

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLINGTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Willington, Crook

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114216

Headteacher: Mr W Guymer

Lead inspector: Mr R A Robinson

Dates of inspection: 18 – 20 April 2005

Inspection number: 268268

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	185
School address:	Hall Lane Willington Crook County Durham
Postcode:	DL15 0QH
Telephone number:	01388 746426
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	The Reverend Paul Grundy
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about 17 per cent, which is about average. The school serves a socially and economically disadvantaged area. Children's attainment on entry is below average. Twenty-three pupils are on the list of special educational needs, which is about average. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have moderate or specific learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech or communication difficulties or hearing impairment. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is about average. The school gained the Active Mark Award in 2004 and School Improvement Award in 2002 and it is part of a Sport Action Zone. The school is an information and communication technology test-bed school: this is a government-funded initiative involving three clusters of schools across the country with the objective of using information and communication technology to raise standards, to improve home-school links, to reduce teacher workload and to develop communication between schools and the wider community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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25431	Lesley Clark	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. The climate for learning is established extremely well. Standards of the present Year 6 are high. Pupils' achievement is excellent because of the consistently high quality of teaching. The leadership and management of the school are excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are as follows:

- The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent and the governing body and subject co-ordinators assist them very ably.
- Pupils make excellent progress from entering the school in the nursery to leaving at the end of Year 6 because of the high proportion of very good and excellent teaching.
- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics, and science, are very high in information and communication technology, and are above average in music and religious education.
- The use of information and communication technology to assist learning in other subjects is excellent.
- Pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour are both excellent.
- Excellent systems are in place to check pupils' progress and to use the information to push their learning on at a fast pace.

Improvement is excellent since the last inspection in June 1999. Pupils' achievement is now very high. Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved significantly from well below average to well above average. The issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed. Attendance rates have improved to be at the national average. The fostering of pupils' cultural development is now a strength. The procedures for the marking of pupils' work have improved and are excellent. The proportion of very good and excellent teaching has increased exceptionally.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is excellent, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Children in the reception class are likely to meet the expected national targets in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development by the time they start Year 1 and to exceed expected standards in personal, social and emotional development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 2 are well above national expectations in information and communication technology, and above average in the skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, religious education and science. In 2004, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 were in line with the national average in reading but were below average in writing and mathematics. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, and science, are very high in information and communication technology and are above average in music and religious education. No judgements on standards could be made in other subjects or areas of learning.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. Their attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. Attendance is average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is excellent and leads to pupils' very high achievement. **The quality of teaching and learning is very good.** Teaching and learning seen was satisfactory in the nursery, very good in the reception class and in Years 1 to 5 and excellent in Year 6. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is very good in English, mathematics, music and science, excellent in information and communication technology, and good in religious education. No judgements were made on the quality of teaching in other subjects. Literacy skills are developed very well across the curriculum. The application of numeracy skills is good in other subjects. Information and communication technology skills are used exceptionally well to assist learning throughout the curriculum. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress are excellent. The curriculum is very good and enriched exceptionally well. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory, on balance. Resources are very good but aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with very good support, advice and guidance and involves them very well in its work and development. The partnership with parents is very well established and there are good links with the community and a very good beneficial association with other local schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are excellent. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and he is assisted extremely well by the deputy headteacher. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their role very well. Management is excellent. The governance of the school is very good and ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the education the school provides for their children. Pupils are extremely positive about the school. Neither parents nor pupils have any significant concerns.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant weaknesses in this outstanding school; however, the governors should consider the following:

- Improving the provision, teaching and learning in the nursery to match more closely that in the reception and the rest of the school.
- Seeking ways to improve the accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of pupils is excellent, overall. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception class achieve very well building on sound progress in the nursery.
- Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2, and they are likely to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 in the skills of speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science and religious education, and are well above national expectations in information and communication technology.
- The average overall performance of pupils in the national tests at the end of Year 6 from 2002 to 2004 was well above the national median for their age.
- Standards of the current group of pupils in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics, science, very high in information and communication technology and above average in music and religious education.
- The demanding targets set to be reached by pupils by the end of Year 6 are likely to be exceeded.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry, when they start nursery, is below average, on balance, though it varies from year to year from well below average to below average, particularly in language skills. The children settle well in the nursery and make sound progress in their learning which is then built on very well in the reception. The children achieve well and by the end of the reception year are likely to reach average standards in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development and above average standards in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Too few lessons were seen to make secure judgements on the standards children are likely to reach in physical development and in creative development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.8 (14.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.8 (13.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.3 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In the 2004 national tests, at the end of Year 2, standards were in line with the national average in reading but were below average in writing and mathematics. The results were a significant improvement on the previous year in reading because of the school's focus. Improvements in standards this year in all areas are apparent because of the effects of changes in teaching, the headteacher's drive to raise standards and the excellent use of information and communication technology. The current group of pupils in Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics, religious education and science and well above average in information and communication technology.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (27.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.0 (29.4)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.9 (30.4)	28.6 (28.6)

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

- Standards at the time of the last inspection, in the 1999 national tests, were well below average, overall, but improved in the following year to be well above average. Well above average standards were maintained in subsequent years until 2004 when standards dipped to be in line with the national average. The lower standards in 2004 reflect the known performance of a poorer cohort. The present group of pupils in Year 6 is likely to be well above the national average in English, mathematics and science, very high in information and communication technology and above average in music and religious education. The reason for the high standards by the end of Year 6 can be attributed to the consistency of very good or better teaching in Years 3 to 5 and excellent teaching in Year 6 as well as excellent leadership of the school and pupils' outstanding attitudes to work and behaviour. Standards in English have improved particularly this year through the effectiveness of the marking of pupils' work and the use of information and communication technology to support learning. Standards reached by most pupils with special educational needs are below average; however, most pupils achieve very highly from a low base and some occasionally reach average standards.
- Pupils' achievement is excellent, overall, because of the outstanding ethos, the high standards of education provided and the extremely good leadership and management. Pupils enter school with below average levels of attainment, and sometimes with well below average standards, and make excellent progress over time and by the end of Year 6 generally reach well above average standards. Prior attainment grades, based on the results at the end of Year 6 compared with results at the end of Year 2 in each year since 2000, have been well above average or in the highest five per cent nationally, except in 2004 when the value added was above average. The school is very well placed to maintain high standards. The statutory targets set for the proportion of pupils to reach the level expected of their age and above are likely to be exceeded significantly in English and mathematics because of the excellent teaching of literacy and numeracy in Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Pupil's attitudes and behaviour are excellent. Their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave exceptionally well and have excellent attitudes and motivation to learn.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem is raised through the information and communication technology test-bed initiative.
- Attendance rates have improved because of the very good work done to improve attendance and punctuality.

Commentary

- No visitor can fail to note immediately the ordered calm and purposeful learning environment at the school. The excellent behaviour and attitudes of pupils combine to create an atmosphere focused upon learning. Pupils rarely chatter or get distracted, but settle to any given task with minimal direction. Much of this is derived from the consistently very high

expectations shown by all teachers and the immediate correction of any behaviour less than acceptable. Yet there is never any feeling of oppression or passive behaviour by pupils; the high standards of behaviour and concentration upon work come from them, reflecting their own values. Moreover, children are bright eyed and enthusiastic. As the choir sang beautifully to the other pupils filing in silently and efficiently to an assembly, everyone had smiles on their faces. The children are cheerful and friendly. They readily speak to visitors about their work with a delightful confidence. In class, their attention is total and they question and respond extremely well, readily co-operate with other pupils and show great initiative; for example, in Year 4, a group of pupils got out laptop computers on their own and logged on without instruction, whilst one pupil, finding his laptop computer low on power, put it on charge.

6. Excellent work is seen on pupils' social and moral development through extremely well run assemblies, personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons and teachers' everyday in-class contact and teaching. Pupils understand their responsibilities and what is expected of them within the school community. The 'rules' are understood totally, with good rewards and reinforcements. Spiritual development is also excellent; in several assemblies, pupils were encouraged to reflect on a range of issues, such as families and other cultures. Around the school, displays and other artefacts invite thought and prayer. In lessons, teaching often stimulates real wonder and consideration. The mutual connections with the local churches add further support.
7. At the last inspection, criticism was made of provision for cultural development. Much very good work has been done in recent years to improve the provision. Numerous initiatives involving both visits and visitors have broadened children's experiences of the arts and of other cultures. Special 'multicultural days' have given pupils insights into the dress, culture, food, and language of ethnic groups, such as African, Indian and Chinese.
8. In reporting upon the excellent personal development achieved, one cannot ignore the impact of the information and communication technology test-bed project. The way the pupils have responded to the accelerated and concentrated exposure to the development of a wide range of information and communication technology skills has made really tangible increments to pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Talking to pupils reveals much pride in their information and communication technology achievements and abilities and they enthusiastically speak of their competence. As one girl said, 'We help out the teachers when they can't master the whiteboard!' Indeed, some older pupils have been used in staff training.
9. The school's ethos is excellent and this is mirrored in the attitudes of pupils with learning difficulties. The use of information and communication technology and the very good relationships throughout school lead to high self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' efforts are celebrated, whatever pupils' abilities may be, so that most pupils are very keen and enthusiastic in their work. Because personal development is very highly regarded, pupils with previous behaviour problems make very good progress.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	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.

10. At the last inspection, attendance levels were unsatisfactory. In the past few years, a host of new initiatives, aimed at both pupils and parents, have been introduced to encourage better attendance, whilst procedures for monitoring and encouraging higher levels have been

continuously applied. This has resulted in a steady improvement so that, last year, the school came close to national norms. During the year, to date, attendance has improved to 94.75 per cent, with that in Year 6 at 97.0 per cent; these figures represent a satisfactory situation.

Exclusions

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	140	4	0

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

There have been no exclusions in this academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, overall, with excellent teaching in Year 6. Assessment is excellent. The curriculum is very good and is enriched extremely well. Standards of care, welfare and health and safety are very good. Pupils' views are sought and acted upon very well. Partnership with parents and links with other schools are very well established, and links with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is of a high standard. The assessment of pupils' work is extremely good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the reception class was significantly better than in the nursery.
- Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage, very good in English, mathematics, science and music, and good in religious education.
- Teaching and learning are excellent in information and communication technology, and skills in the subject are used and applied outstandingly throughout the curriculum.
- The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is very good.
- The marking of pupils' work is excellent.

Commentary

11. The quality of teaching and learning has improved dramatically since the last inspection because of excellent leadership, the development of a very good curriculum and the outstanding use of information and communication technology. The following table shows clearly the strengths in the teaching with three-quarters of teaching being very good or better. The excellent teaching was mainly in Year 6, although one excellent lesson was seen in Year 3 and 4 and one in the reception. All of the satisfactory teaching was in the nursery. In Years 1 to 5, the teaching was very good. The teaching in the reception was very good or better whilst teaching in Year 6 was consistently excellent.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8 (22%)	19 (53%)	3 (8%)	6 (17%)	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. Most teachers have excellent subject knowledge. The planning of lessons is very good and it is matched very well to pupils' needs. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods and make most effective use of time, enabling pupils at all levels of attainment to make excellent progress in their learning over time. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, resulting in pupils working very hard and productively whether in whole-class situations, in small groups or individually. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, resulting in pupils responding extremely well to challenges set by the teaching. Teaching assistants work very hard with pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties. Learning resources are used extremely well, particularly information and communication technology equipment, to motivate and interest pupils in order to enhance and speed up their learning.
13. The teaching of children in the nursery and reception classes is good, overall; however, teaching in the nursery is satisfactory whereas teaching and learning in the reception are very good and, occasionally, excellent. In the nursery, too little attention is given to creating an exciting, stimulating learning environment with opportunities for children to select their own resources to extend their learning.
14. In English, mathematics, music and science, the quality of teaching and learning is very good because of the high consistency of very good teaching and learning in Years 1 to 5 and excellent teaching in Year 6. The teaching of religious education is good. Pupils' excellent attitudes to work and behaviour support their learning.
15. The quality of teaching of information and communication technology is excellent throughout Years 1 to 6. Information and communication technology is used extremely well to assist pupils' learning in most subjects. Teachers plan carefully to use computers and other information and communication technology equipment to encourage a fast rate of learning, both through consolidating existing learning and by making new learning more understandable. Teachers' high quality introductions to lessons using multimedia presentations are a powerful tool in helping pupils to make very good or better progress in their learning. Pupils' enhanced skills in using the interactive whiteboard enable them to take a full part in the learning as well as having excellent opportunities to practise and to relate to others what they know.
16. The quality of the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers write very clear and manageable targets for pupil improvement in individual education plans. They ensure that these are used in class and in work with the special needs teacher. The school makes very good use of teaching assistants to support pupils and there is very close liaison between them and class teachers. Information and communication technology is used exceptionally well to support pupils with learning difficulties; for example, pupils work on closely focused programs in literacy and numeracy, and an equally important feature of the use of information and communication technology is its very positive effect on these pupils' self-esteem, motivation and confidence.
17. The marking of pupils' work is excellent, overall. Throughout Years 1 to 6 the marking of work is thorough and pupils are provided with a clear understanding of how well they have done and how they can improve their work. Titles of work are highlighted by teachers to show to pupils when learning objectives are achieved. Teachers record pupils' attainment using computer spreadsheets and use the information to plan future learning and to set targets for pupils. Through laptop computers older pupils can access their own records, which are linked

to small steps of the National Curriculum, and can see what they must do to move to the next level of attainment. The marking of older pupils' work is exemplary, as can be seen from the following example of outstanding practice:

Example of outstanding practice

Teachers mark older pupils' work using readily available computer software to enable pupils to see how well they have done and to challenge them to improve the standard of their work.

Years 5 and 6 pupils submit their written work in electronic form in almost all subjects using the school's large bank of laptop computers and shared computer network. The teachers mark the work exceptionally well using an editing program. Pupils are then given time to access the marked work and are expected to improve their work based on the teachers' comments, such as 'Could this be one sentence?' The teachers can then track the changes and improvements made to pupils' work and make additional comments as and when necessary. In addition, teachers give pupils a summative comment, which clearly shows how well they are doing and how they can improve; for example, 'A super opening, look at your use of 'its' and see where you need an apostrophe. I like your rhyming language in places but try not to overdo this as it will spoil the content.' The excellent quality of marking and the determination and interest of pupils, particularly boys' motivation, to improve their work further results in rapid progress in standards.

The curriculum

The curriculum is very good and this helps pupils to achieve highly. The opportunities the school provides to enrich the curriculum are outstanding, with a very wide range of activities available outside lessons. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory, overall, with some excellent features in resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enhanced by the outstanding provision for information and communication technology.
- Preparation for the later stages of education is excellent.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good.
- There is a very good match of teachers and teaching assistants to the curriculum.

Commentary

18. The school makes excellent use of information and communication technology in all subjects of the curriculum. The innovative and enterprising application of information and communication technology is a significant factor in the school's high levels of achievement. It is complemented by the extremely rich and varied learning opportunities provided both in and out of lessons; for example, French is taught in all classes and Spanish is provided as an after-school club. The very wide range of extra-curricular activities includes the choir, chess, drama, film animation, digital video clubs and a wide range of sporting activities. The curriculum is further enhanced by a very extensive range of visits out of school to such places as a residential activity centre, a local Roman fort, local museums and nature reserves. Pupils in Year 6 have opportunities to visit France. In a similar way, the school welcomes visitors to the school, such as drama groups, local clergy, storytellers, artists and musicians to help to extend learning opportunities. In order to enrich understanding of life and culture in other countries, the school organises days when there is a focus on India, Africa and China. There are strong links with a school in Tanzania.
19. The school's excellent ethos and its use of information and communication technology play an important role in the development of independent and collaborative learning. Pupils are curious and hard working. They have excellent attitudes to their life and work in school. They show very high self-esteem and confidence. This, together with the school's extensive links with the local secondary school and very effective arrangements for transfer, ensure that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education. There is a very

strong focus on personal development and values. These are positively reinforced during daily collective worship and during personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons.

20. Commitment by the school to ensuring that all pupils take part in all learning opportunities is very strong. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school makes excellent use of information and communication technology in order to support learning. Individual education plans are very clear and set manageable targets which are shared by pupils, parents and staff. These pupils are very well supported by the teacher for special educational needs and by teaching assistants. The co-ordinator for special needs ensures that staff and outside agencies work very well together in order to meet pupils' needs.
21. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum. They are very well trained in the use of information and communication technology in order to assist teaching and learning. All members of staff are involved in extra-curricular activities. The school is very well resourced, exceptionally so in the case of information and communication technology; however, there are limitations in the accommodation. Some classrooms are very small and at times this makes it difficult to manage practical work. Outdoor education in the reception class is also made more difficult because of no discrete outdoor area adjacent to the classroom. The headteacher shares a room with the school secretary, presenting difficulties in the conduct of confidential interviews, and in a similar way there is no separate provision for staff to discuss individual education plans with parents of pupils with special educational needs. These constraints are very demanding of time and energy and staff have to work extremely hard to overcome them.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. Children are supported very well to help them learn and they are given very good opportunities to make their views known.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Arrangements for welfare, health and safety are very effective.
- Very good support and guidance are based upon excellent relationships and excellent knowledge of individual pupils.
- Pupils are involved very well in the day to day running of the school.

Commentary

22. This is a very caring school. The attention given to all the features that ensure the health, welfare and safety of every pupil are handled meticulously. Health and safety procedures are very well organised and supervised by governors, the headteacher and key staff. Child protection routines are managed very effectively by the headteacher.
23. Teachers' outstanding knowledge of pupils' individual needs contributes to the very good support and guidance provided for pupils. Guidance is truly individual and results in mature, confident children. Pupils with learning difficulties are usually identified at an early stage. Class teachers, support staff and the special needs teacher check the progress of these pupils regularly. This is complemented by the regular reviews of targets set in individual education plans. Because relationships are very good, pupils approach staff confidentially with any difficulties they might have and their contributions are valued and respected.
24. Very good efforts are made to involve pupils in the running of the school and they are encouraged to take responsibility. Throughout the school, teachers allocate to pupils 'little jobs' whenever possible or have monitors. In Years 5 and 6, such responsibilities grow and older pupils help younger ones with information and communication technology and in play. The scheme of selected 'playground buddies' is very successful, whilst less formal examples

are constantly seen, such as the way pupils themselves create impressive presentations for assemblies often involving photographs, music, writing and acting and the use of presentation skills incorporating information and communication technology. Class councils are successful. Pupils are consulted regularly; for instance, they had a big impact on a recent debate about travel to school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Very good links have been built with parents and with other local educational establishments. Relationships with the local community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high regard for the school.
- The school involves and engages parents in its work very well.
- Relationships with other schools and colleges are very good.
- The school's links with the local community are well established.

Commentary

25. Parents are very supportive of the school. Responses to the parents' questionnaire and comments at the parents' meeting were overwhelmingly positive, with parents praising highly the education the pupils receive and the outstanding leadership and management. The school works hard to maintain such good relations. Communications with parents are very good; the termly newsletter is a lengthy, friendly document that not only informs them of all events but provides insights into work done by children, news on staff and updates of the attendance of each class. Face-to-face communications are equally good, both at the beginning and end of each school day and at the two extremely well attended parents' evenings, at the second of which pupil targets are discussed. Reports to parents are very good; they are individual, diagnostic and include ways in which parents can help their children improve. Several parents help in school and many more assist at special events and on educational visits. The school maintains very close links with parents of pupils with learning difficulties, particularly through their involvement with individual education plans and statements. Very good liaison occurs with outside agencies in order to meet pupils' needs.
26. The links with the local network of schools and colleges are very good. The information and communication technology test bed project has done much to bring local primary and secondary schools together to provide many links and benefits; for example, in information and communication technology, literacy, numeracy, science and sport. Help comes also for modern foreign languages from the secondary school, whilst Years 5 and 6 are able to enjoy extra-curricular activities at the secondary school. A valuable consequence of all this is that by the time the pupils move to the local secondary school they are well acquainted with that school and many of its staff and pupils. There are strong links with further education colleges who provide additional learning opportunities for the pupils. Of particular note was a building project involving reception children and the choir using facilities to cut a compact disc. Students from local colleges and secondary schools gain work experience in the school.
27. The school is very outward looking and works with, and involves, the local community well. The links to the local churches are a strong feature and the clergy contribute significantly to many aspects of the school. The choir has performed in several local venues creating much favourable comment. Many links have been made to a wide range of local businesses. A large number of local visitors to the school enhance the curriculum as do the many visits to local places and organisations, including excursions to professional soccer and rugby clubs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher, together with the deputy, provide outstanding educational direction for the school. Governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding leadership by the headteacher and deputy has brought about excellent improvements since the last inspection.
- The school's self-evaluation is excellent and the strong focus on assessment, the Foundation Stage and the use of information and communication technology to raise standards and reduce teachers' workloads is highly successful.
- Information and communication technology is used outstandingly to promote self-esteem and equality.
- The governing body has a very clear vision for the future direction of the school.
- Financial management is very good.

Commentary

28. The headteacher's enthusiasm and determination, combined with a sensitive and absolutely clear appraisal of what was needed to improve pupils' quality of education, have led to dramatic changes and improvements since he was appointed two and half years ago. Standards are high and the school leads the way in using information and communication technology in all aspects of its work. The leadership of both the headteacher and deputy is characterised by an exceptional capacity to communicate clearly and simply and to inspire and motivate others. This is evident in the very capable leadership and management of subject co-ordinators and the highly efficient systems used to check pupils' progress in all subjects throughout the school.
29. Through rigorous monitoring and scrupulous evaluation, involving written feedback on all aspects of teaching from lesson planning to marking, the headteacher quickly ascertained where the strengths and weaknesses lay. Rearrangements of teaching responsibilities, professional development in the form of training, and whole-school projects, such as improving writing, helped to draw the teaching staff together as a team. The leadership team is well aware of the more limited provision in the nursery compared with the rest of the school and the school improvement plan indicates precisely each planned stage of development. An extensive programme of training, involving outside agencies and visits to nurseries where practice is excellent, have led to substantial improvements albeit at a slower rate than in the main school.
30. The early decision to become part of the information and communication technology test bed scheme, a government-funded initiative involving three clusters of schools across the country, has been a major factor in raising teachers' skills and expertise and in improving resources for learning. Lessons, as a result, have pace, are exceptionally well planned, incorporate a variety of learning styles and promote independence and pupils' responsibility for their own learning from the reception year upwards. Perhaps, more importantly, it gave all staff a common starting point for reassessing their teaching approaches and reinvigorated their enthusiasm. The initiative, designed to raise standards, improve home-school links, reduce teachers' workload and improve communication between schools and the wider community (including extensive contacts overseas), is resoundingly successful in this school. The headteacher took the decision to provide all pupils in Year 6 with laptop computers (recently extended to Year 5) on which they do much of their work, taking them home each evening. This freed up additional funds, which were used for training and developing teachers' expertise. It has revolutionised teaching, learning and marking. Throughout the school, the innovative use of information and communication technology has energised boys' learning and promoted equality between boys, girls and different ability groups through raising their self-

esteem, their sense of responsibility and their commitment to learning. This is seen when pupils very capably assist staff or when they recently showed a group of headteachers the many and varied uses of information and communication technology.

31. The governors are knowledgeable and use their expertise very well to bring about improvements. They take a full share in putting together the school improvement plan. They consider it a priority to improve the school building and to provide additional accommodation so that single age group classes can be achieved and housed appropriately, and to provide the headteacher and office staff with separate and suitable working areas. There are very close links between subject co-ordinators and governors. From staff presentations to the governing body, the governors are fully informed about standards in each subject which supplements the information they gain from analysing national data. The strong sense of teamwork, evident throughout the school, is also characteristic of governance, and regular training to update governors' skills means that the level of support and challenge they offer through asking searching questions is considerable.
32. The governors ensure that money devolved to the school is used very efficiently. Clerical assistance is highly efficient. Currently, a substantial sum is being retained for improvements to the school building and for resources for the Foundation Stage. Governors have a very good grasp of the principles of 'best value', which they see very firmly as being rooted in high standards and excellent achievement. They are of one mind that the school's involvement in the information and communication technology test bed scheme is excellent value educationally.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	749,447
Total expenditure	718,671
Expenditure per pupil	3,505.71

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	46,799
Balance carried forward to the next	77,575

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Most children enter the nursery at the age of three and attend either in the morning or afternoon. From September of the academic year in which they are five, they attend full-time. Attainment on entry is below average, overall, though well below average in language skills. The quality of teaching and learning is good, on balance; it is very good in the reception class and satisfactory in the nursery. Improvement since the last inspection is good because of improved teaching and children's very good progress in the reception class.

The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The recently appointed Foundation Stage manager has worked hard to improve provision and shows a very good example in the quality of her teaching. The accommodation is satisfactory, although there is no separate outdoor area for children in the reception class to extend their learning outdoors without direct supervision. In addition, the toilet facilities in the nursery are unacceptable, as there are no toilet doors. Learning resources are satisfactory, on balance; in the reception, the organisation and provision of resources are very good but the organisation and quality of resources in the nursery are unsatisfactory. Too few lessons could be seen to make secure judgements on standards in physical development and in creative development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good because of the high standard of teaching in the reception class.
- Over time, children form very good relationships, both with one another and with the staff, and this assists their learning very well.
- Interesting activities help children to make very good progress in their learning in the reception.
- Information and communication technology is used extremely well to develop children's interest in learning.

Commentary

33. Children's achievement is very good. By the end of the reception year, children are likely to exceed the expected standards in personal, social and emotional development. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, overall; it is sound in the nursery and very good in the reception class. Children' behaviour and their attitudes to work improve to a high standard by the end of the reception year.
34. Children in the nursery settle to work well, although a few children flit from activity to activity. Most children quickly learn to work with others; however, a minority find sharing resources, such as the sand tray equipment, difficult. The lack of opportunities in the nursery to select their own learning resources, because of unsatisfactory organisation of resources, restricts children's faster development of acquiring confidence to explore new learning without support.
35. In the reception class, children are highly motivated to learn because of the very well organised teaching and very good relationships between children and staff. The children are given ample opportunities to extend their learning through a range of interesting and demanding activities. The children enjoy role-play; for example, working in the post office and dressing up as a postal worker to deliver packages and letters to other children, staff and visitors.

36. The large number of up-to-date computers with high quality software help to develop children's self-confidence and self-esteem. The children access programs confidently and independently and persevere and concentrate for significantly lengthy periods of time, working on challenging tasks.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the reception class and are likely to meet the standards expected at the end of the reception year.
- In the nursery, opportunities are often missed to develop children's speech and communication skills.
- Information and communication technology is used exceptionally well to develop children's confidence in speaking and listening in the reception class.

Commentary

37. Children make satisfactory progress in the nursery, developing in confidence and picking up vocabulary as they busy themselves in a suitable range of activities. The teaching in the nursery, which is satisfactory on balance, gives good attention to individuals, drawing them into discussion through sound questioning and repetition. Teaching assistants are used well to spend purposeful time talking to children. Opportunities are missed, however, to stimulate speech and extend vocabulary in children through the provision of exciting activities related to a specific learning objective; children happily and willingly, for example, form the letter 'C' in yellow coloured dough but this is not developed further through related tasks.
38. The reception class is a complete contrast because, here, activities abound and children's learning moves on apace. Imaginary flights, with exciting sound effects and flight simulation provided by up-to-date technology, generate much speech. Lower-attaining children used a small, hand-held video recorder very well to record each other telling their 'news' and, at the end of the lesson, the others commented on how they could improve the quality of their recording. The very good quality of teaching provides children with real reasons to communicate in writing; for example, when the children discovered that the class toy lion has had his hair cut over the weekend they were eager to write this clearly and legibly for others to read on the large screen linked to the class computer. By the end of the year, average attainers write simple words accurately and legibly and higher attainers write several sentences, spelling unfamiliar words that are plausible phonetically. Children enjoy reading their work aloud to adults and recording their comments in a 'talking book', which they quickly grasped how to use. Their reading is at the level expected by the end of the reception year. Overall, achievement in the reception year is very good as communication, language and literacy skills are developed very practically through using information and communication technology to foster confidence and physical development at the same time.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are on course to be average by end of the Foundation Stage.
- The quality of teaching and learning is significantly better in the reception than in the nursery.
- Information and communication technology enhances children's learning opportunities exceptionally well.

Commentary

39. Children's attainment is likely to be at the expected standard by the time they start Year 1. The children achieve well, overall, though they make rapid progress in the reception class.
40. The quality of teaching is good, overall; it is satisfactory in the nursery and very good in the reception class. In the nursery, the interactive whiteboard is used well to assist learning. Occasionally, children lose interest during whole-class teaching when the teaching lacks direction in developing mathematical understanding and is complicated by the use of unfamiliar language. Sometimes, the teaching has unrealistic expectations of children to understand numbers above ten and makes incorrect statements; for example, that 18 is a one and an eight. The teaching of small groups and individuals is better, as when the teacher assists children to match and count coins. The teaching assistant works well with small groups, both in the classroom and in the outdoor area though is sometimes not used sufficiently well during whole-class teaching.
41. In the reception class, the pace of learning is very fast because the teaching is very well organised. The interactive whiteboard is used exceptionally well by both the staff and pupils; for example, children gained a very good understanding of elementary problem-solving through extremely good explanations using high quality multimedia presentation on the interactive whiteboard with ample opportunities for children to participate. The children were very interested and encouraged to use mathematical language in their explanations. The pace of learning was brisk and this enabled children to have plenty of practice.
42. Very good opportunities are provided for children to extend their learning using information and communication technology. Children practise new learning confidently by accessing high quality programs. Of particular note is the use of video conferencing to share and develop learning with children in other schools; for example, a small group of children shared work they had done on sequencing and measurement with children at another school in the locality. The children had very good opportunities to talk about their learning with other children. They accepted willingly challenges from the teacher at the neighbouring school to develop their skills further and this enabled their own teacher to check both the children's understanding and speaking and listening skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and reach standards above expected levels because of very good teaching and the use of a wide range of information and communication technology equipment.

Commentary

43. Children in both the nursery and reception classes achieve very well, particularly in the use of information and communication technology to assist their learning. In the nursery, children are confident in using and accessing programs on computers or on the interactive whiteboard. In the reception class, the planning of lessons is of a high standard and opportunities to use information and communication technology to assist learning in other areas of learning are fully exploited.
44. Exploration and investigation in knowledge and understanding of the world is also enhanced by the use of information and communication technology; for example, in a very well planned lesson to expand children's understanding of small creatures, the teaching assistant was used very well to help children gain an understanding of how to care for and collect small creatures found around the school grounds. A small group of children were very interested and had a good understanding of health and safety considerations when collecting specimens. Another

group worked with the teacher to sort small creatures according to the number of legs using a simplified Venn diagram. The small creatures found were examined by the children using a digital microscope linked to the interactive whiteboard. They were absolutely amazed at the features of a snail as it emerged from its shell when observed under the microscope and all the children in the class joined with them to witness the event. A digital photograph was taken to record the event.

45. In **physical development**, children are provided with satisfactory opportunities to develop their skills. The outdoor area in the nursery is used well throughout sessions; however, the lack of a suitable outdoor area in the reception class restricts opportunities. In the lessons observed, children in the nursery enjoyed climbing and traversing equipment. Indoors, children in the nursery followed instructions, though sometimes the staff allowed children to move before all the instructions were given. Children could run on the spot but a few children were reluctant to join in and the teacher did not pick this up. Good practice was not celebrated and demonstrated to other children. The pace of the lesson dipped at times because of unsatisfactory organisation of resources. A significant proportion of the younger pupils had difficulties putting on shoes and socks and the behaviour of a minority was immature.
46. In **creative development**, children are provided with satisfactory opportunities to explore different media; for example, in the nursery, children painted pictures - though they had limited opportunities to mix the colour of paints themselves. The children made, with the help of a teaching assistant, a model of the outdoor area using a range of recycled materials. In the reception, children are encouraged actively to be engaged in role-play; for example, children imagined they were on a magic carpet, travelling to imaginary locations, helped by the use of the sounds and sight of the sea from a multimedia presentation linked to the interactive whiteboard. Awe and wonder abounded as, in the children's imagination, the classroom became the sea and an ordinary rug became a magic carpet.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Year 6 as a result of excellent leadership and management and the high standard of teaching.
- The use of information and communication technology is outstanding, both as a teaching tool and to facilitate high quality learning.

Commentary

47. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in the current Year 6, where nearly half the class exceed expected levels and very few pupils fall below national expectations. This is an excellent improvement since the last inspection. Standards in Years 1 and 2 have risen considerably this year as a result of the successful strategy to nurture the early skills of reading and writing in the reception year and provide a very good starting point for development. The excellent leadership and management have revolutionised marking and the setting of groups and individual targets and sharpened up the quality of teaching through constructive monitoring of lessons; these have had a marked impact on raising standards. Pupils do very well when compared with those in similar schools and in relation to their prior attainment. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 1 to 5 and excellent in Year 6; pupils of all abilities achieve very well as a result and higher attainers put on an extra spurt during Year 6. Achievement, overall, is excellent and pupils' progress over time is also excellent.

48. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 and 2, enabling pupils to reach above average standards in a relatively short time. Information and communication technology is used extremely well to incorporate visual and aural displays to bring subjects alive; for example, helping pupils to appreciate the quirky humour of a nonsense poem by Edward Lear. A feature of the teaching is the fast pace, helped by apt use of information and communication technology to display clear instructions and to summarise what has been learnt. Teachers' expectations are high and the activities very well judged to challenge higher attainers and to provide support for those who find learning more difficult. Teachers question very well, helping pupils to answer fully and in sentences. The teaching of reading is very well organised and, by the end of Year 2, pupils of all abilities read competently, higher attainers with considerable expression. Similarly, pupils' writing develops very well because of the excellent marking of pupils' work. The simple device of using the purpose of the piece of writing as a title and then highlighting where this has been achieved leaves pupils in no doubt as to what they have done well and where they need to improve. The result is above average standards.
49. By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Pupils discuss confidently and state their views with considerable maturity, using technical terms accurately. Information and communication technology is used exceptionally well to develop their skills: when discussing different video clips of the start of 'Treasure Island', for example, Year 6 pupils used terms like 'narrative structure', 'flashback' and 'dialogue' to explain how different visual and sound effects contributed to the frightening openings. This sophistication is evident in their reading too. Pupils are very well used to skim reading for information or scanning texts. Almost relentlessly probing questions teach pupils how to answer fully questions which test their comprehension, with the result that lower attainers read with considerable understanding for their age.
50. The school's focus on writing has led to significant improvements in the accuracy of pupils' spelling, paragraphing and use of punctuation throughout the school. Expectations are extremely high, particularly in Year 6. The marking of pupils' work is taken one stage further in Years 5 and 6 and has produced remarkable results through improving pupils' awareness of how important it is to convey meaning accurately and vividly through writing. The use of information and communication technology to track the changes pupils make to their work and to enable teachers to comment while not determining how corrections should be made, together with a short time at the start of each day for pupils to amend their work, has significantly improved standards; for example, an extract beginning with the words '*Genesis was an old sea dog, he didn't play by the rules.*' continues later with an inserted piece of description '*stalagmites and stalactites thrust out from the rock like the jaws of a shark warning him to keep away.*' Interestingly, when pupils write long-hand rather than using their laptops, the quality of writing is just as good and the handwriting very neat.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Opportunities to talk, to listen, to ask questions and to discuss with a partner or in a group are common features of most lessons. Pupils are given worthwhile opportunities to practise their writing skills in a wide range of subjects and to read and extract information from many different sources, including the Internet.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make excellent progress in their learning because their behaviour and attitude to work are outstanding and teaching is of a high standard.
- Information and communication technology is used extremely well to assist pupils' learning.

- The checking of pupils' progress is excellent.
- The leadership and management are very good.
- Numeracy skills are used and developed well in other subjects.

Commentary

52. Standards, by the end of Year 2, are above average and are well above average in Year 6. Pupils achieve highly in all classes because of the high quality of teaching. Teaching is very good, overall; it is very good in Years 1 to 5 and excellent in Year 6. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work are excellent. A typical example of the high standard of teaching, throughout the school, was seen in Year 2: the teaching was planned and organised very well, outstanding use of the interactive whiteboard at the beginning of the lesson enabled average and higher attainers to gain a better understanding and practice in sequencing three- and four-digit numbers, the teaching assistant helped a group of pupils with special educational needs very well to practise ordering numbers up to 20, the staff questioned pupils very effectively and used individual pupils' answers to extend the learning of all; the pace of learning was brisk.
53. Information and communication technology is used very well to develop learning in mathematics throughout the school; for example, in an excellent lesson in Year 6, computers were used exceptionally well to enable pupils to achieve highly. The excellent use of a multimedia presentation at the start of the lesson, together with the teacher's probing questioning and very clear explanations, kept the pace of learning fast and developed pupils' investigative skills extremely well. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour were excellent. The pupils worked industriously with partners and in small groups to solve mathematical problems through investigation. The tasks were matched to pupils' prior attainment and were extremely challenging. Lower-attaining pupils worked very well with a teaching assistant to work out the number of matchsticks required for repeating patterns. Average-attaining pupils used laptop computers and a simulation program to help them devise a formula to calculate the number of different colours of tiles needed for different repeats of a variety of patterns. Higher-attaining pupils rose to a difficult challenge relating to the movement of frogs across a pond and eventually worked out a formula to calculate the number of moves needed for different numbers of frogs on each side of a pond to swap places with limitations on how they could move.
54. The checking of pupils' progress is extremely well thought out. Pupils' progress is monitored most effectively using a basic computer spreadsheet. The results of national and commercial tests back up the teachers' assessments, enabling both teachers and management to identify the progress of individuals and groups of pupils efficiently. Strong features are the highlighting of previous underachievers on the individual class spreadsheet records and the setting of targets for individual pupils. Older pupils can access computerised records, to check their own progress as well as to see what they must do to reach the next level of attainment of the National Curriculum. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and shows pupils clearly how well they are doing, as the titles of work, which are the learning objectives, are highlighted to show if pupils have achieved the learning intentions.
55. The recently appointed co-ordinator has built very well on the previous leadership of the subject. She has a very clear view of how to develop the subject further and is a very good role model through the quality of her teaching. Improvement, since the last inspection, when standards in the national tests at the end of both Years 2 and 6 were well below the national average, is excellent.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Mathematical skills are used and developed well in other subjects. Opportunities are identified in the planning within other subjects; for example, in science, results of investigations are presented well in bar charts, pie charts and line graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 2, standards are above average and, by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average.
- The school makes excellent use of information and communication technology in order to help to raise standards in science.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Assessment systems are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Commentary

57. Teaching is very good, overall; it is very good in Years 1 to 5 and excellent in Year 6. Pupils achieve exceptionally well. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Information and communication technology is used exceptionally well in the teaching and learning of science. This has helped to improve standards since the previous inspection because it is used in a very well-balanced way in conjunction with practical investigations; this occurred in Year 6, for example, when outstanding teaching and learning led to excellent achievement. In a lesson on air resistance, using spinners, mixed ability groups of pupils used computer programs to help to plan their investigations, including making decisions on variables. They showed excellent collaborative skills in conducting the investigations and demonstrated a very good understanding of the process, including the role of fair testing. Pupils then used a second laptop computer to record and average out their measurements on a spreadsheet. The teacher's high level of subject knowledge and her sensitive but relentless drive for improvement ensured that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, made excellent progress during the lesson.
58. Teachers share lesson objectives with pupils and provide lessons which are imaginative and stimulating so that pupils understand what they are doing and are very interested in their work; in Year 5, for example, as part of work on habitats, pupils were challenged to find the most suitable home for woodlice, setting about organising their tasks collaboratively and ensuring that the scientific process was followed in great detail. Teachers plan and organise their work thoroughly and are very confident in the use of the interactive whiteboards in order to illustrate examples and clarify understanding. In Year 2, for example, when the use of interactive whiteboards was accompanied by well-organised practical investigations and teaching assistants provided support and used scientific vocabulary, pupils were helped to deepen their understanding of magnetism and to extend their skills in making predictions.
59. A strong feature of work in science is the excellent management of pupils and the very high expectations of behaviour. This means that, as in Year 1, where pupils used materials and equipment sensibly and safely in their work on sound, lessons run very smoothly and pupils focus their time and energies on the tasks in hand. Because the ethos of the school is particularly strong, pupils have the confidence and self-esteem to work collaboratively and independently when not under the immediate supervision of the teacher. For example, as part of the excellent teaching in Year 3 and 4, when the teacher excited pupils' curiosity and used a very high degree of challenge, making very good use of the support provided by the teaching assistant so that pupils were engrossed in their work and achieved very highly, pupils worked together in independent groups to use a very wide range of equipment in their work on habitats around the school: they used digital cameras to record sites in the school grounds and these were to be used in multimedia presentations. They placed specimens under the computerised microscope for inclusion in presentations and they made digital animations to illustrate the idea of predator, prey and food chains.

60. The school has very thorough systems of assessment in place in order to check progress and indicate areas for improvement for individuals and the whole school. Books are marked regularly and teachers provide supportive comments which help pupils to understand how they might improve. In Year 5 work on absorption, the teacher commented, 'Well set out, but you need to write about the things that were done to make your test fair.' A significant aspect of the assessment process is in the use of information and communication technology. Teachers mark work loaded by the pupils on the computer. Pupils amend their copies in response to teacher comments. This brings immediacy to the process. They then reflect on the improvements they have made and need to make next. In these ways, pupils are very closely involved in their own learning and this helps to raise standards.
61. Leadership and management are very good. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and the co-ordinator provides very useful support for colleagues. He has a very good understanding of the role of information and communication technology in the teaching and learning of science and of the way ahead in order to improve standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve extremely well because of the high standard teaching.
- The leadership of the subject and the provision of resources are excellent.
- Extra-curricular clubs extend pupils' learning very well.
- Pupils' opportunities to use information and communication technology to assist learning in other subjects are outstanding.

Commentary

62. Standards in Year 6 are very high, and well above average in Year 2 in comparison with national expectations. Pupils' achievement is excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent throughout Years 1 to 6. Improvement since the last inspection is outstanding.
63. Subject co-ordination is excellent. The school has embraced the opportunities provided through the funding for the information and communication technology test-bed initiative exceptionally well. The leadership of the school, the co-ordinator and staff have worked extremely hard to ensure that the aims of the project are fully met. Resources to support learning are excellent and the strong emphasis on using laptop computers has resulted in information and communication technology being used exceptionally well to support learning in other subjects. The teaching of information and communication technology skills is often done most efficiently within lessons in other subjects; however, occasionally, skills are taught discretely in planned information and communication technology lessons. An example being when, in an excellent lesson in Year 6, pupils made outstanding progress in developing an understanding of ways to control events by building up flow charts on laptop computers and testing their designs. The teaching was extremely well organised, with multimedia presentation aiding explanations enabling pupils to understand the new learning. The pupils worked extremely well together and constructed flowcharts quickly because the tasks built very well on previous learning. Work was geared to individuals' attainment. The teaching assistant was used very well to help lower-attaining pupils to succeed. The interest and concentration of pupils was exceptional and they really enjoyed the challenge of controlling the beam of a lighthouse and foghorn according to the time of the day and weather conditions. The laptop computers and computer program enabled all pupils to construct a flow chart and to test their plan, as well as to modify the flow chart, to achieve the required sequences of events.

64. The after-school information and communication technology clubs provide excellent enrichment. Skilled teaching assistants provide very good opportunities to extend pupils' learning; for example, Year 3 and 4 pupils gained experience in producing animated films.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The use of information and communication technology pervades the curriculum and assists learning in other subjects extremely well. The school has planned opportunities for improving standards across the curriculum most effectively through the support of information and communication technology. Particular strengths are the use of multimedia presentations at the beginning of lessons in subjects and the widespread use of laptop computers and the very good quality of software to assist learning. The development of multimedia presentations by teachers has initially been time-consuming but in time will reduce their workload as well as contributing positively to pupils' learning and standards.

HUMANITIES

66. Geography and history were sampled. Statutory requirements are met.
67. In **geography**, one lesson was seen in Year 1. The very good quality of teaching and learning helped pupils to achieve highly. The teacher made very good use of a website to increase understanding and recognition of the features of places, such as beaches cliffs and hills. This was enhanced by comparisons with the local environment and by the pupils' very well-developed skills and confidence in the use of computers to research and record their work. The teacher's high expectations in her use of geographical language helped to extend vocabularies and deepen understanding. The presentation of work suitable for pupils of differing abilities and the very good level of support provided by teaching assistants enabled most pupils, including those with special educational needs, to make very good progress during the lesson. The school enriches experiences in geography throughout the school by the use of educational visits and by welcoming expert visitors during multicultural Indian, African and Chinese days.
68. In **history**, one lesson was seen in Year 6. Pupils were challenged to deepen their knowledge and extend their skills by the outstanding teaching, supported by excellent use of information and communication technology. This was based on a comparison between the development of 'The Beatles' music, styles and presentation, with popular music groups today. Pupils were completely absorbed in their tasks both because work was very well suited to differing ability levels and the teacher kept an exceptionally vigorous pace to the lesson. Pupils watched videos, search for information on the Internet, recorded their findings on computers and interrogated images and record covers. Inspirational teaching ensured that learning was irresistible. The history curriculum is enriched by visits to museums and sites of historical interest and by the use of visitors to the school to talk to pupils about their experiences, in such events as the Second World War.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those normally expected at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Excellent use is made of information and communication technology in teaching and learning.
- The subject contributes very well to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Commentary

69. Standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6 because thorough planning, based on the locally agreed syllabus of religious education, ensures that pupils have extensive opportunities to learn about and from religion and to build securely on previous work. This is enhanced by the good quality of teaching that helps most pupils, including those with special educational needs, to achieve well.
70. Throughout the school there is an excellent ethos, which is based very firmly on spirituality and morality. Everyone in school is valued and respected. Self-confidence and self-esteem are very high. Religious education plays a very important role in this because pupils are challenged to look beyond the face value of stories and beliefs from sacred books and relate them to their own lives; for example, in Year 2 work on the Torah, pupils produced their own well-considered Ten Commandments and, in Year 6, pupils related the story of the Good Samaritan to third world issues. From a study of world religions, pupils develop a deep understanding of the meaning and responsibilities of community and learn to respect other cultural traditions. They also understand that there are similarities between religions. Year 1 pupils recognised the similarities between the teachings of Jesus and Buddha.
71. Teachers combine their outstanding use of information and communication technology with their very good subject knowledge to bring clarity and purpose to learning. Year 3 pupils used a video to learn about the significance of the Qur'an for Muslims. Very good use is made of literacy skills to extend learning. Year 5 pupils used their word processing and literacy skills to present their accounts of the Egyptian plagues in newspaper format. When information and communication technology skills are combined with opportunities to handle artefacts, as in Year 2 work, those associated with the Passover, understanding is deepened.
72. Because teachers present work that is interesting and imaginative, pupils are highly motivated. In Year 4, they produced well-written accounts of the feeding of the five thousand from Jesus' point of view. Year 6 pupils used their deductive and inferential skills well when they learned from traditional Russian tales how Jesus may be seen to enter daily life. Work in religious education is very well complemented by opportunities for collective worship that enhance spiritual and moral perspectives through prayer, hymn singing and dramatic representations of modernised parables. The school makes very good use of festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, in order to enrich work in religious education. Pupils visit the local parish church for services and local clergy come into school to lead collective worship.
73. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject and provides useful support for colleagues. She has a very clear understanding of future developments necessary to raise standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. Art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled and too few lessons were seen to make judgements on provision, standards or teaching. Statutory requirements are met.
75. In the one lesson seen in **art and design**, teaching and learning were very good. Information and communication technology was used extremely well to develop pupils' close observational skills as they noticed how the digitally scanned images of fruit reflected light. Pupils discussed their ideas earnestly with their 'talking partners' and were quick to point out the effects of the different media. Their discussions were technically competent as they took into account variations in tone and demonstrated how to achieve subtle shades and effects by smudging and blending pastels. Art and design has a high profile throughout the school, demonstrated by the extensive displays of pupils' work. Wherever possible, pupils' writing explains the nature and purpose of the display, showing good analysis of both form and content. The

accommodation imposes restrictions on the use of a wide range of media, including large-scale projects and three-dimensional work. The school gets round this to a certain extent by bringing artists into school to work on specific projects with groups of pupils.

76. In **design and technology**, one lesson was sampled and a range of evidence was seen from different year groups across the school. The curriculum is good in terms of content and is enriched considerably by the use of information and communication technology to present material, demonstrate effective designs and develop pupils' spatial and conceptual awareness. The majority of pupils use information and communication technology for their initial designs and manipulate images with considerable skill. Pupils use conventional methods equally well; for example, Year 6 designed some imaginative slippers, labelling a 'working diagram' for instance as '*the slipper of the Gods – side view*'. Pupils finish products carefully and evaluations indicate where improvements could be made. Links with mathematics and science are strong; pupils used their knowledge of reflective symmetry and circuits, for example, when designing board games and quizzes for reception children.
77. One lesson was sampled in **physical education** and discussions were held with the subject co-ordinator and with pupils. There is tremendous enthusiasm for physical education, inspired by the subject co-ordinator who in just two years has led the school's achievement of the Active Mark Gold award. Following monitoring of lessons and planning, the curriculum has been revised extensively and now provides detailed lesson plans to enable non-specialist staff to teach physical education competently. The result has been an upsurge in interest and rapid development of skills. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs gives pupils extended opportunities to try out different sporting activities with a strong focus on participation and enjoyment. Pupils say they enjoy playing competitively and are proud of their success against other schools in sporting competitions.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth and range of the curriculum has improved considerably since the last inspection, enhanced by excellent use of information and communication technology.
- Teaching and learning are very good and, consequently, standards are much higher than at the time of the last inspection and are above average, overall.
- The quality of singing is exceptionally good.

Commentary

78. Pupils' achievement is very good. The use of several schemes of work, chosen to provide the full range of music from listening and appraising to composition and performance, enables non-specialist staff to deliver very good lessons that stretch the higher-attaining pupils. Lessons are lively, challenging and highly enjoyable, leading to a very fast rate of learning. Information and communication technology is used extremely well, both as a teaching aid and as an extra resource. In a very good lesson in Year 5, all pupils had access to a keyboard, both virtual and actual, to identify intervals between a series of notes before incorporating them into their own composition. In an excellent lesson in Year 6, groups of pupils experimented with adding background music to a short clip from a silent movie using laptops to match the sounds to the film and to access a huge range of different music as well as playing actual stringed and percussive instruments while one of the group acted as conductor. The performances, using the large screen in the hall, linked to a computer, were impressively convincing. A feature of the teaching is the recognition that a specified audience sharpens pupils' performance and appraisal. In Year 2, for example, pupils, with considerable verve

and accuracy, recorded appropriate sounds to accompany a story designed to be one of the 'talking books' used by nursery and reception children. Behaviour was impeccable and the first recording could be used as not a child played out of turn.

Example of outstanding practice

This ingenious solution to a problem posed by limited accommodation has resulted in highly effective learning.

Of necessity, choir rehearsals take place in the hall at lunch-time. Using a large screen linked to a computer and a sophisticated sound system, the deputy headteacher and administrative assistant coach the pupils. Their teamwork and use of technology is highly effective. As the pupils sing, individual words are highlighted on the big screen and the adults direct individual parts of the choir as required. The other pupils thoroughly enjoy these times and while ostensibly eating their lunch, join in with their favourite songs. The result is excellent involvement of all pupils at different levels as they develop skills in listening, reading, pitching notes accurately and appraising what they hear. One girl pointed out when she saw a choirboy pick up the microphone that 'he is going to sing solo. It makes me cry when he sings the song from *Titanic*'. The quality of singing is outstanding. Pupils sing accurately, maintaining different parts and rhythms without hesitation; the dynamic range is wide and they switch from simple to compound rhythms with ease. Higher attainers are able to wobble their voices between two notes with great accuracy. Talented pupils, particularly boys, sing on their own unselfconsciously. What makes this practice outstanding is the incidental teaching and learning that goes on as those pupils not in the choir linger over their lunch and quietly join in with what they hear.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. This area of the curriculum was sampled. Statutory requirements are met in regard to the school's provision for sex and relationships education and drug education.
80. During the one lesson seen, when the whole class was gathered together, pupils learnt to listen to others' views and to give their own in a calm and measured way, and they gained a much better understanding of right and wrong. This area of the curriculum is enhanced by the school's excellent ethos. Class councils provide pupils with very good opportunities to learn about democracy. Some classes include information and communication technology to ensure that voting is secret. The school welcomes visiting experts to enable pupils to consider issues of citizenship through the medium of drama. Older pupils took part in the 'Travel Plan' forum, which helped to organise arrangements for pupils to walk to school. This enabled them to make a real contribution to the life of the school. Pupils have participated in many fund-raising ventures for those less fortunate than themselves and, in work in local parks and gardens, they considered wider environmental issues.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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