

INSPECTION REPORT

St James' C of E Primary School

Cheltenham

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115668

Headteacher: Mr Robert Robinson BA

Lead inspector: Glyn Gaskill

Dates of inspection: 16th to 19th May 2005

Inspection number: 267795

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 304

School address: Merestones Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
Postcode: GL50 2RS

Telephone number: 01242 516836
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr John Henry

Date of previous inspection: 28th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves an area in the southern part of Cheltenham with several pupils coming from outside this traditional catchment area. The school is slightly larger in size than most primary schools, is very popular and over-subscribed. The socio-economic status of the catchment area is well above average. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school during a school year is low. A very small number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are of white British background, the remainder coming from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. No pupils use English as an additional language. When they enter the reception class, children's attainment is above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is well below the national average. There are no pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. There are eight single-age classes and three mixed-age classes. The school was awarded *School's Achievement Award* in 2002, *Investors in People* in 2002 and *Activemark*, for its positive promotion of sport, in 2005.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22951	Glyn Gaskill	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology
31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector	
27899	Georgie Beasley	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Personal, social and health education and citizenship Foundation Stage ¹
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	English Religious education History Geography Physical education Special educational needs

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¹ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy;

mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school that very effectively promotes all pupils' personal and academic development. This is due to the very good leadership by the headteacher, very good governance and overall very good leadership and management. Pupils achieve very well. This is because teaching and learning are very good. Overall, standards of attainment are very good. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a very good start in the reception classes.
- Very good teaching and pupils' very positive response leads to well above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' personal development, attitudes and behaviour are very good and their willingness to take on responsibility is exceptional.
- Pupils have very trusting relationships with adults and these are outstanding at the top end of the school.
- The curriculum is very good and pupils benefit from a very good range of activities which are additional to class lessons.
- There are very good links with parents, the community, colleges and particular schools.
- Aspects of the school's accommodation are unsatisfactory as it limits several areas of the curriculum.
- Pupils are increasingly aware of their personal targets for improvement, but these are not consistently clear.

Since the school was last inspected, in June 1999, improvement has been very good. Leadership and management have been strengthened well. Standards of attainment have improved markedly, particularly in science. Assessment procedures have been established in all subjects and are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. Teaching has significantly improved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Average points scores 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*	A*	B	C
science	A	A	C	E

Key: A - top 5% of schools; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' achievement is very good, overall. Pupils' achievement in the reception classes and Years 3 to 6 is very good and in Years 1 to 2 is good. Children enter the reception classes with above average skills. By the time they enter Year 1, a very high number of children are on course to exceed all the goals expected at the end of the reception year with the exception of physical development where the number of children will be high. In Year 2 and Year 6, inspection evidence found very high standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and physical education. Standards in religious education and music are satisfactory in Year 2 and good in Year 6. The remaining subjects were sampled with standards appearing mainly good but very good in art in Year 6 and very good in personal, social and health education in both

Year 2 and Year 6. The use of English to promote learning in other subjects is very good with the use of information and communication technology and mathematics being good.

Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in recent years have been very high in comparison with all schools and well above the average for similar schools with reading being very high. Considering the average results over the last three years at the end of Year 6; in comparison with all schools they have been very high in English and mathematics and high in science. In comparison with similar schools, results have been high in English and mathematics and above expected standards in science. There was a predicted significant decline in results in 2004 because of the nature of the cohort. The school did much to promote higher standards in English and mathematics for that year group.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are very good. Their cultural development is good. Behaviour and attitudes are very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** quality of education for its pupils.

The quality of teaching is **very good**, overall. Both teaching and learning are very good in reception and Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 to 2. Teaching is excellent at times for Year 1 pupils and often exceptionally inspirational at the top end of the school. Throughout the school teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning. Teachers apply their secure subject knowledge well. Weaknesses in teaching involve a lack of pace to the lesson. Classroom assistants play a positive role in supporting learning.

The curriculum provided by the school is very good with a very good range of activities in addition to classroom lessons, which significantly support learning.

The overall quality of assessment is good, promoting higher standards especially in English and mathematics. Pupils are being made more aware of what they need to do to improve by becoming more familiar with objectives for their learning and from written guidance when their work is marked. However, these strategies are not consistently applied. There are several aspects of accommodation that are unsatisfactory. The available accommodation is managed well.

The care that the school provides for its pupils is good. Links with parents and the community are very good and benefit pupils' academic and personal development. Provision has benefited from links with other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership with high expectations that all pupils will do well. The senior team of teachers and subject leaders work very well together to create a very strong commitment for improvement within the school. Governance is very good and meets statutory requirements. Governors are very well informed and fully involved in the life of the school. The school is self-critical, identifies relevant areas for improvement and takes effective action.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high opinion of the school and are aware of its positive reputation in the area. They feel they are well informed about their children's progress and activities concerning the school. There is very good support given to fund raising and other events organised for the school. Pupils have a realistic and very positive view of the school. The older pupils particularly appreciate what the school provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- make pupils more aware of what they need to do to improve;
- improve deficiencies in the accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' overall achievement is **very good** and their standards of attainment are **well above average**, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are well above average in most subjects.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Over recent years, standards in the national tests have been very high at the end of Year 2 and mainly very high at the end of Year 6 but slipped in 2004.

Commentary

1. Children enter the reception class with above average skills. They achieve very well and by the end of the reception year all children will reach the goals expected in all areas of learning. A high number will exceed these goals in physical development with a very high number exceeding them in the remaining areas of learning.
2. At the end of Year 2, inspection evidence found standards to be well above average in most subjects, above average in art and average in music and religious education. At the end of Year 6, standards are above average in religious education and music and well above average in all other subjects.
3. Since the last inspection at the end of Year 2, previously high standards have been maintained and there has been improvement elsewhere. There has been a significant improvement in standards at the end of Year 6 and across the school in information and communication technology. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 and achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
4. Pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans because these are specific to their needs and achievable. The care and support offered by the adults who work with them furthers this very good progress and raises pupils' self esteem. The high standards reached in the school show the school caters well for the more able pupils.
5. The average points score for the National Curriculum tests in 2004 are shown below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	19.1 (19.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.5 (17.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.7 (18.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group 20 boys and 25 girls. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.4 (29.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.4 (30.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.9 (30.7)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 42 pupils in the year group, 23 boys and 19 girls. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

6. Results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in recent years have been very high in comparison with all schools and well above the average for similar schools with reading being very high. Considering the average results over the last three years at the end of Year 6, in comparison with all schools they have been very high in English and mathematics and high in science. In comparison with similar schools, results have been high in English and mathematics and above expected standards in science. The significant decline in results in 2004 was predicted because of the nature of the cohort. The school provided additional support for these pupils in English and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **very good** attitudes to school. Their behaviour is **very good**. Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are both **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' willingness to take on responsibility is excellent.
- The school nurtures pupils' social and moral development very well so pupils know what is expected of them.
- Relationships are very good and pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence are high.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of their personal worth.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school.

Commentary

7. Pupils relish the chance to take responsibility and pupils in Years 5 and 6 willingly carry out a very wide range of helpful tasks to support teaching and learning. Lessons are very well prepared as a result and teachers have the confidence to know that when they want to use a particular resource it will work. For example, Year 5 pupils had tested out the pens to ensure they all worked during the mental arithmetic work in their mathematics lesson. All pupils are polite and very well mannered.
8. The school nurtures pupils' personal development very successfully through its caring and trusting ethos and a very rich curriculum. The resulting caring atmosphere in the school helps pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence to try out new things, safe in the knowledge that it is acceptable to get things wrong the first time. Relationships are very strong because adults and pupils treat each other with mutual respect. As a result, pupils naturally have very good respect for each others' feelings and the beliefs of others. Bullying is not an issue. Pupils become more and more adept at listening carefully to what others say in personal, social and health education lessons and class council and decide for themselves how to deal with the small number of incidents that do occur. There is an atmosphere of mutual trust in school where adults deal with pupils in a respectful, calm manner and there is

an expectation that pupils will behave similarly. Pupils themselves remarked that 'you are taught to trust each other in this school'.

9. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations of their behaviour and so pupils get along together very well during playtimes, sharing the games and toys amicably. Older pupils support younger ones in a helpful way and set very good role models on how they should behave towards each other. Pupils who have special educational needs behave well and work hard. They fit in well in all classes and receive effective support from the adults working with them. The small amount of misbehaviour that does occur is dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff. Pupils' very good behaviour makes a significant contribution to their positive achievement. There are no exclusions.
10. Some lessons are truly inspirational in the way pupils' self-awareness is developed, giving older pupils in particular a close insight into their own feelings and a consideration of how others must feel in certain situations. Personal knowledge about how well they are doing academically is satisfactory, overall. Good opportunities exist for pupils to learn about other cultures through art, music, dance and geography.
11. Attendance is very high compared to other schools. Virtually all pupils arrive at school on time. The conscientious administration staff monitor pupils' attendance very closely.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year – 2003/2004

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.3%	School data	0.1%
National data	5.1%	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 overall quality of education provided by the school is **very good**. Teaching is very good and the overall curriculum is very good. Activities additional to lessons are very good. Provision for care is good. Links with parents, the local community and provision benefits from links with other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching is **very good** and this leads to **very good** learning by pupils. The use of assessment and its effect on raising standards is **good**, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, teaching and learning are very good in reception and Years 3 to 6 and good in Years 1 to 2.
- There are very good relationships between adults and pupils.
- Pupils have an increasing understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Arrangements for assessment are effective and improving.
- The use of specialist teachers is effective in promoting very good learning.
- Classroom assistants provide valuable support for learning.

Commentary

12. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when 25 per cent of lessons were good or better and 6 per cent were less than satisfactory. A summary of all the graded lessons is shown below.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
6 (15%)	14 (34%)	13 (32%)	8 (19%)	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.

13. Teaching and learning in reception are consistently very good in group work. The relatively small amount of time spent on whole class teaching, on occasion, is directed towards the middle and lower ability children at the expense of moving forward the more able. Teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 to 2, but there is very good and occasionally excellent teaching for Year 1 pupils. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is very good and frequently excellent for the older pupils. A common feature of teaching throughout the school is the very high expectation which adults have for pupils' behaviour.
14. Where teaching is good or better, questions are used very effectively to probe pupils' ideas and stimulate them to make decisions about their learning. In this better teaching, teachers are sensitive to pupils' response to the lesson and alter the pace or content to maintain the momentum of learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and skilfully used. Lessons unfold in a logically progressive manner leading pupils on to consistently achieve very well. Attention-grabbing techniques are successfully used to fully involve pupils in their learning. There are examples of excellent relationships enabling teachers to take risks and produce exciting and very stimulating lessons which immerse pupils in their learning. Where interactive whiteboards are available they are used most effectively to arouse pupils' involvement and consolidate their learning. The use of specialist teachers for science, music and information and communication technology has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. The use of homework is satisfactory overall but particularly effective in mathematics and English.
15. Weaknesses in teaching involve a lack of pace to the lesson, pupils insufficiently challenged and overlong teacher introductions to lessons. At times, the number of pupils in the class and the limited space available limit the efficiency of teaching and learning.
16. Classroom assistants work very closely with teachers. This provides very good support for pupils' progress, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Whilst the impact of the work of classroom assistants is very positive, there is little availability for them to work in Years 3 to 6. The small size of classrooms for some of these older pupils, and the behaviour difficulties of a very small number of pupils, warrant a greater input of support.
17. In nearly all classes, teachers give statements of what pupils are expected to know (learning objectives) by the end of the lesson. Where these learning objectives are precise and relate to what pupils should know, rather than the activity they carry out, they help pupils make progress. This is because teachers use these learning objectives to concentrate the work of the lesson and increasingly use them for formal and informal assessment. This gives guidance for improvement to individual pupils and, where needed, improves future lesson planning. The use of learning objectives is being developed very effectively in Years 3 to 6 and to a lesser extent in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve is satisfactory. They are increasingly aware of what they need to do to improve, through individual discussion with their teacher. There are some very good examples of teachers including specific written guidance on how pupils can improve when they mark

pupils' work. Whilst pupils' work is regularly marked, comments to guide improvement are not consistently used.

18. The use of assessment to raise standards is good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology where there is frequent testing. In the remaining National Curriculum subjects the use of assessment is satisfactory with annual assessments being made. There is a common system to record pupils' attainment in these assessments, which is not over-burdensome on administrative time and gives a clear picture of the progress of pupils. The school makes good use of this system to track the progress of individuals and different groupings of pupils. For example, the school provides additional support in English and mathematics for both the lower and higher attaining pupils. The current assessment system judges pupils' performance against high, average and low criteria specific for particular work. There is a move to make more use of National Curriculum levels of attainment, which has the potential to provide a realistic evaluation of pupils' attainment against National Curriculum standards. There is no formal system for assessing pupils' attainment in religious education but teachers individual arrangements are satisfactory. The use of tests at the end of units of work or the end of a year does not sufficiently promote pupils' understanding as they work through the unit or year. The improving use of learning objectives, as previously described, contributes significantly to stimulating pupils' progress as they work through a unit.
19. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are given work which matches their needs very well and the support they receive from teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator and classroom assistants is very effective. Pupils are very well supported by a programme that combines withdrawal with individual and small group support in class that is provided by classroom assistants and the special needs co-ordinator. Pupils engage positively with tasks, often demonstrating independence because of the high quality of the support they receive.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**, overall, and it is enhanced by **very good** opportunities for enrichment. Overall, the accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum gives very good support to pupils to help them build up their skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject.
- The quality of accommodation puts significant restrictions on the curriculum.
- Pupils with special educational needs are provided for very well, ensuring they make very good progress.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Pupils' learning is enriched successfully through a very wide range of activities extra to the curriculum.

Commentary

20. The school has a very good curriculum that meets all legal requirements, including those for sex and drug education, and allows pupils to work with a wide variety of activities. In addition, pupils in Year 6 are given the opportunity to study French for an hour a week throughout the year. The curriculum for children in the reception classes is of very good quality and includes a wide range of experiences. This provides very good preparation for work further through the school. The curriculum is good for Years 1 and 2 pupils and very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. There are good systems in place for reviewing and updating policies and schemes of work for the different subjects, so the curriculum is always up-to-date. As pupils move through the school the curriculum builds systematically on their existing knowledge, skills and

understanding and effective links are created between the different subjects. This is seen to good effect with pupils using their literacy, mathematics and information and communication skills well to support their learning in other subjects such as history, religious education and science.

21. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is very well planned. It provides a very good range of topics, from personal health, behaviour and bullying to children's rights. In addition, issues of health and personal safety are covered very well in other subjects, notably physical education and science.
22. As a result of very clear leadership, the school has a very positive approach to inclusion. This is apparent in the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able, which enables them to learn and make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs have very well constructed individual education plans that focus on specific and measurable targets. The school uses a well-judged mixture of in-class support and withdrawal groups to provide help that is well matched to individuals' needs.
23. The curriculum is well enriched by a very good range of activities outside the routine of the classroom, which help to promote pupils' very good academic and social achievement. Activities in several sports, dance, drama and singing enhance the curriculum. In addition, good use is made of the local area with well organised visits to places such as museums. There are several visitors to school who bring a particular expertise and promote pupils' learning and enthusiasm. For example, coaches in several sports work with older pupils, resident artists influence the whole school and science and theatre groups play an important part in developing many aspects of personal and academic development. Links with the church, emergency services and others help pupils to understand their place in a community. Themed weeks concentrating on one subject, such as art and health, help pupils develop skills and draw everyone together in a common purpose. The curriculum benefits in art and language from close links with specialist secondary schools. Links with the nearby special school significantly contribute to pupils' social development. Residential visits arranged for pupils in Years 5 and 6 are a particular strength and give pupils opportunities away from home to develop their independence and maturity.
24. Both the learning resources and the accommodation have improved since the last inspection. In the main, learning resources are satisfactory and good use is made of those that are available. There has been significant improvement to provision for information and communication technology but the age of the computers means that they are not always reliable. There are insufficient non-fiction books in the infant library and many of the current books are old and tatty.
25. Although they now have a designated play area, reception children do not have direct access to it. As a result, children's choice is limited and their physical development is restricted. The school benefits from good, hard surfaced outside play areas, a good quality field and a developing wildlife area. The accommodation is clean and bright and well maintained. Walls are enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. Very good use is made of all available space, including the central areas. Several classrooms are very small for the numbers in the group and this restricts the activities that can be undertaken, for example during Circle Time or music. The limited space also makes it very difficult for teachers and pupils to move about the classroom during lessons. The outside temporary classroom has no toilet facilities; this is unsatisfactory. The hall is very small and cramped for whole school gatherings and physical education. The information and communication technology suite is on the relatively small school stage, which has been modified to accommodate the equipment. This limits the use of the stage for drama and school productions because all the equipment has to be moved. There is limited storage space throughout the school. Overall, accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. Pupils receive **good** support, advice and guidance. There are **good** opportunities for pupils to be involved in and to influence the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and other adults who work in the school know pupils very well.
- Academic guidance is not always sufficiently targeted so that pupils clearly know what they must do to improve their learning.
- Pupils have a trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school.
- Arrangements to help pupils of all ages settle into the school are very good.

Commentary

26. Pupils say that they really enjoy school and feel safe there. They talk enthusiastically about all the school has to offer and are confident that there is an adult they can talk to if they are unhappy. Pupils at the top end of the school confidently express the view that the care, help and guidance they receive is exceptionally good; this view is endorsed by the inspection team.
27. Teachers monitor pupils' personal development informally through discussion and because they take time to get to know the pupils in their care. Pupils' work and effort are valued and celebrated and pupils appreciate this. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and when teachers notice or are told pupils are having difficulties they take action quickly to put matters right. Pupils confirm this.
28. Through the class councils, pupils feel their views are listened to and where possible acted upon and that they are able to make a difference to school life. They also confirm that they can offer their views during Circle Time and state it is a good forum for addressing concerns or discussing issues when someone needs extra support and care. The recent development of the school council is providing further opportunities to take pupils' concerns on board when drawing up plans for future development. The school takes pupils' views and opinions seriously and acts upon them where it can.
29. Pupils are confident that they can ask their teachers for help in lessons. During the inspection, very good examples of one-to-one support were seen in many lessons. However, pupils in all classes are not encouraged to evaluate their own work. Assessment information is not used sufficiently well in all classes to set and share academic targets with pupils to help them understand how they can improve their learning.
30. Welfare arrangements are very good, for example to deal with any illness or accident that occurs during the school day. Suitable attention is given to health and safety and arrangements ensure that pupils work and play in a safe environment. Staff follow the agreed policies and clear practices relating to child protection well. However, not all members of staff have received appropriate training. The school is aware of the need to address this.
31. There are very sensitive arrangements for supporting children when they start in the reception class. The very good relationships between pre-school nurseries, home and school contributes strongly to helping children to quickly feel at home and adjust to the routines of school life. Arrangements to settle older pupils into school other than at the usual time of year are equally very good. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good levels of care, support and guidance. Their progress is monitored carefully as they move through the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with parents. Links and liaison with the community are also **very good**. Links with schools and colleges are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The community is very well used to enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' personal development.
- Parents' views are regularly sought and concerns swiftly dealt with.

Commentary

32. Parents express many positive comments about the school and what it has to offer their children. The school responds positively to issues and concerns raised by them. Questionnaires and comments made on pupils' end-of-year reports are taken into account when the school is preparing plans for improvement. There is a thriving parents' association, which raises significant sums of money used to provide valuable support for the school. Several parents regularly help with classroom activities and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement in these lessons. In addition, parents support the work their children have to do at home.
33. Routine information for parents is very well presented, regular and contains practical and helpful information. The school has a very good web site and several parents are taking the opportunity to communicate with the school via email. As a result of suggestions made by parents the format of pupils end-of-year progress reports was revised and parents find the result acceptable. Clear and detailed information is provided for literacy, mathematics, science and information and communication technology; this is a strength. But they do not provide sufficient information about pupils' strengths and areas for development in other subjects.
34. Given that there is not an established, defined community surrounding the school, very good use is made of the local and wider area to enrich pupils' experiences. Pupils take part in a wide range of events in the area, including close links with the church. Pupils go on good quality, relevant visits linked to their lessons as well as a residential visit, which the older pupils speak about with great enthusiasm.
35. Links with local pre-school providers are very strong and help to ensure the youngest children settle into formal education quickly. There are very close links with the nearby special school and pupils from both schools benefit from joint projects involving visits to each others' schools. This has a positive impact on pupils' social development. The school regularly accepts students on work experience placements as well as trainee teachers. The school benefits from a close partnership with two specialist colleges and welcomes student teachers, who bring additional classroom support and new ideas. Links with neighbouring primary schools are limited.
36. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved with the support their children are given. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed throughout the process of reviewing their children's individual education plans.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. Key staff fulfil their roles and responsibilities **very well**. The overall effectiveness of management of the school is **very good**. Governance is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high aspirations that all pupils will do well both personally and academically.

- The school evaluates its performance very well and takes effective action as a result.
- Governors are very well informed and fully involved in the life of the school.
- The senior team of teachers and subject leaders work very well together to create a very strong commitment to improvement within the school.

Commentary

37. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. All key issues have been tackled very effectively so that personal and academic standards are high and achievement is very good. The very strong commitment that all pupils will do well permeates the very positive learning climate established throughout the school. Pupils, therefore, have very good attitudes to each other and to their learning. The two senior teachers share the high aspirations of the headteacher and play a significant role in supporting staff and ensuring the day-to-day management of the school runs smoothly.
38. The school evaluates its performance very well in all aspects and subjects and takes any necessary action for improvement. Pupils' progress is tracked effectively to identify areas for further attention. Subject leaders play a full role in this and have carried out detailed reviews of their subjects to note those things that are being done well and those that need to be improved. They do this by talking to pupils and looking at their work. Individual pupil targets have been introduced in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and this has helped to raise teacher expectations and pupils' achievement in these subjects. Subject leaders have not observed lessons directly as a matter of course and so have not identified precisely the considerable strengths some teachers could share with others. The leadership and management of special educational needs are very good. Pupils' needs are assessed regularly resulting in very well focused support so that teaching meets pupils' individual needs.
39. The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school, provides very good leadership and meets statutory requirements. Members have a clear role to play so that they can support and challenge various aspects of school life. For example, each governor takes responsibility for a subject within the school and so has developed a strong and productive link with each subject co-ordinator. This structure has given the governing body an effective overview of standards and achievement in every subject and ensures they play a significant role in the purposeful school improvement planning. Governors have a very good awareness of the school's strengths and of the areas that it needs to improve. They are not afraid to challenge the senior team if they require further clarification before making decisions about school provision.
40. Management is very good. The school provides a very effective induction for new staff. Professional development is very well organised and makes a significant contribution to individual staff performance and the very good quality of teaching. The financial management of the school is very good. Office staff manage the day-to-day finances very efficiently, reporting regularly to the governing body's finance committee. Financial planning is very good, with the budget being clearly set to ensure that the school's current and future planned priorities are considered with care. The school compares its costs against like schools very well to ensure it is getting the best value from its resources.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	699,519	Balance from previous year	40,516
Total expenditure	710,411	Balance carried forward to the next	29,624

Expenditure per pupil	2,337		
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception year is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are very confident learners by the time they start in Year 1.
- Children achieve very well in nearly all areas of learning.
- Teaching and learning in group work are consistently very good.
- Higher attaining children are not always challenged enough in the small number of whole class lessons.
- Links with the local pre-school providers and with parents are very good so the children get a confident start to school.
- There is no direct access to the outdoor area from both classrooms and this restricts opportunities for the children to choose to learn.

Commentary

41. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. All children achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development because teaching and learning are very good in these areas of learning. Achievement is good in physical development and teaching and learning are good. The outdoor area is used very effectively during group work to excite and motivate learning. However, there is no direct access to the outdoor area from both classrooms. This restricts the times when children can choose to learn outside on tasks they direct and choose themselves. It also limits the opportunities to practise physical skills learnt in class and group activities such as climbing, balancing and ball skills. By the time they start in Year 1, all children will reach the goals expected in all areas of learning. A very high number will exceed these in all but physical development where a high number will exceed.
42. Very good links with parents and the local pre-school providers ensure the children are ready to start school. Children start with above average skills, overall. Learning is suitably play based and so the children are interested and motivated to take part in all activities. Learning is particularly effective during group work because the children get the one-to-one attention they need from adults. Intervention takes place at just the right moment to question and consolidate children's knowledge and understanding. Teachers and classroom assistants work together very well to plan activities so learning is equally very good for all children. Adults know the children very well so good quality questions are focused on, and so extend, the planned skills and knowledge.

43. Assessment procedures are very good and the information gathered is used well to match learning tasks to the needs of all children during group time. The information is not always used so well when the children are taught in the small number of whole class lessons and higher attaining children are not always challenged sufficiently well at these times. This is usually in the time before assembly so takes up a small amount of the school day.
44. The curriculum is very good because of the exciting activities in which the children take part. Learning each week is planned so that several skills and areas of learning are linked in a meaningful way. As a result, learning always has a purpose. A very good range of resources supports the children's learning very well. The new veranda provides a useful space for additional practical activities including sand, water, painting and making areas. Leadership and management are very good which have led to very good improvement since the previous inspection. Development has been especially effective in the organisation and planning of the curriculum and development of assessment systems.
45. Achievement in **personal, social and emotional development** is very good. Children start school with good levels of self-confidence. Sensitive adult support ensures they soon learn to look after their personal needs very well and to get along with others in the class during learning and play. Staff work hard to help the children develop high levels of self-esteem, which is reflected in the confident way children join in with all activities and approach adults for help when needed.
46. The children's **communication, language and literacy** skills are very good. The children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are well above average by the end of the reception year. Assessment information is used well to target the needs of individual children during group work. As a result, all children are confident speakers and listen extremely well to each other. They all read simple familiar texts confidently and write independently, confident to have a go at sounding out and spelling words by themselves because they know the letter names and sounds very well. Most letters are formed correctly as a result of focused practice of handwriting skills.
47. Achievement in **mathematical development** is very good. All children count confidently to 20 and most add and take away numbers to ten accurately to find answers to simple problems. A full range of practical activities supports the development of skills and the knowledge and understanding of numbers, shape and measures. For example, children really enjoyed looking for cube, cylinder, pyramid, cone, cuboid and sphere shaped objects hidden in the outdoor area. They used their reading skills to match the correct shape to its labelled hoop and this helped them to learn the names of cuboid and sphere in a couple of days. Learning is well matched to the needs of individuals through one-to-one support in group work. This is not always the case when the children work in class groups because some teaching tends to be matched to the needs of middle and lower attainers so does not always challenge the thinking of higher attaining children.
48. Children achieve very well in their **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Learning is planned very effectively for the children to learn in groups. This enables learning to be matched very well to the needs of all children so they all make equally very good progress in activities. Learning activities are linked to each other so the children always see the relevance of what they do. Group activities are often exciting. For example, children were overjoyed when they found objects around the school that had been photographed for them to find. As a result, they talk animatedly to adults about their learning. Children have very good computer skills and locate programs independently to listen to favourite stories.
49. Achievement in **physical development** is good. A weekly physical education lesson and good opportunities to ride wheeled toys ensure the children develop a good awareness of space and knowledge of how to move safely. Ball skills are developed well in lessons. However, there is limited opportunity for the children to practise the skills learnt through activities they can choose themselves because independent access to the outside area is limited by its position. A wide range of materials is always available from which the children

make models and this supports their manipulative skills very well as they hold and join boxes with tape and glue.

50. Children's **creative development** is very good. Very good improvement has taken place in developing the children's imaginative play since the previous inspection. Role-play areas are very well planned and resourced for children to act out imaginary scenarios and re-enact favourite stories. Very good opportunities for the children to explore sounds, paint and collage materials promote their creative development very well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Across the school, pupils are very confident speakers, very competent readers and write with flair and imagination.
- Teachers have very secure subject knowledge which they present in imaginative ways to promote very good achievement for all pupils by Year 6.
- The curriculum is very well planned and literacy is particularly well used to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
- The infant library is not as stimulating as it might be.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.

Commentary

51. In the 2004 national tests, pupils at the end of Year 6 attained results that were well above the national average for all and similar schools. This is a particularly good achievement as that group of pupils contained a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been consistently very high in reading and at least high in writing. Taking the national test results from 2002 to 2004 together, results have been very high at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Inspection evidence found attainment to well exceed expected standards by Year 2 and Year 6. Since the last inspection high standards have been maintained at the end of Year 2 and standards have improved by the end of Year 6. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Overall, achievement for all pupils is very good.
52. By the end of Year 2, standards of pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average. They listen well in lessons and speak confidently to each other and adults. Progress is very good and by the time pupils reach Year 6 they have developed their skills still further and many have an extensive vocabulary, which they use with understanding and maturity. Their speaking and listening skills make a significant contribution to their progress across the curriculum.
53. Pupils enjoy reading and standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The very good standards that older pupils attain in reading are evident from the confident way they discuss the wide range of books they read and identify features of the style of their favourite authors. The majority of pupils read fluently, accurately and with very good understanding from a wide range of texts. Younger pupils read very well with clear understanding and thoughtful expression. They use the sounds of letters and groups of letters to build words and make accurate attempts to spell words for themselves using this

knowledge. Pupils are knowledgeable about books, authors and illustrators. The infant library is not sufficiently supportive of reading as it is very small and many of the books are worn.

54. Pupils' attainment in writing is well above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils are presented with a wide range of opportunities to write for different purposes. All pupils respond very well to these tasks and their writing in Year 6 shows that they write very effectively using diverse styles. Their descriptive writing is particularly mature. The majority of pupils organise their work accurately into simple or complex paragraphs, which include correct punctuation and mainly accurate spelling. Younger pupils write poems, retell traditional tales and write instructions well. They spell accurately and increasingly add details that make their writing lively.
55. Teaching and learning are very good, overall, with a significant amount of excellent teaching for the youngest and also the older pupils. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when there were instances of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is strong because it is based on very good subject knowledge. Teachers use questions very well to direct pupils' thinking and to check understanding. In the best lessons, expectations are very high and there is a great enthusiasm for the subject that is effectively communicated to the pupils. Relationships are very good and the pupils' views respected. Teachers frequently ask pupils to discuss an answer with a literacy partner and make very good use of the final part of lessons when they discuss each others' work and talk about what they have learnt. This all results in pupils having very good attitudes to their work and very good behaviour. At times, there are weaknesses in teaching involving a lack of pace and challenge in Year 2. This reduces pupils' achievement. Planning is very effective and teachers use the Literacy Strategy framework confidently. Homework, particularly reading, has very well established routines, which makes a very positive contribution to higher standards.
56. Assessment is good, overall. Data from national tests is analysed well and termly assessments are made of pupils' writing. The data is used well to provide additional support that effectively accelerates the progress made by pupils who find learning more difficult and also challenges the more able. The setting of individual achievement targets is developing well and having a positive influence on pupils' progress. Most pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve, particularly in their writing. Pupils' work is marked regularly but not all teachers comment sufficiently on its quality in a way that helps pupils to improve or know how well they are doing.
57. The leadership and management of English are very good. There is a realistic judgement of the current situation and clear plans for further development. Lessons and pupils' work are looked at and improvements made where needed. These outcomes are included in the whole school improvement plan. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The development of language and literacy across the curriculum is very good. Literacy pervades many subjects and speaking and listening in particular is used effectively to help pupils learn. Pupils' reading skills enable them to cope with the demands in other subjects, such as reading and following written instructions. A wide range of opportunities is given to pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects such as history, religious education and science. Reading and comprehension skills are applied well when older pupils carry out research using books, CDs or the internet.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because teachers structure learning carefully.
- In most lessons, teachers use a variety of interesting activities that capture pupils' attention and stimulate them to work hard.
- Pupils do not always know how well they are doing or how to improve because marking is too general.
- Planning for the use of numeracy in other subjects is good and it is left to individual teachers to plan.

Commentary

59. Results in national tests have, on average, been very high at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 over the last few years. When compared to all schools nationally, standards in the 2004 national tests were very high at the end of Year 2. Standards dipped, as the school predicted, to above average at the end of Year 6 because there were more pupils in this cohort with special educational needs. Compared to similar schools, standards in the 2004 national tests were well above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Overall, all pupils achieve highly.
60. Standards seen at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are well above average. This has maintained the high standards since the last inspection. No difference was seen between boys and girls. Pupils in Year 2 have particular strengths in number. Their skills in carrying out an investigation and their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and data handling are not so good but are above average. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have developed these skills very well. Problem solving activities are very well planned so that pupils extend and apply a range of skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 were working out how many cars they could park on the school playground. This required them to measure the area of the playground and average car and to work out the logistics of safely parking and retrieving cars. By this and similar means, older pupils independently collect, present and interpret data in graphs and tables.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, overall. Some excellent teaching was seen towards the top of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be good. Lessons are very well structured and always start with short activities that promote mental calculation very well. Planning does not always provide enough extension for higher attaining pupils to achieve as much as they could in the introductory part of lessons in Year 2. In the best lessons, pupils of different abilities are challenged because they are given different calculations to do. All teachers plan carefully, so that a variety of interesting activities build learning in small steps in group work. As a result, in most lessons tasks are well matched to individual abilities and all pupils are effectively challenged. Pupils work hard because they enjoy mathematics. Teachers make very effective use of resources such as interactive whiteboards to engage pupils' attention and interest and pupils are given very good opportunities to explain their ideas during discussions. Lessons end with teachers using questions to check how well pupils have progressed with their learning. Homework is effectively used to consolidate learning.
62. While teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they do not always give enough written guidance on how pupils can improve. Although pupils are set targets, teachers do not use these consistently in the infants. As a result, younger pupils are not always aware of their targets, how well they are doing or how to improve.
63. Leadership and management are very good. Every year a detailed evaluation is made of provision in the subject. This includes careful analysis of how well pupils have done in end-of-year tests and looking at the work pupils have done during the term. The information is passed to the next class teacher to help plan suitable work the following year. This is very effective practice. Pupils' progress is checked at regular intervals throughout the year through looking at work and talking to pupils and staff. Lesson observations have taken place to check

the quality of teaching and learning directly. Improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. The use and development of mathematics in other subjects are good. Several teachers use numeracy very well. For example, older pupils have many opportunities to practise their graphical skills to gather, present and interpret data in science and geography. Younger pupils act out buying and selling in the role play areas. Measurement of length and capacity takes place in science and design and technology. There is no whole school planning strategy for using mathematics in all subjects. This planning aspect is left with individual teachers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' investigative work is of a very high standard.
- Teaching stimulates very positive responses and high achievement from all pupils.
- Standards fell in the 2004 national tests for Year 6.
- The use of assessment is developing well and has a positive influence on standards.

Commentary

65. Over the last three years the average result in the national tests at the end of Year 6 is well above that of all schools and above similar schools. The result in the 2004 test was significantly lower than previous years. It was average in comparison with all schools but below similar schools. This drop was forecast, reflecting the nature of the Year 6 in the 2004 tests. Significant additional support was given to pupils in English and mathematics but this was not available in science. Inspection evidence indicates that, currently, standards at the end of Year 6 are well above average. In 2004, teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were very high for pupils gaining the expected Level 2 and above average at the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence found standards for the current Year 2 to be well above average. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 and great improvement by the end of Year 6. Across the school, all pupils achieve very well.
66. The most impressive development since the last inspection is pupils' application of scientific investigation. This is where pupils raise a question and seek an answer through use of their knowledge, identify variables, carry out planned experimental procedures and gather and interpret results. There are several examples of excellent work done in this area in the infants and lower juniors. At the top end of the school, pupils show a very good understanding of the investigative process in their lessons, but this is not consistently reflected in their written work. Pupils do not consistently date the work in their books, which limits the evaluation of progress for those not familiar with the sequence of the curriculum.
67. Teaching is very good with excellent teaching observed for the oldest pupils. This is a remarkable improvement since the last inspection. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and make very good use of this to give lessons that stimulate pupils' interest very well. Pupils appreciate the relevance of their learning as lessons make use of everyday contexts such as considering material for the lens of sunglasses or keeping ice cream as a solid. Pupils are challenged to think hard through skilful questioning by the teacher. This leads to very good discussion with consistent emphasis on the use of correct scientific vocabulary. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and become engrossed in their lessons. Teachers stimulate pupils' imagination to better understand the topic they are studying. This

was shown very well where the oldest pupils considered how the particle size of different soils might affect how quickly water drains through. Very good use is made of information and communication technology, by both teachers and pupils, to explain ideas, gather and present data. The use of a specialist teacher for the infant classes has a very positive effect on standards.

68. Assessment is good, overall. There is regular testing of pupils' progress with manageable statistics produced. These outcomes are becoming better related to National Curriculum levels of attainment. Information gained from the national tests is extensively analysed. Both aspects are effectively used to improve the curriculum and raise standards. Pupils' work is regularly marked with several instances of written comment showing how well pupils have done and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' understanding of how they can improve is satisfactory. There are a few examples of pupils carrying out self-assessments, which is having a growing influence on standards.
69. Leadership and management are very good. There is systematic review of provision. Through structured analysis of pupils' written work, strengths and weaknesses are realistically identified and effective action taken to raise standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Across the school, pupils are very proficient in applying their computer skills to new situations.
- Teachers make very good use of the accommodation and learning resources.
- The computer suite is too cramped and the computers are showing their age.
- Information and communication technology is used well to promote learning in other subjects.

Commentary

70. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are well above expectations and achievement for all pupils is very good. This is a great improvement since the last inspection when standards were average and progress was satisfactory.
71. Pupils in Year 1 are very competent in finding relevant information using a search facility. They are very familiar with on-screen commands such as minimising work and most print their work without help. By the end of Year 2, pupils are familiar with giving instructions to a floor robot so that it moves in a particular way. They set up and close down their work with the minimum of help. Drop-down menus and techniques such as click and drag are used confidently.
72. Younger, junior pupils produce outstanding work when they create graphs using spreadsheets and find specific information from databases. They understand the function and production of binary trees to organise information. By the end of Year 6, pupils bring together many information and communication technology skills to make very good quality multi-media presentations. Pupils write instructions to direct the movement of an on-screen image to draw complex mathematical shapes. They use sensors to detect physical properties such as heat, light and sound. They are familiar with the use of email but this has not been used in recent times. Pupils are very knowledgeable in the use of databases and spreadsheets.
73. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers use precise learning objectives to focus pupils' learning throughout the lesson. The very limited space in the computer suite is managed well with pupils responding very sensibly. Failures in individual computers are overcome with the minimum impact on the pace of a lesson. Teachers make very skilful use of the interactive whiteboards in the classroom to promote very good involvement and achievement from pupils. Because all the computers and the white board are networked, all

the class can see the work done by different pupils. This is particularly beneficial for pupils to understand what they are to do in the computer suite and then evaluate their work at the end of a lesson. The start and end of lessons have considerable impact on pupils' speaking and listening skills. Specialist teaching has a positive effect on standards.

74. Assessment procedures are good and have a positive impact upon standards. Each unit of work has an assessment task which is evaluated by the teacher on a simple but very useful three point scale for the unit. This information is used to guide the content of future lessons. This system is gradually becoming linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment so that progress against national standards can be better judged. Pupils' understanding of how well they are doing is satisfactory, but improving as they become more skilled in using the developing self-assessment procedures.
75. Leadership and management are very good. Much has been done to improve the quality and quantity of learning resources. The very limited accommodation in the computer suite is used very well. There is a thorough evaluation of what is being taught and how well pupils are doing through regular reviews at the end of units of work. This has had a positive influence on continuing staff development in the subject. Ideas for the future development of the subject are carefully considered. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The use and development of information and communication technology in other subjects is good. Research using the internet and CD-ROMs is used in several subjects. Sensors are used to investigate heat insulation properties in science. Design programs are used to support art and design and technology. Whilst there is no formal planning to include information and communication technology in other subjects, the strategy of using the context of other subjects to assess standards in information and communication technology is having a positive influence.

HUMANITIES

77. There was not enough evidence available to make an overall judgement on provision or teaching in geography and history. No lessons were seen in either subject. Discussions took place and pupils' previous written work and curriculum planning were looked at.
78. There was insufficient evidence for overall judgements to be made about the quality of provision or teaching and learning in **geography**. Analysis of pupils' past work showed that in Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about their immediate locality by using simple maps to locate and mark geographical features. This is developed further in Years 3 to 6 as pupils consider ways in which their local area could be made safer. As pupils move through the school they develop their enquiry skills by interviewing local residents about what they would like to see changed. As part of this topic, older pupils sent some very well written letters to the Borough Council putting forward strong arguments for the nearby Bath Road to become pedestrianised. Pupils in Year 6 discover some of the facts about a village in Mexico and make comparisons with their own life. Although literacy is used well to support pupils learning, there is less evidence of pupils applying their numeracy skills to geography to help their mapping skills.
79. During the inspection, no **history** lessons were observed but discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work indicated that younger pupils have a developing sense of chronology and good understanding of why people in the past acted as they did. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the topics they have studied. They know, for example, details of the life of Queen Victoria and understand the reason for differences in the lifestyle of rich and poor people in Victorian times. Good use is made of the school's own history to find out about the past. The Victorian day held in school not only supported pupils' learning well but created great enjoyment. Further interest in the subject is promoted well by visits to museums. Pupils have positive views of the subject. Across the school, literacy and

information and communication technology are used well to provide good links with history. Subject leadership is secure and has promoted innovation in the subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are mature in their response to the subject.
- Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for older pupils to answer important questions.
- Pupils are encouraged to respect the rich diversity of religious beliefs.
- In some instances, pupils are expected to listen for too long.

Commentary

80. In Year 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their attainment is average, meeting the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement by Year 6 is good and standards exceed the expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection for Year 6. The wholly inclusive ethos of the school supports the teaching of religious education and makes a distinctive contribution to pupils' personal development.
81. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the events leading to the birth of Jesus and know that these are remembered at Christmas. They are familiar with the importance of special events such as Mothering Sunday and Harvest Festival and appreciate the work of special people in the past such as Gladys Aylward and Mother Teresa. Pupils in Year 2 have acquired a satisfactory knowledge of the key features of the religious traditions of Hinduism. In Years 4 to 6, pupils begin to understand why the Bible is a source of inspiration and learning to Christians. They gain a good knowledge of the main events of the Christian calendar. They understand the significance of parables. Pupils have a good understanding of the faiths of Judaism and Islam. Pupils are well aware of the importance of prayer, special books, festivals and rites of passage for believers of the Christian and other faiths.
82. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Year 2 and good in Years 4 to 6. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils learnt about the caring for animals in an interesting and meaningful way but the pace of the lesson was rather slow, which diminished the impact on learning. In Years 4 to 6, pupils make good progress because they are provided with good opportunities to look at and discuss many aspects of religious education in depth, often related to their daily lives. A strength is the sensitivity and respect that teachers and pupils show towards the feelings, beliefs and opinions of others. This was seen in the top end of the school with pupils re-enacting the ceremony of the Seder Service. The pupils not only had a mature grasp of the significance of the ceremony but the quality of their response was very positive and resulted in some very good, reflective writing.
83. The subject is well led and managed. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but are identified as an area for development because at present there are no common whole-school procedures to evaluate pupils' progress in the subject. Individual teachers use their own judgements and systems. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

84. Physical education and music are reported in depth. Art and design and design and technology were sampled. The arts and physical subjects make a positive contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

85. In the two **art and design** lessons observed teaching was satisfactory in Year 2 and good in Year 4. Standards in the Year 2 lesson were satisfactory but pupils' work on display shows overall standards in the infants to be good. Standards in the Year 4 lesson were very good. This very high level of work is confirmed in displays of junior pupils' work around the school and the wide range of other stimulating work produced. Parent helpers make a very positive contribution to younger pupils' skill development in clay work. Classroom assistants provide expert guidance for older pupils, with special educational need pupils benefiting particularly well. The use of sketchbooks is variable with recent significant improvements by older pupils. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory. There is strong leadership and management of the subject with a clear overview of provision and realistic plans for improvement. Links with a local specialist secondary school have resulted in two separate residencies by professional artists. These have positively influenced standards across the school and contributed well to pupils' social and cultural development.
86. No lessons were observed in **design and technology**. From looking at pupils' written work, completed models on display and photographs of their activities over the last year, standards appear good across the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were satisfactory across the school. The most significant improvements stem from an improved curriculum and the structure given to pupils' recorded work. All activities are now linked to a purposeful design brief. Pupils' written work takes full account of all aspects of the design process, particularly relating their evaluation to the design brief. This was not the case at the last inspection. Arrangements for assessment are satisfactory. Leadership is purposeful and management well-organised. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good subject expertise leads to good levels of challenge in lessons in Years 3 to 6.
- Because class groups are too big in the infants, pupils' opportunities to use instruments are limited.

Commentary

87. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average. They are above average at the end of Year 6. Achievement is good overall. More pupils than you would usually expect read music competently when performing their musical pieces in Years 3 to 6. Pupils learning to play a musical instrument achieve well.
88. Teaching and learning are good overall. Specialist teaching by the subject leader in Years 3 to 6 and visiting instrumental teachers ensures good subject expertise. As a result, older pupils are given good guidance on how to improve their skills and perfect their performances in lessons. Expectations are high. Most pupils read music by the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning in younger classes are satisfactory. Class groups in the infants are sometimes too big and so pupils do not all get a turn to use the small number of musical instruments made available in lessons to practise their skills. This leads to disappointed pupils. The classrooms are too small so pupils are squashed. This limits the opportunities for them to play a more active part in some lessons. As a result, the quality of performance is not always developed as well as it could despite the satisfactory teaching.
89. Leadership and management are good. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including visiting musicians, enrich the curriculum well. Assessment procedures are informal but the information is used effectively to make sure pupils use their musical expertise in lessons.

Provision for the subject is evaluated every year through discussion with pupils and staff and effective action taken where needed. Leadership has a good overview of achievement in the juniors because most lessons are taught by the subject leader. There is a satisfactory overview of provision in the infants and this is an area for development. The good standards and achievement have been maintained since the previous inspection because of continued specialist teaching in the juniors. Improvement has, therefore, been good.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' games skills are well above average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils in Year 6 achieve highly in dance because of the stimulating teaching.
- Teachers are confident teaching key skills.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very effective.
- The school hall is small and limits the opportunity for older pupils in gymnastics.

Commentary

90. Standards are well above average overall. Achievement is very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Records show that provision covers all statutory aspects of the curriculum, including swimming, and a residential visit provides the opportunity for outdoor and adventurous activities. The school reports that virtually all pupils swim at least 25 metres safely unaided using a recognised stroke by the end of Year 6 and many swim much more capably than this. This is very good achievement.
91. In Year 1, pupils move around the hall safely and with secure levels of agility. In the gymnastic lesson observed they successfully created a sequence of movements that introduced varying speed as well as level and demonstrated good control of their bodies. Year 2 pupils showed very well developed games skills in hitting, dribbling and stopping a ball with a hockey stick. Standards in dance in Year 6 are well above average. The ability of both boys and girls to represent emotions and feelings in free dance is very well developed. They also perform formal country dancing routines successfully.
92. Overall, teaching and learning are very good and promote very good achievement. Teachers maintain a brisk pace and ensure all pupils are involved. Expectations are very high and are supported by the very clear explanations and demonstrations of specific skills and techniques. As a result, pupils try really hard and improve through practice. Pupils are given very good opportunities to practice what they have been shown and teachers intervene well to help pupils refine and improve what they are doing. Lessons are well structured with proper warm up exercises, very good development of the main activity and careful cooling down exercises.
93. In a Year 6 dance lesson, pupils achieved highly as a result of the excellent teaching and learning. A very atmospheric piece of music set a quiet thoughtful mood that continued throughout the lesson. The pupils responded very well and by listening closely to the music they gradually chose to join in and moved freely, becoming a part of the music. This lesson made an extremely good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
94. Physical education is very well led and managed and pupils benefit from a very wide range of experiences, including the after school clubs that develop gymnastic, dance, cross-country and games' skills further. This is supplemented by activities organised through the Sports Co-ordinator Scheme which includes, tennis, golf, tag rugby and orienteering. Much hard work has been done to establish a sports programme which gained the Sport England *Activemark* award giving recognition to the school promoting the pupils' participation in sport. The subject

is well resourced and the school fields and playground areas support the teaching of the subject well. However, the school hall is very small for the number of pupils, especially for older pupils in gymnastics. Progress since the last inspection has been very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

95. No judgement was made about overall provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship because too little teaching was seen. The school's very strong ethos of equality and high expectations of conduct underpin pupils' personal, social and health education in all aspects of school life. A very well planned curriculum provides all pupils with a weekly lesson in which a range of topics, from personal health, behaviour and bullying to children's rights are considered. Through science, physical education and other specifically planned lessons pupils are taught the importance of and ways to keep themselves healthy and safe. This process is further enhanced by visits from specialist health workers who discuss health and other matters, including sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. The importance placed on good health is strengthened through Health Awareness weeks and at lunchtimes when pupils are provided with healthy options from which to choose. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 recently organised their own mini-election, planning and organising candidates and manifestos by themselves to encourage younger pupils to vote for them. This made a very good contribution to raising their awareness of their responsibilities as young citizens. Class councils contribute effectively to the work of the school council in shaping the life and work of the school. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
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	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
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	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	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	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).