

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITCHURCH CE INFANT SCHOOL

Whitchurch

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123515

Headteacher: Mr G Smallbone

Lead inspector: Mr G Timms

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 June 2005

Inspection number: 268244

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	307
School address:	Station Road Whitchurch Shropshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Mullock
Date of previous inspection:	6 May 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whitchurch CE Infant School is a larger than average school of this type and has 307 pupils, 105 of whom are part-time in the nursery classes. The children are organised into 9 classes. Overall, the attainment of a high proportion of the children when they enter the school is below that expected for their age. There are 53 pupils on the register of special educational need and this is a broadly average but growing proportion. Six of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs entitling them to extra support, which is above average. The main needs are moderate and severe learning needs, speech and communication difficulties, and social, emotional and behavioural development. Most pupils are from a White British background and very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. There are three pupils receiving some support with learning English, and they speak Polish, Sotho or Filipino. The proportion of parents who claim their entitlement to free school meals is broadly average but this does not accurately reflect the level of deprivation in parts of the school's catchment area. The mobility of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than is normal is below average.

The school has recently been awarded a Basic Skills Agency quality mark in recognition of the work done in teaching literacy and numeracy skills. The school has linked with the feeder junior and secondary schools to create an 'extended school', which will offer many more community links and opportunities for life-long learning.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education
32655	Mr J Bostock	Lay inspector	
30559	Mrs J. Taylor	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Religious education Geography History
32574	Mr J Hobden	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school has made good improvements since the last inspection. It offers a good quality of education and many pupils, especially the younger ones, achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, as is the curriculum provided. The governance, leadership and management are good. Overall, given the level of funding and rising standards, the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- There is a very clear and effective focus on raising standards.
- More able pupils in English and mathematics do not always reach high enough standards.
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use the full range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.
- Links with parents, other schools and the local community are very good.
- The school is very caring and looks after children very well.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they achieve well.

At the last inspection, the school was found to be underachieving. The improvement since then has been good and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the standards achieved. Standards have risen over the last two years in reading, writing and mathematics, and are now close to the national average. Resources have improved and are now good, the work is often more challenging and the teaching and learning is well monitored. Teachers and other staff are working more closely together. The assessment and monitoring systems are much more effective and this is having a positive impact on standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Attainment on entry to the school is below average, with a significant proportion of children who enter the nursery with speech and communication difficulties, and who have personal, social and emotional demands that need to be resolved. They make good progress through the nursery, and through the reception classes. The majority of the children achieve well, although in their personal, social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world, a significant proportion do not reach the expected level by the end of the reception year. However, most children reach the levels expected of them in mathematical and physical development, and they exceed this in their creative development.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	E	E	D	E
writing	D	E	D	D
mathematics	E	E	D	D

*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.*

The above table shows that, when compared with schools nationally, standards in the 2004 national tests were below average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were below average in writing and mathematics and well below average in reading. Reading was a weakness in the school for some time but has been a recent focus for improvement and this is having a positive impact on standards. The overall picture of standards in the school is

one of steady improvement since 2001, and standards are now broadly in line with those found nationally. Early indications from the 2005 test results show that reading has improved further, while the improvements in writing and mathematics made in 2004 have been consolidated.

Inspection findings confirm that current standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards are also broadly in line with those expected in information and communication technology, although there is a lack of sufficient opportunities for pupils to use and extend their skills. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In design and technology, the standards achieved in Years 1 and 2 are better than those normally found elsewhere. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall.** Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, overall. Although many have good attitudes towards school, some pupils demonstrate a lack of independence and maturity. Attendance is satisfactory, while pupils' punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Because of this, standards are rising and pupils achieve well. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this is very effective in encouraging and helping them to enjoy learning. Teaching assistants offer good support for teachers and pupils when they are deployed efficiently. Teachers need to create more opportunities for pupils to mature and grow in independence. The care, welfare, and health and safety of pupils are well provided for. Links with parents, other schools and the local community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher's leadership is good and very well focused on raising standards and developing an effective and appropriate curriculum. Strategic planning has been very effective since the last inspection and the governance of the school is good. Governors have been effective in monitoring development planning and they provide a good level of support and challenge for the school. The teamwork among teaching staff has improved and this has had a positive impact on the consistency of provision. The senior management team has only recently been brought together but now offers the school effective leadership.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of parents are happy with the school and with their children's education. They say children are happy at school and that the teaching is good. They feel comfortable approaching the school with any problems and they feel the introduction to school life when children start in the nursery classes is very effective. A significant minority have some concerns about children's behaviour, as do some of the children themselves. However, most children spoken to during the inspection were very happy with their work and with opportunities to play together.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise the standards of higher attainers in English and mathematics.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills across the curriculum.

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. Current standards in Year 2 are close to the average and rising, and current standards in Year 1 are often above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in most subjects throughout the school.
- Standards have improved a lot since the last inspection.
- Not enough pupils gain the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Skills in information and communication technology are not good enough.
- Standards in children's creative work at the end of reception, and in design and technology in Years 1 and 2 are above those typically expected.

Commentary

1. Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry to the nursery classes, many of the children have low levels of attainment, especially with regard to their social skills and their communication skills. They make good progress in the nursery classes but many remain at a below average level when starting in the reception classes. Further good progress is evident in the reception classes due to the good provision and teaching in most areas of learning, and, by the time they start Year 1, most children have standards that are broadly in line with those expected in their mathematical and physical development. Their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world, remain below the level expected for many children, but their creative development is above that expected by the end of reception.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (14.4)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.3 (13.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.6 (15.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 111 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Standards in the 2004 national tests were below the national average. Even so, the average points scores for 2004 shown above demonstrate how well the standards in reading, writing and mathematics improved from 2003. The early indications are that the 2005 results will consolidate standards in writing and mathematics, with an average points score very similar to that of 2004, although still remaining below average. However, in reading, the average points score is likely to have improved significantly as more pupils reached higher levels. In mathematics, a few of the pupils who were expected to reach the higher levels failed to do so, although in some cases they only just missed the mark. Although teachers often provide different work for different ability groups within their classes, there are times when there is an insufficient level of challenge for the higher attainers. This is also reflected in the below average proportion of pupils who reach the higher levels in investigative work in science, using and applying their mathematical skills, and in those who reach higher levels in speaking and listening.

3. The trend over time in reading, writing and mathematics is rising since a low point in 2001. This is evident in the standards in Year 1, which are higher than for some previous years. This improvement is broadly in line with the improvements found in standards nationally. The improvements in the school are due to the better leadership, which is more focused on monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, to spread good practice and raise standards. This in turn has improved the quality of the teaching throughout the school. Children are now getting a solid start in the Foundation Stage and this is setting them well on the way for further improvements in the future.
4. In science, standards in the 2004 teacher assessments in Year 2 were below average. The current standards in Year 2 are much closer to the national average and are rising, as in other subjects. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected, but pupils have insufficient opportunities to use their skills across the curriculum. This reflects the limited amount of time they have to use computers and other technology, and the limited opportunities to consolidate their learning. Standards of achievement in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in design and technology are above those typically found and pupils have very good opportunities to design, make, finish and evaluate quite complex pieces of work using a range of materials. Standards in other subjects were not judged as they were not a focus for the inspection.
5. Pupils with special educational needs are achieving as well as other pupils. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is measured against the targets set in pupils' individual education plans and as part of the school assessment procedures for all pupils. Individual education plans are reviewed each term and parents are invited to participate in the review. Targets are clearly stated and measurable. Their work is closely matched to their age and ability, particularly in the acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, less able pupils achieve well. There is close liaison between the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs and teaching staff to plan how best to support pupils who have difficulties in learning. The school has recognised some children as gifted and talented and they mostly achieve as well as their peers. However, the provision for them is still at an early stage of development. When the school has pupils at an early stage of learning English, they are well provided for and make equally good progress. This is due to the efforts of class teachers who work hard to obtain appropriate resources and make children feel at home through the use of their home languages on displays.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are generally good and their behaviour is satisfactory, overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good attitudes of most pupils to their work supports their achievement and ensures that they benefit from coming to school.
- A minority of pupils does not consistently maintain the necessary level of concentration and focus in lessons.
- The behaviour of a significant number of pupils lets down the good performance of the majority.

Commentary

6. Pupils generally display a positive interest and enthusiasm in lessons and other activities. Most pupils work hard, and enthusiastically show visitors their work. They remain focused, attentive and respectful of the work of others. Some older pupils were excited and a little in awe during a science lesson when looking for "God's creatures" on the nature trail. Pupils participate well in lessons - especially those lessons that involve more activity, such as physical education or making things. They enjoy taking responsibility and quickly respond if

the school provides opportunities to do so. These good attitudes begin in the Foundation Stage and form the basis of the on-going good achievement of pupils as they progress through school.

7. Some pupils do not always maintain these good attitudes and this is often due to a lack of maturity in their attitude to learning. They do not always co-operate or collaborate when working together in groups, sometimes disrupting the learning of others, as well as themselves. These pupils lack consistency in their concentration and sometimes want to play rather than focus on their work. Some were not able to remain involved in their discussions with adults held during the inspection.
8. While teachers frequently have high expectations of the behaviour of pupils, this is not consistently applied across the school or within individual lessons. Pupils are concerned about the poor behaviour of a limited number of other pupils, and a significant number of parents agree. Boisterous behaviour at playtimes sometimes exceeds the norms of energetic or enthusiastic play and becomes too 'rough'. The schools' recent initiative of providing good outdoor play equipment - bought by the Friends of the School - which is currently available at lunch-times, is having a positive effect in reducing this overly energetic play.
9. The attitudes, values and personal qualities of pupils with special educational needs are developed well. All pupils with special educational needs have a good attitude to learning. They behave well both in the classroom and about the school. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties receive very good support so that they are aware of the high standards expected of them and are enabled to respond positively.
10. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to work together and encourages sharing and co-operation, but some pupils are not yet sufficiently mature in their behaviour to make the most of these opportunities. There is a strong emphasis on moral and spiritual development, with a theme for each week continued through whole-school and class assemblies, giving consistency and allowing pupils to reflect on the messages given. The school supports a wide range of children's charities through fund-raising activities and encourages pupils to consider the feelings of people in different circumstances to their own. A good range of visits takes place to local and more distant places of interest such as Llandudno, where social differences between the two towns are explored in addition to historical and geographical ones. Stories are told from other cultures and the school has organised a visit to Whitchurch by an Australian broadcaster. Pupils also sing at a local arts festival and take part in a festival celebrating the town. These high profile events provide good opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own and other cultures, but further provision should be made for the appreciation of other cultures within the regular curriculum. Current provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, overall.
11. Attendance levels are satisfactory. The school promotes and manages attendance well by good communication with parents and it celebrates exceptional attendance with pupils. It works closely with the educational welfare service. Unauthorised absence remains low.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.1
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

One pupil was excluded briefly for two fixed terms last year but there have been no exclusions this year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	181	2	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	13	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education, supported by good teaching and learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The curriculum is good. The care, welfare, health and safety offered by the school, and the links with parents, the community and other schools, are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. The assessment of pupils' progress is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- The marking and assessment of pupils' work is better than that typically found.
- The teaching of pupils with special needs, and of those with English as an additional language, is good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7 (19%)	21 (58%)	8 (22%)	0	0	0

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

12. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection throughout the school. Changes to the accommodation, the staffing and the way teachers plan and monitor each others' work have all had a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff have attended a variety of training sessions since the last inspection. The staffing is now more stable and the senior management team is beginning to work well together to monitor and evaluate teaching and to spread good practice.

13. Part of the improvement in teaching is due to links the school has made with other schools. Teachers have been able to observe good practice and train alongside colleagues from a range of different schools. The local authority has provided good support for the school over the past two years and this has helped create a firm foundation for the improvements that are now evident.
14. None of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory. One of the strengths observed was the way teachers now work as teams, planning and supporting one another. The best teaching is characterised by very effective relationships between teachers and teaching assistants, and between teachers and pupils. Resources are well chosen and are effective in supporting learning. In the best lessons, the teaching assistants and nursery nurses are fully involved in the planning, delivery and assessment of activities. However, in a few lessons they were less well deployed and less effective.
15. Marking of pupils' work is very good. As well as the verbal feedback pupils receive, teachers annotate pupils' work, showing what they have got correct and the ways they can improve in the future. This provides teachers, pupils and parents with a very clear record of the progress made. The recorded work is kept neatly in workbooks and is very well presented.
16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and of those who are at an early stage of learning English, is good. Teachers consult pupils' individual education plans so that the stated targets can be incorporated into lesson plans. Pupils with learning difficulties are fully included in all classroom activities. Some pupils receive good additional support to experience success. Assessment and tracking procedures for pupils with learning difficulties are very good and are used well to ascertain the rate and levels of achievement. Teachers ensure that pupils are challenged appropriately so that they are working to the best of their ability. The role of the support assistants within lessons is planned well, but greater involvement in the delivery of lessons would make them more effective. There are strong links with the special educational needs support service, which offers both advice and tuition as required. The school has access to a range of outside agencies and these links support the school's work effectively.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are good. The accommodation is good and supports learning. There is a good and plentiful range of resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Curriculum enrichment is good through the range of clubs, visits and visitors provided.
- Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.
- Accommodation and resources are good.
- There is insufficient use of all forms of information and communication technology across all curriculum areas.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets legal requirements. The teaching of religious education follows the guidance of the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum is broad and balanced, although priority has been given to raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Non-core subjects are taught in a themed approach that is working well. There are good planned links between subjects. Visitors and visits are used as a good stimulus for teaching a wide range of skills. The recommendations of the revised Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are fully implemented. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are

included in all subjects and all aspects of school life. The effectiveness of the curriculum is monitored and developed according to the changing needs of the pupils, parents and community.

18. All pupils benefit equally from what the school has to offer, including extra-curricular activities that are sports-related such as, for example, the football club and short tennis. There is a range of visits to places of interest. These visits form a vital part of the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills in addition to their contribution to non-core subjects, such as art and design, geography and history. An Australian musician has visited the school to encourage and enable pupils to develop their interest in music-making. Storytellers have also visited school to stimulate pupils' interest in story-writing. Pupils and staff raise funds for charities including 'Red Nose Day', the local hospice and 'Children in Need'. These opportunities contribute successfully to the good social and moral development of all pupils.
19. The headteacher and senior management team review and develop the curriculum very effectively. Subject co-ordinators manage curriculum development in their areas well. As a team, they are committed to maintaining and improving the provision for all subjects. Recently, there has been greater emphasis on raising standards in English, mathematics and science. Subject managers check that there is good progression and consistent provision through long-term planning and frequent evaluation to ascertain the impact on raising standards. Computers and other technology are not used sufficiently across the curriculum. This has been identified by the school as an area for development.
20. There is close liaison about the curriculum with the adjacent junior and high schools. This includes establishing close working relationships between subject leaders to ensure that there is minimal disruption to the progression of learning for those pupils transferring at the end of Year 2. There is an innovatory programme planned together with the junior school to raise standards in writing.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They participate fully in the same curriculum offered to other pupils. Tasks are adapted and additional help is provided to ensure they experience success. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. The recommendations of the revised Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are fully implemented. Pupils with special needs benefit from the high level of care provided by all staff and the very good relationships that exist generally throughout the school. There are very good arrangements for those pupils who are due to transfer to junior school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have many opportunities to develop their social, spiritual, moral and cultural skills through the wide range of additional curriculum activities offered. Access for disabled pupils and wheelchair users has been provided for most outside areas and to all parts of the school building, including toilet facilities adapted to meet their needs. There is a strong commitment to include all pupils in all aspects of the life of the school.
22. There is now greater stability in staffing than at the time of the previous inspection. There are sufficient numbers of qualified and experienced teachers to teach the full curriculum. The teaching assistants are beginning to take a more active role in contributing to pupils' learning. Recent building work has significantly improved the facilities within the main school building so that, overall, accommodation is now good. All areas are used efficiently and this has resulted in an attractive environment for learning. Recently, a specialist area has been established for computer skills tuition, together with good library facilities. The library is also used as a teaching area for small groups, although this limits its function as an additional research resource or as a space for individual or independent learning.

23. There are attractive grounds, which are beginning to be used as a learning resource, for example, for the study of bugs in science. There are quiet areas outdoors for reading and board games. There are good storage facilities, so that resources remain in good condition and are easily accessible to all. Resources are of good quality and adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with good support and guidance and takes good account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strong personal relationships with staff enable pupils to work safely.
- All staff contribute effectively in ensuring high levels of care and protection.
- Thorough health and safety arrangements ensure that pupils are secure.
- Pupils settle into school quickly and continue to be supported and guided well.
- The school council is starting to provide an important opportunity to take account of pupils' opinions and ideas.

Commentary

24. Teachers use their good knowledge of pupils to nurture pupils' physical and emotional well-being. As a result, pupils feel more able to be ambitious in their learning without fear of failure or embarrassment. Pupils are confident that there are adults to turn to for assistance and that teachers help them with their work.
25. Good attention to the care of pupils is evident. Accidents during play at lunch-time are handled sensitively. One pupil's grazes were treated carefully and she – and her friends who were concerned – were reassured and supported well. Many staff are trained in first aid to provide flexibility of support during trips. Pupils leaving the nursery and reception classes at the end of the day are only released directly to parents or carers. Arrangements for child protection and for those in public care are very good, with designated officers and other staff being appropriately trained. Parents feel satisfied that the school takes good care of their children.
26. Well-organised procedures ensure the safety of pupils and staff. Maintenance of buildings and equipment is carried out in an orderly and timely way. Risk assessments of the building and for trips, are carried out conscientiously. Accidents and incidents are documented and handled appropriately.
27. Pupils settle quickly into the nursery and learn necessary routines and required behaviour. Children are introduced sensitively and in a phased way, which enables them to build up their exposure to life in school. The layout of the school enables pupils to mix easily with people in their next year's environment - especially in the early formative years. Marking of work, identifying the improvements needed, is a strong feature of teaching and close monitoring of pupils' progress enables teachers to redirect individual pupils' efforts well. Class targets are displayed and recognised by pupils.
28. Pupils with special educational need are supported very well and, as a result, they make very good progress. The school assesses and monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs accurately. No pupil is disapplied from the National Curriculum. The school has access to a wide range of visiting specialists, including representatives from the local authority special educational needs support service, the behaviour support team, the speech and language therapy service and the educational psychology service, in addition to more specialist advice from representatives of the medical profession, including occupational and physiotherapy services.

29. The recently introduced school council is starting to provide an opportunity for pupils to raise issues. So far, it only meets every few weeks and is attended by three pupils from each year who are nominated by teachers to represent ideas. It is carefully guided by a teacher and has discussed things relevant to the pupils, such as what playtime games to buy.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a very good partnership with parents. There are very good links with the wider community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's close integration into the community benefits pupils' development.
- Effective partnerships have been forged with other schools.
- Partnerships with parents are supportive of pupils' learning and the school's work.

Commentary

30. The school uses its community links very well to support pupils' personal development and their learning in subjects. Visitors to the school include an Australian musician, storytellers, sports coaches, puppeteers and artists. The local rector takes assembly each week, classes visit the church, and pupils attend church for celebration days. Other local clergy also help support the spiritual development of pupils. Visits to places such as Llandudno and a local fortified manor house focus on topics and subjects such as geography, history and the environment. There are also visits to nearby shops and the local library. Pupils sing at local events, such as the arts festival at the secondary school, and members of the community are invited to shows and to the Christmas and summer fairs.
31. Strong links with other schools also benefit pupils and the school. There are helpful care arrangements with before- and after-school groups provided nearby with pupils from other schools as part of the "Extended Schools" initiative. Schools are co-operating effectively to provide well-planned learning programmes for children and adults, which maximise the use of each school's resources. There are regular meetings of senior staff with the nearby junior school to discuss issues such as sharing best practice, teaching and curriculum work in mathematics and literacy. There are also links with other infant schools in nearby towns. Most pupils move on to the nearby junior school and transfer arrangements are thorough. The junior school teachers visit the school to talk to pupils and to discuss pupils' academic and personal needs. Pupils have a "taster" day at the junior school and make other familiarisation visits. Comprehensive records are passed on to the new schools.
32. Pupils with special educational needs have access to a good home/school link programme. It is designed to show parents how they can help their child further to acquire basic skills and to overcome some of the learning and behavioural difficulties they are experiencing. The co-ordinator liaises closely with the school, parents and any professionals who may be involved in order to monitor its effectiveness. Targets are agreed by the co-ordinator and the class teacher and are shared with parents and pupils. Parents are invited to attend the regular review of individual education plans and the annual review of Statements of Special Educational Needs. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs meets the co-ordinator regularly to monitor and review the provision.
33. Nearly all parents are extremely satisfied with the school. They feel well-informed by the regular information about the life of the school, are comfortable about approaching the school to discuss their children's development, and are pleased to have their opinions and suggestions sought out and considered. The school asks parents for their views and this currently includes gaining ideas about what the "Extended Schools" provisions should include. There are three meetings with parents each year, and day-to-day access to teachers to discuss pupils' learning and development is good. The school provides regular courses for

parents about the work their children experience, such as the 'Share' course, and they also organise family learning sessions. Some parents feel that their children do not receive equal access to visits, but the inspectors found this not to be true.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good, overall. The governance of the school is good and well focused on raising standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is effective in tracking achievement.
- The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Strategic planning is very effective.
- The headteacher leads the curriculum and teaching very effectively through detailed monitoring and evaluation.
- The budget is efficiently and effectively managed and administered.
- The leadership and management of the special educational needs provision is very good.

Commentary

34. The headteacher provides the school with effective leadership, and this has been at the root of the improvements made since the last inspection. This good leadership has helped the school continue to improve through a very difficult time of disruption to staffing that has now largely been resolved. The staff have worked very hard to ensure that the school is no longer underachieving and they now form a strong team who plan together well and offer one another good support. The headteacher and senior management team have appropriately high expectations and these are reflected in the rising standards and improved teaching. Communication in the school has been improved through a staff newsletter alongside regular meetings and training sessions.
35. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is focused clearly on trying to overcome the difficulties many of the children bring with them. There is a very important and effective focus on developing children's personal and social skills, as well as their speech and communication skills. The staff are well managed and the nursery and reception classes give children a good start to their school careers. Other subject leaders' roles are developing well. Many roles are at an early stage due to staff changes, but all co-ordinators are appropriately focused on raising standards and reducing underachievement. Professional development has improved through regular attendance by teachers and co-ordinators at training meetings.
36. The governing body offers the school a good level of support and challenge. Their role has developed well since the last inspection and they are much more involved in monitoring how the school is performing. The standards committee tracks the progress of all pupils. This gives governors very clear opportunities to ask questions about progress and underachievement if any is evident. The governors have more information about the school and how well it is doing than in the past.
37. The school's development planning has improved over time and now provides the school with a clear, detailed and measurable basis for further improvement. Senior staff have improved their skills in writing measurable success criteria, and the priorities decided alongside other staff and governors are appropriate for taking the school forward. All staff are involved in the planning, and governors monitor the progress of the development planning in some depth. Governors visit the school regularly to monitor the plans in practice. They are fully involved in plans with other local schools for the development of more community links and use of the new community room at the school.

38. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of special educational needs. Her experience and expert knowledge enable her to ensure that pupils and their parents benefit from the very good support provided by the school. She actively encourages parental support and incorporates this into the development plan for this area. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed very well by the co-ordinator. She ensures that all pupils have access to the full curriculum. She co-ordinates the views and advice of all professionals involved with each pupil. She liaises closely with the next stage of education to ensure a smooth transition to the receiving school. The management of documentation is exemplary. The recommendations of the most recent Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs have been fully implemented. Support assistants play an important role in supporting pupils with special educational needs. They have benefited from additional training and are now in a position to develop their role further. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs meets the co-ordinator each term to review the provision.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	670,219	Balance from previous year	209
Total expenditure	687,840	Balance carried forward to the next	0
Expenditure per pupil	2,176		

39. The school budget is monitored well by the school business officer and the governing body at regular finance committee meetings. The budget has been used well for resources and improvements to accommodation, as well as for staffing. The school works hard to ensure best value in all of its work; however, although the school provides good value for money, overall, the available resources for information and communication technology are not used regularly enough.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children start in the nursery class during their third year, and join the reception classes during their fourth year. Depending on their age, the transfer can be at the start of any of the three terms. This makes the management of, and planning for, the Foundation Stage complex but the school deals with this very effectively. The curriculum is well planned and based on the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. Staff plan well together and work closely with the nursery nurses and teaching assistants. There have been many improvements since the last inspection, including accommodation and resources.

The assessment and recording of children's progress is very efficient. Teachers' marking is very effective, making the objectives clear and annotating how well children have done and how much support they had. Staff ensure that children have opportunities to choose activities and make decisions about what they want to do, as well as ensuring there is sufficient time for direct teaching of skills and knowledge. All adults are used effectively for the benefit of children's learning. Links to parents are good and have improved since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide a lot of opportunities for children to work and play together.
- Relationships between children and staff are very good.
- A minority of children remain immature in many of their attitudes at the end of reception.

Commentary

40. Good provision ensures that children achieve well and make good progress in the nursery and reception classes. Teaching is good, and personal and social aspects have a high focus as they are recognised to have an important impact on children's future learning. At the start of the day, parents have good opportunities to meet teachers and share any concerns or issues. This helps settle children well and most are keen to meet their friends and start activities. Staff also use this time to talk to children and settle any worries they may have. For example, one child was praised for approaching a teacher to ask the way to a particular part of the school she did not know.
41. Children are encouraged to change and dress themselves as much as possible when preparing for physical activity. They are taught to wash their hands after activities and after visiting the toilet, as well as before eating. A lot of the activities encourage children to work together and co-operate when working. For example, in reception, one teacher made very good use of pairs of children discussing their work with each other to support the consolidation of their learning. Even though most children achieve well by the time they leave reception, a significant minority has not developed the maturity or independence typically expected for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to learn to read and write.
- Speaking skills are underdeveloped.

Commentary

42. Teaching is good, and this results in good achievement throughout the nursery and reception classes. While reading and writing improve significantly, standards, by the end of reception for a significant minority of children, are still below those typically found elsewhere. In particular, many children's speech is immature and shows delayed development and a limited vocabulary. Teachers and other adults in the nursery use every opportunity to talk to children. In one good activity, children took on the role of the wolf or a little pig, and others thought of questions to ask them.
43. Children have good opportunities to experience a wide range of traditional rhymes and fairy tales. In reception, they know what an author or illustrator does. They listen well and make pertinent comments about characters in stories, which show they have sound comprehension. Knowledge of the sounds letters make is developed appropriately and regular assessment shows that good progress is made. In the nursery, children have good opportunities to practise emergent writing skills, beginning with basic mark-making. Higher-attaining children have good letter formation skills by the time they join the reception classes. Teachers make good use of "writing frames" to encourage children to write well and to use an appropriate format, such as when writing a letter to a giant. This method also ensures consistency in the provision across the three reception classes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Number and shape work is often well linked to other subjects.

Commentary

44. Pupils achieve well in the nursery and reception classes due to the good teaching they receive. By the end of reception, most attain standards that are broadly typical for their age. In the nursery, they are provided with a range of activities that encourage counting and matching skills. Children recognise colours and some know the names of common two-dimensional shapes. They make symmetrical patterns and follow simple sequences. This work is extended in the reception classes, where more complex symmetrical paintings are produced in art sessions. In the reception classes, children count confidently and know how to double numbers to 20. Many children are able to complete simple additions. Higher-attaining children add to 20 but some still reverse their numbers when writing the answers. Lower-attaining pupils are still mastering numbers to five with the aid of teaching assistants.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some good cross-curricular links.
- Children have good opportunities to build and test a range of toys and models.
- The use of computers is limited and the software available is not always at an appropriate level.

Commentary

45. The teaching is good and children achieve well. Even so, many children still have standards that are below those typically found elsewhere. Good cross-curricular links are found in the reception classes, as when children learn about forces from traditional stories. For example, the story of the enormous turnip is used very effectively to illustrate the concept of pulling. Children have good opportunities to play with and experiment with toys that work by pushing and pulling. In the nursery, children explore floating and sinking using a range of objects. In both the nursery and reception classes, children have good opportunities to use a range of construction kits to build and modify models. In the nursery, for example, children build houses for animals using a range of commercial construction kits. In the reception classes, children link this with their science work, making a model to push or pull. Children have a limited range of opportunities to use computers, and at times opportunities are missed in the reception classes. Nursery children click and drag pictures and are developing their skills in programming a robot. In the reception classes, children use design software effectively to draw self-portraits.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the school hall and apparatus.
- The school does not use the outdoor facilities effectively enough.

Commentary

46. The teaching is good. This ensures that children achieve well and attain standards broadly typical for their age. In the nursery and reception classes, children have a good range of opportunities to develop careful control of small tools, pencils and paint-brushes. They learn to cut and colour carefully and with growing skill. In the hall, nursery children have good opportunities to use gymnastic apparatus to climb, balance, jump and roll. However, the session does not give children sufficient time to explore and experiment with the apparatus. The outside areas are well resourced with climbing and balancing equipment. There are also large wooden blocks for children to build with. However, there are missed opportunities to create imaginative games as there are no painted markings on the tarmac.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of creative work are better than those often found elsewhere.
- Children experience a good range of three-dimensional work.

Commentary

47. Nursery children sing traditional and modern songs and action rhymes with enthusiasm and enjoyment. These reinforce their number work as well as helping to develop singing and memory skills. They contribute large paintings to friezes, such as that illustrating the story of the enormous turnip. They paint with brushes and using their fingers, and use clay to make tiles, on which they then draw patterns to represent the three pigs' houses. Reception children have very good opportunities to make and finish robot models using a range of materials. They work well together and are supported effectively by teaching assistants. They make good clay animals after a visit to a farm.
48. In one very good activity, children painted imaginatively in response to music. They also had good opportunities to compose music to accompany a robot poem. In one lesson, children sang and moved like robots. Overall, children achieve well due to the good teaching.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, especially in speaking, listening and writing, are not yet high enough.
- Assessment is very good and is used well to plan interesting and appropriately challenging lessons.
- Subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to work with colleagues in order to ensure equality of provision.

Commentary

49. Standards in Year 2 are close to national expectations in reading, but are below the expected level in writing, speaking and listening. During the past five years the results in the National Curriculum tests have fluctuated, being well below or below the national average. However, in recent years there has been good improvement. Standards in reading have improved since 2004 but standards in writing have remained unchanged. This is better than in previous years. In comparison with their attainment at the end of the reception class, most pupils achieve well. This differs from the previous inspection when standards were judged to be below or well below the national average at the end of Year 2. The quality of pupils' speaking and listening skills is improving, although some still experience difficulties that limit their ability to write. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Following a recent subject audit, a stronger focus on reading and writing is beginning to have a positive impact.
50. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and communicate well. Teachers understand their pupils very well and are able to engage their interest and encourage them to work as well as they can. Assessment is very good, particularly marking in pupils' books, which guides and challenges most of them well. There are high expectations of good presentation of pupils' work and of pupils' behaviour within the classroom. More opportunities should be created, however, to enable teaching assistants to make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Teaching that is good, and sometimes very good, combined with the pupils' own good attitudes, ensures that pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs and the very small number for whom English is an additional language, is good.
51. Pupils commence Year 1 with skills in communication, language and literacy that are below expectations for their age. Increasingly, pupils can answer questions and converse with

adults and with one another with greater ease and more confidence. They still make mistakes, but are very secure in the knowledge that their teachers and peers will value their efforts. Due to the hard work of teachers and support staff, many communicate effectively by the end of Year 2. Higher-attainers demonstrate good listening skills when responding promptly to teachers' questions, as observed in a very good lesson in Year 2 when pupils were discussing and planning their writing about a recent visit to Llandudno.

52. Average-attaining pupils explain their work satisfactorily, giving sensible reasons why 'ea' and 'oa' make specific sounds. Pupils are encouraged to read aloud in guided reading sessions, while others follow the text and listen carefully. There is some inconsistency in provision between classes that has been identified by the school as an area for further development.
53. Reading is promoted strongly in the school. The link between home and school is being established through reading diaries in most classes, but there are some inconsistencies in how and when the reading records are used. In Year 2, most pupils are able to read independently and attain the levels expected for their age. There is additional support for those who find the acquisition of early reading and writing skills difficult. Pupils use a range of strategies to read words that are more difficult. They usually break words up into letter sounds and use the illustrations to help. Higher-attainers read fluently, with accuracy and expression, and recall events well. Whilst these pupils use the context to figure out unfamiliar words, a significant number find this task more difficult.
54. Groups of lower-attaining pupils who have less well-developed skills receive additional support for their reading. Their reading is less expressive and more hesitant, and their understanding of the text is not always correct. They are heard to read individually more frequently so that staff and volunteer helpers can discuss the vocabulary and its meaning with them. More able pupils are able to name their favourite authors, such as Roald Dahl, but the majority does not have sufficient experience of books to discuss their favourite book or author confidently. Higher expectations of these pupils would widen their reading experience and raise their standards.
55. There is a good focus on speaking and writing throughout the school, and in some good and very good lessons pupils are given many opportunities to express their ideas and opinions. The school has identified a need to improve the standard of writing and strongly believes that it is necessary to improve the speaking and listening skills of all pupils if this is to be achieved. A storyteller has been used to stimulate and motivate pupils' interest in writing. A writing programme is being developed with the adjacent junior school to improve standards. By the age of seven, many pupils can write independently, and can recall and write about events in sequential order. They know how to use adjectives to make their work more interesting. For example, they describe a jellyfish as being 'translucent' and the sea as being 'turquoise'. They know how and when to use speech marks.
56. Presentation and handwriting are generally neat. Pupils are able to practise their spelling using a computer program and they are encouraged to 'have a go' at spelling unfamiliar words. Spelling is below average in most classes but, by the end of Year 2 it is satisfactory, overall.
57. The subject is led and managed well. The joint co-ordinators are well aware of the strengths and the areas for development, which are currently being addressed through an action plan to raise standards. A rigorous tracking and assessment system has been implemented throughout the school to raise standards in all areas of English, especially by improving all forms of writing throughout the school. The co-ordinators are determined to raise standards further in order to enable pupils to reach their individual best.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The school has adopted a themed approach to teaching foundation subjects, which is working well. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their literacy skills. In their

research about a recent visit to Llandudno, for example, they used a computer program to read non-fiction material about the Victorians. They record their experiences in many forms, including writing a sequenced account of the Llandudno visit using a time-line. Lower-attaining pupils make good attempts to read difficult texts in history because they are engaged in the subject and use clues in the pictures to help understand the text. Overall, language and literacy is used satisfactorily throughout the school to promote learning. Specific technical vocabulary is introduced well in geography and history lessons when comparing Whitchurch and Llandudno. During a religious education lesson, one child used knowledge acquired in science to explain succinctly to others why the moon is not a light source.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good** and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen and are now broadly average.
- The teaching is often very good.
- Too few pupils reach the higher levels.
- The use of computers is underdeveloped.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

59. Pupils' achievement is good and the overall provision has improved to a good degree since the last inspection. The test results in 2004 showed how well the standards have improved, and this improvement appears to have been consolidated in the most recent tests. However, too few pupils are reaching the higher levels and this remains a priority for the school to address. Standards among the current Year 1 pupils look to be improving even further and the improved teaching is clearly having a positive impact on standards. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and a significant amount is very good.
60. The strengths in the teaching include effective planning, which ensures that the teaching and activities are appropriate given the pupils' prior attainment. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, but are grouped by ability, and this is effective in offering support for the less able pupils in Years 1 and 2 as well as providing more challenge for the more able Year 1 pupils. Teachers have created positive relationships with the children in their classes. This encourages most pupils to take a full part in lessons, and be willing to answer questions and take a full part in activities. However, a small number of children are lacking effective learning skills, and demonstrate a lack of maturity and independence.
61. Teachers make good use of practical equipment and apparatus for counting and for teaching about two- and three-dimensional shapes. In one very good lesson, less able pupils developed a bar chart using interlocking cubes rather than recording the chart on paper. This enabled the teaching assistant to work with them effectively and to encourage much more discussion about the skills and concepts than might otherwise have been the case. The marking of pupils' work is a major strength. It makes clear to pupils what they have done well and how they can improve in the future. It also provides teachers with useful information about the purpose of the work, the amount of support received and what is required for pupils' further learning. Pupils' work is presented tidily and neatly. Teaching assistants are often deployed well, but in some lessons they are not used effectively during the whole-class teaching sessions.
62. The subject is co-ordinated well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. The teaching and learning has been monitored effectively by the headteacher during the co-ordinator's absence. This has had a clear impact on the improved provision. Very little evidence exists of pupils using computers and other technology in the subject and this remains an area for improvement. There is a lot of number work produced by pupils, but less

work involving data-handling, and exploring shape, space and measure. The school analyses its test results well and uses the difficulties identified as a particular emphasis for the teaching and the monitoring of pupils' learning. This helps to spread the good practice that exists in the school. Targets are shared regularly with parents, so they are aware of the work being covered at school. Information evenings have been held for parents so that teachers can explain the methods used.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Pupils' mathematical skills are being developed satisfactorily across the curriculum. In science, for example, pupils measure distances in strides and produce accurate bar charts to present the information in an interesting and understandable way. When making high quality models they have to measure and compare lengths accurately.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are close to the expected levels.
- Teaching is good.
- Assessment is thorough.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

64. Standards in science are close to the expected levels, having risen steadily in recent years. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' investigative skills were only just beginning to be developed and this is now a strong feature of the subject. From a low starting point on entry, pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
65. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand the main processes of life and can recognise and name the main parts of plants and animals. They sort these into groups using simple criteria. They have some understanding of the processes which change some materials and that some changes are irreversible. Pupils record their work in a variety of ways, sometimes in writing, sometimes using structured recording sheets given by the teachers and sometimes using software. Work is marked thoroughly and teachers make helpful comments in pupils' books. Teaching assistants assist by annotating pupils' work at the end of lessons. Assessment is carried out regularly and a new scheme is being trialled to allow greater use of assessment to plan future activities.
66. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good, overall, with some opportunities being provided for investigations outside the classroom. Pupils are guided well when planning and carrying out their investigations.
67. The subject is well resourced and the school makes excellent use of its good outdoor resources for science, including a wildlife area and pond. In addition, pupils visit a nearby nature reserve and the school's work has been featured in a local wildlife magazine.
68. The subject is led well and managed effectively. The co-ordinator has many opportunities to monitor the work of other staff and has involved the local authority adviser in work to raise standards. Progress since the previous inspection has been good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good resources in the classrooms and the computer suite.
- Teaching is generally good.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their ICT skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

69. Standards are close to the national average at the end of Year 2. This is similar to standards at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are able to open programs, select colours, shapes and text and place them on the screen to create pictures to illustrate their work. Teachers use a digital camera to take pictures, which are used well in other subjects. They use a floor turtle to explore how to control movements and use an on-screen control program.
70. The school has a computer suite with an appropriate range of software, although it is not used regularly enough. Access to the Internet was not possible during the inspection due to technical problems. Each classroom also has one or two other computers. Some of these classroom machines are laptop computers, with additional large displays that enable class teachers to demonstrate programs before pupils use the suite. The school plans to increase the numbers of laptops available so that more work can take place in classrooms rather than in the suite. A data projector and interactive whiteboard are available through the extended schools project.
71. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching in a mixed Years 1 and 2 class. The school provides full coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Years 1 and 2 pupils use a CD-Rom for finding information about the seaside in history and geography. However, work of this kind is largely limited to the weekly sessions when each class uses the suite and the classroom computers are not utilised fully to support learning in other curriculum areas. The suite is rarely used during the mornings, except by groups of reception-age children. Consequently, pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their ICT skills in other subjects.
72. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory and it is managed conscientiously. With the school's recent focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, the subject has not been a high priority, but its development is a major feature of the school's plans for the coming year. An assessment scheme is in place to record individuals' attainment but it is not yet used effectively to plan their progression.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Information and communication skills are only used to a limited extent to support work in literacy, numeracy, science, history, geography, design and technology, and art and design. Some good examples of the use of computers in other curriculum areas were seen, but this is an area for further development.

HUMANITIES

74. It was not possible to make judgements on teaching or the overall provision in **geography** and **history** as no lessons were observed. The school's approach to teaching, using themes and topics, covers the curriculum well. There are many opportunities to develop pupils' personal, social and health education. Links across the curriculum deepen pupils' understanding and knowledge as well as adding a clear focus and enjoyment to their learning. This approach enables pupils to practise and extend their numeracy and literacy skills in a purposeful manner. The expectations of teachers and the tasks set clearly match the age and abilities of most pupils. However, there are missed opportunities to extend their knowledge and independence.
75. Pupils' work in history shows they are beginning to understand chronology when comparing Victorian times and the Second World War with the present time. They are able to use computers to research evidence and can record their findings in a variety of ways. Work is well presented and the very good quality marking guides their learning well. Pupils talk excitedly about their visit to a local castle.
76. Pupils have developed a good understanding of their locality and how it is changing. They hold strong views about the preservation of some of the important buildings in the town. They are able to compare and contrast living in a small market town with life at the seaside. All pupils value the visits designed to stimulate and motivate them. The visits form the nucleus of each strand of the curriculum and are used very well to engage pupils' interest and to raise standards.
77. Five lessons in **religious education** were observed. Standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, although there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall provision. Achievement for all pupils is satisfactory, including that of those pupils who have special educational needs or for whom English is not their first language.
78. Pupils show an understanding of Christian beliefs and the teachings of the Bible. They understand the Easter Story and the signs and symbols of the Christian faith. They have an understanding of the importance of caring for the world God created. They have limited experience of other faiths and cultures. Their geographical location makes it difficult for them to visit places of worship of other faiths. Pupils learn to care for one another and this makes a good contribution to their personal development.
79. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over this responsibility. The locally agreed syllabus is interwoven with other elements of the school curriculum to form a themed approach. Consequently, there are very good opportunities for the personal and social development of all pupils. The syllabus is suitably adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language. There are close links with the local church, and the vicar takes part regularly in assemblies. He is also a member of the governing body. Pupils visit the church and this makes a good contribution to their spiritual education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. It was not possible to observe any **art and design** lessons during the inspection. However, from displays of pupils' work, it is clear that there are good opportunities for them to use a wide range of materials and media. They learn about well-known artists, such as Kandinsky and Van Gogh, by looking at their work and then producing work in a similar style. They produce very effective colour patterns, and this enables pupils to mix paints for very effective sunset and night sky paintings. They use card and various materials to make collages, and use paper plates to create imaginative faces after a story about a wide-mouthed frog. They design masks that represent the faces of 'wild things' after reading a well-known story. Computer software is used for creating a range of pictures and patterns. There are good

cross-curricular links, for example, when pupils produced some very good paintings and drawings after their visit to a local fortified manor house as part of a history topic.

81. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, standards in **design and technology** work are often above those typically found elsewhere. This is illustrated by the Years 1 and 2 project to design and make a trap for a wolf or a pig, based on a story book. The pupils have made wooden models, involving a range of skills, and can explain how their winding mechanisms work. The completed models are well finished and camouflaged so the wolf cannot see them. Pupils wrote evaluations to explain how they could improve their design. In one class, very good use has been made of a large construction kit to create and illustrate a similar mechanism.
82. In **music**, pupils achieved the standards expected for their age in the one lesson seen. This reflects the findings of the last inspection, when standards were satisfactory. The teaching seen was good, with the teacher setting a clear structure within which pupils could experiment with the use of percussion instruments to make appropriate sounds to accompany a poem about waves.
83. Pupils sing well, especially in whole-school assemblies, while in some class assemblies the whole class are able to sing tunefully and in time without accompaniment. The subject is well resourced, with a particularly good range of high quality percussion instruments. The curriculum is further enriched by opportunities for pupils to perform in a local arts festival.
84. Only a very small number of lessons were observed in **physical education** and it is not possible to make judgements about teaching, standards or overall provision. Resources are good and the system for colour coding equipment helps teachers to manage the lessons well and helps pupils to understand what they should use and where they should work. In one lesson, pupils demonstrated broadly typical standards when using bats and balls. The school has encouraged children to take part in after-school activities where they can extend their interests and skills. A very good proportion of Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have taken part in football and short tennis. In tennis, they also had the opportunity to play against other schools at a local leisure centre.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

85. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is **good**. The development of personal and social education permeates all aspects of school life. Few formal lessons were seen, but through discussions with pupils and observation of collective worship, it is apparent that the school highly values this aspect of their work. Pupils' achievements and self-worth are promoted well. Some good teaching showed pupils discussing the impact of man on the habitat of rare animals and endangered species. Pupils then considered how their own actions may affect the whole world. Visits to places of educational interest help pupils to understand their place in society and the world they live in. Visitors are welcomed to the school and promote pupils' understanding of other cultures. Time is given for pupils to reflect and for them to voice their opinions and concerns. The school council meets regularly to discuss issues that are of particular importance to them. There are limited opportunities to accept responsibility, for example, the collection of class registers, but this is an area for further development. Many aspects of healthy eating are covered in the curriculum.

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	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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