

INSPECTION REPORT

WELDON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Weldon, Corby

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121996

Headteacher: Mrs T Cunningham

Lead inspector: Mr G Timms

Dates of inspection: 27 – 29 June 2005

Inspection number: 268210

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4- 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 195

School address: Chapel Road
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Northamptonshire
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr J T Clifton

Date of previous inspection: 1 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Weldon CE Primary School has 195 pupils on roll who are organised into seven classes. The school is of average size. Overall, the attainment of most pupils when they enter the school is above that expected for their age, although there is a wide range of ability. There are 42 pupils on the register of special educational need and this is above average. There are no pupils with a statement of special need entitling them to extra support; this is below the national average. The main needs are speech, communication and specific learning difficulties. Most pupils are from a white British background; a small number are of other white, or black or black British backgrounds, and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. No parents claim an entitlement to free school meals. The mobility of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than the usual is above average, partly due to children moving to middle school at the end of Year 4.

The school benefits from an Excellence Cluster based on Corby, which supports staffing for specialist areas such as sport and is providing the school with a part-time learning mentor to support some pupils next term. The school was awarded an Achievement award in 2001 for improvements to standards, Investors in People status in 2003, and a Healthy Schools award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education
9708	Mrs S Dainty	Lay inspector	
32475	Mr N Butt	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Music Personal, social and health education Special educational needs
19774	Mrs Docherty M	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This good and improving school provides its pupils with an effective education and prepares them well for the next stage in their education. Pupils achieve well due to the good quality teaching and learning. The curriculum is good overall, and the leadership and management of the headteacher is very good. The governance of the school is good. **Overall, the school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- achievement is good throughout the school and standards are rising over time;
- standards in English, mathematics and science are not yet high enough by the end of year 6;
- standards in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history and physical education are above those expected;
- pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good;
- the outdoor area for the Reception class is underdeveloped and children do not get sufficient time for writing at length;
- teaching is good and the deployment of teaching assistants is very effective;
- the school provides a very strongly enriched curriculum;
- the school prospectus and annual report to parents do not fully meet statutory requirements.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The majority of the issues raised have been largely addressed but standards, as reflected in test results, have dipped in the intervening years. Over the past year, the provision has improved, the quality of education has risen, and the school is clearly improving rapidly. A major improvement has been the provision for information and communication technology. This is due to better resources, teachers' knowledge and understanding, and improved curriculum planning, and standards are now above those expected. Most subject leaders are more involved in monitoring the delivery of the curriculum. Performance management is in place and is having a positive impact on standards. Provision for the ablest pupils has improved, but there are still times when the higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged by the work provided for them.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils overall achievement is good. Although there is a wide range of ability, the overall standard of most children when they enter Reception is above that typically found. They make good progress in most areas of learning and achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and their creative development. Progress is also good in reading, although less so in writing as too few opportunities for writing are provided. Achievement in children's physical development is satisfactory but hindered by the lack of effective outdoor provision.

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

*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.*

Achievement is good. The school has worked hard recently to raise standards and address the significant areas of underachievement that have existed. This is most noticeable in the 2005 Year 2 national tests which look likely to be much better than those in 2004. The current standards in Year 2 are above those expected in reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, and design and technology. They are average in religious education. Although standards in the Year 6 national tests are likely to fall this year, this is due to a range of factors that have now been addressed by the school. The results in the table above show that standards were above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics when compared with all schools nationally. They were above average in mathematics but below average in English and science when compared with schools where pupils scored similarly when they were in Year 2.

The current standards in Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics, science and religious education, but better than that in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history and physical education. Other subjects were not inspected in sufficient depth to make secure judgements about achievement. **Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good; their cultural development is good.** Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good and this has a very positive impact on standards. Teachers insist on good behaviour and they use the very effective classroom assistants well to support pupils' learning. In some lessons, teachers do not provide all pupils with appropriately challenging work. The marking and assessment of work is good and very good in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is good and the school offers pupils a very good level of enrichment and after school activities, often based on very good links to other schools. The care and welfare of pupils is good. Links with parents and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has provided very good leadership in the short time she has been at the school and this is already having a positive impact on provision and standards. The school has a clear focus on raising standards. The governors carry out their responsibilities well and have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's priorities for the future are appropriate to maintain the current rate of improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are largely happy with the provision in the school and are particularly supportive of the new headteacher. Most of them say their children are happy at school, that the arrangements for Reception children starting school are good and that the school is well led and managed. The findings of the inspection support these views. A significant minority of parents would like more information about how well their children are doing, and how they can help more at home. Some parents are concerned about bullying and bad behaviour, although they feel it is well dealt with by the school. The inspection findings show that behaviour is very good overall. Children spoken to during the inspection are happy at school. They like the range of activities and lessons provided for them and particularly feel that the adults are very kind to them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of year 6;
- developing the outdoor provision for the Reception class and provide more opportunities for children to write at length;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- update the contents of the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards are average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, but are improving and better than that in other year groups and in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Current standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education are not high enough in Year 6.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average.
- Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history and physical education are above those expected throughout the school.
- Standards are improving due to the improved provision and quality of education.

Commentary

1. When children start school in the Reception class, the overall attainment on entry is above that typically found. Even so, there is a range of ability and the school has a significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or who are slow to mature. The good teaching ensures that children make good progress in most areas of learning. Their progress is satisfactory in their physical development, largely due to the limited outdoor resources. Achievement is also only satisfactory in writing as they have too few opportunities to write at length. However, achievement is good in speaking and listening, reading, their mathematical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world, and their creative development. The children's personal, social and emotional development is also well provided for by the very caring staff and they achieve well in this area of learning. Overall, standards are above those typically found in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Standards in communication, language and literacy, and physical development are broadly in line with those typically found.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (16.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.5 (16.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.0 (16.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 37pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2. Although Year 1 have had a wide range of staffing changes recently, the current provision in Years 1 and 2 is supporting good progress. In the 2004 national tests, standards were above average in writing but below average in reading and mathematics. When compared with schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds standards were average in writing and well below

average in reading and mathematics. Standards had fallen for two years in reading and mathematics, but had fallen consistently over five years in writing.

3. The headteacher and staff have analysed reasons for this and have improved provision, partly through better assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress over time, but mostly due to a focus on ensuring more pupils achieve the higher levels. The early indications from the 2005 tests are that standards are much improved and likely to be well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
4. Current standards evident from the inspection support a picture of much improved achievement and above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, standards in science, information and communication technology, art and design and design and technology are above those typically found. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in other subjects were not judged due to insufficient evidence being gathered during the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (27.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.1 (28.2)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.6 (29.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Standards in the Year 6 national tests in 2004 were above average for English and science and well above average for mathematics. When compared with school taking similar pupils, standards were average for English and science and above average for mathematics. However, when compared with schools where pupils had similar results in Year 2, standards were above average in mathematics but below average in English and science. This indicates that there was underachievement in those two subjects. This is supported by analysis of the progress made by the current Year 5 pupils in Years 3 and 4. Here the achievement in writing was poor and in mathematics, it was below that expected. Achievement was better in reading.
6. The school has identified reasons for the lack of progress and the improvements put in place since the headteacher took up her post are already having a positive impact on standards. These include staffing and curriculum changes, better resources and training for staff. In addition, the school loses some higher attaining pupils to local middle schools at the end of Year 4, and attempts to stabilise the staffing have been hindered by events outside the school's control. It is likely to be too early for the improvements put in place to be evident in the current test results and there is still a need to raise standards further by the end of Year 6. The evidence of the inspection is that standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education are close to the national average, but below that for schools with similar pupils. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, history and physical education are above those expected.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because they are well taught and given effective support by the well-trained special needs teaching assistants. Lessons are planned to set work that meets these pupils' needs and much

of the support takes place in classes. Pupils are attaining standards consistent with their capabilities, which are sometimes below national averages.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils come to school keen to learn. They pay very good attention to teachers and behave very well in class. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is very good. This is an improved picture from the last inspection. Attendance is very good. Punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show very good attitude towards their work and behave very well in class.
- Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good; this contributes to a positive school ethos.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- Attendance rates are consistently well above the national average.

Commentary

8. Pupils show a great interest in the good curriculum provided by the school and enthusiastically join in extra opportunities for artistic, sporting, and creative activities planned outside the school day. Such activities include a popular gardening club run by a teaching assistant and the school secretary. Pupils are friendly, open in their conversations, and keen to talk about their work and its expected outcome. They are encouraged to develop independence in their learning. For example, they issue their own library books by accessing a computer program using a personal pin number. From this they build up a record of their reading history over time. One pupil noticed with surprise and good judgement that he had focused recently on history books rather than on fiction, which he thought he preferred.
9. Pupils work well together at all times. Good collaboration was demonstrated in many classes, with pupils listening attentively to each other's contribution and building on ideas. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and rise to challenges, and most do. The school acknowledges achievement in curriculum tasks, behaviour, and demonstrations of care and consideration for others. These achievements are displayed in the entrance hall. They give parents, carers, and visitors a strong sense of the school's ethos.
10. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is very good. They are included well in lessons and work is set that will interest and engage them. They are well supported by teaching assistants. Consequently, they have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to make progress. They enjoy being involved in what everybody else is doing and work well with other children.
11. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, particularly through the assembly programme which offers moments for reflection. Pupils are also encouraged to consider the spiritual dimension of their lives through the curriculum. This is well demonstrated in displays of art and poetry around the school and in lessons. Pupils are encouraged to become morally aware through the gospel teaching in religious education and the assembly programme. They understand the importance of the commandments and know how the commandments affect the lives of Christians. Pupils learn about the moral codes of other religions. For

example in Year 6, pupils discussed the positive aspects of an arranged marriage and dowry systems in the Sikh religion. In English, pupils are given opportunities to write on moral issues, for example whether animals should be used in circuses or to discuss a moral dilemma at the heart of the stories they are reading.

12. Their social development is very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to work together before feeding back ideas to the rest of the class. They respond well when given responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils planned and presented a good assembly to the rest of the school, building in questions to secure participation by the rest of the school. They linked their assembly theme on healthy eating to the spiritual health assembly of the previous day and included a range of activities to engage interest. The school council provides a very good forum for pupils to develop social and democratic awareness and contribute to the life of the school.
13. The school provides good opportunities for pupils' cultural development. It is building up resources to acknowledge and celebrate multi-cultural society and to help pupils understand the contribution of minority ethnic people in all areas of learning. Occasional visits from musicians and artists support this work. Pupils are encouraged to consider the beliefs and cultures of other communities. Teachers put great emphasis on the need to respect the ways different communities conduct their lives. The school has not visited places of worship beyond the local parish church this year, but plans to do so in the future.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	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.

14. Pupils are very happy and keen to come to school and their attendance is very good. This makes a significant contribution to their good achievement and progress in lessons. The school has very good procedures for ensuring continuing high attendance rates. Punctuality was very good during the inspection but a few pupils occasionally miss the start of registration. There have been no recent exclusions from the school for poor behaviour.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good and improving quality of education. This is the result of good teaching and learning and a good curriculum. The care provided for pupils is good, as are the links with parents and the community. The links with other schools are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall. The assessment of pupils' progress is good overall and very good in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers insist on high standards of discipline.
- The good quality members of the support staff are very effectively deployed.

- Teachers do not always provide higher attaining pupils with sufficiently challenging work.
- The school makes very good use of outside specialist teachers.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	8 (21%)	19 (50%)	9(24%)	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

- The teaching in all of the lessons observed was at least satisfactory. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection. In addition, the proportion of the teaching that is good or better has improved significantly. The good teaching of the youngest children helps settle them into school routines quickly and builds their confidence for future learning. The teaching in the Reception class is hindered by the lack of good outdoor resources and facilities. The children are not provided with sufficient opportunities to write at length, especially in the summer term. However, in all other aspects, the teaching and learning are good and it is well supported by the nursery nurse, whose work with the children has a positive impact on their learning.
- Throughout the school, teachers make clear their very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This is resulting in lessons that run smoothly and calmly, and where learning can happen unhindered. In a few classes, where there is a minority of difficult pupils the teachers, with the support of the senior staff, ensure that this has little or no impact on other pupils' learning. As a result, the vast majority of the pupils are well behaved, polite and keen to work. The changes to staffing over the past two years, including the need to appoint some very inexperienced teachers, has made it difficult for the school to create a stable staffing structure.
- The teaching assistants are very effective in their work, and are very well deployed by the teachers. This is evident when, for example, the teacher has half of a class in the computer suite while the other half has a productive library session with a teaching assistant. This is helped by the very good accommodation that links the two rooms well. The support that teaching assistants give to less able pupils often helps them take a full part in lessons from which they would otherwise gain little.
- The best lessons, containing excellent and very good teaching, are characterised by very high expectations, a very good subject knowledge and understanding, and they are well planned and resourced. This happened in an art and design lesson in Year 5 where pupils made exceptional progress through a printing activity due to the focused and well planned teaching, and in Year 3 where all pupils were intensely involved in devising pneumatic systems, working very hard and making very good gains in their learning.
- Where the teaching remained satisfactory, the management of some pupils' behaviour was less effective, there was insufficient work for pupils who quickly finished the planned tasks to do, and the scrutiny of pupils' books showed that on a few occasions pupils all had the same task and there was insufficient challenge for the higher

attainers. At times, especially for the younger pupils, the work is too teacher-led and not enough time is given to pupils to build on their learning.

20. The assessment of children's work is very good in the Reception class. The teacher keeps exceptional records of work completed, and the levels of support given. Work is annotated and it provides a very good reference against which to check children's progress. Throughout the rest of the school assessment is good. Teachers mark pupils' work well, and this provides pupils with good information about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work in future.
21. Very effective use is made of specialist teaching to extend and to motivate the pupils. A teacher of French works with Years 5 and 6 pupils each week, giving them an early, largely oral, introduction to the language. These lessons are very lively and help enthuse the pupils, and prepare them well for secondary education. The school has links with a sports college and this provides coaches for different sports. During the inspection the very good coaching in football observed showed how this was helping to develop and extend pupils' skills well. The enthusiasm in the school for tennis reflected the earlier course of lessons taught in that sport.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. Work is planned to meet their general level of ability and they are well supported in class. The targets written on individual education plans, however, are sometimes rather vague and not always taken into account in lessons. Pupils are sometimes not aware of what these targets are.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision is good overall. A very good level of additional activities enriches it. The accommodation and resources are good, except in the Foundation Stage where the accommodation is only satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher has brought renewed vigour to curriculum development.
- Members of the support staff are very well deployed to give pupils full access to the curriculum.
- There are many opportunities to participate in interesting and stimulating activities.
- The Foundation Stage outdoor facilities are inadequate.
- The taught time for Years 3 to 6 is an hour a week less than the recommended amount.

Commentary

23. The curriculum fully meets all statutory requirements, including satisfactory provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education. The weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have all been addressed, and information and communication technology is now a good characteristic of the school. With the appointment of the new headteacher has come a wide-ranging review of the curriculum, with new subjects and a greater emphasis on creativity. For example, the Year 5 and 6 pupils have an hour of French a week, and there are plans to extend swimming to Year 4 pupils as well as Year 3. More links between subjects are being developed, especially through extended writing and exploring themes, such as "faces".

At present Years 3 to 6 pupils have less taught time than is normally found, which adds up to the equivalent of eight days lost over a school year.

24. Members of the support staff are very well deployed and they make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. This is especially true of pupils with special educational needs, who are helped to access the full curriculum. The support is focused where it is most needed, for example in Years 2 and 3. Provision for special educational needs is satisfactory overall, but the work of teaching assistants is a particular strength. The weaknesses are more in the administration of the paperwork and involving pupils and parents in setting targets for improvement.
25. The school gives pupils many opportunities to sample and enjoy a wide range of activities beyond those included in the National Curriculum. The willingness of teaching and non-teaching staff alike to give up their own time to run clubs significantly enriches what is available for pupils. This year there has been a gardening club, a cooking club, dance, athletics and art and craft clubs, a parachute club for the younger children, a drama club, country dancing, a construction club and the choir. Coaches, including a teaching assistant and school governor, have trained pupils in hockey and football. Pupils learn brass and string instruments and can play two keyboards in the information and communication technology suite. There are curriculum weeks, such as reading and art and music and many visits and visitors. A residential visit has been put in place for the Year 6 pupils so that they can take part in adventurous activities and learn to live together harmoniously away from home.
26. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. It covers all the relevant areas of learning. Children are given many interesting and enjoyable activities to do. The outdoor area is in urgent need of development. It is not secure or safe and lacks colour and inspiration. There is no cover in poor weather. In its current state, it limits pupils' physical development and their independence. The school is aware of these weaknesses and has plans to develop the facilities. The school is very well cared for and looked after by the site manager and his staff, and this enhances the learning environment.
27. Because of the good quality curriculum with its many additional features, pupils are well prepared for transfer to secondary school. They have been taught to be independent learners and to take homework seriously.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good with some significant strengths. Provision of support, advice and guidance is good. Pupils are involved well in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for first aid are very good and the school is very successful in promoting healthy living.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and confident that they can get the help they need from staff.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to contribute to improvements in the school and village.

Commentary

28. The school continues to be a safe caring place in which pupils can flourish. It rightly prides itself on its Healthy School status and is currently working towards the gold award. A considerable number of members of staff have first aid qualifications and older pupils undertake a first aid course. Senior members of staff have worked very successfully in recent months to update health and safety procedures, such as for the administration of medicines and the assessment of risks. The accommodation is kept clean and well maintained. Governors have put in place a number of improvements to the safety and security of the site. Arrangements for child protection are good. The headteacher has successfully created a climate in which members of staff at all levels are encouraged to share information about the needs of vulnerable children.
29. Children joining the Reception class are very well supported when they start school. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy very good relationships with staff and appreciate the very clear guidance about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not. As a result, they feel settled in school and are able to make good progress. The newly structured personal, social and health education programme is starting to have a positive effect on guiding pupils further in their personal development. Good procedures are now in place to track pupils' academic achievements and to set individual targets in English and mathematics. These are too new, however, to have had much impact on the standards pupils attain. There are a good number of initiatives to support pupils identified as gifted and talented, and these are set to improve further now that the co-ordinator has been trained and a learning mentor appointed for next term.
30. Support for pupils with special educational needs is mixed. It is good in the classroom, especially from the well-trained special teaching assistants. The new special educational needs coordinator has identified many more pupils who require support and systems are being put in place to provide this. This has created something of a backlog in the paperwork, especially as there was some slippage previously in reviewing individual education plans. This has meant that pupils who require a statutory assessment have had to wait until the relevant paperwork is ready, which has caused delays. There has been some training for staff in specific areas of need such as dyslexia. Tracking of these pupils' progress is at an early stage.
31. The school council, established two years ago, is an effective mechanism for pupils to express their views, particularly about the improvements they would like to see in the playground. Pupils have played a significant part in choosing play equipment. They are particularly proud of the trim trail. They have also been consulted by local agencies, including the parish council, about improvements in the village and woodland park. The headteacher surveyed pupils' views last autumn and responded well to the issues raised. Older pupils particularly appreciate the way in which the headteacher is involving them in the life of the school. Pupils are satisfactorily involved in their own learning: they write contributions to their annual reports but do not yet sufficiently understand the targets they are working towards.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are good with some significant features. Links with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and the headteacher is developing links with them very effectively.
- The school has very close links with the village and the church.
- Pupils and staff benefit considerably from the strong links with local schools.

Commentary

32. Parents continue to give very good support to the school and their children's education; this has a very positive impact on pupils' good achievement. Parents are keen to help in classrooms and at events such as sports day. The recently-formed Parents, Friends and Teachers' Association is very active in raising significant funds. A large number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and expressed largely positive views. Compared with their responses to a similar questionnaire they completed on the headteacher's arrival in September, they now feel much more comfortable in approaching the school and are more confident that their views are taken into account.
33. A small minority of the parents do not feel well informed about their child's progress. Inspectors found that information for parents is good. Annual reports provide helpful information on pupils' academic and personal progress and they have been supplemented this year by interim reports and meetings for parents of pupils in Years 2 and 6 in the run-up to the national tests. Parents are now given termly information about what their child will be studying, in addition to the regular newsletters and useful information on the website. The headteacher has good plans for developing the partnership with parents further, for example by reviewing the use of the homework diary as a means of communication.
34. Governors have not ensured that their annual report to parents and the prospectus provide all the information that is statutorily required, such as how well the school is performing in relation to its targets and how the school's funding has been spent. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently involved in the review of their child's individual education plan.
35. The school is very much a village school, and this benefits pupils by giving them an understanding of local culture and traditions. People from the village come into school to help, such as hearing pupils read or talking about their experiences as an evacuee. Strong links with the church have a very positive impact on provision for religious education and pupils' spiritual development. Two Year 6 pupils represent pupils' views on the parish council, which considerably enhances pupils' understanding of what it means to be an active citizen. The school works effectively with charities. There are satisfactory additional links with the wider world to raise pupils' understanding of other cultures.
36. The school takes a very active part in the local clusters of schools, which has very positive impact on the opportunities provided for pupils. They benefit from professional coaches employed by the Excellence Cluster. Gifted and talented pupils attend master classes on Saturday mornings at the local city technology college. Teachers from secondary schools teach French and science. This prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Joint training and initiatives greatly enhance the confidence and expertise of staff. Arrangements for transfer to secondary education are managed well, especially so in an area where pupils transfer to a considerable number of

different schools. Links with the pre-school in the village are good and enhance the children's transition into the Reception class.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership demonstrated by the headteacher is very good. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear view of the need to improve standards and of how this can be achieved.
- The use of data such as test results is very effective in deciding priorities.
- The information for governors has improved and they are more aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

37. The headteacher provides very effective leadership and has a clear understanding of how the school can raise standards further. In a short time, she has introduced a range of measures to help support teachers, inform governors, analyse strengths and weaknesses, and address the wide range of difficult staffing issues that have arisen. Her positive leadership has enabled the school to become more stable and for teachers to work in a positive, supportive but challenging environment. She provides good reports to the governing body but these do not contain sufficient information about standards, although this is reported in other ways.
38. The focus since the headteacher took up her post has been to raise standards. The school recognised that there had been significant underachievement in the past, that too few pupils reached the higher levels in Year 2, and that too few pupils achieved what they were capable of achieving by the end of Year 6. The analysis of data highlighted where there were weaknesses, and these have been largely addressed. The positive results of this are already showing but have to be reflected in the test results of the older pupils. The headteacher has introduced a pupil tracking system and this is providing teachers with more accurate information about how well their pupils are performing. In particular, the headteacher has identified individual pupils who have underachieved and who need boosting in the future.
39. Since the last inspection, the role of subject coordinators has improved. Teachers, senior management and the headteacher have carried out lesson observations. These are now more developmental and teachers get feedback that is more specific about how they can improve. The performance management systems are in place and these have had a positive impact on standards. This leads to appropriate training for teachers and for teaching assistants, and this is having a positive impact on the quality of education. The senior management team meets regularly. These meetings include one day when whole school development planning is discussed and new priorities decided.
40. The school improvement plan is arrived at through a consultation process that involves all those involved in the school. The governing body monitor the progress of the plan through their regular meetings and the committee structure. The governing body have plans to monitor recent large scale spending, such as on the resources in the computer suite, in more detail than they have in the past. The headteacher is helping develop the governors' awareness of their role and responsibilities, such as the production of the annual report for parents.

41. The new special educational needs coordinator provides good leadership. The coordinator has made some important changes to ensure that pupils are identified early and their needs met. The creation of a study room for working with groups and individuals has enhanced provision. Other priorities have meant that some weaknesses in the management of special educational needs persist. For example, pupils and parents are not sufficiently involved in setting and reviewing targets in individual action plans. The coordinator has devised an action plan, which addresses all these matters, with provision continuing to improve rapidly.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	472,440
Total expenditure	484,357
Expenditure per pupil	2,549

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67,470
Balance carried forward to the next	55,553

42. The high carry forward that the current headteacher inherited has partly been used to create the computer suite, while most of the remainder is earmarked for improvements such as those to the outdoor area for the Reception class. The budget is well monitored by the bursar, headteacher and governors' finance committee and the school works hard to ensure best value in its spending.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Teaching and learning are good and the pastoral care and guidance by the teacher and nursery nurse are good. There is a very effective system for assessing and recording children's progress. This ensures that members of staff are very aware of children's needs and that they know what to plan for their next stage in learning. Assessment information is shared appropriately with parents so they are kept aware of how well their children are doing. The children are all valued and this gives them confidence to approach work and play in a positive way. The planning ensures a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities.
44. The learning environment has many good features. There is good space inside the classroom for a range of activities. However, the outdoor environment is underdeveloped and the school has this as a priority for improvement. Attainment on entry to the school is above that found nationally, although this varies from year to year and there are wide ranges of abilities. The great majority of the children are likely to exceed most of the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. The procedures for starting school are good and are popular with the parents.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to work and play together well.
- The links with parents are very effective in supporting this area of learning.

Commentary

45. This area of learning has a high focus in the planning, and the good teaching helps support good achievement and good standards. Individual targets are set for children and they are aware of what these are. They often revolve around social and moral issues. The teacher has a quiet manner which is very effective in calming children at the start of sessions, and for gaining their attention during lessons. Activities such as singing a hello song during the registration help settle children quickly. Children are given good opportunities to develop independence in their learning. For example, when designing musical instruments, children select their own materials. They are encouraged to investigate problems in mathematics sessions. Throughout the class, activities are well set up to encourage children to co-operate and collaborate when working together.
46. The school provides parents with good opportunities to spend time in the classroom with their children on a weekly basis. This supports the children's confidence and raises their esteem when they can share their profile books or read a story with their parent. Role play opportunities support children's personal development. For example, following a story, play based activities involving pirates were popular and encouraged a lot of collaborative play.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children make good progress in reading and writing.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to write at length.

Commentary

47. The teaching is good and most children achieve satisfactorily. They make good progress over the Reception year. Skills in reading are particularly strong, and standards are above those typically found. Children learn to enjoy books and use them confidently. They know the sounds letters make well and can follow illustrations in a book explaining the story in their own words. They use the school library but few of those spoken to during the inspection make much use of local public libraries although parents do support their learning by hearing them read and reading to them regularly. Most children have a good knowledge of a range of traditional tales and nursery rhymes. Speaking and listening skills are well developed.
48. Children learn to form letters and write words and basic sentences as the year progresses. However, the children, particularly the more able ones, do not have sufficient opportunities to extend their writing skills through longer pieces of writing such as stories, poems or retelling events. By the end of the year, the standards achieved by most children are broadly in line with those expected in the early learning goals, although a significant proportion will not achieve the expected level. Those who are writing independently are able to sequence the events in a story in the correct order.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to use mathematical skills in investigations.
- They learn good basic numeracy skills.

Commentary

49. Children achieve well due to the good teaching they receive. Standards are above those typically found. They have a good knowledge of hours and time using analogue clock faces. The learning is supported by the teacher's good questioning skills. Good resources support the learning. In one small group the teacher worked with six children who all had a clock face to show times. This enabled a good level of one to one teaching within the group, and encouraged all of the children to take an active part in the learning. Good discussion led to a greater understanding of the times of the day in the children's own lives. Children use coins and learn to be familiar with numbers to 10 and beyond, adding and subtracting, and can double numbers to twenty.
50. Children are able to take part in mathematical investigations. For example, in one activity children investigated how many pegs they could put into a pattern in a given

time. In another lesson, children identified different ways of making seven. Others predict how many small bears they can hold in one hand, and then carry this out and count to see how accurate they were. This helps develop their predictive and understanding of numbers very effectively. The nursery nurse offered good support to a group taking part in a water activity, which included the retrieval and recognition of numbers from the water.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a wide range of experiences and activities.
- Very good use is made of parent helpers.
- Computers and other technology are used regularly and well.

Commentary

51. Achievement is good and children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Standards are above those typically found. This is due to the good teaching and the wide range of experiences planned for them. For example, after a music session playing a selection of instruments, the pupils have the opportunity to design and make instruments of their own. They have to decide how their instrument will be played and what materials they wish to use. In another very good session, a parent helper worked with children to make milkshakes. Children cut up fruit to mix with ice cream and they were beginning to follow a recipe with support. As part of their mathematical work, children make good clock faces with moving hands using paper plates and split pins.
52. Children develop good computer skills and this helps prepare them well for their future learning. In the classroom, a computer is used regularly for a range of activities. For example, one girl dressed a bear by clicking and dragging clothes in the correct sequence, while also matching pairs of socks. This activity supported children's mathematical development well. They use art software to draw pictures and patterns, showing good skills in opening new pages, clicking and dragging, and changing the tool for different effects. In the computer suite larger groups of children have good opportunities to use the computers, keyboards and develop their knowledge and understanding to a good level. They are able to create borders to surround their work. However, they need more extended opportunities to develop their keyboard skills by typing their own writing onto the word processor. Children learn about the world around them through visits from police officers and by visiting a plant nursery and the grounds of a local stately home. They can compare old and new toys such as teddy bears, and are able to sequence pictures of human beings at different ages.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor facilities are unsatisfactory.
- Children learn to use small tools and materials with growing control.

Commentary

53. Achievement is satisfactory overall, as are standards. The teaching is satisfactory and helps the children's skills and their control over a range of tools and materials. They use a range of construction equipment, small apparatus and show growing control over pencils, paintbrushes and other media. However, the lack of an effective, interesting and appropriate outdoor area means that physical activities are limited to whole class sessions on the field or in the school hall. The teacher works hard to overcome this and makes fair use of the available space. The school has recognised this weakness and has already developed some planning to address it when funds allow.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use a wide range of materials and media.
- They learn to sing a variety of different traditional and modern rhymes and songs.

Commentary

54. The teaching is good and this leads to good standards and good achievement. The children are provided with a wide range of good opportunities for their creative development. These are often cross-curricular in nature. For example, in one good session, the nursery nurse led a group in a painting exercise as a response to music. This built very effectively on an earlier session where children had collaborated on large scale paintings, and now they produced their own individual responses to the music. The good teaching by the nursery nurse leads children into talking about how they felt about the music. Children have a good knowledge about how sounds are made on a range of instruments and they know that, for example, a guitar is plucked. In art sessions, children create very effective abstract patterns representing a snail after looking at work by Matisse.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and pupils achieve well in lessons. Teaching and learning are consistently good, with a strong emphasis on the key skills needed to read with comprehension and write to achieve a particular effect. While this is a similar picture to the last inspection, there has been recent strong action to improve standards and achievement, particularly in reading.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, though not all pupils achieve their potential or make the nationally expected progress between Years 3 and 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well in lessons.
- Strong leadership has identified key areas for development and it is having a positive impact on overall provision.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop language and literacy skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

55. When compared with all schools nationally, the standards achieved by Year 2 pupils in 2004 fell sharply from previous high levels and, while still above average in writing, were below average in reading. When compared with similar schools, results were well below average in reading and only average in writing. This was because too few pupils attained beyond the nationally expected levels and teachers' expectation for them to do so was not high enough. In the Year 6 tests in 2004 pupils achieved above average standards when compared with the national picture, but only average when

compared with similar schools, and more significantly, below average when compared with their own prior attainment in the Year 2 tests in 2000.

56. The school has recognised that achievement needs to be improved and has taken strong action to address areas of weakness and to ensure that every pupil achieves the standards of which they are capable. For example, analysis of pupils' performance has identified the need to improve the key reading skill of inferring meaning beyond the simple sentence level by the time pupils are seven, and by eleven to understand the characteristics of writing designed for different purposes. These shortcomings have been addressed through a high focus on guided reading, a teaching strategy designed to support comprehension and on directing pupils' attention to literary features typically found in different kinds of writing. Current standards in reading and writing are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. The recent development work is beginning to have an impact on older pupils, but there has been insufficient time to redress the underachievement of previous years. Current standards in Year 5, however, suggest significant improvement will be evident in Year 6 national tests in 2006.
57. Achievement in most lessons is good because of the good teaching pupils experience and the effective deployment of well briefed learning assistants, who contribute well in lessons and in the assessment of pupils' ongoing work. Higher attaining pupils, however, do not have sufficient opportunity to work more independently in writing beyond the limits of the lesson plan and to pursue ideas at a more challenging level. The school's recent focus on improving standards in reading has led to appropriate use of guided reading and guided writing strategies, which are helping the pupils to read with comprehension and to understand how to produce writing of high standard. Support is given through the display of key vocabulary on whiteboards and teachers often model the required sentence style and structure to help pupils tackle writing tasks with more confidence. Support for reading and writing is provided in other areas of the curriculum, for example in history in Year 2 pupils practised their inference skills when tackling unfamiliar ideas and vocabulary in an extract from the diary of Samuel Pepys.
58. Teaching and learning are generally good, which ensures that pupils achieve well in lessons. Planning, which is based on the National Literacy Strategy's Framework for teaching, identifies what pupils of different abilities need to do to achieve the lesson objectives, but is not always focused on how more experienced pupils can take ideas presented in a lesson to a higher level. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on the development of the key literacy skills of spelling, letter sounds, and simple grammar in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 on the language conventions and grammatical features of different types of writing. For example, in lessons in Years 3 and 5 pupils understand that when writing a letter of complaint or persuading readers to change their minds about a course of action they need to use a particular style and conventional grammatical features for maximum effect. Evidence from books also indicates that pupils demonstrate increasing control of complex sentences and powerful word choices to achieve high standards in writing as they progress through the school.
59. The school's strong leadership and heightened awareness of what it needs to do to improve all aspects of the subject have resulted in raised expectations and better understanding of the use of assessment data to check pupils' achievements over time. Teaching and learning are checked through classroom observation and regular monitoring of pupils' work. This has led to improvements in planning, the effective

deployment of teaching assistants, and the implementation of a range of intervention strategies planned to help particular pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable. Good emphasis on speaking and listening is evident in many lessons, for example through role-play and 'conscience alley' techniques, which allow pupils to voice alternative points of view on moral issues.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is good. Curriculum planning includes a good range of speaking and listening opportunities within lessons. Pupils discuss questions raised before feeding back as a group to the rest of the class. In a very good history lesson pupils interviewed adults who had been evacuated as children in World War 2. Their questions were well prepared, and they demonstrated an ability to pursue particular lines of interest with great imagination and independence. Such opportunities for talk enabled fuller involvement of pupils as lessons unfolded. There are good opportunities for developing writing in other subjects of the curriculum, although expectations of presentation, handwriting, sentence structure and spelling are not as clear in other lessons as they are in English, and there is only a satisfactory transfer of literacy skills to some subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen rapidly in Year 2.
- Leadership is very good and it has resulted in many improvements.
- Teaching is good overall with well-paced starts to lessons.
- There is not enough investigative work.

Commentary

61. In the 2004 national tests, Year 2 pupils attained standards that were below average, mainly because too few achieved the higher levels. Year 6 pupils attained standards that were well above average, with a very high proportion achieving the higher Level 5. Since then standards have risen rapidly in Year 2 and are now above average. Strategies to raise the attainment of the more able pupils have been largely successful. In Year 6, some of the faster learners left the school and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is higher. Standards are currently close to the national average, with a drop in the proportion likely to attain Level 5. Pupils are doing as well as expected for their abilities. It is difficult to assess their progress since they took the tests in Year 2 because these results are unreliable. Overall, achievement is good because of generally good teaching. Most of the teaching is excellent and very good, but in a few lessons it is only satisfactory. This varies from class to class. Particular strengths were identified in Years 2, 4 and 5.
62. Teachers have good subject knowledge and question pupils well, especially during the mental and oral work at the start of lessons. They make good use of the interactive whiteboards to interest and challenge pupils. In the best lessons, work is well matched to pupils' abilities and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, in an excellent lesson Year 5 pupils had to use their doubling skills to write out the 7, 14, 28 and 56 times tables all in the space of two minutes! Over half the class was able to complete this task; such was their enthusiasm and drive. Pupils with special educational needs are well included and given good support by teaching assistants. At present, there is not enough focus on developing pupils' investigative skills, an area identified for future development.

63. Leadership and management are very good. In less than a year, the coordinator has introduced many valuable improvements and conducted rigorous and effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. This has raised the standard of provision considerably, and it is now better than it was at the time of the last inspection. It is, however, too early for this to be reflected in the Year 6 results. In particular half-termly assessments track pupils' progress and monthly targets keep them focused on what they need to do to improve.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. A very good link to science was observed when Year 4 pupils used data gathered on a field trip about mini-beasts to draw up Venn and Carroll diagrams. Measuring takes place in design and technology, and there is a range of software to develop pupils' skills and understanding. For example, Year 1 pupils made pictograms of their eye colour. Overall, the development and use of mathematical skills across the curriculum is good.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2.
- There is some very good and exciting teaching.
- Aspects of the leadership and management are under-developed.

Commentary

65. Standards in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2004 were above average. Teacher assessments placed standards as average in Year 2. Since then standards have improved in Year 2 and are now above average. Standards in Year 6 are likely to be closer to the national average because of the level of special educational needs in the year group. Although there was some underachievement in the 2004 cohort, achievement in the 2005 cohort is good because teaching and learning are effective, with some very good examples. Since the last inspection the standards have improved in Year 2 but they are not as good as they were in Year 6. Improvement overall is satisfactory.
66. The quality of teaching varies from class to class but is good overall. The main weakness is the over-use of commercial worksheets, usually given to the whole class, which are pitched at the average child. These do not provide enough challenge for the more able nor are they suitable for slower learners. In other classes, especially in Year 5, very good teaching matches work carefully to pupils' abilities. Teachers have high expectations and make lessons exciting and fun. For example, the Year 5 class used models of the parts of the plant to show how pollination occurs before dissecting lilies. A visiting high school teacher amazed the Year 6 pupils with her explosive 'dragon' and a range of lively experiments on the theme of fire. Investigations are well used to develop pupils' understanding and harness their curiosity.
67. Leadership and management are satisfactory, but with areas for improvement. In particular, the coordinator has not done enough monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning this year, with no lesson observations. Inconsistencies in the provision, such as in the use of worksheets, are thus missed. Assessment is currently unsatisfactory, with no tracking of pupils' progress, and attainment is not based on National Curriculum levels. It is therefore difficult to identify any pupils who are not doing as well as expected.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.
- The resources and accommodation are very good.
- The computer suite and the computers in classrooms are not fully utilised.
- Cross curricular links are good.

Commentary

68. At the last inspection, the standards in this subject were too low and the provision was inadequate. Because of this, the main issue for improvement then was to improve provision and raise standards. The school has worked very hard since then to develop resources, improve the teachers' knowledge, understanding and skills through

training, and to ensure the curriculum matches the needs of the pupils. This has been very successful; improvement has been very good and standards are now better than those typically found.

69. Pupils have good opportunities to meet a wide range of topics giving them experience across the full spectrum of the National Curriculum programmes of study. From their early experiences in the Reception class, pupils improve their keyboard and mouse skills throughout the school. They learn to use art and design software, word processors, databases, spreadsheets and control technology including programmable robots and software to control circuits and the switching of lights. Calculators are used appropriately in mathematics, as in Year 5 when pupils worked out averages.
70. The computer suite offers a very good facility for the teachers, and it has very recently been updated and equipped with new computers and an interactive whiteboard. The room is effectively linked to the school library, enabling teachers to emphasise the links between the two facilities for research purposes. In the library children use the bar code scanner with confidence to check out and return books. The computer suite is not yet fully used for lessons other than direct computer sessions and this needs to be developed further. Similarly, computers in classrooms are not always used as regularly as they could be in all subjects. Even so, the teachers are developing good cross-curricular links between subjects using computers and other technology.
71. The teaching is good in Years 3 to 6. Too few lessons were observed in the infant classes to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. The good teaching evident has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The training teachers have had has clearly improved their skills and knowledge. The recent introduction of interactive whiteboards has resulted in more training being undertaken and, although the potential of this resource is yet to be fully implemented, teachers are already beginning to make positive use of them in a range of subjects.
72. The subject has been well led and managed since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has recently left the school and the leadership and management of the subject is in transition. Even so, the teachers' confidence and enthusiasm with the wide range of resources now available to them has kept the momentum of improvement going. This view is evident through the growing use of the laptop computers and the use of tablet computers on trips, such as the Year 5 visit to the church.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The use of technology across the curriculum is good and the school has plans to develop this further. Computers are used in art and design, from younger pupils exploring the tools and creating patterns and simple pictures, to older pupils creating very effective abstract pictures of snails after Matisse. Graphing programs are used widely in science and mathematics to represent a range of information. Word processing is used effectively in English and other subjects to improve the presentation of finished written work. Digital cameras are used widely across the school to record children's work and to illustrate work following trips and visits.

HUMANITIES

74. **History and geography** were not a focus of this inspection. No geography lesson was observed. Three lessons of history were observed, including one in Year 2 where

standards achieved were above those expected because of the good teaching. From the scrutiny of work in pupils' books, it is clear that provision in geography is generally in line with that expected and this is a similar picture to the last inspection. By Year 6 pupils have studied the water cycle and river formation in detail. In pupils' books there is some evidence of transfer of literacy skills, for example where pupils write an account of Barnaby Bear's visit to Brittany, mapping his journey from Chester to Portsmouth and then on to Brittany.

75. In history, the scrutiny of pupils' work, and the evidence from displays, shows that standards are above those expected at the end of Year 6. Pupils are taught a range of topics that are helping to develop good historical study skills. In Year 2 pupils studied the Great Fire of London and considered the writing of Samuel Pepys as a primary source. They understand that his eye-witness account is more powerful and more useful than accounts written by historians later. In Year 3 pupils developed their understanding further when considering documentary and pictorial evidence about the life of Henry VIII. The teacher helped them to understand that contemporary eye-witness testimony can be biased and needs to be considered against other information about the period. The importance of eye-witness accounts was underlined further through interviews with parents and grandparents, who talked about their lives 20, 30, and 40 years ago. A visit from two friends of the school who had been evacuees during World War 2 brought history alive for Year 4 pupils, who asked searching questions and learned that personal accounts are often the most interesting and accurate forms of evidence. Other good skills were developed in the history lessons observed. Important resources such as world and UK maps and history time-lines were not always evident in classrooms for routine reference. This is a lost opportunity for pupils to locate in time and place the settings for stories, poetry, and religious events across the curriculum.

Religious education

Provision is good. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well. This is a similar picture to the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of aspects of Christianity and other religions.
- There are good cross-curricular links, particularly with information and communication technology and English.
- Strong links have recently been made with the local parish church which benefit pupils' learning.

Commentary

76. Standards are broadly in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement in lessons observed was good, and very good when Year 5 pupils visited the parish church to investigate the symbols and artefacts of Christian worship. Lessons are often practical and visual with very good use of resources, which allow all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well. This is a similar picture to the findings of the last inspection. By Year 2 pupils understand the characteristics which make a person special, contrasting this with 'famous people'. They understand what Christians believe, for example, that there is only one God and that His Son used stories to help followers understand His teaching. They also learn

that things of value are not necessarily expensive or generally viewed to be so. They learn about Judaism and about how the Jews conduct their lives in the light of the Torah. By Year 6, they know a good deal about Christ's ministry, about His miracles, and about the meaning that the miracles might have to their own lives. For example, they try to create their own set of Beatitudes, as if Christ were to give the Sermon on the Mount in modern times. They compare and contrast aspects of different world religions such as, for example, ceremonies at important times in a community's life, for example birth and wedding celebrations, and funerals.

77. Teaching in the lessons observed was good, with good use of resources to support learning about world religions. Teachers set up good displays of religious artefacts to give pupils better access to the meanings of the lessons taught, for example, kipot and prayer shawls, and scrolls containing the scriptures in Judaism, and the Holy Qu'ran and prayer mats in Islam. Sensitive teaching in Year 6 allowed pupils to understand the vows and promises that couples make in a Sikh marriage and how they relate to wedding services in other faiths. In Year 5, pupils visited the parish church and looked at the many symbols and artefacts relating to Christian worship, many of which were unfamiliar to them. They notice that a cross, a principal symbol of Christianity, is presented in a variety of ways to inspire the faithful. They were delighted to find a hassock produced for the millennium by earlier pupils of the school, and treated it with great respect and spiritual significance.
78. The school has forged strong links with the vicar. She contributes to the assembly programme and the curriculum. For example, in Year 5 pupils' visit to the church she explained the significance of the church in its historical context and of symbols and artefacts in worship and in the communion service. She encouraged a few minutes of reflection at the start and conclusion of the visit by suggesting that pupils focus on something inspiring to evoke a spiritual response, which pupils responded to with a great sense of reverence.
79. Leadership is effective. Monitoring of work in pupils' books is taking place and the co-ordinator has identified strengths within the subject as well as areas for improvement. This analysis is informing curriculum development. Assessment is a priority for improvement, along with increasing the opportunities for visits to places of worship in other religions. The school is working with its governors to develop its Christian mission and a stronger policy for worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. Two lessons in **art and design** were observed during the inspection. These were in Years 3 and 5. The quality of the teaching observed was very high and is the main reason for standards of achievement being above those typically found. The display of pupils' work and the evidence from their sketchbooks supports this picture of good standards. A major strength of the provision is the range of different methods and media pupils have the opportunity to use. For example, in Year 3 they produced quite complex wax resist pictures, while in Year 5 the excellent teaching supported very high quality work based on William Morris, as pupils built up their skills of printing using polystyrene tiles. Younger pupils also produce very effective and careful work. Year 1 pupils created some complex weaving patterns, for example.
81. Only one lesson in **design and technology** was observed during the inspection. From this, and from displays of pupils' work and teachers' plans it is clear that standards of achievement of above those typically found and have improved well since the last

inspection. The work is often effectively linked to other subjects such as science or literacy. Year 2 pupils are able to make a range of good vehicles using chasses and axles. In the very good lesson in Year 3, pupils experimented with pneumatic mechanisms prior to making a model with moving parts. All pupils were actively involved in this and the quality of their learning was very good. Year 4 pupils undertook an excellent topic investigating, designing, making and evaluating pencil cases. This resulted in some work of outstanding quality. Year 5 pupils have investigated cranks to create a range of moving toys, while in Year 6, pupils have made complete puppet theatres, with puppets and scenery.

82. **Music** was not a focus of the inspection and there are no judgements on provision, teaching or standards. The choir is well regarded and it has gained awards. The two-part singing in assembly is tuneful and has clear diction. One good lesson was observed in Year 2. The class teacher and teaching assistant worked together in harmony to show how symbols can be used to represent vocal and instrumental sounds. The pupils enjoyed the lively activities and learnt about the different types of percussion instruments. Since the last inspection, there has been good investment in multicultural musical instruments.
83. Only one lesson could be observed in **physical education**. It is not possible therefore to make secure judgements about standards in Years 1 and 2, but it is evident that in Years 3 to 6 the standards are higher than those typically found and that the teaching is often good and very good. In particular, the school makes very good use of outside expertise to coach tennis and football, through an Excellence Cluster link with a local sports college. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities including hockey, football, dance and athletics. These help pupils extend their skills and knowledge and develop their interests to a higher level. Teachers and other staff give freely of their time for these activities. The accommodation is good, and the school has the benefit of a good-sized hall and a very good field, although hard play space outdoors is less well provided for. The pupils' enthusiasm is exceptional and when, for example, they have completed a course of lessons on tennis, they continue playing the sport at lunchtimes with the help of the good quality midday supervisors, who have trained in the use of the play equipment. Pupils with particular talents are recognised on the gifted and talented register and encouraged to extend their skills through specialist teaching and coaching. This currently happens for one young tennis player.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

84. Provision is satisfactory overall, with a thorough review of the curriculum this year. A long-term plan has been drawn up. It covers healthy living, choices, the environment, rights, feelings, belonging, taking part, and the future. Members of staff have received training in class discussion known as circle time. This development is at an early stage. A good lesson in Year 3 was observed in which pupils considered the effects of advertising upon consumers and how we make choices. Year 2 pupils engaged in group activities in which they all had different pieces of a jigsaw and had to cooperate to complete the puzzle. A visiting football coach taught pupils about healthy lifestyles and the importance of keeping fit. A Life Education bus visits the school to teach children about staying safe. The school council meets regularly to consider matters of interest to pupils. These typical activities help pupils feel very well involved in the life of the school and that their views are heard and taken into account.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
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).