

# INSPECTION REPORT

**SAINT STEPHEN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Heath Town, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104361

Headteacher: Mr. W Downing

Lead inspector: Mrs. V Davies

Dates of inspection: 7th - 9th February 2005

Inspection number: 267944

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: 3-11  
Gender of pupils: Boys and girls  
Number on roll: 191.5

School address: Woden Road  
Heath Town  
Wolverhampton  
West Midlands

Postcode: WV10 0BB

Telephone number: 01902 558840

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of Mr. R.J. Allen  
governors:

Date of previous March 2003  
inspection:

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average size Church of England aided primary school for 191 boys and girls between the ages of 3 and 11, including 43 pupils who attend daily half day sessions in the nursery. The school is situated in Heath Town and is close to the centre of Wolverhampton. There are eight classes taught by nine teachers, including the headteacher. A new headteacher was appointed in the summer of 2003 following an eighteen month period when there were three headteachers or acting headteachers.

The pupils in the nursery class are part time and attend allocated morning or afternoon sessions. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Most of the pupils come from housing fairly near to the school, most of which is low cost and a substantial amount of which is rented. About fifty per cent of pupils are of African ancestry, most other pupils are white and there is a small number of pupils with Indian ancestry. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is high. Higher proportions of pupils than usual leave or join the school at times other than the end or beginning of the school year. A substantial number of pupils suffer some economic or social deprivation and free school meals eligibility is high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the national average and there is currently one child with a statement. Recent building work has transformed the accommodation. The school is involved in Excellence in Cities and the Primary Leadership Programme

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20350	Vivien Davies	Lead inspector	English; Information and communication technology; Physical education
32660	Robert Adams	Lay inspector	
29989	Pauline Goodsell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Science; Art and design; Music; Design and technology
22884	Sandra Sutcliffe	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; History; Religious education; Special educational needs; Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### Overall evaluation

**This is an effective school** which provides good value for money. The commitment of the headteacher, staff, pupils and governors to hard work, fun and high standards of behaviour and care make this a good place to learn. The good teaching enables pupils to progress well in their learning. Though school results are well below national results, most pupils achieve well with nearly three-quarters reaching national averages in English and mathematics. The school is highly committed to improvement and is proud of its achievement.

### The school's main strength and weaknesses are:

- Pupils are very well cared for, they behave very well and are polite to each other and adults; they mix very well and social, moral and spiritual development is very good.
- By the time they leave the school they have made good progress in acquiring knowledge and skills but some aspects of independent learning, problem solving and application of skills across the curriculum require further development.
- Teaching is good; it is well planned and lessons are interesting and well supported by classroom assistants, but sometimes there is not enough time for pupils to do individual tasks nor are they always required to contribute enough during whole class teaching.
- Governors are giving the school good support and have done very well to turn around a deficit budget.
- The leaders have created a very strong team which is very effective in monitoring and tracking pupils' performance. However, the school improvement plan does not prioritise key tasks for improvement; in particular to raise standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics.
- Extra-curricular opportunities for clubs and residential trips are very good.
- The special educational needs co-ordinator does not have sufficient time to regularly monitor work in the classroom and to check that those pupils who need individual education plans are appropriately catered for

The last inspection in 2003 had a specialised focus and judgements were made in selected areas only. The issues it identified for the school to address - attendance, leadership, the quality of the English provision and the progress of able pupils and those with special educational needs - have been tackled well, so the school has made good progress since the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

**Overall, pupils achieve well.** When they start school in the nursery many children have quite a bit of catching up to do. In the Foundation Stage children work hard but the numbers who reach national (early learning) goals are well below average. The school's results in the 2004 national tests for Year 2 pupils were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and for Year 6 pupils were well below average in English and mathematics. In science the results were average. However, a fairer impression of the results the school is achieving is found by looking at the comparisons with the results of similar schools. Compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals the Year 2 results were average in reading and writing and below average in

mathematics. The Year 6 results were below average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science. A comparison with similar schools, based on pupils' attainment in Year 2, provides a far brighter picture. By this measure the school's Year 6 results in 2004 were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. Thanks to the hard work of the pupils and their teachers they are making good progress and are achieving well. The school tests its pupils regularly to make sure they are making progress; the local education authority also uses Fischer Family Trust information to review progress and this shows that the pupils are making better progress than expected. The school is strongly committed to raising standards and uses test results very well to make sure that pupils of all abilities are doing as well as they can.

Pupils really enjoy school. They develop very mature attitudes by the time they leave. They think about important issues and care about other people. Pupils are willing to take responsibility and contribute to the schools development through the schools council. There are good levels of attendance and punctuality because the school has established a robust checking system and a popular reward system. **Overall, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.**

### **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is good** and its care for pupils and work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community is very good. **Teaching is good.** Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects taught. They present lessons in an interesting way so pupils enjoy learning. Teachers are very keen for pupils to learn and sometimes they give them too much support so they do not learn to think enough for themselves. Assessment is thorough and well evaluated. It is used well to set targets for groups and individuals. Marking in books encourages pupils. Younger pupils are consistently well taught. Classroom assistants offer good support, particularly to those with special needs.

The school offers its pupils a rich and interesting curriculum, though opportunities to use skills learnt in a subject like mathematics purposefully in another subject such as science are limited. School based work is enriched by residential visits and clubs. Pupils with special educational needs are offered good provision. There are very good links with the local secondary school. Partnerships with parents are very good. They are kept very well informed and make very good use of opportunities to talk to teachers informally and during parents' evenings. Links with the community, particularly the church, are very strong.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management of the school are good overall.** The headteacher is committed to a team approach and believes that school is about children achieving well, working hard, behaving well and enjoying their learning. He communicates these ideas well but has not yet created a school improvement plan which focuses on important priorities so that the school's energy is used as efficiently as it could be to further raise standards and the quality of education. The governing body knows the school well and is efficiently run. The co-ordinators manage their subjects well and establish appropriate priorities for developing and enriching their subjects. However, the special educational needs co-ordinator does not have an opportunity to go into classrooms to check that all pupils who need the provision are receiving it.

### **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

The parents think very well of the school and recognise the good quality of the opportunities it offers. Pupils enjoy school and their friendships. They value the teachers and feel very well cared for. Communication is good.

### **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- Continue to raise standards further in the core subjects of English and mathematics
- Revise the school's improvement plan so that it is clearly focussed on a realistic number of targets for improving the standards and quality of the school's provision
- Ensure that the SENCO has sufficient time to monitor work in the classroom
- Improve opportunities for independent learning and the application of skills across the curriculum



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. In Years 2 and 6 standards are well below average in English, mathematics and average in science. Attainment on entry is very low and limited language skills inhibit learning.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Science results compare well with other results, are similar to national results and show a steady improvement.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well but most will not achieve the early learning goals related to English and mathematics before starting Year 1
- Standards are improving steadily
- Pupils do well in art and design, physical education and religious education

#### Commentary

1. When the children enter the school their attainment is very low compared to national expectations. Speaking and listening skills are very limited and many children have a restricted vocabulary, their sentence construction is immature and they have problems in communicating. There are also a number of children for whom English is not their home language, some of whom have difficulty in communicating. By the time the children move into Year 1 the majority remain well below the national expectations in the Early Learning Goals. However, they have made good progress and know some sounds, read some words and are beginning to write. They are acquiring counting skills, though many find this difficult. They are enthusiastic, friendly and hardworking. Children with special educational needs are identified early and their needs are well met so that they make good progress and achieve well. The children whose home language is not English also progress well and the majority reach an early fluency by the time they leave the reception class.
2. Standards in Year 2 compared to national standards are consistently well below average in English and mathematics. Standards in science are similar to national standards. Compared to their levels on entry pupils achieve well with about three-quarters of the year group achieving national expectations.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	<b>14.1</b> ( 12.0 )	<b>15.8</b> ( 15.7 )
writing	<b>12.9</b> ( 11.4 )	<b>14.6</b> ( 14.6 )
mathematics	<b>14.2</b> ( 12.6 )	<b>16.2</b> ( 16.3 )

*There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

3. In Year 6 pupils achieve very well compared to their prior attainment in Year 2 in mathematics and science. In English compared to their Year 2 figures their results are good. However, compared to national results their results are well below expected levels in English and mathematics and in line with them in science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	<b>24.4</b> ( 25.3 )	<b>26.9</b> ( 26.8 )
mathematics	<b>25.6</b> ( 25.8 )	<b>27.0</b> ( 26.8 )
science	<b>28.4</b> ( 27.9 )	<b>28.6</b> ( 28.6 )

*There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

4. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special needs and the more able, make good progress and achieve well because they have very clear targets and are given good support by their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils achieve average standards in religious education and physical education and below average standards in information and communication technology and design and technology. In art and design, work indicates that standards are above average. In other subjects, particularly the humanities which are English based, standards are below national expectations. This is partly because the presentation, spelling and punctuation of work does not match the standards achieved in English books.
5. The well below average results compared to national results cause concern in all parts of the school and the school works hard to improve the situation by focussing very strongly on target setting, good thorough teaching of the basic skills and use of national support programmes. Individual progress of each pupil and groups of pupils including those of different abilities and backgrounds is carefully monitored and action taken if progress is insufficient. Fischer Family Trust data shows that pupils are making better than expected progress. The national value added data places the school in the top five per cent and the school has received a letter of congratulation from OFSTED. Some caution must be exercised about these figures because of the number of pupils who leave and join the school. Subject co-ordinators monitor outcomes regularly and intervene when necessary. They also work closely with teachers to make lessons interesting and relevant, so pupils enjoy lessons, work hard and achieve well. However, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) does not have sufficient time to regularly monitor work in the classroom and to check that those pupils who need individual education plans are appropriately catered for.
6. Standards of attainment have been improved since the last inspection with three or four more pupils at seven and eleven achieving the national expectation in English and mathematics. The school is meeting its targets, despite substantial barriers to learning which include low attainment on entry and high mobility. The improvements made by the new headteacher and the strong team of subject and phase co-ordinators will take some time to have an impact on results.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Attitudes are good and behaviour is very good. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good overall, with isolated exceptions, which the school is addressing.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils show a high level of interest in school life and activities, and are strongly motivated to learn
- Spiritual development is an intrinsic part of school life

- Pupils are very committed to fairness and doing the right thing
- Social development is very well reinforced by clubs, residential trips, sporting opportunities and co-operative working in the classroom
- Pupils' understanding of a range of cultures is inhibited prior to Year 4
- A very small number of parents do not understand the importance of regular school attendance

## Commentary

7. The school very strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral and social development through its pervasive Christian ethos, together with pre- and after-school clubs, sporting events and the school council. Pupils enthused to inspectors about all these aspects of school life. As a result, pupils' levels of confidence, self-esteem and maturity are high.
8. Pupils have very good relationships with peers and across age and gender ranges. They are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility, for example, via the 'prefect' system. The pupils elected to the school's council have received training and understand the importance of representing their class mates' views. During the inspection pupils demonstrated the ability to discuss a wide range of topics confidently and maturely with teachers, inspectors and each other. Children in the Foundation Stage are appropriately welcomed into school because staff visit their homes and have very good contact with their parents. The children like coming to school and engage with enthusiasm in the good range of activities provided for them. They quickly learn the routines on entering school, behave well, and enjoy trying new experiences. As they grow in confidence their desire to learn is stimulated and their rate of progress accelerates.
9. The school is a community and pupils and parents feel staff are friends as well as teachers. Pupils and parents believe that all pupils are treated alike and that attempts to understand other cultures are well established. However, although the pupils take pleasure in music and art from different countries there is little opportunity to explore non-Christian religions before Year 4.
10. Pupils' standards of behaviour throughout the inspection were very good, both in the classroom and in the playground. Staff set high expectations and act as good role models in this respect. Pupils clearly understand and accept that staff will apply appropriate sanctions for poor behaviour. A very small number of pupils were identified by their peers as continuing to have spells of bad behaviour, but all pupils felt able to report matters to staff who took action immediately. Pupils felt this made school a nice place and one where they could learn. There are no exclusions.

### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.7
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.*

11. Attendance is generally good. However, a small number of parents fail the school by not supporting its attendance strategy. For example, some parents take their children on long holidays in term time, and there are instances of casual attitudes by parents towards lateness and short term absenteeism.

12. The headteacher has established a robust checking system for attendance and punctuality. Parents are contacted almost immediately after the start of the school day if pupils have not attended and no information has been received at the school, and the headteacher personally monitors the doors after the start of school. The school rewards pupils for 100% attendance at a personal and class level. These actions have largely, although not totally, eradicated lateness.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall the quality of education is good

### Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and pupils enjoy their learning. Assessment is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan very interesting lessons and they have a very positive attitude to their pupils, so pupils look forward to their lessons and like their teachers.
- Assessment systems are very well established and very well used to set targets and check progress. Outcomes are monitored and strengths and weaknesses acted upon.
- Well qualified classroom assistants work well with teachers to give pupils with learning difficulties good support so pupils with special educational needs do well.
- Some teaching styles and arrangements for group work do not always sufficiently encourage independent learning and problem solving.

### Commentary

13. Teaching is a strong feature of this school and the quality has improved since the last inspection. Subject knowledge is strong because subject co-ordinators provide very clear guidance and give good support, so teachers are well prepared. In consequence, teachers can explain clearly because they understand the subject matter. Lessons are interesting, so pupils enjoy their lessons. Teachers understand the importance of thorough teaching of the basic skills. Teachers include many opportunities for pupils to hear new basic subject vocabulary and focus well on explaining difficult vocabulary.
14. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. They insist on pupils' full attention as they teach. They expect hard work from their pupils. As a result pupils behave well and concentrate on their work. In many lessons, particularly English and mathematics, teachers and good classroom assistants provide good additional support for pupils who find learning difficult.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	3 (8 %)	23 (62%)	11 (30 %)	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.*

15. Teaching in this school is good and is the main reason why pupils achieve well and have such a positive attitude to their learning. However, in their zeal to ensure that pupils acquire knowledge and skills, teachers do not always sufficiently promote the self reliance that enables them to develop their own understanding and to work independently and solve problems. The following are examples which occurred in satisfactory lessons:

- Teachers spend too long talking to the class so there is not enough time for pupils to join the discussion and practise new terms, or complete their individual and group tasks and consolidate their learning

- Group work is well supported but this support sometimes results in pupils not thinking hard enough. Less able pupils do not have to think enough for themselves and more able pupils are tackling work which is well within their capability, so they can work unsupported.
  - Teachers do not involve pupils as fully as they might in making decisions about their learning or in considering how they might solve problems. At times, teachers miss opportunities to offer tasks that allow pupils to take an individual approach, and this is reflected in the similar work that pupils of the same age sometimes produce.
16. In the Foundation Stage teaching is good so the children make a good start to school, enjoy their learning and achieve well. The teaching of basic skills is well planned and organised and results in the good achievement in learning to read, write and in number work. The classroom assistant very effectively supports individual and group activities and makes a significant contribution to helping the children to behave well and concentrate on the carefully planned and challenging learning tasks. The adults help the children to feel secure, gain confidence and communicate well with others.
17. Accurate assessment systems are very well established in the school in most subjects and teachers use the information very well to monitor progress and to identify areas in which pupils need extra help. This is often linked to the good use of national support programmes. Target setting is very well used to set expectations and pupils can talk about their progress towards meeting these targets. Marking is carried out regularly. Teachers often write encouraging remarks and point out possible improvements. There is regular homework and an after school homework club is very popular.

### **The curriculum**

The school provides a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It is enriched by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum provides interesting learning opportunities and coverage of the basic skills is thorough. However there are few planned subject links to encourage pupils to apply skills acquired in one subject purposefully in a different context.
- All pupils benefit from the very good range of clubs and residential trips.
- The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

### **Commentary**

18. The organisation and planning of the curriculum throughout the school is effective in ensuring that achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has risen over the last three years. The curriculum framework ensures basic skills are well taught and pupils have solid foundations on which further learning can take place. The rest of the curriculum is broad and balanced and many lessons are interesting and exciting. There is good emphasis placed on the pupils' understanding of new subject vocabulary. Drama is often used to support several subject areas. Although information and communication technology is taught in a relevant subject context, other subjects are not yet closely linked. There are few planned subject links so pupils have limited opportunity to transfer, practise and reinforce skills learnt in different subjects across the curriculum.

19. All of the pupils are valued and the school makes significant efforts to ensure equality of access and opportunity. Provision for those pupils identified with special educational needs is good, though the SENCO does not have any opportunity to monitor pupils in the classroom. The school has very close links with the educational psychologist and other outside agencies. Pupils' individual education plans are frequently reviewed, sometimes more than once per term. New targets are set in liaison with the school psychologist, parents and the class teacher. These pupils are placed on specific work programmes and supported well by the teaching assistants. The needs of those pupils with English as an additional language are also addressed with help from teaching assistants and the whole school language programme. The needs of all individuals are met through good quality personal, social and health education which permeates all aspects of the curriculum. Sex, relationship and drug issues are addressed appropriately. Older pupils are well prepared to move onto their next stage of education through close links with the secondary schools. They visit one school's ICT suite to access the specialist facilities and take part in another one's 'Sports Olympics'. Secondary pupils also return to their primary roots to give musical recitals and contribute to assemblies.
20. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good; the pupils have opportunities to play football, netball and unihoc after school. There are other after school clubs offered to the pupils including gardening, computers, Quest, crafts, board games and a Homework Club. These cater for all age groups of pupils in the school and are very well attended. There are three residential trips a year, catering for all pupils. These are highly effective in developing pupils' learning and experiences as well as their independent and social skills. A good range of more local visits and visitors is also in place.
21. There are sufficient members of staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The good quality of the cooperation between teachers and support staff plays a significant part in raising the pupils' achievement. Accommodation is satisfactory and work is nearing completion on the new library and music room. The planned green area will do much to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the school play areas. Resources for learning are satisfactory and well used by the teaching and support staff.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Robust systems ensure that the care and protection of pupils are very good. Pupils' relationships with staff are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's council is developing well and playing an important role in shaping decisions about the outside improvements
- Staff know pupils very well and care very well for their pupils and give very good advice
- Induction procedures for Foundation Stage children, which include home visits, help them to settle happily in school

### **Commentary**

22. Due to the hard work and enthusiastic staff who promote care as a priority, the school is a very happy and safe haven for pupils. Pupils are at ease with staff and can all identify staff they feel happy to turn to for help. Parents were keen to mention the caring

support given by staff during sickness or trauma in their child's lives. Fast action is taken by staff if a pupil fails to arrive for school without adult notification. The nominated leader for child protection is aware of the demands of the role and has meetings with other caring agencies. All staff can identify the nominated leader and know the procedure required in urgent cases. The school has very good health and safety plans. It is a clean bright school, with pupils participating in monitoring health and safety at break times when prefects ensure younger children are not placed in any danger in confined areas such as toilet doorways and corridors at busy times.

23. New pupils are inducted very well via personal visits to the school. Nursery pupils receive home visits and staff assess their progress and capability carefully. Parents of newer pupils seen during inspection reported induction as very good. Academic support and advice for pupils is very good. The school has very good assessment procedures and targets are shared. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in the regular reviews of the individual education plans.
24. Pupils feel involved in school life through the school council and their very good relationships with adults in school. Pupils were active in the committee formed to steer the regeneration of the school grounds. The committee, which included parents and governors, recently accepted the pupils' view that a quiet area was needed in the grounds. School council members report back to their class mates and discuss issues. The members were keen to tell inspectors that children in their classes made their views known, so it was true participation of all, not just the class representative. Clearly, the efforts of the LEA in training pupils had a great impact on the day-to-day working of the school council. The headteacher also said he would use more pupil surveys as he found the one conducted for this inspection had been welcomed by pupils.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has good links with parents, the local community and local schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school is welcoming and friendly, so parents feel at ease.
- Parents provide good support and are given good support by the school.
- The school provides good information to parents
- The local community is used well to support pupils' learning
- Pupils' transition to secondary school is effectively managed

### **Commentary**

25. The school provides good information to parents. Information about the school starts with an induction pack for prospective parents, followed by comprehensive updates concerning building work, school trips, joint parent-pupil activities including a father and children club, and community linked events including sporting events. Regular, good written information regarding pupils' progress is provided. Parents clearly feel they have a partnership with the school. They have participated in training in school, which helps them to become more knowledgeable and able to help pupils. The school has a license for an educational site on the Internet to which parents can gain free access via a password.



26. The school's open door policy enables parents to participate in school life. Staff actively seek parents' views at both informal and formal meetings, and the headteacher is always available to discuss any issues. All staff do everything they can to deal with problems. Parents' comments indicate that some concerns about occasional bullying were swiftly and effectively dealt with.
27. The school has strong community links. These include visits to a local residential care home, public shared singing at the town market hall, visits to a temple, support from local businesses and the link with the church, which is a particularly strong and effective feature and a big part of the school's life. The school also integrates well with the community via its 'Surestart' parents' groups which are hosted in school buildings. These support both parents and the wider community.
28. Pupils' move to secondary schools is effectively managed. Parents of older children who had now moved from this school to the four main secondary schools in the area reported that the change was handled well for pupils and parents. The school holds information exchange meetings with new school staff and pupils go on taster days and other events at their new schools before the start of the new academic year. Year 6 pupils were keen to move onward despite having reservations about leaving what they felt was a happy and nice school. Teachers also meet to exchange educational data to aid transition. The move is seen by Year 6 pupils as exciting, not frightening, due to the efforts of teachers in preparing them. Partnership with local clusters of schools contributes very well to the breadth of pupils' experience, especially in sport and new thinking about the curriculum.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good and the quality has improved since the last inspection. The governors offer good service to the school and the curriculum managers are contributing effectively to raising standards. The headteacher leads well and has created a very effective team which is committed to improvement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher is clear-sighted and he communicates very well with the school's partners
- The governing body knows the school well, is energetic works hard to improve the school
- Subject co-ordinators are well organized, monitor outcomes very well and have achievable action plans.
- The SENCO does not have the opportunity to monitor pupils at work in the classroom to ensure that provision is appropriately allocated.
- Strategic planning by the school does not focus sufficiently on whole school priorities for improvement in standards and quality
- The administration of the school, including its financial management, is good

### **Commentary**

29. The headteacher plays a key role in creating an optimistic, child focussed sense of purpose within the school community. He has helped pupils, parents and teachers to reach a common understanding of the school's aspirations. He has had a considerable impact since his appointment. The school's strength lies in its partnership with all those involved in its day-to-day life, its commitment to inclusion and the enthusiasm with

which it seizes worthwhile educational opportunities associated with a broad curriculum. The school has a very strong shared ethos based on Christian values. The co-ordinators are working well together and are making an increasing contribution to the quality of education. The local education authority has provided the school with good support over the past few years.

30. The school's strategic plan has provided a useful consolidation of subject based action plans. However, it is not tightly focussed enough on whole school priorities. Although pupils achieve well, the school still has well below average standards in English and mathematics, which need improving. It does not clearly identify the key priorities which the school community needs to improve and what impact, perhaps measurable, the actions taken to effect these improvements will have on standards. It is not based on a sound enough evaluation of current strengths and weaknesses in standards and quality. However, the school does make very good use of data to analyse the progress of pupils from different groups and backgrounds. This information is well used by co-ordinators and teachers to set targets and to identify strengths and weaknesses.
31. The school has achieved staff stability over the past two years. Subject leaders are working closely together to develop a strong, lively curriculum, though links between curriculum areas are at an early stage of development. Monitoring arrangements are working well and co-ordinators make good use of sampling pupils' work and analysing assessment information to improve standards in their subjects. The programme for monitoring subject teaching by co-ordinators is about to be extended. Special educational needs and early years provision is well managed and there is good governor involvement. However, the SENCO does not have sufficient time to monitor work in the classroom and to ensure that individual education plans for special educational needs are available for all those pupils, struggling to reach the nationally expected standards, who may require them.
32. The governing body is very involved in the work of the school and well aware of the school's academic weaknesses. They are very involved in the drive for improvement. They are hard working and give the school good support. They have good links with the subject co-ordinators. The school community is close and governors make a strong contribution to the very good relationships between all of its members.

### **Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	487,460	Balance from previous year	-2,813
Total expenditure	490,273	Balance carried forward to the next	7,858
Expenditure per pupil	2,587.19		

33. Prudent financial planning and secure management and monitoring of budgets help the school to meet its targets for development and educational priorities. The school has done well to recover from a deficit budget situation. Decisions on spending and allocation of resources are made with a good appreciation for the principles of best value. The school's administrative officer provides good support. The weakness identified in the last report associated with ineffective co-ordination of English has been remedied. The new English co-ordinator is offering very positive leadership in all aspects of the subject. Leadership and management have improved since the last inspection.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

34. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the last inspection. The children enter the school just after their third birthday when they join the nursery. They join the reception class at the beginning of the autumn term or after Christmas depending on when they are five. When children join the Foundation Stage, their attainment is very low when compared with national expectations, particularly in speaking and listening skills. Many children have a restricted vocabulary, their language construction is immature and they have problems communicating. There are also about a quarter of pupils for whom English is not their home language. The children like coming to school and engage with enthusiasm in the good range of activities provided for them. They quickly learn the routines on entering school, behave well, and enjoy trying new experiences. As they grow in confidence their desire to learn is stimulated and their rate of progress accelerates.
35. By the time the children move into Year 1, although the majority remain well below national expectations in all areas of learning, good provision in the nursery and reception class enables the children to achieve well, make good progress and become eager learners. Children with special educational needs are identified early and their needs are well met so that they make good progress and achieve well. The children whose home language is not English also progress well and the majority reach an early bilingual stage by the time they leave the reception class.
36. The quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning. The teaching of basic skills is thorough and results in the good progress seen in the early stages of learning reading, writing and number. There is a good balance between adult directed and child chosen activities. The classroom assistants effectively support individual and group activities. Good arrangements check what the children know, understand, and can do and the information is well used to plan the next steps children need to take in their learning.
37. Parents and carers have good opportunities to discuss with staff any problems that arise on a day-to-day basis. The parents' notice board gives good information about the topics that the children will be covering. Before the children come into school the teachers make home visits and this helps the children to get to know the adults before they start on a formal basis.
38. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The teacher in charge has a clear vision of how planning can be further developed to promote the progress of the children, especially in the development of the provision and curriculum for outdoor play. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the level of staffing and the teaching and learning resources have been extended and developed. However, the teaching assistants' time now needs re-organising to ensure greater continuity of coverage and to enable the support staff to participate in planning. At present the timetabling arrangements for the two classes are insufficiently flexible and the teachers have to work very hard to ensure that the children have good access to all of the learning activities provided.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children quickly develop a good understanding of how to behave and look after themselves in school
- Relationships are well developed between the adults, the children and their class mates

## **Commentary**

39. The children settle happily and confidently when they come into school because the adults make sure that the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The children develop positive attitudes to taking care of themselves and to learning. They know the routines well on entering the classroom, for example putting away their belongings and in the reception class marking their names with the dinner or sandwich symbols. The adults have consistently high expectations that the children will behave well and be thoughtful towards each other. Good relationships develop between the adults in the reception class and the children. The children are beginning to speak confidently to adults and each other. Their personal and social skills are developing well because they are provided with good opportunities to work and play together and to reflect on the effect of their actions on others.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- From a very low base the children achieve well in learning the basic skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing
- A very good range of activities are provided for the children to develop language
- Complicated staffing arrangements mean that teaching assistants are not always able to take part in the planning for the activities

## **Commentary**

40. The children are given good opportunities to respond to events in stories, and their vocabulary is developed and extended well through question and answer sessions. There is a good range of role-play opportunities for the children to use although these are more limited in the outdoor area. Adults often make good quality interventions to promote the children's understanding and vocabulary in play scenarios such as the bank in the reception class and when the children are thoroughly washing the babies in the nursery; this encourages and develops confidence in speaking and listening. The children's early reading skills are developed well because they are given good opportunities to respond to events in stories, share books and they receive clear teaching of the sounds that letters make. By the end of the reception year a small number of children read simple books and are able to retell stories they have read. There is an effective home -school reading partnership, which has a positive effect on the achievement of the children in learning to read.

41. Writing skills are taught systematically and carefully so that the children learn to form letters correctly as well as learning to write and spell a basic vocabulary of key words. The most able children can write with confidence and enjoyment in their ability to build words for themselves however the majority of the children remain well below national expectations in writing by the time they leave the reception class. At present the timetabling arrangements for the two classes are not sufficiently flexible and the teachers and other adults have to work very hard to ensure that the children have good access to all of the learning activities provided and that adults are clear about planning.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children start from a very low base in mathematical development but achieve well in learning the basic skills of counting, recognising and ordering numbers
- Learning in this area is made interesting through the use of a good range of activities

### **Commentary**

42. A good emphasis on the correct use of language enables children to acquire new words to use in number activities and helps to ensure that they make good progress in gaining mathematical understanding. The teachers use the children's natural enthusiasm for counting and using numbers. However although the children achieve well against their prior attainment progress is slow in this area of learning and there has to be much repetition of work in order for the children to gain the necessary knowledge and understanding of numbers. A small number of the children can count and recognise numbers up to twenty, and a few know numbers beyond. The more able children are learning to add two numbers together. By the end of the reception year children are developing a basic vocabulary to describe mathematical features of patterns and the properties of a range of two and three-dimensional shapes.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children achieve well because the teachers plan interesting and enjoyable learning activities
- The children are making good progress in learning to use computers

### **Commentary**

43. The teachers' planning ensures that there are good opportunities for the children to experience each of the strands within this area of learning. The children use the computer confidently to support their learning and can point, click and drag items for example in finding shapes and moving them to the correct part of the screen. Great interest develops as the children construct a marble run working well together. More able children draw a map to show the route of a running marble. Visits out of school are arranged giving children experiences of travelling by bus and visiting local parks. The fire service provides an exciting glimpse into the life and work of a fire fighter. The children learn about and participate in the faith and customs of Christianity and experience Divali and Chinese New Year. The children have a good sense of their own identity as part of a family, classes and a school and have opportunities to reflect, for example, about what makes them happy or unhappy.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children have good opportunities to develop both fine and large movement skills through a range of activities
- The children attainment is close to national expectations by the time they leave the reception class

## **Commentary**

44. The children develop good fine motor skills when using pencils, scissors and paint brushes. They use them with care and precision and have opportunities to develop fine manipulative control by completing jigsaws and using construction kits. The adventure area in the main school playground provides them with facilities for climbing, clambering and crawling. In the smaller Foundation Stage outdoor area the children enjoy using wheeled toys and they steer, scoot and pedal enthusiastically showing a good sense of space and control. Overall, the children achieve well because the teachers plan the learning activities well; however, the small size of the fenced area limits the opportunities for the children to explore independently. Good use is made of the Red Room for using indoor climbing equipment.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Resources - especially indoors - are well prepared and provide a good range of activities enabling the children to attain standards that are close to national expectations
- Creative opportunities outdoors are restricted because of the limited outdoor play equipment

## **Commentary**

45. The children have good opportunities to use a wide range of media, and sand and water are available on a regular basis. The children greatly enjoy painting; they love using thick paint and different colours to create patterns and faces. They join in singing and musical activities with enjoyment, knowing a good range of songs. Mardi Gras was celebrated in style in the nursery with pancakes and a lively procession of the adults and children in masks, playing instruments and dancing their way along the corridor. Good use is made of the role-play areas (at present a shoe shop, bank and home corner) to develop children's language and social skills through talk and related activities. The teachers provide a range of creative activities in the outdoor area but opportunities for the children to explore outdoors creatively, imaginatively, and independently are limited.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in tests are improving but are consistently well below national averages in Year 2 and in Year 6.
- Throughout the school, pupils of different abilities achieve well.
- Pupils benefit well from national support programmes.
- Teachers assess work carefully so that they have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their class.
- Work matches ability well but there is not enough time given for independent learning.
- The subject is well managed and all teachers are well trained, confident and have a good knowledge of the subject and the way pupils learn.
- English is not used purposefully enough across the curriculum to develop and consolidate skills in writing and speaking and listening.

## **Commentary**

46. Standards in Year 2 are well below the national average. The numbers of pupils who achieve the higher levels is also well below average. Inspection evidence shows that compared to starting points in the Foundation Stage pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well and have made good progress because they are thoroughly taught and benefit from good levels of adult attention from teachers and classroom assistants. Boys and girls are achieving equally well.
47. Standards in Year 6 are consistently well below national expectations but are slowly but steadily improving. The numbers of pupils who achieve the higher levels is also well below average. Inspection evidence confirms that compared to prior attainment in Year 2 pupils are progressing well. Pupils are closely tracked and any shortfall in predicted progress is looked at carefully. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are suitably challenged and do well.
48. Throughout the school, teachers pay attention to speaking and listening skills by using and explaining unusual and technical vocabulary. However, there is not enough opportunity created for pupils to use this vocabulary purposefully in their own discussion with the class or their peers. Partner work and the use of individual whiteboards for the quick jotting of an opinion are underused. Written work in English books is neatly set out and there is clear progress in the spelling, punctuation and content of the work over six months throughout the school. This is not always replicated in other subjects which depend on written English.
49. The basic skills of reading are well taught, so younger pupils, including slower readers, have good phonic skills and make use of context to help them when they are stuck. They are also expected to learn to read and spell essential word list. Older pupils are thoughtful readers and show basic understanding of the text. However, they often need support to appreciate the full meaning as their vocabulary is often limited. A recent investment in new reading materials has increased enthusiasm for reading. At present the school is investigating suitable provision for older boys who are slow to read. All pupils are encouraged to take books home. Many parents support their children at home and the school has planned time to offer more guidance on this matter. The new library is situated in a separate building and it will be a challenge for the school to ensure that pupils have opportunities for independent access.
50. Teachers have good subject knowledge and skilfully lead discussions in lessons, making a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching is usually imaginative, so pupils really enjoy the subject and behave very well.



Questioning skills are good, so pupils are helped to remember previous learning or draw conclusions from what they know. However, there are not enough opportunities yet for pupils of all abilities to develop appropriate independent thinking skills and sometimes to struggle a bit while they problem solve for themselves.

51. Assessment is thorough and is well used to set targets and track pupils. Support programmes are well used to advance progress. Able pupils are identified and are usually offered additional challenge in the class part of the lesson but sometimes their group tasks lack challenge. Pupils with special educational needs are fewer than expected in view of the results. Those who are so identified receive good support alongside other low attaining pupils. Marking is very well done and linked well to the targets.
52. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator has a clear set of priorities. She successfully tackled the updating of the school's reading. Resources are good. Since the last inspection standards have risen. The percentage of pupils reaching national standards in all aspect has risen most particularly in Year 2 in writing.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

53. The application of English across the curriculum is an area for the school to further develop. In many subjects teachers pay good attention to teaching correct terminology. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use the new unfamiliar terms for themselves. Pupils' written work is often independently produced but does not always match the accuracy and presentation seen in the English books.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well though results are well below national levels.
- Basic skills are well taught.
- There are very good systems to track pupil's progress.
- Direct teaching and support are often too time consuming, leaving pupils' insufficient time to independently practise and reinforce the skills they have learnt.
- Problem solving work lacks focus and clarity.

### **Commentary**

54. Many positive strategies have been used to raise achievement in mathematics. The results of the national tests, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that standards are well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The inspection evidence and school data indicate that pupils achieve well and are making good progress by the time they reach Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well.
55. The quality of teaching is good overall. The mental warm up activities are varied and fun. Through them basic skills are constantly reinforced such as number bonds and multiplication tables. In one Year 6 lesson pupils screamed with delight as they tried to beat their teacher in a mental doubling and halving game. Teachers have good knowledge of the numeracy strategy and pupils follow a carefully planned, systematic

programme of work. Number work is very strongly promoted and teachers place great emphasis on developing pupils' mathematical language. The very best teaching is where teachers give clear, direct explanations and instructions and then allow pupils plenty of time to complete the following work in depth. In these lessons all ability pupils have some adult input within their groups, but also have much time to use these skills to reinforce and develop their personal knowledge independently. A very good lesson in Year 2 had interesting, practical demonstrations by the teacher, prior to the pupils completing their own tasks. The activities were very challenging, particularly for the more able pupils, and the exciting practical work meant pupils were absorbed and busy throughout.

56. Where teaching is less effective teachers talk for too long during the lesson introduction and do not allow pupils to explain their answers. Pupils become restless and their own written or practical work is rushed or not completed in any depth. Occasionally a group of pupils are guided through every part of the group activity and spend too much time passively listening and inactive, relying heavily on the adult for every decision. Sometimes some groups, often the more able, are left alone throughout a lesson and progress is more limited. There are fewer opportunities for the more able pupils, as a group, to be targeted with high level direct teaching. The school, quite rightly, has identified mathematical problem solving as an area for development but too often these problems need a sharper focus and the outcomes do little to develop learning.
57. Assessment and tracking of pupils' learning is very well established. Throughout the school pupils' skills and difficulties are constantly being monitored through testing or marking work and targets for their learning reviewed. Some teachers move pupils within ability groups during lessons when they realise problems are being encountered. In one class, the classroom assistant makes notes for the teacher of pupils' knowledge or difficulties when they are answering questions. Several teachers adapt their lesson plans, or the work for specific groups, in light of achievement in the previous lesson.
58. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator is knowledgeable. She analyses the information from tests and assessments in order to identify areas for improvement. She has begun to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and has given demonstration lessons for all staff in the school. New resources are now being purchased. The subject has improved since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

59. Pupils occasionally use their mathematical knowledge and skills to support other subjects. In geography, for example, pupils use their knowledge of co-ordinates to plot grid reference numbers. Pupils use graphs to support science investigations and in history they compare the length of reigns of Tudor monarchs; ICT is occasionally used by some classes to support mathematics but overall there is no structured planning to ensure the skills learnt in mathematics lessons are transferred and reinforced in other subjects on a regular basis.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Overall, the pupils achieve well in science.
- Teaching is good: work is well organised and the lessons are interesting.
- Pupils have good attitudes to science and take a pride in their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to think for themselves and group tasks do not always challenge the more able.

## Commentary

60. By the end of Year 2 pupils' standards are below those expected nationally but they achieve well. Their rate of progress increases as they move through the juniors and, by the time they leave the school, they are attaining standards in line with national averages, showing good achievement. There are no differences in the achievement of girls or boys, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or those with special educational needs. All pupils have equal access to the science curriculum. Standards have steadily risen over the last three years and provision for science shows a good improvement since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are good; the co-ordinator supports colleagues well and consistently monitors standards to ensure that they continue to rise.
61. The improvement in standards is largely due to consistently good teaching. There is a strong emphasis on all pupils acquiring secure scientific vocabulary and knowledge. This is reflected in the good quantity and quality of pupils' recorded work in all year groups. The teachers ensure that pupils work hard and that topics are thoroughly covered. The planned activities are interesting and the pupils clearly become involved in them. For example, in a Year 3 lesson the pupils worked collaboratively to set up their experiments to test how far elastic will propel toy cars. They demonstrated positive relationships and responded to the teachers' expectations regarding behaviour. They thoroughly enjoy their science lessons and are excited by the discoveries they make. Year 2 pupils are delighted at incorporating buzzers and switches into their successful electrical circuits, and in Year 6 pupils enthusiastically relate how vinegar and salts react together to create an exciting volcano effect. The teaching assistants give good support, especially to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to achieve well against their prior attainment. There is an efficient system of assessment at the end of each topic which helps teachers to accurately gauge pupils' understanding and progress and plan further work.
62. Appropriate attention is given to pupils' learning about the difference between harmful drugs and beneficial medicines, as well as the dangers of smoking. Work on the importance of a balanced diet, rest and exercise helps the pupils to develop a positive approach to looking after themselves and living a healthy life. The after-school gardening club is very popular; sunflower and bean seeds are already growing well, enabling pupils to put into practice what they have learnt about the needs of plants for healthy growth. Good use is being made of numeracy skills, with pupils recording findings in tables and graphs as well as using practical skills of measuring length, weight, capacity and temperature. Some use is made of the Internet to investigate scientific topics. In most lessons good opportunities are provided for pupils to predict outcomes and carry out practical investigations. However, teachers do not involve pupils as well as they might in making decisions in their learning, for example, in considering how they could design experiments or solve problems. Pupils are expected to work hard and to record their work carefully but opportunities to sufficiently differentiate between the abilities of different pupils are missed and this is reflected in the similar work that pupils of the same age often produce.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Though standards are below average, pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are confident users of the computers but have limited problem solving skills.
- Skills are purposefully used across a wide range of subjects.
- The subject is well managed and a skills audit has focussed training so teachers are confident.

### Commentary

63. Standards in Year 2 are just below average. Younger pupils use word processing programs and improve, save and print their work. They use the computer purposefully, for example, making good copies of their designs in preparation for a future design and technology lesson. They understand the purpose of a database because they use it in a realistic context. Standards in Year 6 are also below average. Pupils are confident users of the computer and are able to use the full range of programs commonly used by their age group. They can use word processing to refine and edit, graphics packages, spreadsheets to display and calculate data and have access to control packages through good links with the secondary school. They have good access to the Internet for research purposes. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Although pupils across the school can use programs well, many are limited in their ability to apply their skills because of a lack of competence in English or mathematics.
64. Teaching is good. Teachers are confident. They teach the basic skills clearly and encourage independence. The subject is planned very well so that skills are developed in a suitable context across the subjects of the curriculum. In a Year 2 lessons pupils were taught very clearly so shape tools were selected appropriately to create a design. This purposeful teaching continues with older pupils. In Year 5 pupils make good use of a spreadsheet to assess the feasibility of a proposed school trip. They calculate costs for all elements of the trip including entry fees, burgers and rides. However, they find the transport costing difficult because their understanding of division is not secure enough. Teachers are assessing pupils' capabilities well within lessons and make good use of national guidance for this purpose. Teachers used interactive whiteboards effectively to enhance their lessons.
65. The subject is well managed and the subject action plan is well thought through and manageable. The co-ordinator has conducted a thorough audit so he knows which aspects need further support and has provided very focussed training for school staff. The school has obtained a special license so that parents have free Internet access to an educational site. Resources for the subject are good. There are computers in all classrooms as well as in the suite. The three interactive whiteboards are used well by teachers for demonstration purposes. Provision has improved since the last inspection and the use and application of the subject has improved. The ICT governor is aware of the benefits of new technology as a teaching tool and is keen to support the subject

## Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in other subjects are developing well. They use the research capability of the Internet to further their knowledge when studying subjects like history and geography. In mathematics, data handling capabilities are gradually developing, though applying mathematics to problem solve is difficult for many pupils. Word processing skills are well developed and most pupils are confident when using the computer for graphics work.

## HUMANITIES

67. In humanities, three lessons were seen in geography and religious education but none in history. Pupils' books were scrutinised and planning was examined in all subjects. In the humanities in general work is considerably enhanced by the range of visits made. These include residential opportunities for all but the youngest pupils in the school. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards and the quality of provision in **history**. There are very few historical displays around the school and only a little work available for scrutiny. The work seen was of a reasonable standard, but written work was often careless and not well presented. Planning indicates satisfactory coverage of the subject.

### Geography

The provision in geography is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The presentation of work, spelling and punctuation is not as good as that found in English books.
- Pupils are taught mapping skills well.
- Learning in geography is enhanced through the good range of visits.

### Commentary

68. Though pupils enjoy the subject and achieve well, standards are below national expectations. Pupils cover a wide variety of topics in geography. Mapping skills are strongly promoted. Even pupils as young as Year 1 are encouraged to look at maps of the World and Great Britain to determine the best means of transport between different destinations. Older pupils use a wide range of Ordnance Survey symbols to create their own maps of settlements. They are able to explain physical geographical features which determine where settlements would be situated, and show an awareness of the purpose of roads and other transport systems. Teaching is thorough and sometimes exciting, for example for Year 1 pupils who were offered an inspiring range of materials to make Mexican masks as seen in their 'Barnaby Bear' video. The presentation of work in pupils' books, however, is often unsatisfactory. The handwriting, language and punctuation skills taught in English lessons are not always in evidence when pupils record their own work. Work is often untidily stuck in and incomplete.

69. The good range of visits undertaken by the pupils, particularly the residential trips, does much to enhance the pupils' appreciation of both their locality and the wider world. Year 1 pupils appreciate the amenities available within their immediate locality, while older

pupils have the chance to appreciate the physical features of Wales on one of the residential trips.

70. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator is developing resources and has an action plan for future improvement. She monitors planning and does some assessment to ensure a good level of consistency across the school. Computers are used to gain information from the Internet but there is a lack of software to support learning in the subject.

## **Religious education**

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

### **Strengths and weaknesses**

- Moral values and the Christian ethos of the school are very strongly promoted.
- Teachers provide a variety of suitably interesting work.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils, particularly younger ones, to celebrate other religions in depth.

### **Commentary**

71. From the three lessons observed and the analysis of pupils' work and displays, the indications are that pupils' achievement is good overall and that standards are broadly average. Pupils with special needs are well supported. Even the youngest pupils are taught the values of right and wrong and the need to follow rules. This emphasis on being a considerate, caring person continues throughout their school life. In line with the school's policy to promote speaking skills, there are frequent debates, both at whole class level and group level. Pupils pondered such issues as the 'Creation' or 'Time and Eternity', while some Year 6 pupils used the story of Joseph and his dreams to voice their own dreams about what would make the world a better place.
72. Christianity is very strongly promoted as a religion. There are several very attractive displays around the school reflecting Biblical stories. Vibrant reds, yellows and oranges are used in the representations of Moses and the Burning Bush, and attractive weaving depicts the Life of Christ. Some displays promote the pupils awareness that God's World is part of all subjects. Pupils develop a good knowledge of the Bible and many themes are revisited at a higher level as the pupils move through the school. They also know about places of worship and study the main Christian festivals in depth.
73. In the lessons seen teaching was good. In one Year 6 lesson a candle was lit, lights turned out and music played to create a calm, reflective atmosphere, thus making it different to other subjects. The teacher's skilled questioning and good use of individual and group discussion developed pupils' knowledge and speaking and listening skills very well. All teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm resulting in the pupils enjoying their learning.
74. A scheme of work has been implemented based on the diocesan, local education authority and Qualification and Curriculum Authorities documentation. While there is some study of other faiths, it is mostly undertaken by older pupils in Year 4 or above. There is little time to study other religions or celebrate their cultures in depth, though some older pupils are able to visit the nearby Islamic Centre. The school's resources are adequate but there are few artefacts to celebrate other religions.

## CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. There were no lessons seen in art and design and music, or in physical education in Years 1 and 2. Two lessons were seen in design and technology and physical education. In addition to observing lessons, pupils discussed their learning and shared their books. Work on display and curriculum plans were examined. Teachers co-ordinate these subjects well and have written useful action plans. Monitoring, particularly of teaching, is at an early stage. In all four subjects secure programmes follow national guidance.
76. From the evidence seen of teachers' planning, work on display, pupils' sketchbooks and discussions with pupils there is every indication that standards in **art and design** are above average and that pupils achieve well in their art work. The pupils very much enjoy art lessons and talk enthusiastically about the work they have done and how they have achieved various effects when talking about a display or their sketch books. It is clear from these discussions and the range of work seen that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Pupils commented that they enjoyed the links made between art and other subjects and how they enjoyed the work that expressed aspects of religious education. Some use of information, communication, and technology skills is being made in art for example using paint programs to produce pictures and to research artists.
77. No judgements were made on standards in art at the time of the last inspection but improvements have been made since then. For example, the subject co-ordinator has introduced a new scheme of work which more closely matches the needs of the pupils. She leads and manages the subject well and shares her enthusiasm other members of staff. Opportunities to monitor and evaluate progress in art have been restricted to talking to pupils and observing completed work that is well displayed around the school.
78. A strength of the **music** provision is the good standard of singing; the pupils know and enjoy singing a good range of songs. There are opportunities for pupils to sing together in lessons and assemblies. They sing tunefully and with good expression and attention to phrasing. The pupils talk with enthusiasm about the performances they take part in for parents, carers and friends of the school. Music is well used to promote the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural education; it particularly contributes well to the personal development of the pupils in assemblies. The school seeks regular opportunities for the pupils to hear and participate in live music such as drumming and string workshops. The older pupils have opportunities to take part in lessons on brass instruments; these are supported financially by the school and the instruments are available on loan to the pupils. The recorder group is run by the music co-ordinator and is enthusiastically attended by a good number of players.
79. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues well by the provision of suitable materials for teaching and learning and by the promotion of music as an important feature of school life. The school has just taken possession of its new music room providing good accommodation for music lessons. It has a good range and number of musical instruments attractively displayed. The school has recently adopted a new commercial scheme of work, giving the teachers clear guidelines as to what they are to teach and supporting the learning with CDs and other materials. This means that the pupils have access to all aspects of the music curriculum including composition, listening and appraising music and participating in singing and playing instruments.

## **Design and technology**

The provision for design and technology is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils' skills in designing and making artefacts are well developed as they move through the school but work is not always closely linked to the needs of different groups of pupils

### **Commentary**

80. The pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. Standards are below those expected by the end of Year 2 and when the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. No judgement was made on standards or achievement at the time of the previous inspection. The school mainly follows the national guidelines on topics to cover in the subject, which helps pupils gain and develop skills in design and making as they move through the school. They develop a good level of expertise in cutting, joining and fixing materials. Elements of the curriculum, such as testing and evaluating, are also present and most pupils are able to express their opinions about their work.
81. Teaching seen during the inspection reached a good standard. All pupils were included in the lessons and were well supported to achieve the tasks set. Good modelling of the processes, for example, using a template and cutting out the shape of a glove puppet helped the Year 2 pupils to understand what they have to do. Excitement and interest were successfully encouraged in the lessons, and in Year 5 pupils took real pleasure from the sounds that their shakers produced. Older pupils talked with enthusiasm about the bridges they constructed from newspaper. There are some links to other subjects. Some good examples of this were seen in the scrutiny of the previous years' work, as when pupils design and make a lighthouse and use their knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits to make it light. There are good opportunities for the pupils to use skills learned in mathematics, for example, when they measure materials. While learning about instructional texts in literacy lessons the Year 3 pupils tested out instructions for making paper trees. In a good literacy lesson the teacher demonstrated making sandwiches and the teaching assistant followed the directions given by the pupils which involved them in being precise and detailed in their use of language.
82. The leadership and management of this subject are good, and the subject action plan is realistic. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is helping her colleagues to develop their teaching skills, largely by developing an additional scheme of work to support the national guidelines. She monitors the subject through conversations with pupils and teachers but has had limited opportunities to see teaching and learning in the classrooms. While the school has rightly concentrated on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, there have been few opportunities to develop those in design and technology. The school has plans to improve resources and develop planning to ensure that work is more closely matched to the needs of pupils to ensure continuity of learning and the progression of skills.

## **Physical education**

Provision for physical education (PE) is **good**.



## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality after school clubs extend learning for all pupils including the talented
- The school makes very good use of links with other schools including the local secondary school to extend its programme and enhance expertise
- The subject is well led and the action plan contains a realistic set of objectives

## Commentary

83. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. In the two lessons seen in Years 3 and 5 standards are in line with national expectations in gymnastics. Pupils create sequences of linked and contrasting movements and co-operate very well together to use space sensibly. They are beginning to evaluate their work and to comment sensibly on other pupils' performance. Teaching is good and work is well planned and linked to previous work. Instructions are precise and the correct vocabulary is taught and used by pupils. Pupils are expected to get out the apparatus and put it away and, though they are a little noisy, they do this with good regard for safety.
84. The school uses its facilities effectively to teach all aspects of physical education and the provision has improved since the last inspection. It has identified a number of talented pupils and these pupils are well supported by the many clubs on offer. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of competitive sport and are successful in several competitions including football and netball. Older pupils have regular swimming lessons. Pupils of all ages participate in residential visits which are largely centred on exciting opportunities for outdoor pursuits. The school field is a short distance from the school.
85. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who has a national reputation in some aspects of the subject. The staff team provide exceptional support for this subject outside the classroom. Pupils and parents appreciate this.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. No lessons were observed in **personal, social and health education** and therefore a judgement on the quality of provision cannot be made. However, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and displays, discussions with teachers and pupils, plus parental feedback, it appears that the schools' programme in this area is having a very positive impact on pupils' personal development.
87. The school places a high priority on this aspect of the pupils' development and there is attention paid to it in most of the school's activities, whether lining up in the play ground or sharing opinions politely in lessons. Citizenship is intrinsically linked with the religious education programme and the Christian ethos of the school. The newly formed school's council helps pupils to see citizenship in action. The school places a high priority on children valuing themselves, nurturing confidence and encouraging an awareness of the need to act responsibly.
88. The provision meets statutory requirements for education about sex and relationships whilst all pupils take part in the 'Drugs Roadshow' as part of a drugs education programme. The science scheme of work includes raising awareness of healthy living, the dangers of smoking and the need for exercise. A range of extra-curricular sporting activities, accessed by a good percentage of pupils, extends the awareness of, and

participation in, healthy exercise. There is a brief policy for citizenship which is part of encouraging pupils to value God's world and their place in it. It enables staff to nurture the pupils' moral attitude as well as to respond to their personal and emotional needs. Pupils and adults in the school value all members of the community and welcome new pupils with warmth and support. Residential visits help the pupils to understand how different rules apply when they live as well as work together. They are encouraged to voice their opinions about a wide range of issues particularly during religious education lessons. Paired, or small group discussions are a good strategy used by teachers to encourage pupils to listen to the views of others. Pupils' take pride in their school and feel valued as individuals.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>5</b>
Pupils' achievement	3
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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