

INSPECTION REPORT

THRILOW CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thriplow, Royston

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110835

Headteacher: Mrs Amanda Tuck

Lead inspector: Mrs Joy Richardson

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 January 2005

Inspection number: 268116

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	96
School address:	School Lane Thriplow Royston Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG8 7RH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Turner
Date of previous inspection:	3 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. It has 96 pupils from Reception to Year 6, in four classes. Around half the pupils come from the parish of Thriplow, which includes Pepperslade and Heathfield, and half are from further afield. Children start in Reception in September following their fourth birthday. Their attainment on entry varies widely, but is generally above average, overall. A few children come from a minority ethnic background and several are of mixed heritage. Three children are bilingual but all speak fluent English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average, with the highest proportion in the oldest class, and one pupil has a statement. Mobility is higher than average and a third of the pupils currently in Year 6 have joined the school since the end of Year 2. The school gained a School Achievement Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003. In 2004 it was recognised as a Health Promoting School, and as a British Council International School.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6676	Joy Richardson	Lead inspector	Foundation stage English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
9744	Peter Brown	Lay inspector	
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	English as an additional language Special educational needs Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History French Italian

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with many distinctive strengths. Pupils are well taught and thrive as learners, achieving high standards by the time they leave. The school is very well led and managed. It provides an exceptionally broad range of opportunities for pupils, giving them a stimulating all-round education. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve particularly well in English and science.
- The school is very well led and managed, to extend opportunities for pupils.
- Teaching is well-planned and purposeful, ensuring that all pupils make progress.
- Pupils develop as confident, articulate and thoughtful learners.
- The school provides an international perspective and stimulates interest in the wider world.
- Exceptional breadth of provision is underpinned by excellent links beyond the school.
- Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are not consistently developed.
- Pupils have a highly-developed sense of community and know that their contribution matters.
- There are shortcomings in the school's accommodation that restrict its work.

The school has developed well since the previous inspection, improving in many areas. Standards have risen further. The curriculum is now planned and monitored more thoroughly. The use of assessment has improved significantly, giving a clear view of the progress pupils are making. Every opportunity has been taken to enrich and extend the education offered to pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is good. Children achieve well in Reception. Most children reach and some exceed the goals set nationally for the end of Reception, in all the areas of learning. They continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2, reaching standards that are above the national average, overall. Achievement is good in Years 3 and 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6, so that standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are well above the national average by the time pupils leave.

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

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

Numbers in each cohort are small and results must therefore be interpreted with caution. However, the results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been consistently well above the national average in recent years, and the upward trend in results has been above the national trend. In 2004, results in English were in the highest five per cent of schools nationally, and in comparison with similar schools. In the current Year 6, standards are well above average, overall, although targets are somewhat lower for this year group because of the number of pupils with special educational needs.

In 2004, results at the end of Year 2 were above the national average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. These results, taken together, were below average in comparison

with similar schools. The work of pupils currently in Year 2 shows more consistent attainment and standards are above average, overall.

Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with national expectations. ICT is widely used but pupils' skills develop unevenly. The work sampled in other subjects shows that good standards are being reached in many areas. Pupils do very well in music, and this is a strength of the school. They make a very good start in learning Italian and French. As the school is a voluntary aided church school, religious education was not formally included in this inspection.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, making good progress towards the targets set for them.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils are very positive in their attitudes to learning and they behave very well. They look after others, for example, through the 'buddy' system. They enjoy taking responsibility and showing initiative. The school's many international links stimulate pupils' curiosity about people and their understanding of other cultures. The overall attendance rate is satisfactory, though held down by extra days added to holidays, which can be disruptive to learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good throughout the school. Consistently good teaching over time, a well-planned curriculum, careful monitoring of progress and high expectations, lead to very good standards by the time pupils leave. Pupils learn well. The school encourages them to think, to wonder about things, and to express their ideas. Teaching assistants and well-targeted support programmes add to the effectiveness of learning. The curriculum is broad and imaginative. Beyond normal lessons, pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, visits and special events. The opportunities provided for pupils are excellent. Much is made possible by the very productive partnerships established with parents, the community, and other agencies and schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher harnesses the efforts of everyone involved in the school very effectively, intent on achieving the best for pupils. All the teachers contribute well to developing the curriculum. Governors have a very good oversight and are very supportive of the school's work. The school is very well run.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are highly satisfied with the school. They praise the quality of teaching and leadership, the positive attitudes that the school instils and the range of activities it provides. Pupils know that they are listened to and can make a difference. They find learning stimulating and relish their involvement in community life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to build further on its strengths the school should:

- Follow through plans for further developing provision in ICT, to strengthen teaching and assessment and to extend the skills of all pupils in using ICT as a tool for learning.
- Pursue the implementation of building plans, in order to improve access for all, facilities for the headteacher and staff, and spaces for working with groups of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good, overall, and very good in Years 5 and 6. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2, and well above average at the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High standards in English, and particularly in reading, are a strength of the school.
- A strong emphasis on enquiry and investigation leads to very good standards in science.
- Achievement is very good, overall, in the older years, building on the foundations laid earlier.
- Standards broadly match national expectations in ICT, but pupils' competence varies widely.
- Pupils generally achieve well across a broad range of subjects and activities.
- Pupils do well in mathematics, but the school is working for further improvement.

Commentary

1. Children's skills on entry are generally above average, overall. Children achieve well in the Reception year. Most are on course to reach the early learning goals for the end of Reception, in all the areas of learning, and some are on course to exceed them.
2. Results in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were above the national average in reading and writing. In mathematics, results were below the national average, mainly because few pupils achieved beyond Level 2, the level expected at this age. Standards in the work of pupils now in Year 2 are better, overall, and the school is working effectively to strengthen achievement in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (17.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.2 (17.0)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.4 (17.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 10 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were well above the national average and the average in similar schools. In both English and science, all the pupils reached at least Level 4, the level expected at this age, and a high proportion exceeded this level: 80 per cent in English, and 70 per cent in science, reached Level 5. In mathematics, 50 per cent reached this level, which was lower than in similar schools. The progress made by these pupils between Year 2 and Year 6 was rather less in mathematics than in English and science.
4. The current cohort of pupils in Year 6 is achieving very well, overall, although targets for this year group are lower than those of the previous year because more pupils have special educational needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.8 (29.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.4 (28.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	31.2 (31.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 10 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards are high, overall, in English, and particularly in reading, because there is a strong emphasis on literacy, and basic skills are taught thoroughly. Pupils read frequently at school and at home, and wide reading, for pleasure and to find information, is strongly encouraged. Links between subjects provide many opportunities for reading and writing for a purpose. The school's emphasis on active enquiry and investigation feeds scientific thinking and curiosity, and pupils gain knowledge and understanding in the process. In mathematics, pupils are encouraged to reason and to apply their skills. The school recognises that more could be done to promote the speedy recall of number facts, and to give pupils goals to work towards. It is also initiating a project to increase the sense of fun and excitement in mathematical learning through games and challenges.
- In ICT, standards throughout the school are broadly in line with national expectations. The school uses ICT widely and well as a tool for teaching and learning. Interactive whiteboards are used well in classrooms as an aid to learning. Pupils have opportunities to word process their work to carry out research using the Internet. However, pupils' attainment is not built upon progressively and systematically and their skills vary widely, often depending on the experience they bring from home.
- Pupils have the opportunity to succeed in many areas. This is reflected in the high standards seen in music, and in pupils' good achievement in the learning of Italian and French.
- The school monitors pupils' progress closely and intervenes effectively to give extra support where this is needed. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, making good progress towards the targets set for them, often to the point where extra help is no longer needed. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and provision is tailored to their needs so that they achieve well. The school has been alert to the needs of boys, for example, in the teaching of literacy. Although numbers are too small to draw a robust conclusion, the test results in recent years show boys achieving even better than girls, overall, and doing very well in comparison with boys nationally. Pupils from an ethnic minority background, and those who speak English as an additional language, make progress in line with their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Behaviour, attitudes, and relationships are very good, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Punctuality is good and attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and every aspect of school life.
- Pupils behave very well, in and out of lessons, developing independence and responsibility.
- Relationships are very good between pupils of all ages and with adults.
- Pupils take a wide and caring interest in the world around them.

Commentary

9. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, are very positive in their attitudes to school. In class they are highly motivated to learn and many participate in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available to them.
10. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good, providing a firm foundation on which learning can be built. A very effective 'buddy' system, based on 'family' groups, including children of different ages, is reflected in very strong relationships between pupils of all ages. Pupils know and care for one another and older pupils feel a sense of responsibility towards younger ones.
11. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to display initiative. For example, there is a highly effective School Council run by the pupils themselves. They take decisions about spending small amounts of money, and the whole school develops a keen interest in the issues discussed.
12. Pupils are given responsibilities by teachers and they take pride in doing jobs around the school. All this helps to build confidence and self-esteem.
13. Pupils behave very well, both in and out of the classroom. They are attentive, well-mannered, and sensitive to the needs of others. Concerns about bullying are extremely rare, and any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively. Procedures to promote high standards of behaviour are consistently implemented and fully understood and accepted by pupils. There have been no exclusions in recent years. Spiritual development is an integral part of the school's life as a church school. There are frequent opportunities for reflection at assemblies and in prayers during the day. Pupils frequently visit the local Parish Church, and also make visits to Ely Cathedral in order to experience its awe-inspiring architecture.
14. The school places a strong emphasis on developing moral awareness, and social responsibility. Pupils fully understand the difference between right and wrong and are able to consider and discuss moral issues, as when older pupils deliberated over the significance of respect. Pupils work very well collaboratively, as in a religious education lesson when pupils debated a wide range of theological issues, moving thoughtfully towards a consensus. Pupils are skilled at sharing ideas, generous in helping one another, and purposeful in working together to get a job done. They develop an understanding of citizenship in learning how society works, and helping to look after their environment.
15. The school is highly successful in promoting pupils' cultural development. It introduces them to the richness of their own and other cultures, as expressed, for example, in religion, music and dance. Pupils develop a wide international perspective, which is reflected in the school's accreditation as a British Council International School. Pupils benefit from a range of links forged with peoples and places around the world, including visits to an international festival in Sorrento, visits from teachers in other countries and links with a hospital in Malawi. Pupils develop a keen interest in other countries, and the way people live, and concern for others. For example, the School Council voted money, which pupils raised, to buy footballs for children in Malawi. The pupils had been fascinated to see a home-made ball, constructed from black bin bags and string, and a toy intricately made from waste materials. They recognised that children who owned far less than they did shared the same interests and skills.
16. The attendance rate has improved and is now satisfactory. However, a minority of parents often takes extra holiday days during term-time and this disrupts continuity in learning for the individual and the class. Procedures for promoting regular attendance are now good and are being more rigorously implemented. Consequently, school time lost to holidays is decreasing.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003-2004 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.0
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.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the previous academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Pupils are consistently well taught and they learn effectively. The breadth and enrichment of the curriculum, and the partnerships which support learning, are distinctive strengths of the school.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is well-planned, thorough and knowledgeable.
- Pupils are encouraged to explore and explain ideas, to develop their understanding.
- Teachers monitor progress well and help pupils to evaluate their own learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	3	22	2	0	0	0

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

17. Teaching is good in all classes, and in all subjects. Teamwork is strong, good practice is shared and expectations are consistent. Staff, as well as pupils, see themselves as learners, and share the interest and enjoyment of learning.
18. Teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and manage their classes very well, giving everyone the opportunity to participate. Teachers ask questions skilfully to engage pupils, to check understanding and to develop ideas further. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives for pupils' learning, although these are not always related closely enough to what pupils can or cannot do. Pupils listen attentively and readily express their ideas. They concentrate well and develop good work habits. These are very evident in the oldest class where pupils settle quickly and quietly to work and apply themselves industriously.
19. The school's involvement in an action research project to promote scientific thinking has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to make connections, and to give explanations. This shapes their thinking, as when pupils discussed the 'odd one out' among three types of paper, extending understanding of the properties of materials in the process.

20. Teachers have a clear picture of the progress which pupils are making. Individual progress is tracked through the school and teachers set targets for each year. Pupils have goals to work towards, for example, in literacy, talking confidently about the need to make better use of connectives, or descriptive detail, in their writing. Marking is very effective in the older years, creating a dialogue which helps pupils to understand what they must do to improve, and motivating them to do it.
21. Staff are alert to pupils' special educational needs, and to any lack of progress by individuals. The school directs support to where it is needed. Teaching assistants support pupils well in lessons, though they are not always used to maximum effect during introductory teaching. They make a very strong contribution when they withdraw individuals and groups for carefully-targeted programmes of support, for example, in spelling. These programmes are skilfully taught and pupils respond well to work that is matched to their level, and they enjoy the individual attention they receive. 'Booster' groups, taught by the headteacher, provide valuable support and extension in literacy and numeracy for lower- and higher-attaining groups of Year 6 pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are identified, and motivated through extension work in lessons and involvement in activities and challenges beyond the classroom.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good, and excellently enriched by additional activities and special events.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a broad and imaginative curriculum.
- Pupils are encouraged to investigate and apply their skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils have excellent opportunities to take part in out-of-school clubs, activities and visits.

Commentary

22. The curriculum is very good. All the required subjects are taught, with good emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Unusually, the school also makes provision for modern foreign languages. The teaching of Italian and French, in lessons for older pupils and in clubs for all ages, adds to the breadth and variety of the curriculum. Personal and social education also has a high profile in the school; both through discrete lessons, and through wider activities such as the School Council, the 'buddy' system, and the 'Children's Charter', that outlines pupils' mutually agreed rights and responsibilities. Some subjects, such as history and geography, are taught in alternate terms, but the coverage is sufficient to meet requirements.
23. The school has a well-constructed 'curriculum map', which sets out the teaching of topics within and across subjects, in a two-year rolling programme for each of the mixed-age classes. Work within topics maximises the links between subjects. Across the curriculum, there is an emphasis on investigation, practical problem-solving and the application of skills for a purpose. This nurtures interest and independence in learning and the approach is well supported by continuing work on the development of thinking skills. ICT is widely used as a tool for teaching and learning, although this does not fully ensure that pupils steadily extend their skills.
24. The curriculum is excellently enriched by visits and special events in which all pupils participate. Many trips are organised to places connected with lessons, including visits within the local area, and to museums and historic buildings. For example, as part of their personal and social education, pupils have visited the magistrates' court. School productions, concerts and services feature frequently in school life.

25. In addition, pupils can join a very wide range of clubs, including football, netball, language clubs, recorders, choir, art, nature and model-making. A homework club is available which supports pupils in doing their homework and helps them to establish good habits in working independently. Under the expert guidance of a parent, a group of pupils produces the excellent 'Thriplow Times' newspaper, learning much in the process about interviewing and writing reports. The school encourages pupils to play a musical instrument and many pupils have individual tuition during the school day, in guitar, piano, violin, drums or woodwind. There are some sporting opportunities to compete with others in games and tournaments. Older pupils have the opportunity for residential visits to the Isle of Wight, which add much to their social and educational development. Several groups have been on an educational visit to Italy. This wealth of additional activities makes the curriculum very rich for pupils who take full advantage of them, as many do. Although there are charges for some of the extra activities which the school provides, the school works hard to ensure that this does not restrict access to opportunities.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well. They have good access to all subjects and activities, individually or within a group, and are assisted by support staff when necessary. Individual education plans are well focused and all staff have a clear understanding of pupils' needs. The school is quick to follow up any concerns about pupils' progress, consulting with parents and planning a course of action that is reviewed regularly. As a result, many pupils receive extra help for a limited period and can then be removed from the list of those requiring additional support. Support staff make a strong contribution in working with small groups, for example, in additional literacy and spelling. Teaching assistants also lead the 'Get-along Gang', which meets twice weekly before school for 'brain gym exercises', giving help to pupils who need it in following a sequence of instructions and co-ordinating movements.
27. There are no pupils in the school at present who need support in learning English as an additional language. In the past, a few pupils have joined the school from other countries speaking little English. Discussion indicates that staff have been well able to assist them fully in lessons and wider activities, and that these pupils have made very rapid progress.
28. The accommodation is adequate, although some rooms are a little cramped and there are no spare rooms for additional activities such as support groups and music tuition. The staffroom is small and the headteacher does not have an office. Although space is well used, these limitations are a constraint on the school's work. Plans for building improvements have been drawn up and are due to be implemented shortly. The school's resources are good, and used effectively. Many lessons are very well supported by use of the interactive whiteboard, which features in each classroom.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares very well for pupils. It provides a safe and healthy environment. The support and guidance available to pupils is very good and the school is highly effective in seeking, and acting upon, the views of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school attends very closely to pupils health, safety and well-being.
- Pupils are very well known and supported as individuals.
- Pupils are consulted very effectively about school life and their views are respected.

Commentary

29. Procedures for health and safety, including those related to child protection, are very good. The quality of risk assessments is very high, as seen in those prepared in advance of external

- visits. Thorough health and safety inspections are conducted each term by a designated governor and teacher and there are effective procedures to rectify any hazards identified.
30. Internal access between levels requires the use of a flight of stairs, posing problems for anyone with walking difficulties, but the plans for improving the building include the provision of wheelchair access. Inspectors also noted that the steep grassy slope to the upper level playground, frequently used as a shortcut by parents, is difficult to negotiate, particularly for pushchairs or wheelchairs. Very good attention is paid to safety in the classroom, a particularly good example being a documented hazard analysis prepared by pupils prior to a design and technology lesson involving the preparation of food.
 31. Teachers, and support staff, provide a very good quality of pastoral care, based on their close knowledge of pupils and on the excellent relationships that have been established between them. Midday supervisors know the pupils well, as seen in an exercise session led by them during a wet lunch-time. Pupils are well supervised in the playground and encouraged to make full use of a very good range of equipment, and to learn new activities. Pupils confirm that their teachers are both able and willing to provide any required advice or support. The school is particularly effective at providing bereavement counselling, and a comprehensive pack of resources is available, to which pupils and members of staff have access.
 32. Induction arrangements for pupils starting school are very good, so that most make this transition easily. There are close contacts with the 'Ladybird' playgroup on the site, which many children attend before joining the school. Pupils welcome newcomers and are understanding of the needs of younger children.
 33. The school is highly effective in seeking the views of pupils and, where appropriate, acting upon these. This is achieved through an annual questionnaire, a well-organised and active school council, and frequent classroom discussions. The pupils' sense of involvement was demonstrated when pupils in the large Years 5 and 6 class used a session about persuasive writing to compose letters to the headteacher, arguing the case for an enlarged classroom. Pupils know that their views matter and are taken into account.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Very good partnerships have been established with parents and other educational providers. Links with the local community are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with the community and other agencies add greatly to the richness of the curriculum.
- The school's very effective partnership with parents contributes much to pupils' learning.

Commentary

34. The school is held in very high regard by parents. They speak highly of the school's leadership and management, the quality of teaching, and the progress pupils make. They consider the pastoral care for pupils, including that for those with special needs, to be very good and believe that their children are educated in a safe and healthy environment. The evidence from the inspection endorses these views.
35. Communication with parents is very good. The school prospectus is detailed, reader-friendly and provides a very good introduction to all the facets of school life. The Governors' Annual Report provides a very good summary of recent events and achievements and fully meets statutory requirements. A lively and interesting newsletter is published weekly and provides parents with up-to-date information and an insight into school life. Annual written reports provide a comprehensive summary of pupils' progress and achievements over the year and useful information concerning personal development and current targets. The reports are very informative about progress in English, mathematics and science though rather less so

with respect to other subjects. Written communication is very well supported by termly parent evenings. There is very good informal contact between teachers and parents before and after school. Parents greatly value this easy access to teachers when they have a concern.

36. Parental involvement in the life of the school is very good and this makes a major contribution to pupils' learning. The support for homework and reading at home is generally strong. Regular curriculum workshops are found useful by parents in keeping them informed about the work their children are doing. Many parents help in the classroom and with school visits. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school community, as shown by a termly 'groundwork day' when parents, children, staff and governors work together on a Saturday to keep the school's grounds in good order. The Parent-Teacher Association is very successful, both in raising funds and in organising social activities. The school consults very well with parents through annual questionnaires, regular meetings, and informal discussion. The recent redrafting of the Home-School Agreement took careful account of comments received from parents. Although complaints from parents are rare, appropriate mechanisms have been established to deal with any that might arise.
37. Links with the local community are excellent and greatly enrich the curriculum. As a church school, there is a close bond with the local parish church, which the pupils visit regularly, and the vicar frequently leads assembly in school. A local plant-breeding business, specialising in seed cross-fertilisation, is supporting a science project with the school involving the development of new pea strains. Links with the Imperial War Museum at Duxford greatly enhance the history curriculum, and pupils' practical understanding of science and technology. Pupils explore the history of the locality. The school is planning a project, and seeking funding, to interview and video-record the experiences of war veterans and others about activity around the Duxford airbase during the Second World War. The school participates actively in the annual village Daffodil Weekend, providing buskers, refreshments, and handicrafts. In return, the village provides the school with financial support through the Daffodil Weekend Trust, and the proceeds from quizzes run by the local pub.
38. Very fruitful partnerships have been established with the local playgroup and secondary schools, which ensure a smooth transition both from pre-school provision and into secondary education. Links with other primary schools facilitate highly effective in-service training and action research activities, curriculum development, and joint sporting initiatives. The teaching of science has been greatly enhanced by the school's links with St John's College, Cambridge, and the Gatsby Foundation, which have jointly funded a project to develop investigative skills, understanding of science, and resource material suitable for primary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The leadership of the headteacher is very effective. The school is managed very well. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads with vision to maximise opportunities for pupils.
- The efforts of all involved in the school community are harnessed very effectively to the benefit of pupils.
- The school evaluates its performance very well, and is committed to continuing improvement.

Commentary

39. The headteacher has a clear vision of the school as a learning community that seeks to provide the widest possible education for pupils. The headteacher is innovative and imaginative in developing the curriculum and approaches to learning. She is very effective in drawing on the support of staff, parents, governors and external partners, and in securing

funding for initiatives, to extend the boundaries of the school's work. This is seen, for example, in the forging of international links, including annual visits to Sorrento, the teaching of French and Italian and involvement in action research projects in science. Plans are now in hand for a 'Maths Funtastic' project, and for a history project recording memories from the Second World War. The headteacher is very good at seeing the possibilities, enthusing others, and keeping strong lines of communication. A wide range of initiatives is managed very well so that they have a sustained impact on pupils' learning.

40. Although the school is too small to have a senior management team, all the teachers are active and enthusiastic in developing and monitoring the curriculum. The headteacher delegates responsibility, encouraging others to take a lead, and making very effective use of the skills and expertise of others. She plays a leading role within the local 'cluster group' of schools, initiating and co-ordinating projects and the sharing of outcomes. The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training, and welcomes visiting teachers from abroad. Good support is being provided for a newly qualified teachers.
41. The quality of teaching and learning are monitored well through the observation of lessons, with constructive feedback to staff. Arrangements for performance management are very good, building a shared sense of direction. Pupils' progress is tracked closely, with attention to the 'value added' from year to year, and appropriate action is taken to prevent pupils from falling behind. The school evaluates its own performance thoughtfully and clearly identifies areas where it is seeking to improve further. School improvement planning is ongoing, and staff, governors, parents and pupils all make an input to this.
42. Governors are very well-informed and active in their support for the school. They are fully involved in planning for the future, and in pursuing the planned improvements to the building. They create a strong bridge to the parent body and the local community. The governors have their own development plan, covering key areas of their work. They have actively sought training, for example initiating training for governors in personnel management in conjunction with the local secondary school.
43. The school is very well run and finances are managed efficiently. The school has a balanced budget. The use of money carried forward from previous years has been well planned as part of the school's contribution to the building improvement programme. Great care is being taken to secure best value. Expenditure per pupil is broadly average for the type of school, and the school uses its resources well to achieve high standards and breadth of opportunity for pupils. It gives good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	296,494	Balance from previous year	26,099
Total expenditure	292,754	Balance carried forward to the next	29,839
Expenditure per pupil	3,050		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle in well as members of the school community.
- Good foundations are laid in reading.
- Children listen carefully and speak confidently in a group.
- Good provision is made in all the required areas of learning.
- The school has plans to extend the limited opportunities for outdoor learning.

Commentary

44. There are currently 15 children of Reception age in a mixed-age class, including some Year 1 pupils. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of both age groups, and to ensure that the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum are fulfilled.
45. When children start in Reception, they are generally well advanced for their age in their language and social skills, they are beginning to count and are interested in books. The children achieve well over the year in making progress towards the early learning goals for the end of Reception. Most children meet and some exceed these goals in each area of learning.
46. Teaching is good in all the areas of learning and basic skills are taught thoroughly and effectively. The children are taught as a single year group for one day each week, and this helps to ensure that foundations are strongly laid. Assessment is ongoing and effective in tracking the steps taken towards the early learning goals. The teacher and teaching assistants record observations that build a clear picture of each child's learning and development and help to focus future teaching.
47. Children's **personal, social and emotional development** is nurtured very well. The children learn to abide by simple class rules, such as not calling out, which are consistently reinforced. The children take pride in knowing and following simple routines. They listen attentively, showing interest and curiosity. They readily participate in class and group activities, co-operating happily with others. They take a full part in school life, enjoying playtimes, and making friends across the age groups. Their sense of belonging to the school community, right from the start, is supported by their membership of a 'buddy' group, which includes children of all ages.
48. Good foundations are laid in **communication, language and literacy**. Children are encouraged to talk and to share their ideas, and have a receptive audience when they do so. They learn the sounds of letters and combine them to read simple words. They enjoy showing what they know; for example, taking delight in locating mistakes made by 'Jessie' the doll puppet when she read 'fan' for 'pan', or 'pet' for 'pen'. The children enjoy browsing books and listening to stories. They are beginning to read simple caption books and to recognise a range of common words. Their writing is less well developed, but most can write their name. A few are beginning to attempt the writing of a simple sentence, drawing on their knowledge of sounds and common words.
49. In **mathematical development**, most children can count and recognise numbers to nine, and they have many opportunities for counting. The children enjoy exploring numbers, although little emphasis is given to learning to write them. Around half the children are beginning to calculate, for example, working out 'one more' than three or five. The school is exploring ways to develop this aspect of the curriculum further. Children learn about the properties of

shapes and their knowledge is reinforced well in practical ways, for example, in making models.

50. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is extended through a range of activities. They have ready access to the computers and enjoy exploring the use of the interactive whiteboard. They make models and are inventive in their ideas; for example, turning a bottle into a 'ferry', a 'spaceship', a 'teapot' or a 'shaker'. They begin to think scientifically, as when, exploring the sense of sight, they tested how well they could draw with their eyes closed, or investigated the working of a magnifying glass.
51. **Creative development** is encouraged through imaginative engagement in activities such as model-making and construction activities, role-play and dressing up. Children begin to use a sketch-book and are helped to look closely, as when observing and drawing houses and churches. They paint and explore the mixing of colours, and use a wide range of materials in making pictures and models. The children share ideas well, as when choosing the colours of tissue paper to create a 'stained glass window'.
52. Children's **physical development** is supported by regular physical education lessons. They make full use of the playground equipment, enjoying opportunities for climbing and testing their skills. Structured play during afternoon playtimes extends their involvement in physical play. They learn to manipulate tools and materials and to handle equipment carefully and safely. There is an enclosed outdoor area with a playhouse, but other equipment is limited. The school has plans to cover this area in order to extend its use for outdoor learning, and to increase the range of equipment available.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy words and develop very good skills in speaking and listening.
- Standards are high in reading throughout the school.
- Skills in writing and spelling are well taught.
- Pupils are given very good guidance about how to improve.

Commentary

53. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2, and well above average at the end of Year 6. This shows good improvement since the last inspection. Achievement in reading is very good throughout the school.
54. Careful attention is paid to developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening. Pupils are expected to listen to the teacher and to one another with respect, and this creates an attentive audience that gives children confidence in contributing. In all subjects, technical vocabulary is introduced, explained and practised purposefully. Pupils are encouraged to identify words they do not understand, for example, in guided reading. Teachers help pupils to organise their ideas in words, encouraging them to explain their thinking, or to explore situations through role-play. Pupils respond well, particularly enjoying the open-endedness of questions in thinking activities such as 'odd one out'.

55. Standards are high in reading because of the emphasis it is given in the school, and the extent of support from home. Most parents hear their children read regularly at home, and many also give voluntary help in school. This extends the opportunity for pupils who are not yet fluent readers to be heard to read individually on most days, by a teacher, teaching assistant or volunteer, in addition to reading in lessons. As a result, pupils make good progress through the colour-banded stages of the reading scheme. They enjoy a wide reading diet in guided reading sessions, including much non-fiction, and have ready access to the school library. Most pupils enjoy reading and some become avid readers, reading their way through a series of books by favourite authors. However, when pupils become 'free readers' their choice of books for individual reading is not always guided closely enough to ensure progression and the sharing of recommendations. Daily guided reading sessions are well organised, and pupils' reading skills are extended through group reading at an appropriate level. Pupils are confident in reading for information, learning how to find answers to questions, taking notes and organising their findings. Their research skills, using books and computers, are very well developed.
56. Handwriting is taught systematically, and many pupils develop a fluent joined style, which they use consistently. However, the presentation of work is variable in quality and sometimes rather untidy.
57. The school has been developing its teaching of spelling and the standard is generally good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are assiduous in practising spelling and take pride in mastering difficult words. Writing skills are taught systematically, although able younger pupils need more challenge and opportunity to write at length. Sometimes too much time is spent talking about writing rather than doing it. Older pupils take great pleasure in crafting stories, as seen in their concentration when writing a section for an 'Elizabethan story'. They are rightly proud of the books they have created to share with pupils in the youngest class.
58. Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan well for shared and guided reading sessions, building systematically on pupils' skills. Learning objectives are shared with pupils, although these are not always related closely enough to strengths and weaknesses in pupils' own work. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly, for example, analysing a sample of writing from each child each term, to identify the progress made and the next steps to be taken. Older pupils track their own progress against targets and have a clear view of what they must concentrate on to improve their work. Marking in the oldest class is very good, highlighting achievement and what could be better. The teaching of support programmes by teaching assistants is lively and motivating for pupils and helps them to keep up. Booster groups for pupils in Year 6 aid the acceleration of progress by pupils of all abilities, which is a feature of the older years.
59. The subject is led and managed very well. The co-ordinator monitors work across the school. She works closely with the whole-staff team to develop the subject further, and to make learning stimulating and interesting for pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The curriculum is planned to make the most of cross-curricular links. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing, are developed and applied to very good effect in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils write for a clear purpose, for example, in science. This helps them to organise and reflect on their learning, although the opportunity for such writing tends to be limited by the emphasis on practical work. Pupils read a wide range of non-fiction texts and are very confident in reading for information whenever this is needed to support work in other subjects. Pupils use computers to word-process their work and to carry out research using the Internet.

Modern foreign languages

61. One lesson of Italian and one of French was observed, so it was not possible to make overall judgements about these subjects. However, the school's provision for modern foreign languages reflects its promotion of international awareness and its concern to maximise opportunities for pupils. The teaching of French and Italian is appreciated by pupils and by parents. It lays good foundations for future learning, establishes interest in languages and heightens awareness of other languages and cultures.
62. **French** is taught for half an hour a week to all pupils in Years 5 and 6. In addition, a French club, which is open to younger pupils, operates each week and there is a charge for this. Many pupils are interested in the language, as seen when two boys in Year 2, when looking at a book, took great pleasure in counting in French. The French lesson observed was well prepared, and it was led in a lively way that engaged pupils. Their learning was good, and they mastered a range of vocabulary to do with fruits and other foodstuffs, mainly through a series of interactive games. The teaching is well organised and plans for what is to be learned in the long term are good.
63. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn **Italian** for half an hour each week. In addition, two Italian clubs operate weekly, for older and younger pupils, for which there is a charge. The Italian lesson seen was excellent. The teaching was very well planned and prepared, and the lesson was led with great energy and enthusiasm. Pupils were hanging on to every word and responding with eagerness. They behaved impeccably, even during games based on 'Charlie's Angels' and 'James Bond'. Their motivation was highly impressive, as was their accent in speaking Italian, the range of words they already knew, and the confidence with which they responded to the teaching and to one another. There is a very good plan of what is to be learned in the long term, and the teacher has created a good range of very appropriate resources. The school has ongoing links with the Sorrento area of Italy. Trips there have included visits to Italian schools, as well as to such tourist sites as Pompeii and Herculaneum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to think mathematically and to apply their skills practically.
- Teaching is well planned to build steadily on previous learning.
- The school has plans for further strengthening its provision in mathematics.

Commentary

64. Pupils attain well compared with national expectations by the end of Year 2, and very well by the end of Year 6.
65. Teaching is good. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons very well. Teachers are very good at asking probing questions. They encourage pupils to think and to explain their ideas. They use a good range of equipment, including interactive whiteboards, to help pupils understand. Support programmes are provided for lower-attaining pupils to help them in areas where they are having difficulties, and there are 'booster' sessions for all the pupils in Year 6. High-attaining pupils are encouraged to pursue mathematical challenges for homework, and special teaching arrangements are made for pupils of exceptional ability.

66. Pupils are well motivated to learn by teaching that is often lively. Pupils pay good attention, and are willing to work hard, whether in practical investigations or in doing more routine work. Teachers plan activities for pupils of different abilities, but some lessons do not give enough challenge for the most able. Teachers mark pupils' work well, and give much positive feedback to individuals during lessons.
67. The good teaching results in good progress, and the effect builds up as pupils develop through the school. Pupils are achieving well by the end of Year 2, and very well by the end of Year 6. The strength of pupils' attainment is seen in their ability to investigate and solve problems in all areas of mathematics. This is the major focus of the planning and teaching. Pupils learn how to use and apply their skills in different situations. Their skill in manipulating numbers for practical purposes is underpinned by the learning of number facts and multiplication tables. However, some need more specific goals in this area, with a view to helping them work at increasing speed in manipulating numbers. There is a good emphasis on practical learning, but expectations about the quantity and presentation of work are not always high enough.
68. The subject is very well co-ordinated and teaching is monitored throughout the school on a regular basis. Pupils' progress is assessed regularly, and this information is used well in deciding what needs to be taught next and which pupils would benefit from additional lessons. A good range of resources has been built up well. The school is planning to enhance its provision in mathematics further. It recognises that, although standards are high by the time pupils leave, the pace of progress is not quite as strong as in other subjects. It has secured funding for a 'Maths Funtastic' project to promote mathematical thinking and excitement in learning, through games and challenges in and out of the classroom.
69. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen throughout the school. The assessment of pupils' progress and the co-ordination of the subject are much improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Mathematics is well reinforced and developed in other subjects. This is seen in the use of mathematical skills within problem-solving activities, for example, in science and design and technology. Pupils use directions, grids and scales in geography, for instance, and measure temperatures in science. They count their heartbeats before and during exercise in health and physical education lessons. They sometimes use computers to produce graphs from mathematical data.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, engaging pupils' thinking and extending their understanding.
- Pupils are skilled in carrying out practical investigations.
- Special projects contribute to the quality of teaching and pupils' interest in learning.

Commentary

71. Pupils attain well in relation to national expectations by the end of Year 2, and very well by the end of Year 6. Pupils become very skilled in experimenting and investigating. They learn to think scientifically, to pose questions, to make connections, and look for explanations. They acquire a very good level of knowledge and understanding in learning about living things, about forces, and about natural and man-made materials.

72. Teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, basing them very much around practical activities. These mostly take the form of very good investigations that develop pupils' skills in predicting, setting up experiments, and recording their results. The written recording of work, though accurate, is not usually extensive, and the quality of presentation varies. Teachers use a good range of equipment and apparatus in their lessons, and make good use of the interactive whiteboards. The quality of teaching, and the challenging nature of the projects, build up pupils' thinking skills, and their scientific vocabulary and understanding. Lessons are often exciting and very interesting. Sometimes, however, the pace of the lesson can decline, as pupils begin to work at their own, more steady pace, rather than being kept 'hard at it' throughout. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special needs are given good support by teachers and, when available, by classroom support staff and make good progress.
73. The subject is very well led and managed, encouraging the development of a practical and experimental approach throughout the school and the application of scientific thinking skills across the curriculum. Much has been done to raise the profile of science, and the quality of teaching and learning, through action research with other schools and the support of outside agencies. A successful science education project, funded through Cambridge University, has been undertaken with other schools in the cluster, to promote scientific thinking. A project is now in hand with older pupils, about the breeding of a new pea strain, which pupils are finding fascinating.
74. There has been a good improvement in this subject since the previous inspection. Standards have risen and teaching is better. The plans of what is to be taught in the long term are now well-considered and are followed throughout the school, ensuring a broad and well-balanced curriculum. The school's science resources have been developed well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is used widely across the curriculum.
- Teachers use interactive whiteboards well as a tool to aid teaching and learning.
- Pupils' skills develop unevenly and their progress is not monitored closely enough.
- The school is planning more work in such areas of the curriculum as control technology.

Commentary

75. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in ICT is satisfactory and their attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall, with some good features.
76. The school is committed to the use of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning across the curriculum. It is used widely in the course of many lessons and this is a strength. Teachers often make very good use of the interactive whiteboard as an aid to learning, for example, showing how adverbs are used with verbs. In addition, pupils regularly use the computers available in classrooms; as seen, for example, when some pupils word processed their work while others wrote it by hand, or when a group of pupils during a guided reading session searched for information about Hindu gods on the Internet. Pupils enjoy ICT and are very enthusiastic about the opportunities they have to use it.
77. The timetable designates some time for introducing pupils to an activity, such as how to create a simple graph, enter a line of text in a cell on a database or look up a topic on the Internet. However, the practical, hands-on activity that follows involves only a few pupils each lesson, and some forget what has been taught before they have the opportunity to apply it. Pupils' experience of using computers at home varies widely. In school, some are hesitant in their

ICT skills and need support from others, while those who are very skilled are eager for greater challenge.

78. The school recognises the need to keep a closer check on coverage of the curriculum and the extent of pupils' skills, in order to ensure that pupils build steadily on what they can do. There are examples of ICT being used well for a range of purposes, such as creative picture-making, text manipulation, data-handling and research, as well as, for example, e-mailing schools in other parts of the world. However, pupils' skills in these areas, and their understanding of the uses of technology, are uneven.
79. Leadership and management are good, as seen in the development of very good resources, especially the provision of interactive whiteboards in all classes. There are several computers in each room, and adequate software for the pupils to learn all the expected skills. However, there is no consistent assessment of pupils' progress or goals for pupils to work towards. There is, however, a good improvement plan for the subject, which includes further staff training, improving access for all pupils, and extending aspects of the curriculum such as control technology.
80. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved resources and the use of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning across the curriculum. Interactive whiteboards have been introduced to very good effect. The school has a strong platform on which to build further improvement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. There are many opportunities for pupils to use ICT skills in other subjects, such as mathematics, science, geography and history. Pupils recognise ICT as a tool for learning in many areas of the curriculum, although their success in using this tool does not develop consistently.

HUMANITIES

82. No lessons were seen in geography or history so no overall judgement could be made about provision in these subjects. Religious education is subject to a separate inspection because the school is a voluntary-aided church school.
83. In **history** there is a well-balanced plan of what should be taught, and good resources to support learning. There is a very good emphasis on the investigative approach to history, in which sources of information are studied – sometimes at first-hand, as in the local Victorian graveyard. Good links are made with other subjects, often in the form of a termly project, as in the study of ancient Greece during the Olympics last summer. Very good use is made of visits to places of interest, including museums, a nearby Victorian manor and a Tudor hall. The school is very aware of the history of its community, and an exciting project is being planned to capture wartime memories as a record for the future.
84. **Geography** alternates with history in the school's two-year rolling programme of topics to be covered each term. Work in geography is richly enhanced by the school's extremely good links with other countries. These include trips to Italy, visits by teachers from overseas and links with institutions in Africa, India and Europe. Lesson plans show that the teaching fosters an enquiring approach in the use of geographical methods, including fieldwork. Displays of recent projects indicate detailed studies of, for example, the Caribbean island of St Lucia, and, by younger pupils, the fictional Scottish Isle of Struay. Pupils take a lively interest in places around the world, knowledgeably discussing the journeys of the school's three well-travelled teddy bears. They were delighted to send the bears as their ambassadors to a hospital in Malawi, for which they had raised money.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. No lessons were seen in art and design and technology. One lesson and parts of others were seen in physical education. In music, one lesson was seen and a range of instrumental tuition, club activities and assemblies. No overall judgements can be made about the quality of provision in these subjects.
86. The curriculum in **art** is very well planned to build pupils' skills in key areas such as painting, drawing, textiles and sculpture, and to apply them across the curriculum. Pupils throughout the school keep sketch-books. In Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils looked carefully and drew features such as eyes, nose and mouth before creating portraits of one another. Pupils learn to mix colours, and they explore the properties of paint when mixed, for example, with sand or pasta. All the pupils participated in the major endeavour of creating leaves and creatures from clay to be incorporated in the large 'Tree of Life', which now adorns an outside wall of the school.
87. Work in **design and technology** fits in well with the school's practical, problem-solving approach to learning. Pupils enjoy designing and making, and working towards an end product. Work is well linked to other subjects, as in the creation of pop-up books by pupils in Years 5 and 6, containing stories written for younger pupils. Ideas developed from work during a visit to the 'Recycling Bus', which explored mechanisms for making pop-up features. Pupils implemented their ideas enthusiastically and painstakingly, working in groups, and showed great pride in their completed books.
88. The school provides a balanced programme of **physical education**, which includes dance, gymnastics, games and swimming. In the dance lessons seen, pupils responded well to the challenge of moving in response to music, while others worked hard at mastering the complex patterns of an Asian dance. Older pupils worked on a keep-fit routine, although many tired quickly and found this level of exercise demanding. The school makes good use of local resources, organising regular swimming so that almost all pupils are confident swimmers by the time they leave. The school also secures some coaching in sports such as rugby and 'Kwik Cricket' from local clubs. There are football and netball clubs, and occasional opportunities to participate in games and tournaments against other schools, although some pupils and parents would like more.
89. **Music** is a strength of the school. Several of the staff have specialist skills in music, and these are put to good use. Pupils enjoy singing and sing well, as seen in assemblies. The school has a large choir, and its members sing well in parts, producing a good quality of sound. Many pupils play the recorder, and the school is planning to extend provision so that all pupils learn the instrument. In the lesson seen, pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed a good grasp of musical notation and terminology, responding well to high expectations and challenging teaching. Many pupils learn a musical instrument in school. Tuition is currently offered in drums, piano, violin, woodwind and guitar and the pupils make good progress. There are many opportunities for performance, in assemblies, and in school concerts and productions which are organised regularly.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning in this area is developed through many aspects of school life.
- Pupils are well equipped to become knowledgeable and responsible citizens.

Commentary

90. The whole approach of the school encourages pupils to think about who they are and how they fit into the wider community. It is a part of all activities and lessons to encourage pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others and to grow in independence and understanding of the world around them.
91. It is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching because only two short lessons were seen during the inspection. However, it is clear from all the evidence that pupils develop very well in their personal attributes and understanding as a result of the emphasis that the school gives to this aspect of learning.
92. Lessons give opportunities to discuss personal relationships and responsibilities; for example, exploring through role-play the different perspective of parent and child in an argument. Lessons in citizenship are also part of the curriculum. Pupils learn about how society works, for instance taking part in the 'Net Detectives' project. This links them with the police and the magistrates' courts, enacting situations in real life, and using their computers to follow through with questions and taking on the roles of different characters. The School Council models the democratic process, and pupils' involvement in decision-making helps them to recognise different sides to a case. Recent decisions have seen pupils donating aid as diverse as giving harvest festival goods to a night shelter for the homeless, and footballs to the children of a village in Malawi.
93. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught by school staff with the help of a visiting nurse. The recent project on 'Healthy Eating' has been very successful in raising pupils' awareness of health issues, including diet and exercise. Pupils learn to care for the environment, and the importance of starting close to home in this. They help to tend a conservation area in the school grounds, and there is an active nature club led by the Chair of Governors.
94. Throughout the school, all these aspects of personal, social and health education and citizenship are very well planned, organised and managed by staff. The school has a very clear vision of what is needed to help pupils develop as rounded people and good citizens.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

