

INSPECTION REPORT

APPLETON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Appleton

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123219

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Watts

Lead inspector: Greg Sorrell

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th October 2004

Inspection number: 266312

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	115
School address:	Church Road Appleton Abingdon Oxfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Elizabeth Davies
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Appleton Church of England Primary School is voluntary aided and serves the local community who mostly come from the village and neighbouring villages near Abingdon. It is smaller than most other primary schools. The vast majority of pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage with very few of other heritage and all pupils speak English as their first language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are 9 pupils on the register of special needs, which represents 9.4% of the pupils attending the school, which is much lower than the national average. There are two pupils with a statement of special need, which is broadly in line with the national average. The attainment of pupils when they start school is above the average expected for their age. The school's character has not changed significantly since the last inspection in 1999. It has received the School Achievement Award in 2002.

The school was simultaneously inspected under Section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996 where the provision for Religious Education; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; collective worship; ethos and links with the Community are reported separately.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21529	Greg Sorrell	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education
14066	Gill Hoggard	Lay inspector	
30997	Joy Considine	Team inspector	English, the Foundation Stage, art, geography, history
22778	Anne Shannon	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, music, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Appleton Primary Church of England School is a very effective school.

The headteacher gives excellent leadership and ensures that the overall quality of governance and management is very good. The quality of education is very good and the parents hold very positive views of the school. The pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching and the close attention given to standards achieved throughout the school. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is very high. Children in reception achieve the learning goals expected for their age, and many exceed them;
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and vision to promote high standards throughout the school;
- The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is very good;
- The overall quality of teaching and assessment of learning is very good which results in the pupils showing very positive attitudes;
- The support, advice and guidance given to pupils is very good as is the quality of relationships within the school;
- Standards achieved in ICT are not as high as in other subjects.

Overall improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school's capacity to improve still further is very good. The school has maintained its identified strengths at the time of the last inspection and has successfully addressed its weaknesses. School management is now very good overall and subject co-ordinators are much more influential in developing and discharging their responsibilities. The use of assessment in English, mathematics and science is very strong and as a result subjects are effectively planned to provide a good curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. The school has correctly identified that there still remains some room for improvement in the assessment of other subjects, particularly in ICT. Many opportunities are now provided for the pupils to work independently although the restricted access to the library hinders this somewhat.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A	A*	A*
Mathematics	A	B	A*	A*
Science	B	A	A*	A*

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The achievement of pupils is very good. Children achieve very well in the reception class and reach the goals expected of them and many exceed this expectation. In the most recent national tests, the pupils at the end of Year 2, achieved overall standards that were well above average for similar schools. Standards in reading and writing are well above average and those achieved in mathematics are very high. These latest results reflect the trend which has been above the average national trend over the past three years. The pupils achieve these standards as a result of very good focussed teaching based on the very good start they receive

in reception. The pupils also achieve well in geography, music and physical education. Test results at the end of Year 6 are very high in English, mathematics and science. These results are in the top five per cent of schools nationally. The value added to the pupils' results compared to what was achieved at the end of Year 2 is very high. These results are due to very good teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 and the continued close attention to individual pupils' performance. For example, pupils are given specific support appropriate to their abilities so that boys and girls or those of different ability achieve their best. In other subjects the pupils achieve well, such as music, geography and physical education. The pupils' overall achievements in ICT are not as high as they could be due to an underemphasis on some aspects of the curriculum.

The pupils' personal qualities including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. So too, are their **attitudes** to school and their **behaviour**. The pupils' positive response to school is reflected in their good **attendance**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching is very good and ensures that the pupils' learning is of similarly high quality. The school keeps very good records of pupils' achievements and this guides lesson planning as well as the support and guidance they receive. The school enjoys very good relationships with parents who support the school in many ways, for example, in-class support for reading and music as well as significant fund-raising to provide additional equipment, including, outdoor play equipment. The curriculum is good and is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities that provide the pupils with a very well rounded education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of leadership, management and governance is very good. The headteacher gives excellent leadership and has an extremely clear vision of school improvement. She sets appropriate priorities based on a very secure analysis of data and serves as a role model for other staff. Other key managers have a clear view of their function, even though some are relatively new to their roles. School management is very well supported by very effective administration staff and a very well informed and active governing body.

PARENTS' & PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents' and pupils' views of the school are very positive. The parents appreciate the efforts made on behalf of their children by the headteacher and staff. They value the ease with which they can approach the school and know their views are valued. The pupils enjoy coming to school and feel very much part of the local community that the school serves well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Raise standards in ICT to those evident in English, mathematics and science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In small schools caution is needed when interpreting test results as a small number of pupils can have a significant effect upon overall judgements about standards. Nevertheless, the attention given to pupils' achievement at the school in terms of data analysis that informs planning and the very good quality of teaching has played a very important role in maintaining and raising standards of achievement. The children in reception and pupils throughout the rest of the school achieve very well overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved in national tests by the end of Year 6 are very high;
- Standards achieved in national tests by the end of Year 2 are well above average overall;
- The children in Reception achieve their learning goals, many exceed them and are well prepared for learning in the main school;
- The pupils' achievement is not as good in ICT due to too few opportunities to develop the appropriate range of skills.

Commentary

1. Since the last inspection, the pupils' attainment on entry has remained largely the same and is at least above that expected nationally. The provision in Reception includes well planned activities and very good teaching and prepares the children well for entry to Year 1. Achievement in the reception class is very good overall and almost all children achieve their expected learning goals.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.2 (17.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.5 (15.9)	14.6 (14.5)
mathematics	18.8 (17.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the most recent national tests, standards at the end of Year 2, when compared to all and similar schools, were well above average in reading, writing and very high in mathematics. The trend in these results over recent years has been above the national average. The work seen of the present Year 2 pupils was consistent with above average test results at the end of the year. Boys' and girls' relative achievement has been a recent school focus for attention where there has been an emphasis on raising the achievement of girls. The trend in these results over time has been above the national averages. As a result of monitoring standards achieved, the curriculum and teaching styles, boys and girls achieve equally well. The pupils also achieve well in geography, physical education and some achieve very well in music.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.2 (30.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	30.7 (28.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.6 (30.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In the most recent national tests, standards at the end of Year 6, when compared to all and similar schools, are very high in English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils also achieve very well. Compared with the results achieved at the end of Year 2 the standards represent very high added value. The school has successfully identified areas of relative weakness and has ensured that boys and girls both achieve very well. The use of data to target particular groups of pupils with additional literacy and numeracy support and close monitoring has been very successful. The trend in these results over time has been broadly in line with national averages. The pupils also achieve well geography, physical education and some pupils achieve very well in music. Although pupils achieve well in some aspects of ICT such as the presentation of information for different purposes, data handling experiences, such as the use of spreadsheets are too few.

4. All pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. (IEP's) Outside agencies, such as the education psychology service, are used when needed and the school makes good use of them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' attitudes are very good and they behave very well in and around the school. Moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are confident and articulate;
- Children in the foundation stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development;
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Commentary

5. All pupils, including those with special educational needs have very good attitudes to the school and work hard during lessons. Pupils greatly enjoy school. Attendance has improved since last year and is now above the national average. Pupils are largely punctual to school and to lessons. Those interviewed were very positive, saying that it had many facilities other schools did not have, such as the playing field and teachers were kind and helpful, always ready to help them learn. Many opportunities are offered for pupils to talk and to listen to others in the course of the school day. For example, Year 1 pupils in a geography lesson looking at St Lucia and a Scottish island discussed pictures in pairs. Year 2 pupils tried hard to work together in their science investigations into the best way to wash hands. There is a good uptake of various after school activities including the after school club three times a week and

twice yearly musical productions. Great emphasis is placed on working with others and being considerate and as a result pupils are confident, articulate and motivated.

6. Children in the foundation stage achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development. Copious opportunities are given for them to mix with others, talk, listen and involve themselves in role play. They enter the school with above average levels of personal development but the school also does a great deal to develop their confidence, even the youngest pupils are given age-appropriate responsibilities.

7. Personal development is among many features strongly promoted by the school. Moral development is well underpinned by the close links with the church and Christian ethos. Classroom rules are negotiated with each class and displayed on the wall, and staff are quick but subtle in reinforcing desired behaviour. Pupils raise money for several charities, for example, through the “Jeans for Genes Day” when the pupils and staff are sponsored to wear denim instead of school uniform to support research into genetic disorders. Social development is strong and well supported by parents. There are many opportunities for collaborative working in lessons, and pupils have the ‘buddy’ system to support pupils who may be lonely in the playground. They mix well and play easily together in the after school club with several different age groups represented. Lively, dynamic whole school assemblies are another example of positive social activities. Links with schools in Finland and Spain give pupils a good insight into the cultures of other countries as does the visit of an African artist who inspired the pupils to some very impressive clay masks.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. There are particular strengths in the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and in the personal support, guidance and advice given to the pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good as are the assessments made of what pupils have learned.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use a range of strategies to engage the pupils in learning and reflect upon what makes lessons effective;
- Teachers enjoy very good relationships with the pupils and have high expectations of their work and behaviour;
- Teachers make regular assessments of pupils’ learning, including the promotion of self-assessment to ensure that the teaching is relevant to their needs;

- Opportunities are missed to use ICT in support other subjects, particularly data handling.

Commentary

8. The teachers use a wide range of strategies to encourage the pupils to learn effectively. All lessons start with clear learning objectives including a brief reminder about what was learned in the previous lesson. The most effective lessons start with pupils volunteering this information for the benefit of the teacher and other pupils. A rich combination of explanation, demonstration, practical activity, review and recording is a feature of very good lessons. Another very good feature is where the teachers reflect upon the lesson and consider what worked well and what elements may be improved next time. The use of interactive whiteboards, large touch-sensitive displays connected to a computer, is very effective in focussing pupils' attention where teachers use a range of appropriate programs to support literacy and numeracy.

9. The quality of relationships is very good. The pupils feel confident to try their best and know that any wrong answers will be met with encouragement and the time to re-consider. The pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectations of the work produced and its quality. Raised expectations are evident as a result of very good leadership that gives close scrutiny of standards achieved and the curriculum provided. Being engaged in high quality lessons also promotes very positive attitudes that minimise instances of mis-behaviour. Pupils are mutually supportive and are increasingly able to make constructive comments about the work of their peers.

10. Considerable planning is put into the lessons pupils receive. In the best examples, teachers work closely with colleagues, including teaching assistants to match the content closely to the needs of the pupils. This feature is particularly effective in English, mathematics and science to ensure appropriate grouping and curriculum coverage for mixed year teaching. Teaching assistants appreciate this involvement and, this, in turn makes them more effective when supporting pupils in class or small groups. All staff are engaged in effective continuing professional development programmes, including research, that ensure their knowledge and skills remain relevant and up to date. Regular observation of colleagues and team-teaching are also strong indicators of the desire to constantly improve the teaching pupils receive. Pupils with special educational needs are given carefully matched support by the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and class teachers and teaching assistants. The teaching assistants play an important role in managing the pupils with whom they have very good relationships and guide them in activities. As a result of this unobtrusive but effective support pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. The assessment of the needs of these pupils and of their progress is very good. Reviews are undertaken regularly and support is specific and based on an accurate analysis of progress. Regular assessment in lessons by "question and answer" gives the teachers and all pupils very good assessment information. Increasingly, the pupils are engaging in self-assessment where they too, reflect upon how well they have performed against the lessons' objectives and what they must do to improve. Very good records are kept in English, mathematics and science. The teaching of Literacy and Numeracy strategies is underpinned by effective assessment and support systems that contribute to pupils' very high standards of attainment and their very good achievement.

11. Although teachers make very good use of ICT to plan lessons, prepare resources and mount displays some opportunities are missed to enable the pupils to handle data effectively. For example, the pupils are given too few experiences to develop understanding of simple

formulae in spreadsheets or working with databases. As a result, the pupils' overall achievement in ICT is not as good as it might otherwise be.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	7(32%)	12 (54%)	3 (14%)	0 (%)	0 (0 %)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages.

The Curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum provides good learning opportunities for pupils. Accommodation and resources are also good. The curriculum is enriched by the many extra-curricular activities available to the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enrichment of the curriculum through focus weeks is very good;
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good;
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good;
- Involvement with the Comenius project is an exciting aspect of the curriculum.

Commentary

12. The curriculum is balanced and gives the pupils a wide range of opportunities. The school, rightly, prides itself on the way it encourages independence and confidence in its pupils and promotes their spiritual as well as their intellectual and physical development. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. The very good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship contributes substantially to the pupils' personal development.

13. The school places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy within an interesting curriculum. Literacy is supported and extended through links with other subjects. There is extra provision in literacy for pupils who are behind in their reading skills.

14. The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs. Procedures are well organised. The requirements of the New Code of Practice for special needs are fully met. The SENCO works effectively with all members of staff to ensure that the pupils have full access to the curriculum. Individual targets are reviewed regularly to monitor each pupil's progress towards the learning targets and to set new ones. The school also ensures that provision matches statemented pupils' individual education plans. For pupils who are not on the special needs register but for whom staff have concerns, the school provides further literacy support and Year 6 pupils are given extra maths support before they sit the national assessment tests.

15. Teachers work hard to make learning exciting for the pupils. The curriculum focus weeks are very popular with the pupils and their parents. These weeks are very carefully planned with interesting activities, which capture the pupils' imaginations and centre on creativity. The recent African week made use of the expertise and talents of a visiting African artist. Space week included art, music, sculpture, printing and model-making in partnership with the local secondary school. Pupils visited a planetarium which had been set up in the secondary school and investigated the planets in science. They made moon buggies in design and technology. Music has a high priority in the school and a specialist music teacher is employed. Pupils use these skills very well in Christmas and summer productions. There are theatre and museum visits that support learning and through the Comenius project, where schools forge links with schools in other countries. As part of this project, the pupils exchange e-mails with pupils in Finland and Spain to find out about school life in those countries. The pupils achieve high standards in swimming and participate enthusiastically in many sports.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are given high status. Support, advice and guidance are very good. Pupils are very involved in the life of the school and asked for their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support, advice and guidance is very strong and directly help achievement;
- There are very good relationships at all levels;
- Induction arrangements for children entering the school are very good.

Commentary

16. The school is a warm and caring community where all the staff know pupils well and take an interest in their development. Teachers use assessment well: they have a very good knowledge of pupils' work and capacity and set targets for them to improve. Pupils interviewed confirmed that they know what level they are working at and understand what they have to do to improve. Personal development is strongly supported through such measures as the head teacher's award for good work or good behaviour and the lunchtime supervisors' award. Pupils may also go into the 'Super Star Book' and have their success celebrated in assembly. The school community is small and close-knit, many of its members live locally and know each other well. There are warm, easy relationships at all levels in the school which pupils particularly comment on, saying their teachers are kind and always ready to help.

17. Induction arrangements are very good: there are close links with the local pre-school group and staff come in to visit the primary school and transfer relevant information about each child. The result is happy settled children who make a very good start in the foundation stage.

18. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. A strength is the early identification of individual needs and the commitment to ensure that the provision for these needs is made. Individual education plans contain appropriate targets, which are guided by assessment of pupil's difficulties. This information is used effectively to plan work well-matched to the pupils' abilities and this has a positive effect on children's progress. The school works closely with the local education authority's support services, for example, the educational psychologist. The school is mindful of the support some pupils with specific educational needs require when they move on to their secondary schools and has procedures in place to prepare them for the changes they will experience.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very good links with parents and carers, and with the local community and church. There are good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good links with parents are reflected in the many practical ways that they support the school;
- There are very good links with the local community and especially the church.

Commentary

19. The school has developed very good links with parents, who in turn are very positive about the work of the school; Appleton is heavily over-subscribed as a result. Almost all parents asked say their children like school, are making good progress and behave well. They feel teaching is good and they are well informed about progress because teachers are approachable and easy to talk to. They also praise the settling-in arrangements and the good range of extra curricular activities offered.

20. Parents are, in addition, very active in practical ways which support the school. A number attended a recent workshop run by the LEA advisor on helping children with reading. The parent-teacher association is very dynamic in fundraising and social events; for example they funded the recent purchase of adventure equipment for the playground and are running a games and skittles night to raise funds. Parents also offer practical help in school, for example, the support of reading and music with groups of pupils of all ages. The school works closely with parents when their child is put on the register for special educational needs. The parents' views and opinions are sought and are considered when drawing up targets for the child to achieve.

21. The school has a special place in its local community and there are particularly strong links with the Church of St. Lawrence. Pupils visit, for example, at Christmas or for the harvest festival. Local senior citizens are invited to school to talk about their lives and to receive food baskets from the harvest festival. A number of governors are members of the community group and are active in local issues, such as the future of the pre-school playgroup. The village takes a close interest in the welfare and progress of the school, and is very supportive of its work. Foundation stage children went on a local visit to learn more about their environment and paint pictures of their homes and older pupils washed cars of local residents recently in order to raise money for new football kit.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher;
- Leadership is clearly focused on raising achievement throughout the school;
- Very good management which ensures that weaknesses are identified and addressed;
- Good overall improvement since the last inspection;
- Financial management is very good and this helps the school to achieve its educational priorities;
- The school has excellent procedures for self evaluation;
- Governors make an effective contribution to the leadership and management of the school.

Commentary

22. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent. She has a clear vision of what she wants to achieve and is totally committed to every child reaching the highest possible standards, both academically and personally. She ensures that pupils have access to a well planned and stimulating curriculum which challenges and motivates them. She sets a very good teaching example and is fully committed to seeing that all staff work hard to ensure that

the pupils, whatever their abilities, get the most from their time at school. The school describes itself as "...Always looking for ways to improve and extend. We look for creative ways of extending learning." The very strong team of teachers and assistants is managed sensitively to ensure a shared sense of purpose. The headteacher is committed to the development of a whole school learning community and actively encourages all staff to increase their professional expertise. For example, one teacher who completed her newly qualified year had been a classroom assistant and then trained at the school on the graduate teacher programme. Another teacher is doing an MA and a further teacher has been nominated for the award of Oxfordshire science teacher of the year. The school has also been involved in the national pilot project for interactive whiteboard training which is having a positive effect upon teaching and learning styles across the school.

23. The school is fully committed to the process of self evaluation and as a result it has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. This means that successes can be celebrated and appropriate areas for improvement identified. The school improvement plan has clearly focused priorities based on a three year plan so that resources can be effectively targeted. The implementation of the plan is monitored by governors through committee meetings and by staff at staff meetings. At the end of each year the plan is reviewed and new actions as appropriate are fed into the plan. Each committee explores how the intended actions will impact on standards for pupils. This ensures that the school is well placed to take effective action and keep targets on track. Clear targets for development are identified together with timescales and resource implications. It is the headteacher's vision that underpins the work of the school and this is reflected in the involvement of parents, staff, governors and pupils in school development planning.

24. The headteacher and governors are committed to teamwork and involve all staff in the decision making process. Assessment information is shared with and discussed by all staff and governors so that they know about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In addition to performance data, the headteacher provides a written commentary to help them to understand the meaning of the figures. A critical approach is taken to all aspects of school life and co-ordinators have action plans to reach set targets. They monitor the work of the school through analysis of pupils work, scrutiny of planning and some classroom observations.

25. Excellent use is made of all available performance data to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school. This is used to identify individual pupils or groups of pupils who are at risk of not making expected progress. Additional "catch up" programmes are then provided for these pupils and by doing this, the school ensures that pupils of all abilities can achieve well.

26. The management of special educational needs is good. All staff work closely with the co-ordinator who ensures that they are all aware of the procedures. Parents are kept well informed and are invited to all reviews. There is a governor designated as a person responsible for overseeing special educational needs. She is very well qualified for the responsibility and contributes much to the school's effectiveness in this area. The teaching assistants are trained and committed members of the school staff and make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning.

27. The systems for performance management are well embedded. This includes an annual appraisal of teaching assistants as well as of teachers. Each teacher has performance targets which link to pupil performance and the priorities on the school improvement plan. The

teaching assistants are suitably deployed across the school and this ensures that teachers receive support for administration and with teaching individuals and small groups.

28. Governance is very good. Governors are committed to the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They understand their roles and responsibilities and feel they always receive relevant information to help them make good decisions. Statutory requirements are regularly reviewed and this ensures that the school meets all of its responsibilities. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The governors regularly visit the school and the literacy governor has used her professional background in publishing to run a workshop for parents about helping their child to read. The governing body benefits from stability and the ability to work together with the school as part of a team. A recent review of working practices led to the setting up of meetings from the chairs of each committee to discuss how their particular function fed into whole school development. There is a good balance of strengths among the governors, including financial management and this has been a great help in securing value for money when considering bids for work on the school site.

29. The quality of financial planning is very good. Financial information is presented by the bursar so that it is accessible to all members of the governing body. Budgets are set in accordance with statutory requirements and spending decisions are well linked with priorities outlined in the school development plan. When considering items of large expenditure the four principles of best value are applied so that governors know they are getting the best value for money. The headteacher is always on the lookout for bids which are seen as opportunities to further enhance provision for pupils. She also encourages governors to “shop around” to make sure that services such as in-service training is given by the best provider. The large amount of the budget carried forward is to fund the building extension programme that will improve the accommodation for the foundation stage children, enhanced staff facilities and additional access for anyone with physical disabilities.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	£342,253
Total expenditure	£338,491
Expenditure per pupil	£2,844

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	£66,711
Balance carried forward to the next	£70,743

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

The Foundation Stage at Appleton Primary School comprises one Reception class with 13 children. Most children have attended pre-school settings. Children enter school with a wide range of attainment although the majority are above average ability. Teaching is very good and ensures that most children achieve the Early Learning goals by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage. About half of the children will exceed this and are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Children of all abilities achieve very well. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. Careful and detailed records are kept of children's personal and academic development. Relationships between adults and children are very good and children are confident, safe and happy. The outdoor area is too small and the school has plans to develop this. Currently it is safe for only six children to be using bicycles and scooters at one time. The curriculum is very well planned to meet the learning needs of all children. It is further enhanced by use of visits outside the classroom and visitors, including parents and governors to the classroom.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good procedures to induct new children into school;
- There are very good relationships between adults and children;
- Children work well together;
- Children behave well and can work independently or as part of a larger group;
- Children work with concentration for sustained periods of time.

Commentary

30. Children are on course to reach, and in most cases, exceed the early learning goals in most aspects of their personal development by Year 1. The start of the day is well managed and allows children to talk together and with the teacher. They listen well during whole class discussions and take turns when speaking. They share, co-operate and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Children understand classroom routines and happily move between teacher directed and self initiated activities. Behaviour is very good and most children work with concentration for prolonged periods of time.

31. The class teacher works very effectively with other adults, including parents and governors and this means that children are well supported through consistent approaches. For example, a visiting governor, who was listening to children read, has a quiet calm manner and enjoys talking with the children about books and stories. A parent helper naturally settled down with the children to watch a video and unobtrusively directed children's attention to what was happening and what they needed to be listening for. There is a close working partnership between the teacher and the teaching assistant ensuring seamless transition between activities throughout the school day.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The overall provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children make very good progress;
- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's language skills.

Commentary

32. Children enter the reception class with above average skills in this area. During their time in the reception class most children will reach and exceed the early learning goals by the time they reach Year 1. Teachers plan a wide range of learning experiences in which children talk together or with adults. Children speak and listen well. They have a wide vocabulary, speak confidently in sentences and can take turns in conversation. For example in one lesson, the teacher was talking about how to make a fruit salad and the children could use words such as "recipe" and "ingredients" with confidence. Children enjoy stories and take great delight in anticipating the ending. They readily share books and discuss points of interest and express preferences. They concentrate and identify many initial letter sounds. Some children already recognise words and blend letters to make words. For example, one boy was asked to write his name on his work and he responded with "S-A-M makes Sam". Children enjoy making marks on paper and through choosing activities such as crayoning and drawing, are making very good progress. There is an appropriate emphasis on writing and children are encouraged to write independently for a variety of purposes. Many are beginning to develop clear letter formation and enjoy writing simple words and sentences. The role play area is well used to support all aspects of language and literacy.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The overall provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are well planned;
- Teaching is very good;
- Assessment is used very effectively.

Commentary

33. Teaching and learning are very good. Children enter the reception class with standards which are above average for their age. By the time they leave the reception class over half of the children are working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Activities are well planned to meet the needs of the children. Teaching is based on thorough assessment of children through detailed observations of their work. Very effective use is made of questioning to develop their learning and explore their understanding. As a consequence children achieve very well. The teacher uses a wide range of resources to stimulate children's interest. Such as, in one lesson, the teacher used a chart to introduce the names and properties of three dimensional shapes to all the children and then the children were able to select additional activities to develop and practice skills of recognition of shape through a variety of experiences. For example, children choose sponge shapes to print with, cut out shapes to make pictures and extend their understanding of three dimensional shapes through playing with large building blocks.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned;
- Good links between different areas of learning make lessons more meaningful for the children.

Commentary

34. Teaching and learning are good. Most children will achieve or exceed the early learning goals in this area. There is a good range of activities usefully linking different areas of learning. For example, an activity about healthy eating was to make a fruit salad. This explored links with literacy through the story of “Handa’s Surprise” with a geography topic about food grown on different countries. Children knew that some food grows in this country, but that other foods, such as tropical fruit, grow in warmer countries. These links were further developed through design technology when children made a fruit salad and ICT, where the children demonstrated good mouse control to create and print a picture of a pineapple. Throughout all of these activities there is a constant dialogue between children and adults. This enables them to develop their understanding and consolidate learning. Good opportunities are provided for the children to explore their environment and these activities are well supported by adults’ understanding of children’s needs. The children are interested in the world around them and take delight in looking for bugs in the outdoor area and using printmaking techniques to record the fall of leaves in autumn.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of activities makes the best use of the indoor facilities and the limited outdoor area;
- Good use is made of the school hall for children to develop their physical skills;
- Provision for outdoor activity is limited by the size of the outdoor area.

Commentary

35. Teaching and learning are good. Children are in line to achieve the early learning goals and many will exceed them by the time they enter Year 1. Children are developing a good sense of space and move with confidence. The teacher makes good use of the school hall to provide experiences for children to develop running and jumping with the emphasis on moving safely within a space. Children are co-ordinated and have a good sense of balance. Activities provided outside enable the children to develop this work through playing with wheeled toys. Currently this provision is limited by safety factors which only allow for up to six children to play safely within the area available. Further work on balancing is provided through playing on stilts or balancing boards which are part of the child initiated choosing activity. Children enjoy physical activities and most are making very good progress in the development of their skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of activities is planned;
- The teaching is very good as is the use made of different areas of learning;
- Children respond enthusiastically to a wide range of activities;

Commentary

36. Children are on target to reach or exceed the early learning goals for this area. A wide range of experiences are planned so that children experiment with paints, crayons and chalk. Children are absorbed in their activities and are willing to share and to co-operate. For example, in one lesson where children were using paintbrushes, one child happily suggested that they took turns to use the brush. Where possible, opportunities are created for children to work in other areas of learning at the same time. This is shown in recent work about one of the village streets. Children were linking a simple plan of the street to a model which they had made. They then painted a picture of their own house. They are learning to cut and stick with some accuracy and use their skills to make collages and models. Children enjoy singing and experiment with a range of instruments to make sounds. They have a very good understanding of rhythm and rhyme. The role play area is used to very good effect to support work on healthy eating. During the week of the inspection, it had been set up as a restaurant and children played at being customers and ordered some very interesting meals from efficient and well mannered waiters.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and reach very high standards;
- Pupils enjoy reading;
- Speaking and listening are strong features in most lessons;
- Assessment is very well used to identify and provide for pupils' learning needs;
- Marking is constructive and informs pupils of how they can improve;
- Handwriting and work in some pupils' books is untidy;
- Library provision does not offer the pupils opportunities for independent research.

Commentary

37. There is a wide range of attainment within most year groups and rigorous use of assessment is made to identify the needs of the pupils and plan lessons to meet their needs.

38. In 2004, the standards reached in the National curriculum tests in Year 2 were well above the national average in reading and writing. This is an improvement since 2003 and reflects the school's commitment to the achievement of high standards for all pupils. Very good teaching coupled with rigorous assessment of pupils needs has made a significant contribution to improved attainment. Standards in English at Key Stage 2 are very high in

comparison with the national average and this maintains the trend of high achievement that has been in place since 2001.

39. In Years 1 and 2, pupils speaking and listening skills are well developed. Pupils have a wide vocabulary and are presented with frequent opportunities for talk and discussion throughout the school day. For example, prior to a writing task, a teacher questioned pupils about the correct order for making a fruit salad and challenged other pupils to decide if the sequence was correct. In the lessons observed, pupils achieved very well, were highly motivated and reached well above expected standards in speaking and listening. Very good teaching promotes pupils enthusiasm and develops their vocabulary very well. Pupils confidently take part in discussions, understanding the importance of turn taking and making significant contributions with well thought out ideas. For example, pupils talk about what aspects of playtimes they would like to see improved and what impact their ideas would have if implemented. Teachers respond well to pupils' questions and frequently engage in a learning dialogue involving the whole class, small groups or individual pupils. This increases pupils' confidence in talking with a wide range of people.

40. In Year 1, many pupils write a series of sentences confidently. They are being encouraged to work independently by using word banks for support and to talk to each other about what they are writing. They are taught structured spelling patterns and are able to use simple punctuation to demarcate their work. By Year 2, some pupils can write longer stories, sometimes recounting stories and events in the right order. More able pupils can fully engage the interest of the reader by using language such as "...danced till the dead of the night." The teaching of phonics, reading, handwriting and spelling are methodical and presented in imaginative ways to engage pupils' interest. However, the presentation of pupils work is sometimes inconsistent. The teaching of handwriting is in a process of change following the introduction of a new scheme for younger pupils last year and this has yet to impact on the quality of pupil's work.

41. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to use a wide vocabulary which is developed and extended by very good teaching. Pupils are articulate, confident and often well read. Teaching has a direct impact on pupil achievement. In one very good lesson seen, the level of discussion was high with the teacher setting a very good model of spoken English. In another lesson in which pupils were translating a playscript of "The Hairy Toe" into dialogue, the teacher's focus on language use ensured the pupils had a clear understanding of what they had to do. Pupils identify features of writing that engages the interest of the reader and show well developed skills of creating atmosphere through their writing. For example one pupil wrote,

"The river is sleek, silent and black,
Only the moonlight can see it
Seeping into every shadow."

42. Detailed assessments are kept so that teachers know exactly what pupils need to do next. Planning is closely linked to assessment which means that work can be closely matched to the learning needs of pupils. Teachers' marking is constructive and identifies what has been successful and what further steps need to be taken. Teachers plan to teach skills of different types of writing. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils write clearly and fluently for a variety of purposes. Pupils enjoy reading and make very good progress. They understand that authors have varying styles and comment on how effective the writing is. For example in book reviews, one pupil introduced "The Worry Website" by Jacqueline Wilson with the words, "This book was delightful to read..."

43. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in all classes. This is because assessment is very well used to identify their needs and to give them access to support programmes such as Early Literacy Support and Additional Literacy Support. Teaching assistants have considerable expertise and have built up very good partnerships with teachers and pupils who need additional help.

44. The subject is very well led and managed by a co-ordinator who has a passion for the subject. She monitors teachers' planning to ensure the curriculum for English is covered and has monitored the quality of lessons. Samples of pupils' work are collected twice a year and scrutinised and discussed by all staff. This ensures that all teachers are aware of standards and expectations. They also discuss issues and how these may be resolved. The co-ordinator supports staff through discussion of plans and resources and leads very ably by example. The current arrangements for library provision, located in the ICT suite which also serves as a classroom, reduces opportunities for pupils to carry out independent research activities. The size of classes in the next academic year will alleviate the pressure on this classroom and allow for greater flexibility and access to library books and computers.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Language and literacy, particularly speaking and listening are well developed in all subjects. Good opportunities are given for pupils to discuss their work, to work in pairs and collaborate throughout the school. Writing also makes a successful contribution to other curriculum areas such as geography. For example, pupils had to write a report on an aspect of Indian life which was to be read aloud to an assembly attended by parents.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high and have improved since the previous inspection;
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall;
- Teachers maintain very good records of pupils' skills and progress and use the information gathered well;
- The use of interactive whiteboards makes a significant impact upon the quality of pupils' learning.

Commentary

46. Standards in mathematics are very high at the end of the both key stages. A particular improvement has been seen in the achievement of higher attaining pupils. Overall, provision in mathematics has improved very well. Although a relatively recent appointment, the subject leader has continued to build upon the good foundations laid by the headteacher. Assessment data and test results are carefully analysed to identify where changes to the curriculum and teachers' planning are needed to address weaknesses in learning, and to make predictions of each pupil's future performance. This information is used to set learning targets for each individual pupil. This process has helped pupils achieve better standards.

47. Very good and challenging teaching leads to very good progress and achievement. Teachers expect a lot from pupils, and demand high standards of work and concentration. Pupils rise to the challenge and work hard. As a result, in Years 1 and 2, nearly all have a very good understanding of addition and subtraction. They know multiplication and division facts and work confidently with money, adding up totals and working out change. Many are working at around the average level for nine year olds. Teachers have a secure grasp of mathematics, which helps pupils learn well. Lessons start briskly with brief, yet clear explanations of the planned learning objectives. For example, how to make group shapes and food packages by a number of criteria such as shape, number of sides and corners. Higher attaining pupils use vocabulary such as cylinder with increasing confidence. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are working at an equally high level and their achievement is very good. Pupils apply knowledge already learnt to a range of problem solving activities, such as fraction equivalents and take pride in their results.

48. The quality of teachers' records is very good and the assessments made directly guide their planning. Teachers prepare materials and run lessons efficiently to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are supported effectively and achieve well. In order to address the range of abilities and ages the pupils are appropriately grouped and provided with work that is relevant to their level of learning. Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively for this purpose, for example, asking them to work with a small group of pupils who need reinforcement, while the remaining pupils work independently with larger numbers.

49. The recent acquisition of interactive whiteboards has enabled teachers to offer a wide range of teaching and learning styles. The programs used are successfully promoting the pupils' abilities to predict and estimate practical mathematical problems such as number factors, division, multiplication and percentages. These activities are effective in engaging all pupils in learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Pupils' mathematical skills are reinforced and enhanced well by their use in other subjects, which helps them understand the practical application of mathematics; these opportunities are clearly identified in lesson plans. For example, work in pupils' books shows that they have used graphs and tables in science and geography. Pupils learn to measure and explore patterns in art where they show a good understanding of repetitive patterns based on symmetry. Good use is also made of ICT in this regard, although too few opportunities are provided for the pupils to use spreadsheets to support mathematics. The "Healthy Food Tuck Shop" also provides Year 5 and 6 pupils with good opportunities to run a mini-enterprise using real goods and money.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high;
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and leads to very good pupil achievement;
- Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection;
- Pupils are encouraged to think, to ask questions and to investigate.

Commentary

51. Standards at the end of both key stages are well above the national average for the subject. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 2004 all pupils reached at least Level 4 which is an improvement on the previous year.

52. Science lessons were observed in two classes in Key Stage 2. The previous report judged teaching to be good overall. Inspection findings this time are that teaching is very good overall. The lessons observed were well planned and the activities were very well matched to the pupils' different levels of ability. Relationships are good between the pupils and adults. Good classroom management in both classes and the very good contribution of teaching assistants encourages good attitudes and behaviour from the pupils. Due to pupils taking work home when they left the school last summer, there was no work available from the previous Year 6 so judgements have been made from the small amount of work completed since September. Analysis of work in Year 2 shows that the pupils have a good understanding of what is meant by healthy eating. There is a reliance on worksheets to aid pupils' recording and these are kept in a topic folder and not a designated book for science. Work is marked regularly but teachers' marking often does not include a comment to show the pupil how to improve or how well they have achieved.

53. Year groups 5 and 6 were observed at Key Stage 2. In these lessons, the teacher used open-ended questions to provide a challenge and built learning on the contribution that the pupils made to the lesson. Scrutiny of the work of pupils at eleven years of age shows that standards being achieved by the majority of pupils are high. Year 6 pupils were observed finding out what happens to the direction of a beam of light when it is reflected off a surface. ICT was being used to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers' planning shows that all attainment targets are covered. The last inspection reported that pupils' work on scientific processes such as predicting, fair testing and isolating variables in a test situation was undemanding. The coordinator has addressed this by having a whole school focus on this attainment target.

54. The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is very good at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There was no notable difference between the achievement of boys and girls observed during the inspection. Pupils are eager to learn and enjoy their lessons. They work responsibly in pairs or groups and behave well.

55. The co-ordination of science is very good. Resources are of good quality and used effectively. Since the last inspection the role of co-ordinator has been expanded to include classroom observations which identified areas for improvement that have led to increased teacher confidence and expertise that has informed the subject action plan. She has targeted the use of ICT as an area to develop and has put together an assessment package which is tracking achievement as pupils move from one year to the next. The local secondary school's head of science has visited the school to get involved with teaching the subject and forge useful links between the two schools.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ICT suite is a very good resource which supports teaching and learning well and this has a positive effect upon pupils' achievements in a range of subjects;
- Some aspects of the curriculum are underemphasised;
- The co-ordinator has a clear vision to improve the provision.

Commentary

56. The pupils' standards in the understanding and use of ICT are satisfactory overall as is their achievement. The pupils enjoy using programs in the ICT suite and occasionally in their classrooms. They show confidence and competence in the use of a range of applications, including a word processor and programs that develop numeracy and literacy. Older pupils are familiar with procedures for logging on and locating previous work saved in class folders. They use the mouse and keyboard to select appropriate icons or enter text. Older pupils show more confidence and competence as they word-process text to support a range of subjects such as English, geography and religious education. Many pupils are familiar with desktop publishing and the Internet to research topics or design pages for a story. In the summer term, the oldest pupils made an excellent movie of their school and village. This work, as part of the Comenius Project with schools in Finland and Spain, involved shooting and editing scenes, conducting interviews and inserting titles and backing music. Within the ICT suite, the quality of teaching is good overall. Lessons are well paced and regular opportunities are given to demonstrate what has been learned. However, its timetabled use as a classroom means that the suite is not always used to maximum effect.

57. Opportunities and resources for the pupils to experience monitoring, control and modeling are available, although these are somewhat restricted due to not all teachers being confident about these aspects of the subject. This has an adverse effect upon the pupils' overall achievement. However, the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and most teachers have adequate subject knowledge to teach the current breadth of the curriculum.

58. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator has recently taken up the post and has a clear view of what needs to be done and has the capacity to drive improvement. She has identified the need to improve the monitoring of planning to ensure that ICT is used effectively across the curriculum. An audit of staff expertise to determine future training needs has recently been undertaken. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory although the provision of equipment has much improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory overall. Some teachers use ICT well to support most subjects, for example by making use of the Internet for researching geography and history. Word processing supports pupils' literacy and the digital movie project made a very good contribution to the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Numeracy programs are well used in conjunction with interactive whiteboards, although spreadsheets are not used to best effect. Teachers use word-processing very well to produce worksheets and the use of digital cameras is very evident in most classroom displays.

HUMANITIES

Geography

60. Pupils reach standards above expectations for pupils of their age at Year 6. Teaching seen was good and stimulated pupils' interest in the world around them. Achievement is good because of the cross curricular links made by teachers which reinforce and extend their understanding. For example, pupils in Year 4 are studying India through a variety of teaching resources including a well selected video. The theme of culture and tradition was followed up by careful questioning by the teacher who drew the pupils' attention to the design and making of block prints to apply to fabric design. The pupils then replicated this in their classroom with an overall purpose to make a cushion cover based on traditional design and manufacture. Pupils in Year 2 are comparing island life through Katie Morag books and are making links between literacy and geography. This helps them to relate to differences between the life of Katie Morag and their own lives.

61. Teaching and learning are good. Analysis of pupils' work shows that most learning activities are well matched to the needs of pupils, although in some cases there is over reliance on photocopied worksheets which leaves some pupils unchallenged. In other lessons, pupils are given opportunities to develop their report writing. This was seen in some work about India where a pupil wrote a report about Indian elephants which was then read out loud in the next assembly. A visit to the local Pitt River Museum gave pupils in Year 4 the opportunity to follow an investigative trail to enhance their understanding of life in India. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are also comparing life between the Island of Coll in Scotland and St Lucia. Pupils talked about the differences and their preferences with reasons. In Year 6 pupils had undertaken field work to study a local river. This entailed practical work where they were measuring the flow of the river. Pupils talked enthusiastically about this and how they enjoyed planning how they were to carry out the activity. Pupils have a good awareness of the world around them and are able to talk about the factors that make the lives of people in one community very different from the lives of people in other communities. They also understand the physical features such as rivers, mountains and deserts and the impact this has on land development and use.

62. The leadership and management of geography are good. Analysis of planning shows that the requirements of the National Curriculum programmes of study are fully met. The co-ordinator has an action plan determined by targets to raise standards and is supporting the staff in developing links with other subjects. This work has been further supported by the school's involvement in the Comenius project which links the school with schools in Finland and Spain. Pupils have opportunities to e-mail pupils in schools in those countries and to share work through videos and CDs. Additionally a whole school focus week on Africa was

enhanced by the visit of a Ugandan artist who worked with the pupils and spent time talking about the life he led Uganda.

History

63. This is because the school plans to teach this subject in alternate half terms with geography and history is not taught until after half term. Consequently, no judgement could be made about the overall provision in the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art & Design and Design and Technology

64. Art and Design and Design and technology were not main focus areas for this inspection. Consequently, insufficient evidence was gathered to make secure judgements about the provision. However, the teachers' thorough planning shows that the subjects are given appropriate time in the curriculum.

Music

65. Music was not a focus of this inspection and no judgements have been made about provision or of teaching and learning as no lessons were observed. There are several extra curricular clubs and many pupils learn to play an instrument and successfully take examinations. Former pupils regularly make up a large part of the city's secondary schools' orchestra. Visiting teachers provide high quality tuition to a number of pupils and parents organise very successful sessions that promotes singing and wind instruments. The school also employs a part-time music teacher to support the music curriculum. The confident playing of flutes by some pupils in an assembly showed the high standards achieved by these young pupils.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well in physical education;
- The quality of teaching is good overall;
- The curriculum is broad and well supported by a very good range of after school activities;
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

66. The pupils' achievements are good in physical education. They achieve particularly well in swimming and team games. In the swimming lesson observed, the older pupils' abilities ranged from gaining increasing levels of confidence in water to the development of good stroke techniques. Most can swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school and several achieve success in personal survival skills. At all times, the pupils show a very good understanding of health and safety by listening carefully to instructions and behaving very

sensibly traveling to the venue and around the pool itself. The pupils also develop gymnastic skills and experience competitive sport in netball and football.

67. The teachers present themselves as effective role models by providing good quality demonstrations and wearing appropriate clothing. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall and some have particular expertise in swimming and team games. These skills are used well to ensure that the pupils receive good quality instruction. This is supplemented further by the expertise of the swimming instructor at the local swimming pool. The role played by teaching assistants is good, particularly supporting pupils with special educational needs. In most cases, expectations of pupils' performance are high, although, occasionally, greater demands could be made upon the pupils' fitness. For example, more opportunities could be provided for vigorous activity by increasing the number of widths swum, whilst at the same time, focusing upon skill development.

68. The subject is well led and managed which results in a curriculum that is very well planned with good regard paid to national guidance. The provision, enhanced by a wide range of after-school clubs, includes gymnastics, tennis, team sports, swimming and athletics. The annual residential trip provides pupils with valuable experience of outdoor activities. These activities are well attended, actively supported by governors and much appreciated by parents and pupils alike. Inter-school competition, where the pupils experience success in team games is also encouraged and contributes significantly to the pupils' personal and social development. Physical education has high status within the school and has improved well since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- PSHE is integral to the work of the school and does much to support its ethos.

Commentary

69. This area is a key part of the school's overall ethos and is successful in assisting the pupils' overall development towards maturity. The planning is very good and embraces many subjects of the curriculum, including sex education as appropriate for older pupils. Links with the Religious education curriculum are relevant and illustrate a strong commitment to the pupils' overall development. Recently the pupils have focussed upon issues such as fitness, healthy life-styles, the importance of role models, self-esteem and peer pressure. They talk with increasing confidence about the everyday potential hazards such as how to keep themselves safe when travelling to and from school. Visiting speakers, including the rector make a good contribution to assemblies. The school council plays a genuine part in school life and prepares them well for taking up their role as participative citizens. The improvement since the last inspection is good.

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 (Ethos)	2
Attendance	3
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	2
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	1
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).

