

INSPECTION REPORT

**ADEL ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF
ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Adel, Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 108041

Headteacher: Mrs K C Ross

Lead inspector: Miss K Manning

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th December 2003

Inspection number: 255294

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	197
School address:	Long Causeway Adel Leeds
Postcode:	LS16 8EX
Telephone number:	0113 2141040
Fax number:	0113 2141040
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Allan Dawson
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a voluntary aided Church of England school, which serves the local and wider community of Adel. It is an average sized school, with 197 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6. Most children join in the reception class and though a number of older pupils leave before Year 6 to go on to local grammar schools the mobility of pupils remains below the national average. Twenty-four pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is a lower proportion than the national average. No pupils have statements of their special needs. A small number of pupils have been identified as being gifted or talented.

The area in general is more advantaged than most, with a substantial proportion of pupils coming from professional families. This is reflected in children's attainment on entry to the reception class. Many have benefited from pre-school experiences and, though their knowledge varies considerably most children have skills in reading, writing and mathematics that are beyond those expected for their age. Most pupils come from British families though an above average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. Several of these speak English as an additional language, although none of the current pupils need help beyond what the school can provide.

The school has an Investors in People award and a Healthy Schools award. Its facilities are used by a privately run and funded nursery and by members of the community who attend leisure classes and clubs. In the last couple of years the school has been hit by tremendous amounts of absence, as almost all of the staff have been seriously ill. Classes have been taught by a succession of temporary teachers and this has had an impact on the school's provision and budget.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20267	K Manning	Lead inspector	Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
			Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			English as an additional language
9511	A Longfield	Lay inspector	
1470	K Ford	Team inspector	Special educational needs
			English
			Art and design
			Design and technology
			Music
33190	A Brown	Team inspector	Science
			Geography
			History
			Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Ltd
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 NE11 0SR

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school where pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good overall, though better in English, mathematics and information and communication technology than in science. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall. Despite having a deficit budget, the special circumstances surrounding this mean that the school is nonetheless providing satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve standards in English and mathematics that are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Although most pupils reach the level expected for their age in science, too few pupils achieve a higher level by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected by the end of Year 2 but not high enough by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers promote pupils' personal development very well and consequently pupils are very keen to learn and behave in a mature and sensible way.
- Pupils benefit from a curriculum that is enriched by good links with the community.
- Though the headteacher provides good direction and has helped steer the school through a difficult period, the effectiveness of some senior staff is limited by a lack of rigour in the way that they monitor the school's performance.

The school continues to be effective. The key issues identified in the previous report in 1998 have been tackled systematically. However, standards in information and communication technology have fallen by the end of Year 6 because teaching and resources have not kept pace with new developments in technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A*	A	A	B
mathematics	A	A	A	B
science	C	C	D	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Overall, pupils achieve well. They get a good start in the Foundation Stage and go on to achieve standards in English and mathematics that are well above the national average by the end of Year 6. This has been a consistent picture in the past few years, with the school's performance being in the top five per cent of all schools in English tests in 2001. The school has not been so successful at achieving high standards in science and last year, for the first time, they fell below the national average. In the main this is because far fewer pupils than in most schools achieve a higher level in national tests. This is also a key factor in why the school's results are rising at a slower rate than the national trend. Inspection findings are that, in science, standards match those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 but that not enough pupils achieve a higher level. In information and communication technology, improved teaching and resources means that pupils of all ages are now achieving well. However, although standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2 older pupils have a lot of catching up to do and standards are below those expected by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development are very good. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well enough but pupils have a limited knowledge of other religions and beliefs. Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and at other times and there has been only one short, exclusion in the past year. Although pupils enjoy school and arrive on time, attendance is well below average because many parents take their children on holiday during term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. There is good teaching and learning in all key stages and strengths to the teaching in all subjects. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are taught well and consequently achieve at the same good rate as other pupils. Although satisfactory, there are gaps in the school's procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do. A wide range of after-school clubs and educational outings enrich the curriculum and there are good links with the community and satisfactory links with other schools. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory and there have been substantial improvements to the library where a suite of computers has also been installed. Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well and links with parents are satisfactory. The positive ethos of the school reflects its strong links with the church and its dedication to promoting pupils' personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher leads the school well and has been instrumental in strengthening the role of the deputy head. They now work effectively together and share a view of what needs doing in order for the school to continue to improve. Though committed to the success of the school some staff do not always pull together as a team. The senior management team is not effective with regard to evaluating what the school does well and identifying priorities for development. Co-ordinators are knowledgeable about their subjects but do not monitor the teaching rigorously and make insufficient use of performance data when monitoring standards. Governors are supportive of the school but do not have a long-term strategic view of how they want the school to develop and are not always sufficiently involved in setting priorities for improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are happy with what the school provides, though a significant number have concerns about some aspects of its work. Their concerns are largely unfounded, though governors take their views seriously and intend to do something about them in the next term. Pupils are happy with school and the opportunities and activities available to them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that teaching enables the most able pupils to achieve a higher level in science by the end of Year 6,
- Raise standards in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6,
- Strengthen the leadership and management of senior teachers through more rigorous and systematic monitoring of the school's performance and use this to identify relevant priorities for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils of all ages and abilities generally achieve well. By the end of the Foundation Stage standards are beyond those expected in relation to the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy and mathematics. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well in English, mathematics and information and communication technology and consequently standards are above those expected by the end of Year 2. In science, pupils achieve steadily and standards match those expected by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and standards are well above the national average by the end of Year 6. In information and communication technology, though they are now achieving well, past weaknesses in teaching and learning mean that standards are below those expected by the end of Year 6. In science, although pupils achieve steadily and standards match those expected by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher level is lower than in most other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a fine start in the reception class.
- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve a higher level in science is lower than in most schools.
- Though pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve standards in information and communication technology that are above those expected for their age, standards are below those expected by the end of Year 6.
- The school's results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 are rising slower than the national trend.

Commentary

1 When they start in the reception class, children's attainment varies significantly but most have skills and knowledge in literacy and numeracy that are beyond those expected for their age. An appropriate curriculum and teaching that is good overall ensures that they learn at a steady rate. Consequently, by the end of the reception year most have already achieved the early goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematics and are working towards the first level of the National Curriculum. In other areas of learning work was only sampled so no firm judgements can be made.

2 Good teaching of English and mathematics ensures that pupils achieve well over time. Standards have been consistently high over the last four years and pupils' performance in both subjects is better than those in similar schools. Over the last four years, standards in reading and writing have been consistently high at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Boys and girls do equally as well in tests. Last year almost all of the pupils in Year 6 reached the level expected for their age and about a third achieved a higher level. Two additional factors contribute to high standards in English, the Advanced Skills teacher in Year 6 and the school's links with a local Beacon School have a positive impact on pupils' learning. In mathematics the picture is slightly different. Pupils' performance in tests at the end of Year 2 has varied over the last four years but last year it was well above average. However, boys in Year 2 have been working at more than two terms ahead of girls for some years. Though fewer pupils in Year 6 reached the expected level in national tests almost a half achieved a higher level.

3 Pupils' performance in science tests is not so high. For three years standards had matched those of most other schools but last year they fell to below this. The main reason for this is that fewer pupils than in most other schools achieved a higher level in national tests at the end of Year 6. This brought the school's results down. Inspection findings are that higher attaining pupils

are not always challenged sufficiently by their work and the more structured approach to recording work, which benefits lower attaining pupils, sometimes adds constraints to the scientific creativity of the more able pupils.

4 Pupils' performance in science tests at the end of Year 6 has fallen below the national average in four of the last five years and this is the main reason why the schools results are rising at a slower rate than the national trend. In contrast, in English and mathematics, the school's results have exceeded the national average in each of the last five years.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (17.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.1 (15.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.7 (16.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.6 (28.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.9 (28.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.3 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5 In information and communication technology, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have benefited from good teaching and improved resources and consequently standards are beyond those expected for their ages. However, in Years 3 to 6, where the teaching has not kept up to date with technological improvements and pupils have not had the same advantages of regular use of computers, pupils have fallen behind. As a result, standards are below those expected by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive and they behave extremely well. This is reflected in the fact that there was only one exclusion in the last year. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, social and moral development very well. Their cultural development is promoted satisfactorily. Last year, attendance was well below the national figure.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested in school life and the range of activities provided.
- Staff promote pupils' personal development very well.
- Pupils have a fairly limited knowledge of other cultures and religions.
- Too many parents take their children out of school during term time.

Commentary

6 Pupils enjoy school and are keen to join in the good range of extra-curricular activities offered at lunchtimes and after school. For example, the gymnastics club and orchestra are extremely popular and so is the after-school club, where computer games are so much in demand that pupils say they have to book in advance. During the inspection much of the conversation was about the school production and older pupils were pleased to be watching the first performance. In

lessons, most pupils listen attentively and are eager to respond to questions or be involved in discussions. They talk about their work confidently and show a very positive attitude to school.

7 From the Foundation Stage onwards, staff expect pupils to behave in a mature and responsible way. The youngest children learn to share equipment and to take their turn and this stands them in good stead as they get older and are expected to work together on topics and projects. Though teachers are always ready to lend a helping hand pupils are encouraged to get what they need and be independent. As a result, from an early age, pupils are self-disciplined and sensible. For example, pupils in Year 2 got on with gathering information about favourite Christmas Carols without any fuss despite the fact that everyone in the class was trying to gather their own data. Some even showed initiative by extending the sample to include the teacher and other adults but they did this quietly and without feeling the need to seek permission first. Staff also promote pupils' personal development through more formal lessons and by using visitors to help pupils consider aspects of growing up and health and safety. As a result, pupils are very much aware of the issues surrounding the misuse of alcohol and drugs and have very firm opinions about healthy lifestyles, and the benefits of not smoking and taking exercise.

8 The curriculum is not broad enough with regard to other cultures and this limits pupils' knowledge and understanding. In history, pupils study ancient civilizations, such as the Greeks and Egyptians and in geography they compare their own culture and environment with that of a country from another continent. In religious education they study only Christianity and Judaism. This leaves them without a view of other major world religions. The headteacher and governors recognise that this is an area that needs further work, particularly as a growing number of pupils come from Muslim or Hindu families and their heritage is not celebrated enough within school.

9 A detailed analysis of the school's attendance records show that much of the absence is caused by parents taking their children out of school during term time. Registers show that the days before and after half term holidays are particularly affected by absence and so is the summer term. This brings the school's figures down. The headteacher is consistent in her approach and reminds parents of the detrimental effect this has on pupils' learning. This appears to be working and figures have improved slightly this term.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.9%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.0
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean

No of pupils on roll
158
1
2
2
3
8
3
4

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
1	0

Black or Black British – African
Chinese
No ethnic group recorded

3
2
11

0	0
0	0
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 quality of education provided by the school is good. The main strengths of the school's provision lie in good teaching and a varied curriculum but close links with the church and the community, good links with parents and satisfactory links with other schools all play a part in ensuring that this is an effective school.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and pupils' learning are good and have improved since the previous inspection. There is good teaching in each key stage. Teaching of English and mathematics is good and teaching of science is satisfactory. In information and communication technology, teaching is generally good and improving. Although satisfactory, there are gaps in the school's procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers generally adapt work to suit the different abilities and backgrounds of pupils.
- Good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs enables them to achieve well
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.
- Throughout the school, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour.
- Assessment procedures have not been determined or agreed for some subjects and areas of learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	10	14	0	0	0

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

10 One of the strengths of the teaching is that teachers generally ensure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities and backgrounds. This is done best in English and mathematics, where lesson plans show clearly what pupils of different abilities will be doing and which groups will be supported by teaching assistants or other adults. The effectiveness of this strategy is evident in the results of national tests in English at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, which showed that a number of pupils who had special educational needs did very well to overcome their barriers to learning and achieve the level expected for their age. The most able pupils also did very well, with almost a third of the pupils in Year 6 achieving a higher level in English and almost a half doing so in mathematics. In science, it is not done as effectively and average and higher attaining pupils often record the same findings. In other subjects, teachers' planning does not always show how they will adapt work but during lessons pupils are generally set different tasks. For example, in a history lesson, lower attaining pupils in Year 3 were given help to obtain evidence about ancient Egypt from objects and photographs. At the same time higher attaining pupils were expected to work independently and given additional activities to extend their knowledge of hieroglyphics and pyramids. All pupils enjoyed the work and achieved well based on their prior knowledge. It is a similar picture for pupils who speak English as an additional language; teachers ensure that they keep up through questioning them carefully and explaining technical terms in detail so that they understand the vocabulary. In the Foundation Stage, the teacher takes great pains to ensure that activities are adapted to suit the maturity and needs of all children. The most and least able children are given additional support to either challenge them or help them to learn, particularly in mathematics and communication, language and literacy.

11 A further strength of the teaching is that pupils who have special educational needs are given all the help they need to achieve well. Pupils' difficulties are diagnosed early in the Foundation Stage and those who need help with reading, writing and number are given support in small groups or individually. Very often, this is planned meticulously and each child has an individual programme of learning. In lessons, extra help often takes the form of working in small groups led by a well-briefed teaching assistant, student or adult. On these occasions, pupils benefit from having more opportunities to ask and answer questions and to talk about their work. Teachers often plan practical activities to help this group of pupils grasp difficult concepts. For example, in a good lesson on collecting data, lower attaining pupils succeeded in completing their task by using ticks to tally favourite foods.

12 In addition to the support they get in lessons, pupils who have special educational needs are given extra help from the learning mentor and the co-ordinator. During these times they work in very small groups or individually and work is focused particularly on each pupils' targets in their individual programmes of work. This method is effective and is one of the key reasons why this group of pupils achieve well.

13 Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. They are well qualified and trained and have a firm understanding of how pupils learn. As a result, they know when to intervene and make good use of discussions, prompting and questioning to help deepen pupils' thinking and move them forwards. For example, in a good information and communication technology lesson in the computer suite the teaching assistant was skilled and confident enough to help pupils in Year 1 when they got stuck with their task of creating a pictogram. Being familiar with the program and computers meant that the teaching assistant could provide pupils with clear explanations of what to do next and consequently pupils learned at a good rate.

14 From the Foundation Stage onwards, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour. This mostly results from the warm and friendly relationships between pupils and staff, which ensure that pupils are keen to please their teachers and try hard to do their best. Any misbehaviour is dealt with quietly and firmly and staff follow the school's agreed procedures for ensuring good behaviour. This means that pupils know what is expected of them and they understand the consequences of misbehaviour. The procedures work well and ensure that pupils who have special educational needs linked to behavioural problems do not disrupt the learning of others.

15 Teachers have agreed appropriate procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do in English and mathematics. They record the results of a range of standardised tests and use these to measure pupils' progress and predict how well they should do over time. In science, teachers assess and record pupils' knowledge at the end of topics. All of this provides useful information for passing on to other teachers and informing parents about their children's progress. In other subjects, the school's procedures are not so defined and not always agreed, with staff recording pupils' progress in their own way. For example, in information and communication technology the co-ordinator has devised a system that will enable teachers to assess pupils' skills and help them pitch work at the right level. This is crucial if pupils in Years 3 to 6 are to catch up and standards are to rise. However, the system has not yet been tried out or agreed. Teachers' marking also varies in quality. In the best instances, such as in English and mathematics, it lets pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve but in some subjects the marking is focused on grammar and punctuation rather than knowledge or skills. In the Foundation Stage, a long absence by the teacher has resulted in there being assessment records for only three of the six areas of learning and no clear indication of children's attainment when they start in the reception class. Staff recognise the need to tackle these gaps in the school's assessment procedures as soon as possible, which puts them in a good position to be able to improve, especially as this has been identified as a priority in the school development plan.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with suitable breadth and balance across subjects. Curriculum enrichment is good through a range of extra curricular activities, visits and visitors. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school produces specific education plans for pupils who have special educational needs, adding to the quality of provision for these pupils, by focusing on specific areas for improvement.
- The school's involvement with its neighbouring Beacon school, and literacy initiatives introduced by the Advanced Skills teacher, are improving curriculum provision.
- The recently developed information and communication technology suite enhances the curriculum provision in this subject.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to participate in a range of activities outside their normal lessons, and this adds significantly to the quality of their curriculum experiences and contributes to their personal development.

Commentary

16 The school curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. It meets statutory requirements and overall, provides satisfactorily for pupils' academic and personal development. A strength of provision is the care taken to prepare individual plans with clear targets for those pupils whom the school has identified as having special educational needs. The headteacher undertakes this work thoroughly in her role as the special needs co-ordinator.

17 In developing the quality of its curriculum, the school has made good use of the skills and experience of the Advanced Skills teacher. She has had many opportunities to work in partnership with other schools and teachers, all of which has benefited literacy teaching. The school's links with a neighbouring Beacon School and the associated shared professional development, have helped to broaden the approach to teaching literacy, and are improving the quality of pupils' writing.

18 The school has put considerable energy into developing its information and communication technology facilities and the computer suite is effectively timetabled and used. In an otherwise satisfactory picture of accommodation and resources, this represents good provision, which is enhancing the curriculum and pupils' experiences.

19 The school's programme of extra curricular activities enriches the curriculum, as does the range of visits and visitors. Pupils enjoy opportunities to broaden their experience and develop skills in sporting and musical activity, which includes orchestra, recorder clubs, and a dance and theatre group. They can enrich their scientific understanding and skills through the science club, which in winter focuses on indoor investigations and, in summer, exploits the surrounding school environment. Pupils can also learn French, and the school is looking for ways to extend this provision to include Spanish. Educational visits link closely to curriculum topics; for example, pupils will visit York when they are studying the Vikings. An annual residential visit to Egton affords good opportunities for historical and geographical study, as well as personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for well. The school ensures their health and safety and teachers provide them with good advice and guidance. Teachers seek the views of pupils but this is mostly done informally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The impact of gaining a Healthy School Award is evident throughout the school.
- Pupils get on well with their teachers.
- The school council meets regularly and pupils feel that they have a say in matters that are important to them.

Commentary

20 Earlier this year, the school gained a Healthy School Award for its work on promoting healthy lifestyles. The impact of gaining the award is very much evident around the school. For

example, every Wednesday, pupils from Year 6 make up a tuck shop of fruits and salads, which are very popular with pupils of all ages. Children in the Foundation Stage get a good healthy start to the day with milk and a fruit snack available to those who choose to have it. At lunchtime, the school cooks provide a range of good quality, healthy, hot food that is much enjoyed by pupils who have a school dinner. When asked, pupils say that they enjoy having a hot dinner and are quick to say which are their most favourite meals. Throughout the day pupils are encouraged to drink plenty of water. The youngest pupils know that this is healthy and older pupils are aware that it has an effect on their ability to concentrate better in the afternoon. On a more formal level, visitors such as the local nurse talk to pupils about important lifestyle decisions such as smoking and the misuse of drugs and about sex and relationship choices. All of this means that the support and guidance for pupils is of good quality and that pupils have access to well-informed advice.

21 The relationships between teachers and pupils are based on mutual respect and friendship. Teachers know their pupils well and work hard to develop their confidence and self-esteem in all areas of school life. For example, they praise pupils whenever possible and talk to them informally about their life and families so that they know at a glance if something is wrong. In the Foundation Stage much of the first term is spent forging these strong relationships and attitudes towards learning, which the school rightly views as paving the way for success in school. Pupils respond positively to the efforts of adults. In the past year, many pupils have had to adapt to having temporary teachers and they have done this exceptionally well. This was evident during the inspection when pupils in Year 6 did all they could to help a temporary teacher and settled quickly to his style of teaching and management. Teachers also work hard to forge relationships with the families of pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language and this is one of the reasons why the school is gaining popularity with parents.

22 The school council meets every fortnight and gives pupils a say in how their school is run. Pupils view it as a good thing and are proud to be chosen to be a member.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Pupils benefit from the good links that the school promotes with parents and the local community. There are satisfactory links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are provided with good quality information about their children's progress.
- A significant number of parents have some concerns about aspects of the school's work, but these are largely unfounded.
- Particularly strong links with the Church are evident in the ethos of the school.

Commentary

23 Although a significant number of the parents who returned questionnaires said that they were not kept well informed about their children's progress, inspection findings are that parents are given a substantial amount of information about events, the curriculum and how well their children are doing in school. When children first start school parents are given a useful brochure, which tells them about important aspects of the school's work. They are invited to bring their children to visit the reception class and to stay with them during this time. The reception class teacher takes the time to talk to all new parents about the school's procedures and gives parents valuable information about how they can help their children settle into school and how they can help them to learn. At the start of each year parents are given a schedule of events, though sometimes these dates have to be changed because of unforeseen circumstances, such as rain on sports day or a teacher being ill. Newsletters keep them up to date about the topics their children study and termly events or meetings. At the end of the year parents are given fairly detailed reports about what their children can do in each subject. The parents of pupils who have special educational needs are always invited to attend meetings when their children's progress is reviewed and they are involved in setting new targets and expected to do their bit at home.

24 Other concerns raised by parents are equally unfounded. These included parents who said that they feel uncomfortable about approaching the school. However, staff make themselves available and during the inspection a number of parents were seen chatting with teachers at the start and end of the day. The headteacher is happy to talk with families whenever possible but recognises that sometimes they have to make an appointment. Parents know who the governors are and a number have, in the past, written to them seeking help, guidance or information. Another area of concern was that of the school not seeking parents' views. In the past the headteacher has sent questionnaires to parents about important issues and staff seek parents' views informally through their day-to-day contact with mums and dads.

25 The aims of the school strongly reflect Christian values. All adults in the school share these aims and provide good role models for pupils. Daily prayer helps pupils to think about what they hear and to reflect upon their own beliefs. The school promotes a strong Christian ethos and has close links with the parish Church. The Reverend is a frequent visitor to the school and his assemblies and puppets are popular with pupils of all ages. Prayer plays an important part in developing pupils' spirituality and in promoting values of trust, tolerance and understanding. The impact of the strong Christian ethos is that pupils are mature and caring of one another.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and is aided by some good but mostly satisfactory leadership and management from senior staff. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The school has benefited from its close links with a Beacon School and has used this connection to maintain high standards in English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has successfully handled some difficult staffing situations including long-term illness, and in so doing has made it possible for the school to move forward.
- The headteacher has developed the role of curriculum co-ordinators, so that there is a greater sense of responsibility though they are not monitoring the quality of teaching and learning rigorously or systematically.
- The headteacher has worked hard to develop a cohesive senior management team, but this is not working effectively and there is not a clearly understood and shared commitment to improvement.
- In her role as special needs co-ordinator, the headteacher has created good procedures, which are improving provision for this group of pupils.
- The school lacks a well considered, long term strategic view by which to evaluate its progress.
- The governing body supports the school but is not sufficiently involved in decisions about priorities for improvement.

Commentary

26 Since the previous inspection the headteacher has successfully worked with the deputy headteacher to increase his role and responsibilities. They now work as an effective partnership and have a fairly clear view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. In this time the headteacher has also introduced procedures for appraising the teachers and for their continued professional development. The success of this is evident in the fact that the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and the school now has an Advanced Skills teacher whose skills are valued by the local education authority. Of crucial importance to the school is the fact that, over the past couple of years the headteacher has managed the tremendously difficult situation caused by a substantial number of staff absences. Throughout all of this, staff, parents and pupils have remained positive and, most importantly standards in English and mathematics have not fallen.

27 With clear guidance from the headteacher, curriculum co-ordinators now have a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Each co-ordinator has been allocated time to audit their subjects and to decide on priorities for further development. As a result, they have a fairly clear idea of the curriculum and resources and lead the way with regard to recent developments and training. For example, the headteacher and co-ordinator took advantage of grants to ensure that all teachers have had and will continue to have the training in information and communication technology that they need to raise standards. The main weakness to the management of subjects is that the monitoring of teaching and learning lacks rigour or consistency of approach. The problem is exacerbated by the reluctance of some staff to be monitored by others.

28 The headteacher and governors share the view that staff should be involved in decisions that affect the school. To this end the headteacher created a senior management team consisting of herself, the deputy headteacher and two senior staff. The team has met only infrequently because of staff illness but within some of its members there is no sense of shared direction or team spirit that could move the school forward. In addition, without the information provided by clear and focused monitoring it has been unable to prioritise the most relevant issues for the school. For example, the issues surrounding science and lack of achievement by higher attaining pupils is not included as a target in the school development plan. As such the senior management team is not working effectively and has had little impact with regard to long-term strategic planning or raising the quality of teaching and learning through systematic monitoring.

29 The headteacher has provided good leadership in her role as co-ordinator of the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs and this has improved since the previous inspection. The headteacher carries out all of the duties of a co-ordinator conscientiously and maintains close contact with staff, parents and outside agencies. Additional funding to support these pupils is put to good use to provide extra help in classes and additional resources. However, time spent on this takes the headteacher away from monitoring the quality of teaching and learning more systematically.

30 The priorities within the school development plan are relevant to the school but not necessarily the most important issues to move the school forward. All co-ordinators contribute to the plan following an annual audit of their subject yet important issues are not always included or seen to be important. In addition to this, governors have only a limited involvement in making these decisions and consequently the plan, as it stands, is unlikely to tackle the crucial issues of science and information and communication technology. For example, governors are aware that raising standards in science is a priority but have not insisted that it is included in the school development plan. Once again this is largely because the monitoring is not being used as a means of evaluating strengths and weaknesses. However, the headteacher and governors are aware of the need to be more focussed on what needs doing, which puts them in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary.

31 Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and the school. They are conscientious, have the pupils' interests at heart, and attend regular meetings twice each term. Their commitment to the school is reflected in an increasing involvement in training for their work, and in their assiduous analysis of external test performance data, which has highlighted some issues for the school. The governing body has established several committees to enable it to meet its statutory responsibilities but its work is not always recorded sufficiently to give a clear view of its long-term aims and plans for the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	379,410
Total expenditure	384,560
Expenditure per pupil	2,024

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	- 22,330*
Balance carried forward to the next	- 27,480

32 The large deficit in the budget has been caused by the need to provide temporary teachers to cover for the vast amount of illness that has happened over the past couple of years. The school is working closely with the local education authority to ensure a steady reduction in the deficit, leading to a balanced budget over a three-year period.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33 Areas of learning relating to children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development were sampled, with only a small number of activities seen.

34 Staff promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world through activities that involve them exploring science, history and the local environment and children gain from first-hand experiences such as a visit from local fire fighters. The pictures children drew after this visit showed how closely they had looked at the details of the fire engines and equipment. The teacher also plans activities where children can learn by using some of their senses. For example, in one lesson children sorted metal and non-metal objects and described the metal objects as 'hard', 'cold' and 'shiny'. Many knew that 'the middle of car wheels', scissors and keys are made of metal.

35 Each day, children can choose to paint, draw or make models. Many produce paintings of good quality, which show clearly that they have thought about colour and detail. Portraits of their friends and family include features such as clothing where the pattern is included on a dress, eyelashes, eye colour and skin tone. One or two children know to paint all the way down their page when making a landscape and they try very hard to keep colours from running or spoiling their work.

36 During the week there are planned times for gymnastics, dance and games activities and, weather permitting, children play outside each day. Once outside, children are robust and lively. They play with available toys and whiz around the yard in pursuit of friends. Most have good control and can change speed and direction quickly and weave in and out of other children without too many bumps.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Considerable effort and attention is given to ensuring that children settle into school.
- Children want to learn because the teaching is good and activities are interesting and challenging.
- Staff expect children to do things for themselves and consequently they are very independent.

Commentary

37 At the start of each year, parents and new children are invited to visit the reception class, where they can see other children at work and play and become familiar with new surroundings. Parents are given advice about how to help their children settle into school and what part they can play in their learning. A number of parents said that this helped them overcome the stressful time that first days at school can be for children. In September children come into school in small groups of about six. This means that the teacher and teaching assistant have time to talk with them and get to know them well. It also provides a time when they can assess what children know and can do and help them get over any problems of settling down. This system works well and is good for children and parents. During the remainder of the first term staff ensure that children get to know their classroom and school routines and that they are secure in knowing what comes next in their day. As a result of these efforts, children are happy in school and are confident enough to take part

in major events such as the Christmas nativity production where they all dressed up and had a part to play.

38 The activities planned for children are generally challenging and interesting. Sometimes the teacher catches their attention by telling a story or asking them to do something quickly, like counting forwards and then backwards from 10. Very often the tasks children are set are of a practical nature, such as going on a 'metal hunt' around the classroom. These stimulate children's interest and help them learn quickly because they become very involved in what they are doing. Each day, there is some time when children are given the freedom to choose their preferred activities from a range planned by the teacher. Children look forward to these times and are keen to choose their favourites but understand the need for organisation and order. Consequently, there are no squabbles when the role-play area or the paint table is full and they have to wait for their turn. In part this is because children see the fairness of the system and recognise that allowing only a small group of children at each activity means that they can access more equipment. Staff also expect children to do little things for themselves, such as getting an apron or putting on their hats and coats at playtime. Children gain independence from having to carry out these tasks and are keen to take further responsibilities such as handing out bottles of milk or returning registers to the office. All of this means that children's personal skills are beyond those expected for their age.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff incorporate communication, language and literacy into planned activities in other areas of learning and consequently standards are above those expected for children's age.
- Good teaching ensures that children who speak English as an additional language understand new vocabulary.

Commentary

39 One of the main reasons why this area of learning is taught well is that speaking and listening and reading and writing are part of children's daily experiences in school. When working with small groups of children staff constantly engage them in conversation and discussion and in this way children gain confidence and widen their vocabulary. For example, in an activity aimed at promoting children's knowledge and understanding of the world, good prompting from the teacher enabled children to use words such as 'wooden' and 'metal' to describe objects. Reading and writing is part of many everyday activities. During the inspection children were writing lists of Christmas items in the class 'office' and improved their ability to sound out letters and spell words as they sounded or read words from cards. The most able children were set the task of writing about Christmas and because everyone was excited they had a lot to say. In order to ensure that lower attaining children have the same opportunities to read and write, adults often act as scribe, writing the words of children, which they then copy or trace depending on their ability.

40 The teacher has a good understanding of how children learn to speak English as an additional language and puts these skills to good use in the classroom. One of the ways she does this is to ask questions in order to ascertain whether these children have understood new words or terminology. When recording what children know and can do the teacher looks for evidence that this group of children are doing as well as others and if they fall behind in any way she provides additional help for them in lessons. As a result of this, these children get off to a good start at learning a second language and make the same good progress in listening to and using spoken and written language as other children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn quickly because the activities are of a practical nature.
- Staff ensure that children learn about number, pattern and shape in everyday activities.
- The activities planned are adapted to suit the different needs and abilities of children.

Commentary

41 One of the main reasons why teaching is good is that staff plan activities that require children to think and find out for themselves. For example, when learning about the number four a group of lower attaining children were asked to gather four cubes then count them out by pointing at each one as they did so. For these children the task was challenging but they had gained a better understanding of the concept of four by the end of the activity and also practised their counting. Mathematical activities generally involve counting or describing and finding out by exploring the patterns and relationship between number. Staff also plan other activities that help children gain an understanding of shape and measurement. For example, children learned to identify common two-dimensional shapes by drawing and painting them and using them in pictures.

42 Daily opportunities to count and use mathematical language help children in the reception class make good progress in recognising numbers, counting and in adding and taking away. Staff ensure that children have opportunities to count and look at numbers each day. This is often done through number rhymes and songs, which children enjoy tremendously. Children count out how many in a group and how many missing and they have to work out mathematical problems such as how many aprons or bottles of milk are needed. As a result, they achieve many of the early goals and knowledge in mathematical development and the most able are already working towards the first level of the National Curriculum when they leave the reception classes.

43 A particular strength of the teaching is the way that activities are adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. This ensures that children have equal opportunities to make progress and all groups achieve as well as they can. For example, in a mathematical session children who had special educational needs and lower attaining children were helped to count and identify small numbers by the teaching assistant while the most able were asked to estimate numbers up to ten. Each group achieved well during the lesson, though at different levels. In addition to this, the teacher ensures that children who speak English as an additional language understand and can repeat mathematical terms such as 'one more'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are good throughout the school, and sometimes very good for the oldest pupils.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects and to write in different ways, including longer pieces of writing, all of which contributes to the high standards.
- Teaching is good overall but time was not always used effectively in some of the lessons seen.
- The subject is well managed, and this is a factor in maintaining standards. However, there is no regular direct monitoring of teaching to identify issues for improvement.

Commentary

44 Standards in speaking and listening are above average across the school. Most pupils speak clearly and confidently and have a good vocabulary to support their contribution to class discussions and to express their feelings. For example, pupils in Year 2 used language such as ‘the sea lit up at sunset’ and ‘the shadows of fish dancing in the waves’ to create atmosphere. In discussions about books and authors, pupils in Year 6 showed considerable command of the language in describing their reading preferences; ‘Its just not my sort of book. It lacks a real story line’, ‘I prefer horror stories because they’re more gripping’. The school’s increasing emphasis on personal, social and health education provides further opportunities for pupils to actively listen and converse with teachers and with each other. These opportunities are used effectively to promote language development.

45 Pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. They quickly master and use phonic and word skills successfully so that in Year 2, many pupils, even at this stage of the school year, are reading confidently. They are able to use information books, and talk about favourite characters in stories they have read. Pupils’ reading records suggest that they are well supported in their reading at home. Pupils with special educational needs receive extra help and this is ensuring that they also achieve well. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils are very confident, and average and higher attaining pupils read fluently without the need to use phonic skills or contextual understanding, except with particularly esoteric words. They read with obvious enjoyment when the story or poem grips their imagination, and they know how to use non-fiction books and information and communication technology sources to find information quickly.

46 From the earliest stages of schooling, considerable attention is paid to different forms of writing in many subjects and the result is that pupils achieve well. The school’s commitment to raising standards further is reflected in the current Beacon Writing Project, which aims to further improve the quality of pupils’ imaginative writing by the end of Year 2.

47 A number of factors contribute to this positive picture of achievement.

- Regular opportunities are provided for a range of different types of writing. For example poetry related to personal feelings and thoughts; writing reports, notes, instructions, factual accounts in newspaper style or using the precise language of science in describing investigative processes; historical biographies and writing such as ‘A day in the life of...’ which helps pupils to take another perspective.
- Time is given for the longer pieces of writing, which test pupils’ abilities to construct imaginative plots and to sequence their stories carefully. This work also provides opportunities for pupils to use imaginative vocabulary, grammar and punctuation for effect.
- Teacher’s value pupils’ writing and this is reflected in the well presented books of pupils’ poems and stories in each class.

- Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported in their writing tasks. This adds to their confidence so that they achieve well.
- Information and communication technology skills are applied effectively to support pupils' writing.

48 Teaching that is predominantly good ensures that standards in English are well above average by the end of Year 6. One of the key reasons for this is that considerable time is given to the subject, particularly writing in English lessons and in other subjects. Effective teaching strategies, which support high achievement, include the identification of individual targets, and positive marking which shows pupils what they need to do to improve. This is done very well by some, but not all teachers. Another strength of the teaching is the good use made of teaching assistants and other adults to help lower attaining pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. In addition to this, all staff are aware of the language and vocabulary needs of any pupils in their class who speak English as an additional language. Through sensitive questioning they ensure that these pupils overcome their barriers to learning and progress at the same good rate as others. During the inspection teachers had altered their timetables in order to show as much of the curriculum as possible and to accommodate the school production. As a result, some lessons lasted for longer periods than would normally have been the case; sometimes well over an hour. Occasionally, this had a negative impact on pupils' learning, because the lesson has not been carefully enough planned to ensure that momentum, pace and high quality learning were sustained throughout. Nevertheless, overall, pupils have good attitudes to their work. They are interested, conscientious and usually work hard, with good results.

49 The subject is managed well by an experienced teacher who undertakes regular scrutiny of teachers' planning. The fact that the co-ordinator is an Advanced Skills teacher also has a positive impact on standards and provision.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50 Teachers plan many opportunities for pupils to use their language and literacy skills in other subjects. In history, geography, science and religious education, they write in a range of styles to present narrative accounts. Debates and discussions in many subjects help pupils gain confidence in speaking to a larger forum and to give their points of view.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching ensures that pupils gain a firm understanding of pattern and relationship in number.
- Teachers make good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan work that is challenging for pupils.
- Teachers' marking helps pupils know how to improve their work.
- Boys in Year 2 are working more than two terms ahead of girls.

Commentary

51 One of the strengths of teaching is that the activities provided help pupils grasp the idea of numbers being related and know that they can use this knowledge to solve mathematical problems. This begins in Years 1 and 2 when pupils are taught about odd and even numbers and encouraged to use strategies such as doubling and halving to calculate using addition, subtraction and multiplication. Teachers continue to point out the relationship in number as pupils widen their knowledge of multiplication tables and learn to look at the pattern of end digits to work out the next multiple. Teachers ensure that pupils have a go at explaining their reasoning when answering questions and expect them to say which strategies they have used to get the answer. This is an effective method of teaching and works well because pupils gain in confidence as they get older and

are not afraid to have a go, even if they get it wrong. For example, pupils in Year 4 struggled with a new game in a mental mathematics session but this did not detract from their enjoyment or determination to improve their performance the next day.

52 Throughout the school there is a consistency of approach to teaching mathematics that comes from a clear understanding and effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy. It means that lessons follow the same format and that there is a good balance of mental mathematics and time to learn and practice new skills. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed using all of their knowledge of number operations to complete 'magic squares' in a briskly paced mental mathematics session and because the teacher used algebraic representations the most able pupils were challenged in their thinking. Teachers generally plan sufficient time into each lesson for pupils to practise new skills and solve mathematical problems. For example, when pupils in Year 2 were asked to collect data and information about favourite Christmas food or songs and communicate it as a bar graph with questions to ask friends they spent most of the lesson on this practical task. The result was that most pupils completed their work successfully and said that they were pleased with what they had done. Teachers make effective use of the last few minutes of each lesson to go over what pupils have learned and reinforce the main teaching points. However, some miss the chance to remind pupils of the aim of the lesson and in doing so help them gain a clear understanding of how well they have done.

53 Teachers' marking leaves pupils in no doubt about what they need to do to improve and where they are succeeding. Pupils' books are marked regularly and, in all year groups, the comments made by teachers are detailed and helpful. Teachers' comments such as 'you are putting the tens digits in the hundred column' help pupils know exactly why their calculations are wrong but similarly advice and praise help to motivate pupils and ensure that they put a lot of effort into their work in lessons and at home. When talking about their work, pupils are keen to point out any comments or praise for effort or in particular when they have got everything right. Most pupils believe that their teachers show them how to make work better and help them when they get stuck.

54 The results of national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that in each of the last four years boys have performed at levels that are more than two terms and sometimes almost a year ahead of girls. So far the school has no agreed strategies for reducing the gap. This is largely because the co-ordinator does not use performance data to analyse results and the monitoring of teaching and learning has not been rigorous enough to identify this gap. However, sound leadership means that, having identified the issue, the co-ordinator is now set to make this a focus for monitoring in the coming year. This puts the school in a good position to be able to begin to find out why this is happening and remedy the situation.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55 Pupils make good use of their mathematical skills and knowledge in other areas of the curriculum and in their day-to-day involvement in school activities. In geography they create and interpret graphs and charts that sometimes involve large and negative numbers. In history, timelines are used to give them a feel for the passing of time and help them place the civilisations they study in the right order and period. Some of the work that pupils do in information and communication technology is focused particularly on mathematics, for example they use computer generated spreadsheets and databases which form part of their work on topics such as planning a Christmas party for the class or researching facts about the Victorians from a large database.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- One of the strengths of otherwise satisfactory teaching is that much of the work planned is of a practical nature, which pupils enjoy tremendously.

- In helping pupils structure their scientific enquiry, teachers sometimes prevent pupils from gaining skills in devising tests and experiments.
- Teachers do not always provide challenging enough work for higher attaining pupils and consequently far fewer of the pupils in Year 6 achieve a higher level in national tests.
- Lower attaining pupils are given all the help they need to reach the level expected for their age in teachers' assessments carried out at the end of Year 2.
- Although the subject is led and managed soundly, monitoring has not been sufficiently rigorous to identify what aspects of teaching and learning need improving in order to raise standards.

Commentary

56 Throughout the school, teachers plan work that involves scientific enquiry and investigation. For example, pupils in Year 1 made steady progress at understanding how light travels in straight lines and shadows are formed when light is blocked, by using torches to create a beam against an object. They then went on to try to apply their scientific knowledge to create shadow puppets, which they enjoyed tremendously. Pupils in Year 3 explored the properties of magnetic poles through experimenting and those in Year 4 investigated the strength of electrical current by making circuits. Pupils are highly motivated by these practical tasks and put a lot of effort into their work in order to check their predictions and record their results. These methods are effective in ensuring that pupils reach the levels expected by the end of Years 2 and 6. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a thorough grasp of how to make a test fair and have some thoughts about how to decide on a suitable method to test scientific theories.

57 Although pupils benefit from using a practical approach to science, occasionally the investigations are so highly structured that there is little room for them to try out their own experiments or investigations and, by the time they are in Year 6 they have had little experience of doing this. This is evident in pupils' books where pupils of all abilities record experiments in a similar or identical way. So, while teachers help lower attaining pupils to approach scientific enquiry in a structured way the recording of results sometimes prevents higher attaining pupils from being creative in deciding how to conduct experiments and identifying key factors to be considered when a fair test is part of the investigation. In addition, in those lessons where considerable time was devoted to recording experiments this restricted the time available for scientific discussion and evaluation.

58 Teaching is satisfactory rather than good when teachers do not provide enough challenge for higher attaining pupils. By the end of Year 2 the proportion of pupils who achieve a higher level in teachers' assessments is broadly the same as in most other schools. However, by the end of Year 6, this proportion has fallen and fewer pupils than in most schools achieve a higher level. Teachers have been unable to identify why this should be so and consequently no agreed strategies have been put in place to remedy the situation. An examination of teachers' planning shows that extension and more challenging work is not always planned for higher attaining pupils and this is borne out by their books which often show that average and higher attaining pupils have recorded the same results. This means that, although higher attaining pupils progress at the same steady rate as all other pupils they do not always achieve as well as might reasonably be expected based on their prior knowledge.

59 Pupils who have special educational needs and lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given all the help they need to reach the levels expected for their age. In lessons, work is clearly adapted to meet their different abilities and they often benefit from working in small groups led by a well-briefed adult. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 1 benefited from working with a student teacher whose careful questions and sensitive prompts helped them understand that shadows are the 'absence of light'. This extra help makes all the difference and ensures that lower attaining pupils grasp scientific concepts and that their poorer reading and writing skills do not become a barrier to learning. The good support that they get paid dividends last year when teachers' assessments showed that all pupils reached the level expected for their age.

60 The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject soundly but there is a lack of rigour to the monitoring of teaching and learning that prevent it from being better than this. The co-ordinator rarely

uses performance data to compare standards nationally and with similar schools though she is aware of the need to raise standards. In addition, the observation of teaching lacks a clear focus and without this the co-ordinator has not been able to identify what needs to be done to increase the proportion of pupils who achieve a higher level; though she has been aware that work needs doing. Though science is not identified as a priority in the current school development plan the co-ordinator has rightly determined a plan of action for tackling some of the most pressing issues. This puts the school in a good position to be able to make the changes necessary once the monitoring becomes more systematic.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Frequent access to the computer suite has resulted in pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieving standards that are beyond those expected for their age.
- Standards are below those expected by the end of Year 6.
- Though most of the teaching is good, some teachers lack confidence.
- Systematic monitoring means that the co-ordinator knows what needs to be done to raise standards.

Commentary

61 Two years ago, with clear direction and leadership from the headteacher and co-ordinator, governors decided to provide the school with a suite of computers and associated hardware and software. Since then the suite has been used regularly by all classes. This has had a marked effect on standards in Years 1 and 2. Where it had previously taken a long time to ensure that all pupils in the class got to practise and refine their computer skills the time taken to do this is now substantially reduced. Pupils generally work in pairs, which means that everyone gets a turn each lesson and consequently pupils acquire skills at a much faster rate than previously. As a result, pupils in Year 1 have already mastered many of the basic skills associated with being familiar with keyboards, saving, retrieving and printing work and using programs for word processing and drawing. Pupils in the current Year 2 have had at least one lesson on computers each week and this method of teaching has clearly paid dividends. They use information and communication technology purposefully to achieve specific outcomes, such as to ensure that their published writing is 'neater than if it was written in pencil' and to produce pictures that are colourful or graphs of results in science.

62 Having the computer suite has not had the same effect on standards in Years 3 to 6. This is largely because the school had not, prior to this, had the resources to keep up with the fast pace of change in information and communication technology. Consequently, standards fell so that pupils lack many of the basic skills that come from regular and purposeful use of computers. For example, in a good lesson in Year 5, pupils were slow to achieve all that the teacher had planned for them because many used only one finger on each or only one hand to type. This slowed their progress markedly. Similarly, though pupils are now rapidly gaining familiarity with the school's software their knowledge of combining sound and pictures in multimedia presentations and programming computers to control robots or models is still very limited and they have a lot of catching up to do.

63 The co-ordinator has taken a good lead in training the other teachers and continues to provide technical support and advice to those who need it. Funding and grants for the training of teachers have been used effectively and all teachers have had training from consultants. As a result, all of the lessons seen during the inspection were taught well. One of the main strengths of the teaching is that teachers are good at explaining and demonstrating how each program works so that pupils grasp new skills quickly. In addition to this, the on-the-spot assessment that takes place when teachers or teaching assistants see that pupils need help means that problems are overcome quickly and pupils are highly motivated to keep at their work. For example, in a Year 1 class the

teacher's advice to 'check the numbers at the bottom' of a pictogram was enough to remind pupils that the number on the graph should tally with the data they had previously gathered so that their graphs were accurate. Thoughtful monitoring of the quality of teaching by the co-ordinator has shown that one or two teachers in Years 3 to 6 still lack the confidence to make greater use of computers. Until this situation is remedied the school will continue to have an issue with keeping pace of new technology and raising standards.

64 The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well and keeps a close check on the quality of teaching and learning. Over a period of time the headteacher and co-ordinator have worked alongside other teachers and provided them with help and support and consequently have identified the main strengths and weakness of teaching. For example, his monitoring has shown that teachers are sometimes unsure about where to pitch work because the school has not had shared or agreed procedures for assessing and recording what pupils know and can do. To remedy this he has devised a system that is to be tried and put to use in the coming terms. Similarly, close monitoring of pupils' work on display and in their files means that the co-ordinator is aware of gaps in their knowledge and has a plan of action aimed at remedying those through further training for teachers and more frequent access to computers as a teaching and learning aid.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65 Pupils are beginning to use information and communication technology across the curriculum but are not yet doing this to any great extent. They use computers to write and publish work in English, to research in geography, religious education and history and to communicate graphs and information in science and mathematics. However, they rarely use other technology such as digital cameras or sensing equipment in their work. Teachers are not yet making the most of information and communication technology to teach. Some use the Internet to access information for lessons but the use of computers in classes is minimal.

HUMANITIES

66 Geography and history were sampled through observing a small number of lessons, looking at work on display and talking with pupils about what they know.

67 In **geography**, no lessons were seen but pupils talked about the work that they had done previously. Pupils in Year 2 have used maps and atlases to locate the places they study and knew that Scotland is part of the British Isles and that it is in the north of the country. They could name the capitals of the countries in the United Kingdom and remembered Fingal's Cave from stories and work that they had done. Pupils in Year 6 are scheduled to begin their geography programme of work in the spring term and are looking forward to a geography field trip later in the year. Their knowledge of physical features such as mountains and rivers matched that expected for their age and they understand the importance of conserving the environment through recycling waste materials.

68 In the three **history** lessons seen the teaching was satisfactory and pupils achieved as well as could reasonably be expected. In all three lessons teachers encouraged pupils to research facts from a range of sources, such as photographs and objects and older pupils were expected to use the Internet to look up facts about Tudors and Christmas traditions. In discussions, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were keen to tell what they knew of famous people and events from the past and spoke at length about Samuel Pepys and the great fire of London. They were fascinated by the fact that a church was the only building left standing after the fire, and knew that Samuel Pepys worked for the king and wrote a diary which he put under the ground for safe-keeping. When they discussed this topic they used mature language such as 'and do you know it was such a dry summer,' and 'it was only a tiny little spark.' Older pupils demonstrated factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of history of Britain and other countries, such as, Victorian, Tudor, Roman Britain, local studies and life in ancient Egypt. As they get older pupils use a widening vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 3 used the terms 'mummification', 'cartouche' and 'papyrus' correctly when explaining ancient Egyptian culture. Similarly, the most able pupils in Year 5 talked eloquently about writing with a quill

pen and how to make a Tudor hornbook and chuckled at the differences between school in Elizabethan times and today.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69 During the inspection art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled through observing a small number of lessons, looking at work on display and photographs and talking with pupils about what they know. No judgements were made about provision in these subjects.

70 It is clear that **art and design** is an integral part of the curriculum planned for pupils. Teachers' plans show that art and design is given a high enough priority and this is reflected in the work that is on display around the school. Several classrooms contained friezes relating to Christmas but there were also displays from pupils' work in other subjects. For example, in the Year 2 class work in geography, art and design and design and technology had all been used to create an attractive display of the fictional island of Struay. From Year 1 onwards, pupils are given reasonable opportunities to develop painting and drawing skills in art and design lessons and when using their skills to illustrate work in other subjects. Consequently, the paintings and portraits they produce are often accurate in their portrayal of form and those produced by pupils in Year 5 as part of their history work also included substantial and accurate detail about how Tudors dressed. Work in watercolours by pupils in Year 4 in the style of famous paintings and Year 6 pupils' paintings of Victorian life show the development of colour mixing skills.

71 When asked, many pupils said that they enjoy the work they do in **design and technology**. Pupils in Year 1 were excited about making a Christmas theatre. During a well taught lesson the clear explanations and demonstrations provided by the teacher helped them to make a picture with moving parts. They incorporated previous learning about pivots, slides and levers into their designs and pupils of all abilities achieved well by the end of the lesson. They were confident in their use of different materials and could relate their simple designs to the product. They were also able to discuss other possibilities in achieving the desired outcomes, for example, the 'snow effect' could be obtained using white paper, cotton wool or white paint. The teacher actively encouraged pupils' ideas for improving their model, and her questions to pupils as they worked made a significant difference to their achievements. Similarly, pupils in Year 3 were especially animated when talking about how they had set about first designing and then making Christmas cards and calendars. There were good examples of designing and making in several different classes, for example, making musical instruments in Year 5. These were based on thoughtful drawings and designs, showing different ways of joining materials and embellishing the finished product.

72 There was very little opportunity, during the inspection, to observe the teaching of **music**. However it is clear that the school sees it as an essential part of the broad and balanced curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to play musical instruments through the local education authority music service. The school follows national guidelines for music, and reinforces these with a commercial scheme of work, which is helpful to teachers who do not have specific musical expertise. Musical activity is a strong part of the school's extra curricular provision with an orchestra, recorder groups and an annual musical evening that is well attended by parents.

73 No **physical education** lessons were seen during the inspection but pupils talked about the after-school clubs they attended and the games that they most enjoy playing. Older pupils know that it is important to warm up and cool down after a period of physical exercise and that strenuous work has an effect on the circulation and heart. In the past the school has been successful at local football tournaments and there continues to be sporting links with other schools. The idea of being healthy through exercise is carried into the playground where a 'heart line' is drawn on the yard.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

74 The school's programme for promoting pupils' personal and social development was not inspected in depth, but because of the time of the year much of what was seen during the inspection

formed part of this aspect of its work. This was particularly relevant for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 who were involved in rehearsing and presenting a Christmas production for other pupils, the local community and parents. For some time pupils had been working together to practise a play that involved singing, dancing, drama and gymnastics. The fact that they had learned patience and tolerance of one another was evident in the way that everyone worked hard on the day and they were quick to help one another out with dressing, costumes and lines. Their involvement in the play meant that the youngest children gained in several areas of learning as well as personal and social development. Their confidence increased from one performance to the next and the play provided many opportunities for them to extend their communication, language and literacy skills at the same time as they increased their knowledge and understanding of the world. All of the pupils involved in the production gained an awareness of the Christian beliefs and traditions surrounding Christmas. Older pupils were always ready to take on responsibilities and their contributions to costume and organisation helped the production run smoothly. On a more general level, older pupils know why and how the school rules are made and enforced and realise the consequences of poor behaviour. They take their duties seriously and are always willing to lend a hand and help out. Though the school provides some opportunity for pupils to be involved in a 'council' its effectiveness in ensuring that they have a say in how the school is run is limited by the infrequency with which it meets and the informality surrounding its objectives.

75 Alongside the informal promotion of pupils' personal and social development the school also provides a formal programme of lessons. Teachers plan these carefully to help pupils understand the benefits of having a healthy lifestyle, to develop good relationships with others and to become effective and supportive members of the school and the local community. Within the programme there are lessons about the use and misuse of drugs and medicines, sex and relationship education for the oldest pupils and times when pupils of all ages can discuss issues that are of importance to them. For example, pupils in Year 2 talked about times that make them happy and sad in a 'circle time' lesson.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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