

INSPECTION REPORT

**MARCHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC) PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Abingdon

LEA area: Oxford

Unique reference number: 123155

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Clark

Lead inspector: Mr Andrew Clark

Dates of inspection: 31 January – 2 February 2005

Inspection number: 267275

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	87
School address:	Morland Road Marcham Abingdon Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX13 6PY
Telephone number:	01865 391448
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Ven Eddie Shirras
Date of previous	8 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Marcham Church of England Primary is smaller than an average school of this type. There are similar numbers of girls and boys. The school serves the village of Marcham near Abingdon and some surrounding villages. Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs is below average at approximately 9 per cent. The pupils special needs include moderate learning difficulties, speech and communication and autism. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, approximately one per cent, is about average. The pupils' families include a range of professional, skilled and rural occupations and social and economic circumstances are largely positive. The children's attainment on entry to the

Foundation Stage (the reception class for children up to and including the age of five) is above typical levels for their age.

There are four classes in the school; a Foundation Stage and Year 1 class; a Year 1 and Year 2 class; a Year 3 and Year 4 class and a Year 5 and Year 6 class. Two of the five teachers were new to the school over the last sixteen months, including the headteacher. The headteacher teaches for a minimum of two-fifths of the week.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21596	Andrew Clark	Lead inspector	English Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector	
30205	Theresa Kenna	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design technology Music Foundation stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and leads to standards which are well above average. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governing body and as a result it gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well and standards are high in English, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher has established an excellent vision for future improvement and the staff and governors contribute very well to this.
- The very good quality of teaching leads the pupils to become independent and eager learners.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and have very good attitudes to work because of the positive Christian ethos and strong provision for their personal development.
- Parents give very good support to the school and this has a significant impact on learning.
- The school offers many enriching learning experiences but does not yet identify regular provision for gifted or talented pupils.

There has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards achieved have improved well throughout the school. The quality of teaching is much higher and has a significant impact on learning. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved well. The presentation of pupils' work is now good. The quality of education in the Foundation Stage (children in the reception class) is now very good. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have also improved well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Standards achieved are very good. Standards are well above average by Year 6 and compare well with those of similar schools, particularly for English. All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve very well as they quickly build on the standards they enter school with in all areas of learning and work at levels which are well above those normally expected throughout their time there. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in all areas of learning. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average by Year 2. In 2004 the pupils attained standards in all three subjects which were in the top five percent of the country in Year 2. Pupils of all abilities throughout the school read with expression and very good understanding. They write with imagination and a rich vocabulary. The vast majority of pupils listen intently to

each other and their teachers and are very articulate. Their mathematical calculations are quick and accurate. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Standards in ICT are good and they are satisfactory for religious education. Examples of good standards were also observed in art and design, history and music.

The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good. There is a strong spiritual ethos and the school provides many opportunities for pupils to work with others and to benefit from visits and visitors. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory and improving.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is very good. Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is good. Lessons throughout the school are creative and challenging with work matched well to the needs of pupils of all abilities. There is very good teaching of literacy and numeracy and these skills are used well in all subjects. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils. The pupils concentrate well and work particularly well in groups. Teaching assistants and volunteers make a very good contribution to learning. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught. Although the most able pupils are challenged and achieve very well, the teachers do not yet identify specific opportunities for pupils with a gift or talent. The school is making good progress in involving pupils in their own work through target setting. The curriculum is good and there are very good links between subjects. Learning is enriched with good opportunities for sport and the arts. All pupils have access to the full curriculum. The partnership with parents is very good. Parents are very committed to the school and this has a positive impact on learning in many areas. Procedures for managing health and safety are good and all staff are very caring.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Governance is very good and the governors fulfil their statutory requirements. The leadership of the headteacher is a strength and she provides an excellent strategic vision for future improvement building on the work of her predecessor. The senior staff manage their responsibilities very well. The governing body is well informed and make a very good contribution to school improvement planning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are very proud of the school and recognise the strengths of the leadership in moving the school forward. They are regular visitors and take a strong interest in daily school life.

The pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and find learning fun. They are very pleased with the increasing involvement they have in school life through the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant weaknesses requiring improvement.

- Improve provision for gifted or talented pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards achieved are very good. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved well since the last inspection.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well throughout the school. They make a very good start in the foundation stage.
- The pupils use their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT very well in all subjects.

Commentary

1. Standards are well above average for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 for English and mathematics. There has been a good trend of improvement since the last inspection because of very effective leadership leading to very good teaching. By Year 6, in 2004, standards in national tests are generally high in comparison with national averages. They are well above those of similar schools for English and above for mathematics. All pupils attained at least the nationally expected levels for English and science and a significant proportion reach higher levels. Standards in science were at least as good as those of similar schools. The school sets very challenging targets for pupils' attainment and has been successful in meeting them. Standards have also improved well by Year 2. The results in both Year 2 and Year 6 over the last two years have markedly improved. The results of the teachers' assessments made at the end of Year 2 in 2004 indicate outstanding performance in reading, writing, mathematics and science. As the numbers of pupils taking the tests and assessments are small, the overall picture can change depending on the starting points of children. Similarly in Year 6 the strongest rise has been over the last few years and the value added to the pupils test results from Year 2 to Year 6 was well above average in 2004. All the inspection evidence indicates pupils will continue to do their best and high standards sustained.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.7 (16.7)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	19.0 (15.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	19.0 (16.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 7 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 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (28.8)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	29.3 (29.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.0 (30.5)	28.6 (28.6)

2. The children make very good progress in all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. The majority of children reach the expected targets for their age (Early Learning Goals) and a significant proportion exceeds these levels. They build very well on the skills and understanding they start school with. This is a direct result of the lively and stimulating climate for learning in the reception class and the very good standard of teaching. The pupils continue to make very good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and to 6. The teachers know their pupils well through accurate and regular assessments and make good use of this knowledge to ensure work is carefully planned to challenge the pupils whatever their ability. They make learning fun and this motivates pupils to achieve very well. Tasks, such as experiments in science, are challenging and allow pupils, particularly the most able, to use the full extent of their knowledge and organisational skills. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because they are identified early and provided with clearly focused support. Both boys and girls achieve very well. The progress of the few pupils from ethnic minority families is carefully monitored and they also achieve very well. The positive support and close relationship with parents is a significant contributory factor to the achievement of the pupils.
3. The pupils make very good progress in the basic skills which underpin learning in most subjects. The school teaches reading very effectively so that pupils of all abilities read fluently and with good understanding. This makes it easy to access information from reference books in history and geography for example. There has been a significant improvement in the pupils' handwriting and presentation skills which they put to good use, for instance, in note taking in humanities. They have very good mathematical skills which enable pupils to measure accurately and use a good range of methods to record data in science and design and technology. The pupils develop good skills in ICT which they use well to produce multi-media presentations on the human body or use spread sheets to handle the data from scientific experiments.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as is their personal development. They are a significant strength of the school. The provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and improving. Their punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well behaved in the classroom and playground. They are polite and considerate to others.
- Pupils' personal development is very good and results in very good attitudes to learning.

Commentary

4. Pupils behave very well and this is a very good improvement since the last inspection. For example, an assembly taken by a local church visitor demonstrated the pupils' ability to sustain high levels of concentration and attention. A warm feeling of spirituality was created at the start of this assembly by the playing of gentle music and by the quietness of most children as they gradually filed into the hall and sat down in silence. In the playground the pupils play very well together and they demonstrate very good relationships with all teaching and supervisory staff. There have been 18 fixed term exclusions during the last year which would normally be high. However,

these were part of a managed programme in close consultation with the local education authority (LEA) and effectively meant that the child could continue in main stream schooling for as long as possible.

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	78	18	1
White – any other White background	2	0	0

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

5. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this can clearly be seen in the classrooms where most lessons were observed to be well paced and childrens' concentration levels and effort were significantly high. In one observed religious education lesson for example, most pupils exhibited very good attitudes and interest in the subject as they took part in a dramatic re-enactment of the story of Moses and the parting of the Red Sea. There is a very active school council in place at the school and pupils feel that they have a 'voice' in the way the school is led and managed. This has a positive impact on the pupils who show this in the commitment they give to the school as a whole and their work. A wide range of other opportunities are provided for pupils to enhance their personal development including supporting younger pupils in the playground and leading roles in assemblies. They take significant responsibility for the ways in which they present their own work and manage some of their activities. They make suggestions for clubs and societies and run their own school newspaper. The pupils are given very clear guidance on the tasks they undertake and are proud to guide other pupils in them.

6. The provision of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very strong and they are provided with many opportunities to work together in the classroom and to explore the local environment by means of many curricular and social visits into the community. Collective worship is linked to biblical and cultural themes and is planned across both key stages to ensure equality of access and opportunity. Spirituality is enhanced during assemblies through special times for reflection and prayer. Moral and social development is enhanced through personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons and circle time and in the way group and partner working is encouraged in the classroom and around the school. Pupils' cultural development is taught through music, art, history and literature. World faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism are featured on a range of displays and books around the school and visits to a local mosque are occasionally planned into the curriculum. The breadth of the pupils' personal development is evident in the very kind and

tolerant behaviour pupils show towards each other and adults in the school. They are very aware of the need for racial and other forms of tolerance and express their views knowledgeably and thoughtfully.

- Attendance since the start of the school year is good. There have been no unauthorised absences during the last or current year. The vast majority of pupils arrive in good time to start lessons and parents are supportive in ensure there is little lateness. The school quickly follows up unexplained absences.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, together with the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are a significant strength of this school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is very good. The very good teaching and learning is supported by a good curriculum which is rapidly improving.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment procedures are good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	12	7	0	0	0	0

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is imaginative and challenging throughout the school.
- The pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are taught well.
- The pupils' skills for learning are highly developed and teachers promote these very well.
- The use of assessment is good and the pupils are increasingly involved in target setting for improvement.

Commentary

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good for pupils in the infants and juniors. The children in the Foundation Stage are also taught very well. Occasionally the teaching in the school is excellent. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection particularly in the foundation stage where expectations were often too low. Pupils of all abilities are taught very well.

9. The teachers are very creative and imaginative in their planning. This appeals strongly to the pupils who find learning fun and respect the teachers' efforts to make it so. The headteacher and senior staff set a very good example through their own teaching. Very good use is made of the classroom and outdoor area to create a stimulating and motivating learning environment in the Foundation Stage. Strong emphasis is placed on independent learning by making resources readily accessible to the children and interesting to use and handle. There are very good links made between different areas of learning so that the children's understanding is consistently reinforced. For example, in science work on magnets the children use the water play for magnetic fishing, and create pictures using coloured magnetic strips to create cards and pictures. In turn this work is linked to 'pirate maps' the children use magnets to move pointers along the map and play pirate games on the climbing frame. There are very good links between the work in the foundation stage and that in Year 1 and 2 so that there is good continuity to teaching and learning. Work throughout the school is very practically based so that pupils' learning is active and alive. For example, in geography work in Years 1 and 2 the pupils have been studying the island of Guernsey and have made a detailed three-dimensional relief map in their creative work. Drama and 'hot-seating' techniques and the use of puppets help the pupils understand more about folk tales and fairy stories in English work. In Years 3 to 6 very good links between different subjects make the work more interesting. For example, science experiments on sound are built around studies of Tudor England. Good use is made of ICT by teachers and pupils. In mathematics and religious education good use is made of interactive white boards to develop pupils' learning.
10. The teaching of basic skills is very good. Reading continues to be well taught through structured guided reading activities in literacy and many opportunities to read aloud to skilful and well trained volunteers and teaching assistants. The teaching of writing, particularly handwriting, has improved since the last inspection because of the focus on regular skills teaching and many opportunities to write for a wide range of purposes across the curriculum. Very good use is made of homework which is set regularly for many subjects and matched well to the pupils' needs.
11. The pupils develop very good learning skills and this has been, and remains, a priority since the headteacher started a year ago. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and as a consequence, pupils are treated with maturity and respect. In many lessons, teachers discuss the learning approaches that the pupils need and give them simple techniques to remember them. For example, pupils in Year 6 are very clear about the skills they need to work in groups and achieve high standards. They remind each other of the need to pay attention to each other, to work with accuracy and fairness and to show tolerance. Children in the foundation stage recognise that they need to concentrate and take time to complete tasks carefully. This is particularly evident in their creative work and early writing. The school is focusing well on developing higher levels of study skills for pupils linked to the new library provision. However, although the teaching is challenging for all abilities, the teachers do not yet identify specific opportunities in their planning for pupils with a gift or a talent. Many pupils make good independent use of reference skills, including, ICT in their homework.
12. The use of assessment is good and often very good in English and mathematics. There are very good assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage. There is a wide range of tests and assessments used to evaluate progress in reading, writing and numeracy. Teachers evaluate these regularly to measure pupils' progress against National Curriculum levels and to set new targets for the pupils' learning.

They are increasingly developing good strategies to share these with the pupils so that they know precisely what they need to achieve. This is complimented by very good analysis by subject coordinators. Work set is almost always challenging to pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs. The school has recently reviewed its curriculum planning making increasingly tight links between what is to be taught and what the pupils are expected to learn. This is always discussed with the pupils at the start of lessons using useful acronyms to help pupils understand. In several, subjects assessments are made in a vocabulary which is easy for the pupils to understand so that they can understand what they have achieved and what they can do next. This is supported by good marking. The marking is increasingly used to develop a dialogue with the pupils to help them question their understanding and move forwards. The teachers set targets for pupils to achieve, particularly in English and mathematics, which are focused and useful. Increasingly the older pupils are encouraged to make decisions about their own targets and there are good plans to develop this. The pupils value this involvement in their own learning highly and not only does it make a difference to the standards achieved it also contributes well to their personal development.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. It is broad and balanced and of good quality. It enables all groups of pupils to achieve well. A good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors all enrich the curriculum well. The satisfactory, well maintained accommodation and good quality and range of resources meets the needs of the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are knowledgeable about how the curriculum should be developed and regularly check on the impact of planning on pupils' achievement.
- The curriculum is well planned, ensuring that all pupils benefit from what is on offer.
- The school maximises its use of the open spaces within the site.

Commentary

13. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has improved well. Thorough attention is given to how learning is planned, to ensure a consistent build up of knowledge and understanding lesson-after-lesson. There are good systems for staff to consider the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and they are making constant adjustments as a result. Since the appointment of the new headteacher, there has been a rigorous review of planning for all subjects and how key skills for learning can be developed across the curriculum. This is leading to increasingly imaginative and challenging teaching. For example, the use of ICT in teaching the English and mathematics curriculum is having a positive effect on standards in these subjects. As a result the most effective strategies are adopted, so as to help raise standards. In this way the curriculum is constantly reviewed in order that continuity, coverage and progression are secured in the schools complex and changing mixed age and phase classes.
14. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs and the most able pupils. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There is early identification of potential learning and behavioural difficulties in the Foundation Stage and this are discussed with the special educational

needs coordinator and closely monitored. Advice is sought through speech therapist and educational psychology services. Good links with support services continue through the school. Detailed records are kept of regular assessment so that additional teaching support is provided and closely targeted. The support given very effectively allows pupils with special educational needs to access the full curriculum at an appropriate level.

15. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum and makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' physical, social and intellectual development. These are very well attended by all groups of pupils and cover a wide range of activities such as art, ICT, choir and football clubs. A particular strength of the school are the sporting activities including netball, hockey, tennis, athletics and football. There are many visits to places of educational interest, which bring learning alive for the pupils. The wide range of visitors stimulates their interest in music, the arts and the wider local community. A very good example of the school's involvement in the local community, and its commitment to involving as many pupils as possible in its activities, is the school choir.
16. Good use is made of all available space for teaching purposes. The good range and quality of resources support learning well in all areas of the curriculum. The Foundation Stage has good outdoor provision and the resources provided are of a high quality. Accommodation throughout is very clean and welcoming, it is of good quality and is used well to promote a warm and inviting atmosphere that is conducive to learning. This contributes effectively to the very good ethos of the school. However, there is limited spare space for teaching in small groups or for pupils to work independently.

Care, guidance and support

This is good overall. Teachers and other staff are very caring and responsive to pupils' needs. The procedures for health and safety are good as are those for supporting and guiding pupils' through monitoring. The procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are good and all staff are well informed.
- The school provides a very high level of pastoral support and guidance as pupils progress through the school. Teaching and support staff know their pupils well.
- The school is successfully improving the good procedures for involving pupils in many aspects of school life.

Commentary

17. Good child protection systems and procedures are in place and the reporting person is known to all staff in the school. All staff have received good training in this area contributing to the support teachers give to pupils' personal development. Teachers and teaching assistants, with good links to external support agencies, provide a high degree of welfare and pastoral support to individual pupils as indicated through the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' academic performance and personal development is monitored well both formally and informally and steps are taken to identify any individual problems with a range of effective strategies.

18. The school operates a good first aid system for minor accidents and appropriate records are maintained. Regular fire drills are carried out and the school also maintains a record log. The school also carries out regular health and safety audits of the site and is proactive when considering possible risks on external trips out of school. The school's site manager maintains the school to a very high standard.
19. Pupils are increasingly involved in the life of the school. This extends to meeting and talking to potential candidates for teaching posts. The school council is very well organised and allows the pupils to express views on many areas of school life and take action to follow this up. For example, they are very involved in charity work and in the long term planning for use of the old swimming pool site. They present their ideas to the governing body. The very good relations with teachers encourage the pupils to discuss and plan how they organise their own work and how it is displayed around the school. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing and monitoring their own work with a good impact on learning.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

This is very good overall. Links with parents and other schools are very good. Links with the community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents are very well informed and involved in their children's education.
- The school makes good use of the local community well to support the curriculum.
- The very good links with local schools makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and academic development and teachers' professional development.

Commentary

20. The parents' meeting with the inspectors was reasonably well attended and the parental questionnaire was returned by a high number of parents. A significant majority of parents are very supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making very good progress. Parents also feel that the teachers are good and that the school is very well led and managed. The pupils' questionnaire was completed by the majority of children and their overall response was largely positive.
21. The information provided by the school through the prospectus, annual governing body report to parents and via regular and well designed newsletters is of a high standard. Annual pupils' reports to parents are of a very good standard, particularly in relation to the reporting of the English, mathematics and science. There are targets for pupils to improve their work and these are becoming increasingly focused and purposeful. There are two parents' evenings each year during which parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and these evenings are very well attended. The school produces an informative page for the monthly village magazine, with strong contributions from the children. The Annual Governing Body Report for parents is well written by the governors and provides a useful analysis of the provision offered by the school.
22. A few parents are frequent visitors to the school and they provide very welcome classroom support and assistance with occasional external visits. They are often very

skilled in listening to children read and other classroom activities and respond well to staff's guidance. All parents are invited to enter into a home/school agreement, which is designed to promote improved communication between the school, parents and children. Parental attendance at school concerts, celebrations and sports days are consistently very good. The school consults parents closely and regularly through meetings and questionnaires. The governors have their own well established procedures for gathering parents' views. The most recent and effective consultation has been over the development of outdoor facilities and opportunities for learning through the environment.

23. The school also makes good use of the local environment to enhance pupils' curricular access and the range of extra curricular clubs and activities is impressive for the size of school. The school has good links with the local church from where the minister and other church members are frequent visitors to the school. Older people in the community occasionally visit the school to enhance the curriculum, for example, by offering their wide knowledge and experience to support a history or geography topic. Close links are also apparent with several local primary and secondary schools including Larkmead to which many pupils will eventually transfer. There is a good 'buddy' system developing with Larkmead in which year 7/8 pupils become buddies for year 6 pupils as they move up from Marcham. The cleaner in charge at Marcham is also a lunchtime supervisor at Larkmead, much to the delight of year 6 pupils when they transfer up to secondary school level. The transition to secondary school is very good.
24. The school's links with parents and other local schools provide a very strong contribution to pupils learning and personal development and they are major strengths of this school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Governance is very good and the governing body plays a significant role in planning school improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides an extremely strong vision and very high aspirations for future development and leads very well by example.
- The governing body provides very well organised and effective support to the school.
- All staff make a very good contribution to school improvement.

Commentary

25. In the year that the headteacher has been in post, she has had a very significant and positive impact on the leadership and management of the school and has built very effectively on the improvements made since the last inspection. In particular she has established a very clear vision for shared leadership and team work which is well understood by the staff, governors and parents and expressed well in the school improvement plan. She has worked well through systematic monitoring of teaching and learning to establish a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school as a basis for future development. This has been achieved despite a 60 percent teaching commitment during the last year. This has been reduced in the current year. The headteacher sets a good example to staff and pupils by the high

quality of her teaching and subject management. The staff have responded very well to the dynamic leadership and this is moving the school forward very quickly.

26. The school is supported by a very efficient and effective governing body. There are very good procedures in place to manage meetings and ensure policy and procedures are up to date and meaningful. The governing body is quick to establish working parties to guide its work and ensure it is well informed by the views of all stakeholders including parents. For example, there is a very well informed group exploring ways to further racial integration and cultural awareness and the 'fun' committee established to promote the school in the wider community. The agendas for meetings are very carefully planned and ensure efficient use of time. Governors with a specific responsibility are well informed and work closely with the subject coordinators. The governing body manage the finances very well to support school improvement. They bring considerable personal skills to this aspect and are very well informed through effective administration and efficient school improvement planning which is regularly monitored. The carry forward from the previous year is above the recommended five per cent because of the need to protect against the variations to the budget that arise from year to year changes to the number of pupils on roll and towards planned building costs for the benefit of all pupils. The chair of governors, amongst others, has a good working relationship with the headteacher and makes a good contribution to the spiritual and cultural ethos of the school through assemblies and regular involvement in school life.
27. The teachers all contribute to the leadership and management of the school through many areas of curriculum and other responsibilities. Subject coordination is often very good despite the heavy workload carried by the few teachers. There are very good procedures in place to manage the monitoring of the curriculum and to match training needs to school and professional improvement. The school is making sound progress towards establishing a reasonable work/life balance for teachers. Subject coordinators have a very good understanding of the priorities for improvement based on the effective strategies for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. The school improvement plan is effective in establishing key priorities at any point in time and also establishing a long term vision. Although all teachers carry a heavy workload, the positive school ethos and structured procedures makes this as efficient as possible.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	203,110
Total expenditure	201,262
Expenditure per pupil	2,507

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	17,675
Balance carried forward to the next	19,523

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children are provided with a very stimulating and effective start to their school life.

Children enter a mixed reception and Year 1 class during the year in which they will become five. The first few weeks are on a part-time basis. At the time of the inspection 15 children were in the reception year, 11 of whom were beginning their fourth week of full time education. The overall attainment of the children starting their full time education in all areas of learning is above that usually expected for children of this age. This attainment is higher than reported previously during the last inspection. As a result of very good achievement, the majority are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year. Improvement in the Foundation Stage has been very good since the last inspection.

Children are provided with a very stable and caring environment where the quality of teaching and learning is very good. They are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of lively, practical activities, which support their progress effectively in all areas. Children with special education needs are very effectively supported and have full access to the curriculum. The main strengths in teaching are the knowledge and understanding that both teachers and support staff have of the ways in which young children learn, and their ability to plan for the many very small steps necessary in order to achieve this. Children take responsibility very well for their own learning and this encourages them to become very effective learners.

As soon as the children begin their schooling they are assessed against the nationally recommended targets. This results in effective planning by both the teachers and classroom assistants with work specifically aimed at the needs of individual children. Further daily assessment ensures that planning is constantly adapted to meet the changing needs of all the children in all areas of their development. This ensures that a very strong atmosphere is created where children are able to learn independently whilst being given reassurance and guidance that enables them to feel safe, secure, valued and individually well cared for.

Foundation Stage staff have a very good relationship with parents. There are very good procedures to help the parents, carers and children settle in school and so they become involved in their work. The Foundation Stage classroom is very well equipped and established. The outside area is well equipped and is very well used as an integral part of the classroom. The pupils in Year 1 are also timetabled to use this area. Very carefully planning ensures a clear progression of experiences across both years.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Regular routines are quickly established.

- The very good classroom organisation encourages the children to interact with each other and children very well.
- All staff show a consistent approach when supporting children.

Commentary

28. The children's achievement is very good. Routines are very well established and help the children to work in various groups, to take turns and share. As a result children are growing in confidence and developing very positive attitudes to their work. They understand classroom rules and routines and their behaviour is very good. For example, lining up for lunch is accomplished in a very sensible and careful way.
29. Children are helped to become independent. There are very clear routines for children to select and work in the different areas of the room or with particular pieces of equipment. Children understand and respond to these routines very well. The approach taken to involve children in managing resources and equipment for themselves is very good for promoting personal development and all are able to clear things away quickly and tidily when required.
30. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. All staff give very clear ideas of what is expected of the children including the difference between right and wrong. Very patient, supportive teaching, where children are encouraged to work together and collaborate in their tasks, results in happy and confident children who make very good gains in their lessons.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's communication skills are being developed very well.
- Great emphasis is placed on developing children's listening skills.
- Writing is made relevant and interesting.

Commentary

31. As a result of very good teaching methods, children answer questions posed by their teacher and are very eager to express their ideas in words. The majority show great confidence in speaking to adults and to other children, and all initiate conversations in their play. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and sharing a book with an adult. Most children know some letter sounds and can draw the shapes of letters.
32. Children understand that writing is used to communicate and at times they enjoy working at the writing tables, making books and lists. They are all eager to *Sign in* in the mornings as they write their name on the school or packed lunch list. Staff work with small groups of children giving them very individually focused help. In one lesson observed, some children demonstrated the ability to remember the story of the *Run away Pizza*, and used very descriptive language as they compared it with the story of the *Gingerbread Man*.

33. Children thoroughly enjoy their books. They are aware that they are a source of information and great pleasure. They handle them with confidence, and are eager to retell the stories. Most are able to recognise some familiar words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's counting skills.
- Mathematical ideas are made relevant to children's experiences.

Commentary

34. Children make very good progress in developing their awareness and understanding of mathematics. They enjoy counting. All can count accurately to 20, and most can count beyond. Very good use is made of number rhymes to reinforce children's counting. Children count while they sort objects as they play. They respond to the very good teaching well.
35. The classroom is organised very effectively enabling all children's mathematical needs to be met in full. Planning ensures that children are provided with a very good balance of teaching led and self-chosen activities. Opportunities to develop the children's mathematical understanding are very well planned into a range of activities that children choose for themselves.
36. Most children recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. They know circle, square, triangle and rectangle. They relate addition to combining two groups of objects, and can use the appropriate language and symbols. They use relevant vocabulary when answering questions, such as those about 'heavier and lighter' and all are able to use a balance to check their results.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan a very good range of interesting activities that lay a strong emphasis on practical investigation. This makes learning interesting and exciting.
- Computers are used very well.

Commentary

37. The children of all abilities achieve very well because of the very good teaching. Children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. Activities are interesting and are very well planned with an emphasis on investigation. For example, children were very excited as they fished for paper clips and other metal objects using a magnet, while others were very busy making *Gingerbread Men*.

38. Children use the computers with great confidence, using the mouse to identify and move items on the computer screen and point to illustrations. A variety of programs are used very well to promote the children's understanding in this area of learning. One very imaginative activity was seen, where children used an art program to develop their computer skills and hand eye coordination.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor facilities are used very effectively.
- Children's awareness and use of space is very good.
- Children are taught well to handle resources safely.

Commentary

39. The children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and curriculum provision. Staff use the outdoor area very well to support children's physical development. Opportunities are planned for children to experiment and experience a range of physical activities. They manoeuvre wheeled vehicles in a controlled way and with an awareness of space. The essence of both the teaching assistants and teachers' very good planning, was the extent to which they allowed the children to take initiatives and manage the tasks for themselves.
40. Children move around the classroom with growing confidence. They show a very developed awareness of space for themselves and for others. In a physical development lesson in the hall children used the space very well; they also demonstrated very good control as they discovered different ways of moving using different pace.
41. Most use small equipment with increasing control, as they draw or write. All are able to manipulate construction materials. Children are taught very well to handle equipment with care, and most are aware of the need to do things safely. Children's skills in manipulating small tools, scissors and pencils develop very well because of the good opportunities they have to practise and apply them.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of experiences and materials are used to stimulate children's imagination.
- Very good links are made with other areas of learning.

Commentary

42. There are very imaginative opportunities created for developing creative skills and understanding. Staff question the children skilfully to improve their understanding. The quality of teaching is very good and children achieve very well as a result.

Children enjoy a very good range of well-planned art and craft and role-play experiences to stimulate their imagination. They concentrate very well on these, making pictures and models with a variety of materials and paint. They relate very well to each other and are eager to share in imaginative ideas to create stories and events. They planned their assault on *Treasure Island* very carefully as they made hats, eye patches and maps ready for the expedition.

43. At times the children work with intense concentration on their tasks paying attention to small details. This was seen for example as they made their eye patches the correct size, and gave their *Gingerbread Men* their eyes and their buttons.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards achieved are well above average because of very effective leadership.
- Pupils of all abilities read with interest and enthusiasm.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good.
- Writing is often exciting and well constructed.

Commentary

44. Standards are well above average by Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The trend of improvement in standards for the last five years has been above the national trend. The pupils attain results which are well above those of similar schools. In the Year 2 tests in 2004 the test results were in the top five percent in the country. The current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are working at levels which reflect the previous high standards and achievement through the school is very good. The subject coordinator provides very good leadership with strong support from the governing body. There has been a very thorough evaluation of the quality of the pupils' work and standards achieved in all aspects of the subject and this has led to very effective development particularly with pupils advanced reading skills and the teaching of speaking and listening. The subject coordinator is building well on previous developments. Pupils from the full range of abilities are taught very well as a result and there are a significant proportion of high achievers. Although the school recognises when a pupil has a particular interest in writing, for example, teachers do not yet make full provision for gifted or talented pupils in their English planning. Pupils with special educational needs and those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs achieve very well. There is a good concentration of well planned activities to develop basic reading and writing skills to a high level whilst ensuring the pupils have full access to a wide and stimulating English curriculum.
45. The teaching of reading is very good so that pupils read with fluency and interest. The teachers plan very effective guided reading activities where the pupils are taught to read different texts with deeper understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants are very skilful at asking questions which make the pupils think very carefully about the way words and phrases are used to further the plot or develop the characters. For example, in Year 2, the pupils have a thorough knowledge of common phrases used

in fairy tales they have read together and later use these to create their own stories. By Year 6, pupils have developed good techniques for skimming a text for appropriate information and looking for key words or phrases. Pupils of all abilities show an enthusiasm for books and many have a good understanding of the style of writers from different genres. The very good teaching is supported by many opportunities to practise reading with well-trained volunteers. They enjoy this experience and it makes a good contribution to their social development. The pupils of all ages also regularly read to, or with, their parents and use local libraries. Detailed records are kept of reading progress and parents welcome the good level of communication between home and school.

46. Pupils' achieve very well in speaking and listening. This is a continuing priority for development. Teachers plan their lessons in all subjects with good consideration for opportunities for progress in speaking and listening. Teachers and teaching assistants question the pupils skilfully and have high expectations for clear and succinct answers. As a result, pupils give very detailed explanations of their thinking processes and ideas. They use a rich vocabulary with good understanding. For example, Year 5 pupils discussed 'The subtle difference...' between different religions in their history work. Good opportunities are provided for drama and 'hot-seating' (answering questions in character) in many lessons which promotes better speaking skills. Pupils also act as the Master of Ceremonies during weekly assemblies showing confidence and articulation in public speaking. A few pupils do not speak loud enough when addressing the class and some teachers are inclined to articulate their ideas for them rather than encouraging them to at least partly speak up. Older pupils are developing good debating skills and have good experiences of planning both sides of an argument. There are good links to their work on persuasive writing.
47. The presentation of pupils' writing has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is a good balance between regular, interesting skills teaching and good opportunities to practise in literacy and other subjects. The teachers' have high expectations for good presentation, but this does not detract from the content of pupils work. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils are using a joined, neat cursive writing style in their work. They continue to develop fluency in this so that pupils in Years 5 and 6 take notes efficiently in a fluent hand. The pupils' writing is varied and interesting. They are taught how to structure their writing well so that the grammatical phrases of their writing is used to very good effect. For example, they use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas on bullying and tolerance. They pay good attention to the plot of their stories and many incorporate mature twists into their own fiction. Lively punctuation is used effectively and purposefully.
48. Teachers are knowledgeable and the development of their professional skills in English is very good. The curriculum is very good and the school is set to maintain very good achievement and reach its targets.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

This is very good. The staff have reviewed the curriculum to place the development of literacy skills at the heart of many subjects. For example, in PSHE pupils use their list making and note taking skills. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 produce engaging diaries about the Great Fire of London stimulated by Samuel Pepy's work. Pupils make good use of reference books and information from the Internet in many subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are carefully planned and well taught so that all pupils' needs are very well met; this is because staff know where their pupils are up to in their work and are quick to recognise any difficulties they have.
- The application of pupils' mathematical skills and use of mathematical vocabulary are emphasised well.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who need additional help.

Commentary

49. Pupils achieve very well during their time in school and there is a very good trend of improvement to standards. They are well above the national average by the time pupils leave school and by Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and their achievement is good when compared to their prior attainment. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.
50. This very good improvement is due to improvement in the quality of teaching, the use of assessment and planning. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have developed a very good understanding of basic number activities, such as counting on and back in tens or recognising odd and even numbers and sequences. They know simple fractions, learn the names and properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. In Years 3 to 6, pupils of all abilities continue to build very well on their mathematical understanding. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils have a very good understanding of place value, which they put to good use in making mental calculations. They use written methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in, for example dealing with metric distance calculations. Higher attaining pupils are able to calculate the prime factors of given numbers, to sequence, add and subtract negative numbers when studying temperature. They are able to round decimal numbers up and down in order to give an approximate whole, and they understand and can calculate the mean, median and mode using a set of given data.
51. The teaching of mathematics is very good overall in all classes, teachers provide stimulating, well-prepared lessons and explain the work very well. There are very good assessment systems, which allow the school to teach groups of similar ability with work very focused to their needs. This gives teachers very clear information about what their pupils know and can do, and what they need to do next. Lessons are well planned, and teachers are good at keeping their pupils fully involved in their work. Pupils have clear targets. Teachers explain clearly what their pupils will be learning, and then check later to see if they have been successful in their learning. In the very best lessons, teachers challenge their pupils with a lively pace of work, and inspire them to try harder. In a Year 6 lesson where the teaching was very good, pupils learnt how to identify prime numbers and the pattern their factors make. The teacher's very lively approach, and very good teaching methods, ensured that the majority of pupils discovered the nature of prime factors.
52. In the majority of lessons, suitable mathematical problems are set, which allow the pupils to apply their new mathematical learning. Pupils are very effectively taught the

skills they need to solve mathematical problems. Accurate mathematical vocabulary is continually used and pupils are constantly involved in discussions, leading to full understanding of calculations and ideas. Pupils' work is generally well marked, so that pupils know how well they have done, and what they need to do next. Teachers often include helpful comments, which guide their pupils, and show them how to improve. The use of information and communication technology within the subject is developing well, with the introduction of interactive white boards within the classrooms and the well used computer suite.

53. Teaching assistants provide helpful support for those who need it and they make a valuable contribution to learning. This support takes place in class; this is effective in building pupils' confidence. This approach means that pupils of all abilities are developing a broad and secure understanding of mathematical ideas.

Mathematics across the curriculum

The development of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects is good. Teachers constantly identify occasions when pupils can use their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum. For example, in Year 6 pupils calculated the exchange of pounds and USA dollars. There is good use of mathematical skills in science particularly for data handling when pupils select the most appropriate graphs and charts to record their work and this is complimented by very good use of ICT to assist the calculation.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and improvement is good.
- Pupils develop very good skills in experimenting and investigation.

Commentary

54. Achievement is very good. Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are well above average. There has been a good trend of improvement. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The subject is well led and managed. The results of the Year 6 national tests were in line with those of similar schools which are below the comparisons for English and mathematics. The school carefully analysed test data and identified that there were some weaknesses in pupils' investigative skills. They acted quickly and training has strengthened this area so that pupils' skills are now good. All pupils in 2004 attained at least the expected level for their age, including pupils with special educational needs. The results of tasks and assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2004 placed them in the top five percent in the country. The careful targeting for pupils' achievement and work well matched to individual needs means that the school is well placed to continue with very good achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well as lessons are closely matched to their needs. For example, when pupils are experimenting they receive strong guidance on sharing and supporting each other and worksheets and instructions are tailored to individual reading abilities.
55. Pupils' scientific knowledge is good. Young pupils in Year 1 and 2 have a good understanding of the properties of magnets and make good predictions of magnetic

and non-magnetic materials. They classify and sort materials by scientific properties. They show very good recall of key facts they have learned. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build a very useful bank of factual scientific knowledge which they use in their experiments. For example, they describe in detail the different nutritional needs of the human body and how this affects the heart. They make good use of multi-media presentations in their learning in this area. The pupils' knowledge of sound and how it travels is very good because of the teachers' imaginative approach and constant reinforcement of a suitable scientific vocabulary. The majority of teachers' have a good understanding of science teaching and this is reinforced by continued professional training. The teachers' very good subject knowledge enables them to ask probing questions which reinforce the pupils' understanding and helps them recall facts.

56. The pupils have very good skills in investigation. Any weaknesses have been addressed well and the curriculum continues to improve. Pupils of all abilities learn to pose sensible scientific questions and to challenge themselves to act in a scientific way. The teachers encourage this through simple role play. The main strength in this area is the practical nature of most lessons and a good balance between providing a structure for experimentation and good levels of independence at every stage. Pupils are expected to make decisions about how they record their experiments and there are good examples of the use of graphs, including line graphs, charts and written recordings. Pupils are also taught how to draw scientific diagrams as a development on early picture making processes. The quality of the teachers marking is often, although not consistently, good because they challenge the pupils to think scientifically and use a scientific vocabulary. Another strength is the increasing use of links between subjects to create imaginative and stimulating settings for experiments. For example, the Year 5 and 6 pupils experiment with how sound travels in the context of Henry VIII trying to get peace from a noisy tower. The pupils use materials from that period as sound insulators. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the need to control the variables to create a fair test and practically apply this well. They know how to use their existing knowledge to make predictions and to structure their experiments using a controlled situation. The open ended nature of much of the work in science provides challenge for all abilities but the school does not yet identify specific opportunities for pupils with a gift or talent in science and related subjects. The subject is led and managed very well and the coordinator has worked closely with the local education authority advisory staff to manage systematic monitoring and evaluation of standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve good standards and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- The pupils are developing good skills in all aspects of the subject and make good use of ICT as a tool for learning.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards ICT.

Commentary

57. Standards of work are above expected levels by Year 2 and Year 6. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when they were below expected levels by Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. The subject is very well led and there are exciting plans for further development. The governing body supports the leadership well. Resources are now good. Teachers are making increasingly effective use of ICT in their teaching through very regular sessions in the ICT suite and constant use in other subjects.
58. The pupils throughout the school achieve well in all aspects of ICT, not just in word processing which was the case before. However, this remains a strength and pupils make good use of it in producing a school magazine. Pupils of all abilities have good basic skills in using the computer. They make full use of these skills by regular access to computers in programs to develop reading, writing and numeracy. By Year 2, the pupils are composing their own stories during the lessons based on their work on fairy stories. The teachers plan the work as an integral part of lessons in most subjects. By Year 6, pupils have very good skills in planning pathways and routes for a computer character using logical sequences of instructions. They develop this into more complex projects linked to design and technology. They make good multi media presentations to support work in science and history. For example, a group of pupils mixed Tudor madrigals they found on the Internet with pictures and text on the six wives of Henry VIII. The pupils scan and manipulate illustrations and photographs in a presentation on healthy hearts. They do this with very good levels of independence and are critical and selective in their use of the Internet. They make very good use of their understanding of editing skills to produce final presentations of high quality. They explain their reasoning very well and are challenged to do so by the teacher. The teachers encourage the pupils to turn to ICT as a natural tool for learning. They use spreadsheets with a good knowledge of how to apply formulas and other functions of data handling programs. This supports their learning in science well.
59. The teaching is good because of the strong links made to other subjects and this is leading to rising standards. From a very early stage the pupils show a good understanding of how to apply their skills from an early stage. They are enthusiastic and patient when using ICT and very willing to share their skills with other pupils. They use microphones and recording equipment well, for example in assemblies and in English and music activities. Pupils make good use of computers at home. They use a good technical vocabulary.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

This is good. Teachers have reviewed the curriculum to identify opportunities for effective use of ICT in all subjects. They are making increasingly good use of interactive white boards. There are good examples of computer based art work. There are some very good links with lessons on personal and social development such as work on healthy living and friendship in Year 2

HUMANITIES

There was insufficient evidence to judge overall provision in **geography** and **history**. Evidence was gathered from interviews with pupils, scrutiny of some planning and samples of work. One lesson was observed in history. Standards in **geography** are at least in line with expected levels by Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils progress well in mapping skills and environmental education. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 explore the differences between their own environment and the island of Guernsey. This is developed in Years 3 to 6 through studies

of the Island of Lucia. There is evidence of good work on the local area. In **history** standards by Year 6 are above average. The pupils have a good understanding of primary and secondary sources of information and use these well in their own research. They write well in the character of famous people from history. There are good links between history and other subjects and good use of ICT through the Internet and using spreadsheets.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and are learning to think analytically about religion.
- There has been a good improvement to the pupils' knowledge of different faiths

Commentary

60. Pupils achieve well and reach standards which meet and often exceed the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus by Year 2 and Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Assessment is satisfactory. The subject is led and managed well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
61. The pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. This is supported by the overall Christian ethos of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how the Bible is constructed. Through a lesson where the teaching was excellent using DVD and ICT facilities, the pupils showed a good understanding of the perspective of different writers of Bible stories and the meanings they carry. The teachers' probing and fast paced questions encouraged the pupils to think deeply and formulate good questions in turn. The pupils have a good understanding of major Christian celebrations and the role of the church. They use a good vocabulary in discussions which is reinforced well during lessons. The work on Christianity and other faiths is linked well to work on personal qualities such as bravery through the life of Moses.
62. At the last inspection, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths was judged to be a weakness. This has much improved and is now satisfactory. The subject coordinator undertook a complete review of the curriculum shortly after taking the post. There is now a better balance of coverage although there is sometimes over long periods devoted to one faith rather than drawing on links between faiths. The school has worked hard to give the pupils' meaningful experiences which ensure the pupils have a sound understanding of different faiths in modern society. A very good lesson for Year 1 pupils made good use of drama and role play to teach pupils about Old Testament stories. The pupils were enthralled.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology and **music** were not able to be inspected in full. No judgements were made about these subjects. Examples of pupils' work, subject planning and interviews point to curriculum provision that is fully in place. In **art and design**, work displayed around the school showed very good use of colour, different materials and design techniques. All indications are that standards of work have improved since the time of the last inspection. Designs and plans in **design and technology** indicate

that the subject is taught in full. **Music** has a very high profile in the school. Pupils have very good opportunities to appreciate a very wide range of music. They enjoy singing in assemblies where they sing tunefully and confidently. The choir has many opportunities to perform both in and outside of school. The choir's participation in music festivals and concerts makes it a very strong link with the local community. Visiting musicians make a positive contribution to the pupils' cultural development because there are opportunities to experience music from other cultures as well as their own. All indications are that standards of work have made good improvement since the time of the last inspection when it was judged that insufficient time was spent on the subject.

There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on **physical education**. No lessons were observed. The pupils of all ages have the opportunity for at least two hours of physical education during the school week. The pupils report that they enjoy their lessons and teachers challenge them to work very hard. The curriculum is broad and is enlivened by specialist training from the community for various sports skills. There is a good range of sporting opportunities outside the school day and the school has been successful in a range of interschool games. The school no longer has its own swimming pool but makes good use of local facilities. The majority of pupils meet or exceed the requirements of the National Curriculum for swimming.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The pupils' personal and social education is central to the philosophy of the school and a key feature of its success. There are well-planned opportunities to educate pupils about sex education and drugs awareness. They discuss issues such as racism or sexism in an open manner. The very good links with the pre-school and secondary school all develop the pupils' knowledge of the world of work and citizenship. The pupils feel that they benefit significantly from lessons in this aspect. For example, they feel they have come to a greater understanding of tolerance after a lesson on bullying and explain that they could now see how comments they think are humorous could be seen as offensive by other people. Good use is made of visitors to the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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