

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S C OF E VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115065

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Konarzewski

Lead inspector: Mr Colin Henderson

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th June 2005

Inspection number: 267820

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: 209

School address: Clay Lane Grove
Colchester
Essex
Postcode: CO4 0HH

Telephone number: 01206 841288
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Appropriate authority: Governing body
Name of chair of Mrs W Pagden
governors:

Date of previous 22-Jun-1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St John's C of E VC Primary School is an average-sized primary school. It is over-subscribed with over 50 applications for 30 places. Most pupils come from the local area, a mixture of private and rented housing and a broad mix of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of white, United Kingdom ethnic backgrounds, with small numbers from other minority ethnic groups. Just over 1 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language. Eleven per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average. These are mainly moderate learning difficulties, with some behavioural, emotional and physical difficulties. Two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Attainment on entry is average overall, although with some variation from year to year. The school has begun to work towards the Advanced Healthy Schools Award and this is reflected in many aspects of the daily life of the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23742	Colin Henderson	Lead inspector	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Physical education; Personal, social and health education and citizenship; English as an additional language
9173	Sarah McDermott	Lay inspector	
26945	Sylvia Gatehouse	Team inspector	English; Art and design; Design and technology; Music; Special educational needs
32136	Lesley Brookes	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Religious education; Science; History; Geography.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of St John's C of E VC Primary School is **very good**.

It is a friendly, supportive and harmonious school community that has a strong Christian ethos that reflects its motto 'caring people, confident learners'. The school provides a very good quality of education with a varied and interesting curriculum. Pupils clearly enjoy school, are keen to learn and behave very well. They attain well above average standards. Their very good achievement owes much to the very good teaching and the very good leadership and management. The school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well and attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by a very strong staff team and a very effective governing body, are key factors in raising standards and the quality of education provided.
- The excellent relationships throughout the school reflect its caring ethos.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work excellently together to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work which they work hard to achieve.
- Procedures to track pupils' progress are not always reviewed rigorously enough.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. It has improved curriculum planning considerably. Pupils use the improved information and communication technology resources very well to attain above average standards. Standards of attainment have improved and the school has made very good improvement in the Foundation Stage and in the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	B	D	B
mathematics	B	B	B	A*
science	C	A	A	A*

Key: A - top 5 per cent nationally; 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**. Children's very good achievement in the Foundation Stage is built on very well in Years 1 to 6. This helps pupils to attain

standards that are well above the national average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The current Year 6 pupils are attaining higher standards than those attained in national tests, especially in English. The group has a higher proportion of more able pupils and the writing standards have risen as a result of the school's strong focus on improving this aspect. The very good standards and pupils' very good progress overall result from very good teaching, a very good curriculum and their strong desire to learn. Boys achieve equally as well as girls. More able pupils and gifted and talented pupils are challenged successfully throughout the school to extend their skills and knowledge and achieve high standards, especially in mathematics. All pupils benefit from excellent support from teaching assistants. This helps those with special educational needs to achieve very well. It also helps those who speak English as an additional language to make rapid progress in their learning. Many attain standards that are well above those expected for their age. Pupils' reading, writing and number skills are very good throughout the school and used very well to support learning in other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education are above expected levels by the end of Year 6.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall, especially in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 6, and help pupils to make very good progress in their learning. Assessment is good. The procedures are very good, although the information is not always used rigorously enough to review progress towards attainment targets. The curriculum is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6. It is enhanced very well by enrichment activities. The school takes very good care of its pupils and provides very good support and guidance. Links with parents are very good. They are good with the local community and local schools and enhance pupils' learning well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by a very effective governing body, provides a very clear and purposeful direction to the work of the school. There is a very good team approach with strong leadership in key subjects. Subject leadership is good overall as some subject co-ordinators are new to their roles and beginning to gain a clearer view of how to raise standards. Governance is very good. Governors are fully involved in working with the headteacher and her staff and make a significant contribution to shaping the direction of the school's work. They successfully ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school and are very happy with the education provided. Almost all parents agree that their children like school and make good

progress. They particularly value the good teaching; the leadership and management of the headteacher and governors; the range of activities; and the good use of homework. A small number were concerned about bullying and the information they receive from the school. Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views and found that the school provides good information overall. Pupils have equally positive views. They like school and value the friendly and caring approach of adults and other pupils. Few had any concerns about bullying and were confident that if they reported a worry, it would be quickly sorted out. Inspectors confirm that bullying is not a problem in the school and relationships are excellent.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Review rigorously pupils' progress towards their predicted attainment targets.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils attain **well above** average standards overall. Their achievement is **very good** throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' writing skills are developed very well throughout the school and attain well above average standards by the end of Year 6.
- More able and gifted mathematicians achieve very high standards.
- Very good teaching and a good range of well-planned and interesting learning activities help pupils to achieve well in many subjects.
- Children in the Reception class make very good progress towards their expected learning goals.

Commentary

1. Most children start at the school with average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding overall, although it varies from year to year with many children having below expected standards in personal, social and emotional development and speaking and listening skills. They settle quickly and happily into classroom routines and are enthusiastic learners. Very good teaching and detailed planning help all children to make very good progress in all six areas of learning. Almost all achieve the nationally expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Many exceed these goals and work in the early stages of the National Curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well and teachers build very successfully on pupils' early learning. They teach the skills of reading, writing and numeracy very well and successfully meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Teachers continue to make good use of pupils' enthusiastic approach to learning. The valuable contribution of parents and the very effective work of teaching assistants extend pupils' skills very well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (18.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	17.0 (16.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.4 (16.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Year 2 pupils attain standards that are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and above average in science. These reflect closely the results of last year's national tests and teacher assessments. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection and test results

show that attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved in the last three years from average to well above average levels. They are well above the average of similar schools in writing and above average in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils that attain above the nationally expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is high.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.9 (27.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.9 (27.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.1 (30.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to achieve very well and build successfully on their prior learning. By the end of Year 6, they attain standards that are well above the national average, mainly as a result of very good, challenging teaching and the excellent support given in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants. Test results over the last three years show that standards have been well above the national average in science and above average in English and mathematics overall. Compared with similar schools in 2004, they were in the top five per cent nationally in mathematics and science and above average in English. Boys attain equally as well as girls. The current Year 6 pupils are attaining higher standards than those attained in the 2004 national tests, particularly in English, as there is a higher proportion of more able pupils and the school has focused strongly on improving pupils' writing skills. An analysis of pupils' work shows that many pupils attain high standards in a wide range of different types of writing.

4. The proportion of pupils attaining standards that are above those expected for their age is well above the national average in each year group. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and set challenging work to meet and extend their skills and knowledge. Pupils respond very positively. They are keen to succeed and all achieve very well. Gifted mathematicians are encouraged to use their talents to achieve as well as they can, for example, when teachers enable them to work with older more able mathematicians. This provides excellent opportunities for them to extend their skills and attain very high standards. Those with special educational needs benefit from very good support and their achievement is very good. Many attain standards that match those expected for their age. The small numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress and many attain very high standards.

5. Standards in Year 6 are above nationally expected levels in information and communication technology, physical education and art and design. Standards in religious education are above those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' attainment in history and geography meets nationally expected levels. There was not enough evidence to make an overall judgement on standards in design and technology and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' **very good** spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their **very good** attitudes and behaviour, **excellent** relationships and willingness to take responsibility. The attendance and the punctuality of the pupils are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well because their behaviour is very good and they are highly motivated and eager to learn.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves help to promote a productive learning environment.
- The very good provision for pupils' personal development contributes very effectively to the school's caring and supportive ethos.
- The very good attendance plays an important part in the high achievement of the pupils.

Commentary

6. Both pupils and parents hold very positive views about their school. Parents are delighted that their children are happy and enjoy school. They feel that teachers' high expectations encourage their children to work hard and help them to develop into mature and confident individuals. They feel that the school is very successful in promoting its motto of 'caring people, confident learners'. Many pupils spoke confidently and articulately about the very good range of interesting activities and the caring adults, with specific mention of the approachability of the headteacher.
7. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Everyone treats each other with courtesy and respect and pupils respond very positively in a well-ordered environment. Harmony is a strong feature of the school and pupils have very few concerns about bullying. They feel confident that if any incidents do occur, they will be sorted out very quickly. Last year two pupils were excluded on fixed term exclusions as a last resort. This was entirely in their best interests and led to improved support from outside agencies. Parents were kept fully informed and it resulted in the pupils being integrated back into school with very few further difficulties. The school is very effective in promoting working together and encouraging pupils to take increasing independence and responsibility for their learning. This promotes pupils' confidence and self-esteem very well.
8. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well integrated into the daily life of the school and contributes very successfully to pupils' personal development and the school ethos. Provision for spiritual development is good. It is well promoted through assemblies and aspects of religious education, although teachers do not always focus on spiritual aspects in lessons.
9. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is excellent. Pupils show great respect for the values and beliefs of others. They know right from wrong

and, through their discussions in personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons, they gain a deep understanding of how their actions and opinions affect others. Pupils know the school's behaviour code and how they are expected to behave. They try hard to meet those expectations. Pupils accept responsibility willingly and undertake their tasks conscientiously. For example, members of the school council take great pride in organising and running their own meetings and feeding the results of their discussions back through their class councils. Year 6 pupils volunteer to help with extra-curricular clubs, for example, writing and information and communication technology clubs, and this helps the learning of younger pupils.

- The school promotes awareness of their own and other cultures well. This is clearly evident through displays around the school and through such activities as the current Year 6 pupils producing their version of 'Midsummer Night's Dream'. The school's good provision for art and design helps pupils to gain a good understanding of other artistic and cultural traditions, such as Japanese and Aboriginal art. The effective use of a multi-cultural theme week extended pupils' appreciation of different practices and traditions, for example, styles of cooking. The school makes effective use of good video and audio resources to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religious beliefs and musical traditions, although they are not always studied in enough detail.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions
White – British	191	16
White – Irish	1	
White – any other White background	3	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	
Mixed – White and Black African	1	
Mixed – White and Asian	1	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	5
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	
Black or Black British – African	3	
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	

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

Attendance

- The school has worked very effectively to improve attendance since the last inspection. The attendance levels now compare very favourably with similar schools. Pupils love coming to school because the staff are very welcoming and the learning activities on offer catch their imagination. The headteacher strongly discourages holidays in term time, other than with permission after the

national tests week, so consequently unnecessary disruption to learning has been reduced. Pupils arrive very punctually because morning routines are very well established and parents know that learning starts straight away. The very good attendance and punctuality show that pupils are getting good habits and are key factors in their high achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.2	School data:	0.3
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 school provides a **very good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **very good**. Assessment is **good**. The curriculum is **very good**, enriched by a **very good** range of extra-curricular activities. The provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is **very good**. Links with parents are **very good**. Those with the local community and other schools are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good**. Assessment is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching contributes very well to pupils' achievement.
- Teachers' excellent relationships with their pupils and high expectations of their work and behaviour mean that pupils strive hard to achieve.
- The excellent partnership with teaching assistants ensures that all pupils are included fully and are given very good support and guidance in their learning.
- Detailed planning and a very good range of teaching methods encourage pupils to have very good, enthusiastic attitudes to learning.
- There are inconsistencies in teachers' marking and the presentation of pupils' work in some classes where pupils are taught by more than one teacher during the week.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(3%)	13 (37%)	17 (49%)	4 (11%)	0 (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 where 30 or more lessons are seen.

12. Teaching and learning are very good across the school. They were good, often very good and occasionally excellent in lessons. There were examples of good teaching in every year group, with consistently very good teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 6. An analysis of pupils' work since the start of the year shows that their achievement is very good overall. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is a significant factor in raising standards to well above average levels and is valued by parents and pupils.
13. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils. They have high expectations of work and behaviour and pupils are keen to achieve them. Teachers plan in very good detail to provide a very good range of learning activities that match the different needs within each class. They use a very good range of interesting methods, for example, when Year 3 pupils use onomatopoeia to create lively writing in their poetry. Teachers maintain a brisk and challenging pace to lessons, with most regularly reminding pupils how long they have left and what they expect them to have achieved in that time. As a result, pupils stay focused on their work and are very keen to use the time to achieve as much as they can. Teachers use questions very well to clarify and extend pupils' thinking. Many use follow-up questions successfully, for example, 'Why?' and 'How?' to get pupils to use their knowledge and provide a more detailed answer.
14. The partnership between teachers and teaching assistants is outstanding and is very influential in helping all pupils to achieve well. Staff know what they are trying to achieve and share it with pupils to give a clear focus to their learning. Many teaching assistants are used very well to support and guide particular groups of pupils, for example, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as additional language. Teaching assistants also support pupils of average attainment and more able pupils. This enables every pupil to benefit from very good support and guidance in lessons and their achievements clearly reflect this. Where teachers plan very challenging work for more able pupils, for example, in mathematics, pupils are confident in turning to either the teacher or the teaching assistant if they need further guidance or another extension task. Teaching assistants assess pupils' progress regularly in lessons by making notes and sharing them with the class teacher. These are used well to help the teacher to plan how to extend or consolidate pupils' learning. For example, a teaching assistant noted that most pupils in a particular mathematics group had not grasped the previous lesson's objective securely. The teacher used these notes to bring the group together at the start of the next lesson to review the concept carefully before moving the group on to their next learning task. This helped pupils to build very successfully on their prior learning and achieve very well.
15. Teachers use homework very successfully to support pupils' learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. Most mark pupils' work well, giving clear points for improvement. Some require pupils to put their initials next to the comments to inform the teacher that they have noted and acted upon them. Some make constructive comments linked to pupils' improvement targets in

literacy and numeracy, although this is not consistent in each class. There is some inconsistency in teachers' marking and their expectation of how pupils present their work in classes taught by two different teachers during the school week, for example, in Year 4. This does not ensure that these pupils always achieve as well as they could.

16. The school has improved its assessment procedures considerably since the last inspection and has established very good procedures for assessing pupils' work, especially in English, mathematics and science. The results of each pupil's achievements are recorded for each pupil and their future likely attainment is predicted as they move from year to year. Teachers use tests and other assessments to check on pupils' progress during the year and to identify if any additional support needs to be given. They do not use them to check that the end-of-year predicted target is still suitable for each pupil. The school has introduced pupil improvement targets in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use the literacy targets very well to show pupils clearly what they have to improve. This results in improved work. Numeracy targets are not used so effectively and the school is planning to review and change the way in which it uses pupils' targets in numeracy.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. Opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. Accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Cross-curricular links are well developed, particularly in literacy and information and communication technology.
- A very good range of visits and visitors enhances and enriches the curriculum.
- There is a wealth and variety of clubs available.
- Outdoor accommodation and the information and communication technology suite have a positive impact on the curriculum.

Commentary

17. The school keeps its curriculum under constant and effective review and implements changes successfully. Curriculum planning and schemes of work have been systematically developed to ensure full access to a broad range of activities for all pupils. Each subject is given enough teaching time, and cross-curricular links between subjects are well developed. Subject co-ordinators monitor teachers' planning and scrutinise pupils' work. Teachers review and adjust the curriculum effectively, having regard for any differences between pupils of different gender and capability. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and extends their curriculum successfully. The school's values of inclusion and equality of opportunity are consistently reflected in what the pupils do.
18. The school enriches pupils' learning with a very good variety of activities outside lesson times. The range of visits and visitors, together with educational visits, gives pupils extra chances to learn. The depth and range of clubs are of a very good standard, and younger pupils are catered for as well. Educational visits are regularly planned and enhance the quality of learning. Visitors are invited to talk with pupils and share their knowledge and expertise. Visits to local places of interest, such as the Roman castle and a Tudor house, develop skills in geography, history and science. The school holds regular weeks dedicated to specific areas of the curriculum, such as arts and recently held a 'Pirates' Week' with a focus on mathematics.
19. The quality of staffing is very good. The number of experienced teaching assistants provides excellent extra support. Accommodation is good overall and very good in the Reception class. The new library is well stocked and attractive. It is located effectively near the ICT suite to provide good research opportunities, although the space limits the number of pupils that can use it at any one time. Since the last inspection a dedicated outdoor area for the youngest pupils has been developed which enriches their curriculum. The outdoor accommodation is spacious and attractive and there are plenty of seats and quiet areas to attract pupils. Subject resources are generally good and support the curriculum well. They have been extended and improved since the last inspection and of significant improvement is the provision for information and communication technology. Each classroom has its own small number of computers and printers, as well as an interactive white board and the use of the new information and communication technology suite is well organised and timetabled.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils are **very good**. The school supports and guides the pupils **very well**. The involvement of pupils by seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent relationships mean that all pupils have an adult to confide in should they feel sad or worried.
- The practical and medical care of the pupils is a very high priority.
- Pupils have a very strong voice in improving the school because the school is very interested in their ideas and suggestions.
- Guidance on how pupils improve their work is not consistently developed.

Commentary

20. The school continues to provide very good care, support and guidance to pupils. Pupils are very safe and secure whilst in the school's care. Health and safety systems are very well established and an important factor in the school's plans. Potential risks are swiftly addressed because the site is regularly and methodically assessed for hazards. Child protection procedures are very good. The headteacher has been particularly conscientious in ensuring all staff are up to date with the recommended training. Pupils with specific medical needs are very effectively cared for because the school agrees special protocols with the parents and then makes sure all relevant staff know what to do in a crisis. The welfare staff are careful to note when they give medicine but it is not as easy as it should be to recall the dosage in an emergency because the records are not in a secure bound book. Otherwise there are very good first aid systems bolstered by the high number of staff with first aid qualifications.
21. Pupils feel especially at ease in school because teachers, support staff and pupils get on so well together. All pupils know they have someone to turn to if they are sad or upset. Staff are very sensitive and practical in their support of families who have domestic and social problems, so ensuring the pupils' learning continues as smoothly as possible. New children are introduced well to school life. A few parents feel the settling in period is very short, but it is effective in encouraging the Reception children to be independent as soon as possible. Pupils are prepared very well for life beyond school because personal, social and health education is very well organised and a regular part of the school week. The management of the rare occurrences of inappropriate behaviour is very effective because pupils are encouraged to think sensibly about what they have done so it does not happen again. At the end of each year teachers report very perceptively and knowledgeably to parents on their children's personal development. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is good. It is particularly effective in English, but in mathematics and other subjects teachers are not consistent in ensuring that pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their learning. The school is planning to improve these procedures.
22. The headteacher and her staff are very good at including pupils' ideas in how the school is run. Questionnaires to pupils are a regular feature, either to the whole school or to a selected cross section. Pupils are told the outcome and know that their views matter. They have been very well involved in promoting healthy eating and having a say in what is served at lunchtimes. The school council is run along clear democratic lines, with the pupils taking charge of the agenda and minutes. Particularly impressive are the very well organised slots councillors have to consult their classmates. The headteacher can move the school forward with confidence because she knows that the pupils are right behind her.
23. Assessment procedures to guide pupils in their learning are good overall. Their use in English is very good as targets are frequently set, reviewed and renewed for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to conduct their own evaluations of how they feel they are progressing in reaching their targets. However, this very good

strategy has yet to be developed consistently in mathematics, and assessment procedures to guide pupils to achieve better in other subjects are similarly less rigorous at present.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very appreciative of the school and provide very valuable practical and financial support.
- The headteacher goes out of her way to answer parental queries or remedy concerns.
- The school has very effective links with other schools in the consortium to manage finance, catering and building issues.
- Annual reports are not sufficiently consistent in giving a clear message to parents on how their child has progressed over the year in each subject.
- The school has very beneficial links with the parish church.

Commentary

24. Parents are very supportive of all the school does for their children. Justifiably parents feel that the school looks after both the personal and the academic progress of their children very well. Parents receive excellent information on school events and celebrations in the colourful and frequent newsletters. They give their children very good support in their learning because not only is homework clear and regular, but also they are kept well up to date on what is being taught in the classroom. Teachers make sure parents are well informed orally on how their children are progressing either via the formal parent teacher meetings or informal chats at the end of the day. The annual reports are useful in giving the levels at which the pupil is working, but they do not all give a clear message on progress in each subject since the last report.
25. The very active Fund Raising Association is a great asset to the school. Substantial sums are raised each year towards necessary resources, such as play and computer equipment. Together the staff and parents have decided to fund and maintain the Secret Garden, which provides an attractive, quiet and educational space for the pupils. The headteacher greatly values not only the practical input of the parents, but also their ideas and views. Regular surveys of the parents are analysed and the results threaded into the school development plan. The parents are clear why some ideas, such as the Walking Bus, have been taken on board and why other suggestions, although carefully considered, are not included in current plans. On a personal level the headteacher has an excellent rapport with parents. She ensures she is always available to answer queries at the beginning of the day and is extremely conscientious in helping parents to sort out problems relating to their children. Just as at the time of the last inspection, the close affinity between school and parents contributes very importantly to the pupils' very good achievement.

26. Links with the parish church are very well established to promote the pupils' personal development. Not only do pupils visit the church for religious education and for special services, but they also use its professional stage for end of term productions. Year 6 pupils give back to the church community by helping with the elderly residents' lunch club. Links with the wider local community are satisfactory. There is no particular centre to the local community, but pupils do walk to the nearby country park and the school lets out its facilities to local clubs.
27. The school works very effectively with the local consortium of schools to share expertise for financial, building and catering management. This link ensures that the school receives readily accessible professional advice and very good value for money. Pupil links with other schools are satisfactory overall, although they are good with consortium schools in sharing training opportunities and good practice. Competitive sports mostly centre on district events, but beyond this there are limited opportunities to play matches or share in music. There are satisfactory contacts with local secondary schools. Co-ordinators liaise well for professional development in mathematics and information and communication technology. However there is more scope for work to be continued from the end of primary into secondary to ensure learning is as smooth and uninterrupted as possible.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The headteacher provides **excellent** leadership. The leadership of other key staff is **good** overall. The governance of the school and the overall effectiveness of management are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear educational vision and gives strong leadership to the work of the school.
- Governors work in a very good, influential partnership with the headteacher and her staff to evaluate how well the school is doing and focus on improvement.
- The school has a strong team approach and staff work hard to ensure that every pupil is included fully in the school's programme.
- The procedures to track pupils' progress towards their end-of-year targets are not reviewed rigorously enough during the year.
- Procedures to manage the school funds and help achieve improvement priorities are very good.

Commentary

28. The overall quality of leadership and management has been maintained at the very good level reported at the last inspection. The leadership of the school by the headteacher has improved. It is now excellent and valued highly by parents and pupils. It is a key factor in helping the school to improve the quality of

education it provides and to raise standards. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. This has been shared successfully with all members of the school community and has created a very strong team approach. The vision has been particularly successful in establishing a vibrant and caring Christian ethos that includes fully pupils of different abilities and from different ethnic and social backgrounds. Teaching and support staff work excellently together to support and meet the needs of all pupils. There is a very good climate of self-improvement and all staff are keen to build their skills and expertise. The school's motto is reflected clearly in all aspects of its daily life. The involvement of individual governors in evaluating the school's effectiveness on each of its aims illustrates the commitment of the team to provide and maintain a high quality education.

29. The very good management results in very good procedures to evaluate the school's performance, target key areas for development and monitor closely the resulting improvement. This is shown clearly by the very effective focus on pupils' writing skills that has led to considerable improvement. The headteacher, supported very well by her deputy and literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, monitors teaching rigorously. They have identified and followed-up on areas for improvement. As a result, teaching is of a very good standard. The very good leadership in key areas such as English, mathematics, the Foundation Stage and special educational needs has maintained a strong focus on improvement. The co-ordinators work closely with the headteacher to analyse assessment information and identify any weaknesses in pupils' learning. This analysis is used well to inform teaching and to improve these weaknesses. It is not always used to check closely on pupils' progress towards the end-of-year targets or to amend the targets if they are no longer sufficiently challenging. The leadership of other subjects is good overall as some teachers are new to their subject responsibilities. They are beginning to gain a clearer understanding of the standards in their subjects and of the strengths and areas for development. As the skills and knowledge of these co-ordinators continue to improve, the school is set up very well to raise standards further.
30. The governing body is excellent in supporting the school, evaluating the quality of education it provides and working closely with the headteacher and her staff to shape the direction of the school's work and target improvement. Governors are given a very effective lead by an influential chair of governors and have a very good understanding of what the school is trying to achieve. They know the school's strengths and areas for development through visits to lessons; meetings with subject co-ordinators; an analysis of test results; detailed reports from the headteacher and parental questionnaires. Many governors attend staff training and the governing body benefits from regular training from the local education authority's support service. The committee structure is very effective and enables the governors to use their collective expertise well for the benefit of the school. The governing body very successfully ensures that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities.
31. The financial planning and management of the budget are very good. The school is in a consortium of local schools that buys in financial expertise. This service provides very good support for the school's finance officer and very

good quality financial information to the headteacher and governors. This helps them to link funds very successfully to the key priorities in the detailed, strategic development plan and closely monitor spending levels and their impact on standards. Governors make very good use of the principles of best value, for example, in the current planning for improved information and communication technology resources and facilities. Funds are usually used fully, although there is a current small surplus linked to improvement priorities.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	543 547	Balance from previous year	3 575
Total expenditure	536 584	Balance carried forward to the next	10 538
Expenditure per pupil	2 507		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

32. The pupils in the Reception class receive a very good start to their education and their achievement is very good. Teaching is very good overall and very good planning and good assessment systems contribute to the effectiveness of these early years of education. Detailed planning meets the needs of pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs.
33. The Early Years area is managed very successfully by an experienced co-ordinator. The two class teachers job-share, but the strength of the organisation, management and planning ensures a consistent approach in teaching the curriculum. Most children are of average ability when they start school, although they are below average in their personal and social and speech and language skills. By the time they move into Year 1, virtually all the pupils will have achieved the nationally expected levels in all six areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum, or be very close to doing so. Many will already be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum and they are prepared well for the progression.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are developing their levels of personal independence well.
- They behave very well for their age.
- Their personal and social skills are developing very successfully.

Commentary

34. Many of the children have below average personal and social skills when they start school. The strong focus on developing these skills means that they achieve very well. Most children quickly develop their confidence, performing with aplomb and flair to the whole school, parents and relatives in their class assembly. They work and play co-operatively and a strong rapport has developed between them, their class teachers and the classroom assistants. The high quality of the general ethos and environment, together with effective teamwork and supportive relationships, contribute to the strength of this area of development. Children behave very well and are encouraged to be considerate of others. Teachers capture children's interest effectively, and promote concentration, by the good use of resources and the provision of a very good curriculum and very well-organised environment. These qualities, together with suitably planned activities, ensure that children's involvement is fostered and maintained to a high standard. High expectations of the children's attitudes and behaviour are supported by very good teaching, and children's learning reflects the teaching standards. All receive plenty of praise and encouragement. This is effective in building up their self-esteem and confidence. They cope well with their personal needs such as changing for physical education, needing little adult help. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children are likely to have exceeded the expectations for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's emergent writing is promoted and fostered effectively.
 - Their speaking and listening skills are developed and extended very well.
 - Early reading skills are successfully encouraged.
35. Teaching and learning in the Reception class are very good. When they start school, many children have speaking and listening skills that are below average, but very good opportunities are provided for them to extend their speaking skills through all areas of learning. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing books, and predict or suggest how a story will develop. Reading skills are developing well and a high proportion of the children read simple texts. All have reading books and the most able read with fluency and understanding. The classroom has a good range of picture books, including non-fiction, which are accessible to the children. Most are writing phrases and sentences. More able children's writing skills are well-developed, and they write at least two or more sentences unaided. Good use is made of classroom computers to support children's early reading and writing skills. Children achieve very well and most are on track to attain the nationally expected levels for their age. The very good standard of teaching, with its great emphasis on literacy skills, means that it is likely that half the class will be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum as they progress to Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's mathematical vocabulary is developing very well.
 - They count and calculate with confidence.
 - Their emerging skills are used very effectively across a wide range of curriculum areas.
36. Due to very good teaching, most children make very good progress in their early understanding of number, shape and measure. They handle simple calculations with numbers to five and ten, and the more confident work expertly with higher numbers. The most able group carry out extended verbal problems, which include addition and subtraction, in their heads, keeping tally counts to check their work. Staff use games and activities effectively to support number work in a wide range of learning areas and children are enthusiastic about their lessons. They use a good range of resources, including classroom computers and the interactive white board, to support children's learning very successfully. Their use of mathematical vocabulary is developing well and they demonstrate very good understanding of how to sort objects, for example, toy vehicles by the ways in which they move. Children's achievement is very good and many are likely to be working within the National Curriculum levels by the end of their time in Reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A stimulating environment introduces children to the wonders of the world.
 - They have very good opportunities to explore and learn about their world in the classroom, outdoors and further afield.
 - They have good understanding of simple scientific concepts and apply them successfully.
37. Children's achievement is very good in this area of learning because they have plenty of opportunities to experience a wide and stimulating range of activities. Teaching and learning are consistently very good. Children are very interested in all activities presented to them and make very good gains in their learning. They quickly learn to use programmable robots, computers and the classroom interactive white board, and are skilled in their use of digital cameras and other technological equipment. Children learn about their world by observing, handling and discussing a variety of objects. They have very good opportunities to carry out experiments, such as testing fabrics to see which absorbs the most water. Adults use questioning very well to extend the children's vocabulary and use of language, to explain their thoughts and ideas, and to encourage children to think about their world. Activities are planned well to support and extend learning through the topic in all curriculum areas and children are likely to exceed the expected levels in this area by the end of their year in Reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good opportunities to develop their physical skills on a range of large exercise equipment.
 - They are developing their expertise successfully in the use of pencils, scissors and other small tools.
38. Children achieve very well in this area of learning. They have almost continuous access to a fenced outdoor area adjacent to their classroom. Its frequent use is planned very well and it is used effectively for a range of outdoor activities that extends children's physical skills very well. Sessions with a play parachute are a very popular activity and also promote co-operative skills. Well planned physical education sessions are used to develop children's skills and co-ordination and good use is made of the time-tabled sessions in the school hall to include gymnastics, dance and drama. Teaching and learning in this curriculum area are very good and children are likely to exceed the nationally expected goals. Fine motor movements are developed effectively through the use of pencils, brushes, scissors and sewing activities. Children

have very good opportunities to manipulate a range of small equipment and construction apparatus with dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Easy access to a very wide range of resources for creative work promotes freedom, independence and creativity.
 - Their musical ability is fostered and developed very well.
 - Children have plenty of opportunities for imaginative play
39. Children's achievement is very good as they have a very good range of opportunities to develop their creativity. Planning of this area is carefully thought out, giving children a broad range of experiences. Very good teaching is matched by children's learning, and the children use a wide variety of tools and materials to create all sorts of different images. Many examples of children's work are on display and show that they have used many different techniques and media. They learn to sing a number of songs and rhymes, and are given good opportunities to listen to music as well as playing percussion instruments and creating their own songs. Their class assembly featured some very tuneful singing as well as high quality acting and dancing. They have many very good opportunities to use their imagination through role-play and a lively session in the 'underwater area' was observed.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management.
- All staff work closely together with the shared goal of improving standards.
- Teachers have high expectations and secure knowledge of the subject.
- Teachers and support staff work together very well to support pupils.

Commentary

40. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above the national average. Pupils make very good progress and all achieve very well throughout the school. The standards reflect the well above average test results in reading and writing for Year 2 pupils over the last two years, compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Standards are better than the above average test results overall for Year 6 pupils over the last few years. This is due mainly to the current year group having a higher proportion of more able pupils and the teachers having a strong focus on improving pupils' writing. Boys and girls achieve equally well. The achievement

of many of the pupils who speak English as an additional language is very good and they attain well above average standards.

41. The school identified the particular need to improve pupils' writing skills in a broader range of styles, following the Year 6 tests in 2004. The results showed that pupils achieved below average standards compared with all schools, although well above the average of similar schools. Factors affecting those results were analysed and swift remedial action taken to improve writing skills. All teachers maintained a strong focus on improving this aspect of pupils' English skills and standards have risen.
42. Pupils' learning is promoted very well throughout the school and most reach very good standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Guided reading times ensure that all pupils have regular times with their teacher in sharing and enjoying books. Frequent brief opportunities in lessons enable them to put their speaking and listening skills to good use when required, for instance when considering points to support an argument in a debate. Pupils extend their skills very successfully in a wide range of different types of writing based on a curriculum that is both rich and exciting. Teachers generate stimulating and interesting activities such as designing pamphlets to attract visitors to a farm or constructing arguments using persuasive language. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in all sorts of writing, using interesting vocabulary, compound sentences and devices like alliteration to enliven their work. They are given many very good opportunities to study the styles of authors such as Shakespeare, and visits out of school serve very well to deepen their understanding of poetry. These enriching activities provide them with the confidence to write their own excellent play script for the whole school end of year production, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
43. The overall quality of teaching is very good, strongly featuring secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, very high expectations and considerable expertise in the management of information and communication technology that enlivens lessons and captures pupils' attention. All teachers and support staff make very good use of very good assessment procedures. Teachers' marking is consistently good. They make the objectives of their lessons explicit and bring lessons to a satisfying close with very good evaluations. Pupils are acutely aware of what their targets are and what they need to do to reach them. Lessons have a strong sense of purpose and there is an air of determination to succeed. Consequently, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, set about their tasks enthusiastically. There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs provided by a well-briefed and experienced team of teaching assistants. The close liaison between teachers and assistants is a particular strength.
44. The co-ordinator's very good leadership and management have resulted in very good improvement since the last inspection. Her teaching is excellent. Her passionate knowledge of language and literature enables her to increase pupils' understanding with confidence and certainty. The school's very good monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, together with astute target

setting and very good assessment procedures, are major factors in raising the standards in writing across the school. The school has improved its fiction resources and provides very good class libraries to promote reading skills. It has improved its non-fiction library, although the use of it is limited to group rather than whole-class research, because of its size.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Pupils make very good use of their literacy skills in many other subjects and in many ways. For example, they make notes and write labels in design and technology and in science. In religious education, history and geography, they use their skills very well in narrative writing. They combine their literacy skills with information and communication technology when writing poetry, descriptions, stories and prayers. A particular strength is the after-school club, when Year 6 pupils work alongside younger pupils using information and communication technology to compose delightful poems using correct punctuation and exciting vocabulary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good teaching extends pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding very effectively.
- Pupils recall number facts quickly, and use their knowledge very well to solve challenging problems.
- Pupils are very positive in their attitudes to the subject and enjoy their work.
- Very good subject leadership provides a strong focus on raising and maintaining high standards.
- Pupils are not always sufficiently aware of how to improve their work.

Commentary

46. All pupils achieve very well in mathematics, mostly as a result of the very good teaching and pupils' enthusiastic attitude to the subject. Many said that mathematics was one of their favourite subjects and this was very evident in many of the lessons seen. Pupils attain standards in Year 2 and Year 6 that are well above average. These reflect the results of the 2004 national tests for Year 2 pupils. Standards are higher than the above average results attained by Year 6 pupils in 2004, as the current group of Year 6 pupils contains a higher proportion of more able pupils. An analysis of their work shows that over half of them are attaining Level 5, which is above the level expected nationally for their age. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection, especially in raising standards at Year 2 and in the provision for higher attaining and gifted and talented mathematicians. For example, a gifted Year 2 pupil works with higher attaining Year 3 pupils and attains well above nationally expected standards. Boys and girls attain equally very well and many of the pupils who speak English as an additional language attain high standards.

Achievement is consistently very good with a high proportion of pupils in each year attaining standards that are well above expected levels for their age.

47. The very good teaching is a key factor in promoting pupils' very good achievement. The teaching of mental mathematical skills is particularly effective. Teachers use very good methods, for example, through the interactive whiteboard and competitive partner and group activities. These create a stimulating learning atmosphere, with a brisk lesson pace, in which pupils improve their mental recall skills very well by competing against the clock or against each other to successfully recall their multiplication tables. Pupils show increasing confidence throughout the school and their speed of number recall helps them to use different number operations quickly and accurately to solve challenging problems. Teachers plan work in detail to provide a broad range of activities that meets the full range of different learning abilities. Most teachers have very high expectations of pupils in the standard of work, its presentation and the amount achieved and pupils work very hard to achieve them.
48. Teachers work in an excellent partnership with teaching assistants to support and guide different groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and more able pupils. Pupils are challenged consistently either through very good questioning or extension activities to apply their skills and knowledge. The very effective support by class teachers and support staff helps pupils to grasp difficult concepts with increasing confidence, for example, when most Year 6 pupils simplify algebraic expressions successfully. Teachers make very good use of homework to reinforce class work and to use their mathematical skills to solve challenging problems. Teachers mark pupils' work well, with some examples of very good practice where teachers have clearly informed pupils what they need to improve. Some teachers require pupils to respond to this advice, for example, by initialling the comment, although this is not consistently developed, particularly in some classes where teachers share the teaching of mathematics. This does not ensure that pupils know how to improve their work. Teachers identify targets to help pupils improve their number skills and knowledge. These are displayed well in pupils' books and are dated when achieved. The targets are not consistently effective in each class as some teachers do not refer to them sufficiently when marking pupils' work. As a result, pupils are not always clear how their particular targets will improve their work.
49. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator analyses test results in detail to inform teachers on what they need to focus in their teaching and this contributes very well to improved test results. She uses mid-year assessments successfully to identify any pupils who are not making enough progress towards their end-of-year predicted level of attainment and need additional support. The information is not used to change the target, either up or down, if it is no longer realistic or challenging enough. The co-ordinator observes lessons and identifies points for improvement. This results in better teaching. The detailed action plan gives a strong focus to subject improvement and shows that the co-ordinator plans to work with another local school to improve the use of pupils' targets.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Teachers require pupils to apply and extend their mathematical skills in a very good range of subjects. Their detailed planning links subjects together very successfully. There were many examples, both in the lessons observed and in pupils' work, to show that standards in mathematics are supported well by pupils using their knowledge and skills frequently in science, design and technology and information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils in Year 6 achieve standards well above those expected for pupils of their age.
- Teaching and learning are very good and, as a result, pupils achieve very well.
- The focus on practical work has a positive impact on the standards achieved.
- The use made of assessment procedures is not as good as the procedures themselves.

Commentary

51. Pupils' standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. All pupils achieve very well throughout the school. These standards are a very good improvement on those found at the last inspection. This is because pupils develop a good understanding of scientific enquiry through a consistent 'hands-on' approach. In the science lessons seen, pupils were involved in exploration, experiments and challenges about 'fair tests', which encouraged their thinking and evaluation skills. In most classes, pupils are making effective use of information and communication technology to support their science work by producing good quality work, such as recording their data and using it to create charts and graphs.
52. All groups of pupils, regardless of background, ability or gender, achieve so well because the teaching is very good overall. Teachers prepare resources carefully, use teaching assistants (who are equally competent and enthusiastic) effectively and constantly challenge their pupils to draw scientific conclusions. Pupils frequently work in small groups and as their interest is constantly sustained by the challenging activities, their behaviour and personal development are often very good. In a very good lesson in Year 3, the competitive element of sections of the lesson interested and engaged pupils most effectively. Work is clearly presented and it is evident that pupils receive clear guidance on the correct presentation of predictions, experiments and conclusions. The contribution of science to the development of pupils' literacy skills is good.
53. The school has in recent years developed a strong culture for the successful teaching of science. This has worked well because most teachers have good

subject knowledge, are confident in teaching the subject and 'tap in' well to pupils' natural curiosity. There are very good procedures in place for assessing pupils' progress but the information gained from the procedures is not yet developed as well as it might be to inform planning and focus on developments in the subject. A new subject leader has recently been appointed to lead and manage science, which she does satisfactorily. She has had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in science, although she has scrutinised the work in pupils' books to evaluate standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good detailed planning and the good use of the ICT suite ensure that pupils enjoy their learning and develop their skills and knowledge effectively in all required aspects.
- Pupils are enthusiastic to learn and use their ICT skills well to promote achievement in many subjects, especially literacy.
- Opportunities to extend ICT skills in classrooms are restricted by limited resources.
- Good teaching, supported well by teaching assistants and an ICT technician, develops pupils' skills and knowledge well in all required aspects.

Commentary

54. Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection when they were below nationally expected levels. They are now above expected standards at Year 6 and in line with expectations at Year 2. Pupils' achievement is good overall as a result of increased teachers' confidence and competence, improvements in resources and the efficient use of the ICT suite.
55. The school's ICT suite is used effectively to provide pupils with a good range of opportunities to develop their skills. The efficient ICT technician helps teachers to get the lesson running smoothly by ensuring that the correct software is ready at the start. This allows classes to follow on quickly from the previous lesson and maximises the use of the resources. Teachers make good use of national subject guidance to plan carefully to develop pupils' skills and knowledge. They are particularly effective in linking learning in ICT to support standards in other subjects. They teach basic ICT skills well and use suitable software to make the activities interesting and challenging. For example, Year 2 pupils use their ICT skills well to control the movements of a programmable robot to find the 'treasure' during the 'Pirates' theme week.
56. Discussions with pupils show that they value and enjoy the improving range of resources. They talk enthusiastically about using computers, digital cameras and the interactive whiteboards. Year 6 pupils use their good literacy and ICT skills to link photographic images, sound and text to produce high quality multi-

media presentations. Pupils are confident in their use of Internet search engines to locate information for their topic work, for example, on Ancient Greeks.

57. Teaching and learning are good overall. They are often very good in Years 3 to 6 and extend pupils' skills and knowledge very successfully. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have improved since the last inspection as a result of good training. They have high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes. They plan their work very carefully to meet pupils' different learning needs and to include all aspects of the subject. Teaching assistants contribute very effectively by supporting and guiding individual pupils, for example, those with special educational needs, to ensure that they achieve well. The constant high quality support and the consistent use of the question 'Why?' helps pupils to continually seek to improve the standard of their work. Teachers plan good extension activities for higher attaining pupils that require them to use their skills and knowledge to solve challenging problems. This results in above expected levels of attainment, for example, in Years 3 and 6. Teachers make regular assessments on how well pupils are doing. This information is passed on to the next class teacher to inform teaching and achieve consistent progress in pupils' learning.
58. The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory overall, although improving rapidly. The new subject co-ordinator has only recently taken on the responsibility. She has worked closely with the headteacher and the governing body to draw up and implement a detailed subject improvement plan. This will result in greatly improved resources and facilities for the start of the new school year. A renovated and improved ICT suite with upgraded software and considerably improved resources for use in the classrooms will enhance the range of learning activities for pupils to extend their skills. Teachers use the small numbers of class based computers effectively but they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils in large classes to apply the skills that they have recently learned in the ICT suite. This limits aspects of their achievement as, in some lessons, teachers have to revise previously taught skills before moving on to new work. The subject co-ordinator has looked at teachers' plans to monitor their use of ICT, has analysed some examples of pupils' work and has observed one ICT lesson. However, her knowledge and understanding of standards across the school and the quality of teaching and learning are not developed enough, although planned for improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The school focuses strongly on developing pupils' skills through different subjects and using them to support achievement across the school. Teachers use computers, digital and video cameras and other resources very successfully in most subjects. This is clearly reflected in work on display around the school and in pupils' work saved on the school's system. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 4 use a painting program well to create self-portraits and paintings in the style of Mondrian. Good use of the digital camera by Year 3 pupils helps them to create a 'Fantasy Garden' to link their work in literacy and

science. A writing club allows Year 6 pupils to support pupils in Years 3 and 4 to use word processing and graphics to produce very high quality poetry work.

HUMANITIES

60. No **history** and **geography** lessons were observed so no judgement has been made about overall provision or the standards of teaching and learning in either subject. Standards in both subjects are in line with national expectations. Good assessment procedures, based on the units of work, are used well to track pupils' achievements.
61. Year 6 pupils use their mapping skills well to locate mountain ranges and then use their information and communication technology skills effectively to research information on different mountains and present data carefully, for example, in climate graphs. They have a secure knowledge of the different parts of a river and how it links in with the water cycle. Pupils recall historical facts clearly, for example, how the Ancient Egyptians mummified bodies. They use their writing skills well to produce a detailed and accurate account of the Battle of Marathon.
62. Both subjects are satisfactorily led and managed, and a programme of external visits supports and extends learning effectively. Visits to local places of interest enhance the curriculum and history and geography feature in trips further afield, including residential visits.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are above those expected.
- Well prepared lessons promote the school's Christian ethos successfully.
- Visits to centres of worship, other than the local church, do not feature in the curriculum.

Commentary

63. Standards are similar to those reported in the last inspection. They are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2, and above at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good.
64. Many pupils have a good knowledge of different world faiths, including Christianity, and are developing a good understanding of the similarities and differences between them. Most understand, for example, how worship practice varies in different religions, but how the notion of worship is central to all world faiths. They are developing good understanding of the use of symbolism in religion and handle the artefacts presented to them with care and respect. The

school's Christian ethos is supported and developed well in religious education lessons.

65. Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are prepared well and good teaching captures pupils' interest and attention. A good feature of teaching is the use made of the school's good range of resources. This practice of supporting pupils' understanding of religion through first-hand experience is extended well, for example by using videos and other information sources to enhance pupils' knowledge of centres of worship and features of other religions. This is further developed by visits to the local church, although visits to centres of worship of other religions do not feature in the planning. Pupils' response in the lessons was good and was matched well by their recall of their learning.
66. The co-ordinator has a good overview and grasp of the subject, and how it could be further improved. A school syllabus has been developed which is firmly based on the local education authority's agreed syllabus. Assessment currently takes place through the evaluation of planning and the units of the scheme, using the assessment guidance from the syllabus effectively. Good resources are used effectively to support learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

67. During the inspection only one lesson was timetabled in **design and technology** so no judgements were made on overall provision and teaching and learning.
68. Teachers' planning, pupils' books, photographs and models on display indicate that there is a rich curriculum for design and technology throughout the school. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills in design and technology as they draw up plans and evaluate their finished work using their writing skills to good effect. The rich curriculum enables pupils to plan, make and evaluate their work effectively, for example, when making slippers and puppets, and treasure island games for pirates. They have good opportunities to disassemble items like torches to see how they work, and then design, evaluate and improve their own versions. Very good links with literacy, numeracy, and other subjects are secured, for example, when producing packages that are designed to carry fragile items.
69. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a clear policy and a scheme of work but the co-ordinator has not had time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in design and technology on a formal basis, and assessment procedures are not fully embedded. The accommodation and resources for design and technology are satisfactory, and teachers make good use of them.
70. One improvement since the last inspection is that there is now a scheme of work to guide teachers' planning, to secure progressive teaching of skills, and to ensure continuity from year to year. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

71. Because of timetabling arrangements and only parts of some lessons were observed, there was insufficient evidence to judge standards and provision in **music**.
72. Pupils sing tunefully in lessons and assemblies, although little attention is given to posture, dynamics or enunciation. Regular opportunities are provided from Year 4 to learn to play the descant recorder. Pupils are not yet mastering standard notation, although they are taught carefully to tongue their notes in order to produce a good tone. A few pupils learn to play instruments such as guitar and keyboard, through the county's peripatetic music service.
73. Music plays an important part in the school's annual calendar of events and festivals such as Christmas, providing good links with religious education, literacy and history. Close community links are maintained through the school's regular use of the local church and its community for concerts and celebrations during the year. For example, the summer show, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', involving the whole school, includes incidental music for recorders and percussion instruments as well as singing. The well-attended school choir meets weekly and there are other satisfactory opportunities for pupils to enjoy the wider world of music through the performances of visiting musicians from time to time.
74. The school presently employs a part-time specialist teacher for class teaching throughout the school. She is also the co-ordinator. The leadership and management of music are satisfactory. She has secure subject knowledge that she imparts to class teachers in weekly lessons. Accommodation and resources for music are satisfactory. Assessment procedures to record pupils' attainment are under review.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations throughout the school.
- Good curriculum initiatives have focused strongly on improving pupils' skills and have had a positive effect on the quality of work throughout the school.
- Pupils are not taught skills progressively.

Commentary

75. Since the last inspection, standards in art and design in Years 3 to 6 have been maintained at above the expected level. Standards have risen in Years 1 and 2 and are now also above the expected level for pupils of their age. These constitute good improvement since the last inspection and reflect good teaching overall throughout the school and good achievement by all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

76. The school is bright with displays of pupils' work in many media, including printing and modelling. The school has improved its curriculum, and specific times devoted to art have resulted in exciting work around the school featuring the contributions of all pupils. Art and design is linked well to other subjects such as history when studying different types of chairs including thrones for Henry the Eighth. However, the scrutiny of work in pupils' art books indicates that pupils are not systematically being taught art skills.
77. In conversation, pupils are confident in describing the features of many European artists and have emulated their distinctive styles in their own work. They are also familiar with artists of the wider world including Japan, Africa, America, China and Australia. In addition, art makes a powerful contribution to other areas of the curriculum such as religious education, history and geography, literature and design and technology. Pupils have good opportunities to link art with information and communication technology.
78. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked effectively with advisory staff to provide good in-service training for colleagues that has boosted their confidence in teaching drawing. She monitors the achievement of pupils effectively through looking at their work and discussions with teachers. Assessment procedures are improving, although not yet fully developed.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 attain above expected standards in swimming, athletics and games skills.
- Pupils have very enthusiastic attitudes and thoroughly enjoy participating in a very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities.
- Good subject leadership gives high profile to the subject and has enabled pupils to benefit from working with sporting organisations within the local community.
- Teachers do not always help pupils to improve the standard of their performance.

Commentary

79. Standards are above nationally expected levels in Year 6. They are higher than those in the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards at Year 2 as no lessons were observed in Year 1 or Year 2. The skills of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in swimming and games are good, mainly as a result of good teaching, specialist support from local community organisations and pupils' keenness to participate and learn. They benefit from good opportunities to swim in good local authority facilities, with very good use being made of specialist swimming instructors to extend pupils' skills and water-confidence. The school focuses initially on the swimming skills of Year 3 but further opportunities ensure that all Year 6 pupils can swim by the time they go on a residential trip in which there are some water-based adventurous activities.
80. Pupils' games and athletics skills are good as a result of good teaching from teachers and from coaches from local sporting organisations, such as Colchester United and Sport England. They use their good subject expertise to improve pupils' skills and knowledge well through effective skill practices and a very good range of activities, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Teachers use a good range of activities to help pupils to practise their skills and then apply them in competitive partner and group situations. They make good use of any pupils who are not taking part to assess how well other pupils are doing. However, pupils are not given enough opportunities to evaluate their own performance and that of others. They are not asked to identify what they do well or how their skills could be improved. This does not help pupils to improve their performance.
81. The leadership and management are good. The enthusiastic subject leader has given a strong direction to promoting a healthy lifestyle, recognised by the school's advanced Healthy Schools Award, and to encouraging pupils' participation in a very good range of physical activities. Her positive approach has encouraged staff, governors and outside agencies to extend pupils' learning in lessons through a broad range of extra-curricular activities. She has improved staff subject knowledge through training, for example, in dance. She

has observed some lessons and provided feedback to improve the quality of teaching and learning, although opportunities to assess and track standards through the school are not developed fully. The co-ordinator has encouraged pupils to take part in competitive sporting festivals held at the local university, for example, in girls' and boys' football, cricket, hockey and athletics. This has encouraged pupils to be very enthusiastic in their approach to physical activities and to value the benefits of healthy exercise. Discussions with pupils show that they greatly enjoy and value the after-school clubs and the opportunity to participate in local school's sporting festivals. This was clearly reflected in the large number of pupils attending the clubs, for example, athletics, during the inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the school's strong Christian ethos promotes a caring and supportive school community. The very good programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship adds very positively to pupils' personal development. It includes a good sex education programme taught by the school nurse. Teaching was very good in the two lessons observed. Teachers plan their weekly lessons very well to focus on issues relevant to pupils' personal development and to the needs of the school community, for example, on teasing and bullying. This increases pupils' understanding of the needs of others and helps promote excellent relationships throughout the school. The school places a very high value on developing pupils' knowledge of themselves, promoting their confidence and self-esteem and their contribution to the school and wider communities. The school's work towards the Advanced Healthy Schools Award is having a considerable impact on its work. There are many opportunities to discuss and focus on issues such as healthy eating and safe journeys to school. The school provides pupils with healthy food choices through its provision of fruit and its own lunch-time catering. Members of the school council value the responsibility and opportunity to contribute their ideas and those of other pupils to improve the school. The good use of the weekly Achievement Assembly helps to reinforce the school's motto 'Caring people, confident learners'.

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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	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).

