

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MATTHEWS CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Telford

LEA area: Telford and Wrekin

Unique reference number: 123557

Headteacher: Mr G Calcutt

Lead inspector: Mrs C A Field

Dates of inspection: 20th – 21st June 2005

Inspection number: 267892

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: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 265

School address: Church Road
Donnington Wood
Telford

Postcode: TF2 7PZ

Telephone number: (01952) 605 926
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Reverend D Wright

Date of previous inspection: May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Matthews Church of England Primary School serves the Donnington Wood area of Telford where there is a high level of deprivation. There are 265 pupils on roll; 135 girls and 130 boys with another 60 children who attend part time in the Nursery. The profile of children's attainment when they start in the Nursery is well below average. Almost all pupils are of white British ethnic origin but a very small number are from Asian or Black heritage. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. A much higher proportion of pupils than seen in other schools of this size have special educational needs. Two pupils have a statement to meet their specific difficulties. A well-above average proportion of pupils take up free school meals. Most pupils spend their whole education at the school.

The school was accredited with a government Achievement Award in 2002, Investors in People and the Football Charter Standard in 2003 and the Naace Mark awarded for information and communication technology (ICT) in 2005. The school works in active partnership with a number of other schools and colleges to support initial teacher training and with local schools to exchange best practice through the Excellence in Cities initiative.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9428	J Butler	Lay inspector	
22704	G Williams	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Music English as an additional language
1189	S Brown	Team Inspector	English History
4099	R Braithwaite	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is **highly effective** in providing a very good quality of education for its pupils. The commitment to educational inclusion is outstanding and the very positive Christian ethos successfully promotes the total well-being of all members of the school's community. Teaching and learning are very good and underpin pupils' very good achievement. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and holds crystal clear aspirations for making the school the best it can be. All staff are united in their determination to move the school forward and they play a full role in providing a rich and vibrant learning environment. The school adds very good value to the pupils' all round development and gives **very good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The head, staff and governors work in successful partnership to promote a *Can Do* ethos in which pupils achieve very well both academically and socially.
- Standards are well above average in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and music and above average in English, science and design and technology by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' speaking skills are not well enough promoted across the curriculum.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall but more focus is required to ensure the higher attaining pupils are consistently challenged in their studies in all years and particularly in mathematics in the juniors.
- Assessment is good overall but there is room for improvement in target setting and pupil review.
- Very good provision is made for children in the Foundation Stage and they receive a flying start to their education.
- Pupils with special educational needs do very well because of the very good provision made for them.
- Boys and girls are growing as highly responsible future citizens well prepared to take their place in a multicultural world because of the excellent way in which the school assists their personal, social, moral and cultural development.
- The very good curriculum is well planned to promote pupils' positive enjoyment with excellent cross-curricular use of ICT and outstanding enrichment that helps heighten pupils' physical, aesthetic and creative awareness.
- The school seeks 100 per cent involvement of the pupils in making decisions. Their views are listened to, respected and acted upon.
- Excellent links with parents and very well-forged links with other schools and the community make a very beneficial contribution to pupils' education.

The school has made very good progress since its previous inspection six years ago. Standards today are much higher than at that time and all the issues raised for improvement have been tackled very effectively. The school is clear from its own evaluation where the next steps for improvement lie and has good capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is **very good** overall. In the 2004 National Curriculum tests, pupils in Year 6 reached average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science. They achieved very good results when compared to those seen in similar schools. The school's trend in raising standards is better than seen nationally and places it amongst the top five per cent of schools nationally.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004

English	B	C	C	A
Mathematics	B	B	C	A
Science	A	A	A	A

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

Current standards are average in English, and above average in mathematics and science at the end of Year 2. Standards are above average in English and science and average in mathematics at the end of Year 6. This picture reflects very good achievement from the low baseline from which most pupils start their education. However, potentially more pupils are capable of reaching higher levels in mathematics, in particular. Pupils' writing skills are good because of the effective push the school has given to this. Speaking skills are not extended well however, and this is an area for further development. Standards are well above average in ICT, art and design and music across the school. Standards are broadly average in the other subjects that inspectors sampled.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. The **excellent** provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development assists them in becoming extremely well rounded future citizens. Good attendance is underpinning the pupils' very successful academic and social growth.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good**. Classrooms are calm, purposeful and very happy places in which relationships are excellent. Teachers give excellent attention to equal opportunities and manage behaviour very positively. Their use of questioning helps build pupils' knowledge but is less effective in deepening thinking skills. Good assessment is helping teachers to plan effective lessons that meet the diverse needs of the pupils well, particularly those with learning difficulties. However, there is inconsistency in the level of challenge in the work set for higher attainers. A very rich and exciting curriculum with a very strong focus on the creative arts has a very positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning. Very good systems are in place to help the staff take very good care of pupils. Excellent attention is given to supporting pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship. Excellent links with parents are promoting a partnership approach to education that is bringing very great benefit to life long learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher is an excellent leader who has built a very high performing team. He works in a very fruitful and productive partnership with the very high calibre deputy to inspire and motivate others to give of their very best. Robust and rigorous management systems result in a very high level of consistency across the school. Senior and middle managers exercise their roles with confidence and success. Governors are supportive and committed friends of the school and make sure that all legal requirements are met. They seek best value very well when they buy things in but are not as pro-active as they could be in checking the quality of curriculum and standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold extremely positive views about the school and are very pleased their children go there. A very small number of parents told inspectors that they had concerns about behaviour. Parents should be reassured that the school has zero-tolerance to bad behaviour and deals with any instances swiftly. Pupils of all ages find the school a really good place to be. They told inspectors that they especially like their friends and teachers and most wouldn't change a thing!

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make sure that potentially high attaining pupils always have work that challenges them.
- Widen the opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in class discussions and through drama and role-play.
- Continue to implement assessment for learning with sharper focus placed on teachers' tracking and target setting systems and pupil self-review.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils' achievement is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the previous inspection, standards throughout the school have improved significantly.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success in sustaining positive improvement to standards. He sets a very clear plan for raising achievement that all staff are signed up to and work consistently to implement.
- From a well below average starting point, boys and girls from different ethnic backgrounds make very good progress and achieve very well.
- Standards are well above average in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and music and above average in English, science and design and technology by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils with learning difficulties do very well because of the very good provision made for them. However, those who are potentially high attaining are not as consistently well provided for.
- Pupils' basic skills are very well developed on the whole but speaking skills are not consistently promoted across the curriculum.
- The school sets very challenging targets to assist the raising of standards.

Commentary

1. The school's performance in national tests is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. The school's rate of improvement in standards is very good and places it amongst the top five per cent of primary schools in the country. Due recognition has been given by the government because the school has improved its results in national tests for ten years in succession.
2. When the children in the Foundation Stage start school their standards are well below average. They make good progress but standards remain below average overall, especially in communication, language, literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school most boys and girls make at least good progress over time and achieve very well. This includes those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Current standards are average in English, and above average in mathematics and science at the end of Year 2. They are above average in English and science and average in mathematics at the end of Year 6. This picture reflects very good achievement overall. However, potentially higher attaining pupils are capable of reaching higher levels in mathematics in particular. Pupils' writing skills are good because of the effective push the school has given to this key skill. However, speaking skills are not extended well and this is an area for further development. Standards are well above average in ICT, art and design and music across the school. Standards are broadly average in the other subjects that inspectors sampled. This indicates a well above average 'added value' to the attainment of pupils during their time in the school. This picture is testament to the excellent leadership of the headteacher, very good teaching and very high quality management of the school that is totally focused on raising standards whilst ensuring pupils enjoy a rich and stimulating curriculum and are helped to grow as very responsible future citizens.
3. The standards reached by pupils in Year 2 in the 2004 national tests were below average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics, but were well above those seen in similar schools. Standards were much better than those in 2003

in mathematics and reading and at the same level in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 compared favourably with both national and similar schools pictures. The overall trend in improvement is above that seen nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.4 (15.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.4 (14.4)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.1 (15.1)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In the 2004 national tests, pupils in Year 6 reached average standards in English and mathematics and well above average standards in science. They achieved very good results when compared to those seen in similar schools. The school's trend in raising standards is better than that seen nationally and places it amongst the top five per cent of schools nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (26.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	27.7 (27.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.0 (31.1)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The school has tried and tested strategies for supporting improvement. For example, close monitoring of individual pupil progress by the deputy headteacher enables pupils to have extra support in English or mathematics if they are in danger of underachieving. Very good support given by teaching assistants helps the slowest learners to learn very successfully, with the majority making very good progress to reach the expected Level 4 in core subjects by the time they are eleven. The school has made a good start in identifying those pupils with gifts and talents and has drawn on the highly effective practice in place to support those with special educational needs to help plan extra support for this small but important group. Good quality extended learning plans, very similar in concept to the individual education plans in place to support those with learning difficulties, are helping this group to achieve well. The needs of pupils who are potentially high attaining are the group whose needs are not as consistently well met. In the lessons observed by inspectors and when sampling books it is apparent that these pupils are not always set work that is sufficiently challenging, especially in mathematics where they often do a similar task to others of lower attainment. Additionally, teachers' assessment of this group of pupils is not sufficiently rigorous and senior leaders are not using tracking systems sharply enough to target their progress as assiduously as the other two groups referred to earlier.
- Pupils build good basic skills. They are active listeners and use confident reading skills to enjoy books and extend their appreciation of different genres. Writing skills show creativity with examples on display showing a wide range of styles being used for different purposes and audiences. Pupils put their numeracy skills to good use in practical subjects such as design and technology and science. A very good drive to improving provision in ICT has resulted in standards being shifted from average to well above average since the previous inspection. From a very early age, pupils are taught

basic computer skills and become familiar with the keyboard, using the mouse and a good range of programs in different subjects. This secure start enables pupils to maintain very good standards in ICT and build very well-honed skills in its application to support their work in all the subjects they study.

7. The school has set higher academic targets for 2005 than those set for 2004. This reflects very creditably on the drive for even better performance. There are strong indications that the current Year 6 pupils will meet the challenging targets set for their performance in the 2005 national tests.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils have **very good** attitudes and behave very well. Their overall personal and social development is **excellent**. Their attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very proud of their school and take responsibility for making it special.
- In response to excellent opportunities, and with exemplary role models, they become young people who are trustworthy, self-controlled and very good to know.
- Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and at play is always very good, friendly and helpful.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and try really hard with their tasks.
- Boys and girls are punctual for school and have good levels of attendance.

Commentary

8. The considerable success reported in this aspect reveals the inspirational and dedicated way in which the headteacher and his staff nurture and promote the development of the whole child. In response to the excellent provision made for their personal development, pupils learn to love school and all it stands for. As they grow older, they develop a mature sense of responsibility that shows they care about their own environment and the world in which they live.
9. Pupils have excellent opinions of the school and are particularly proud of the achievements they have made both academically and socially. They think the most special features are the friendly pupils, supportive teachers and the way all individuals are treated equally.
10. Attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils maintain a very good level of concentration and effort throughout the day, trying really hard with their work, and taking initiative in lessons particularly when they can do their own research. They take real pride in their achievements, and are supportive of their colleagues in class.
11. Behaviour throughout the school is very good and often exemplary. In class pupils are quiet, self-controlled and co-operative, maintaining very good order even when the pace or challenge slackens. Pupils say they feel very secure and that anti-social or aggressive behaviour does not occur. They cite the anti-baiting policy as a very successful reminder of what not to do. At work and at play pupils show they enjoy very good relationships with their peers and across all age ranges. Older pupils happily volunteer to help with younger pupils at lunch times or act as their *reading buddy*. The teaching assistants' *BAFTA awards* provide a much-valued reward for demonstrations of exceptional behaviour.

12. In all aspects of their personal development pupils respond extremely positively to the consistently excellent staff role models, inspirational motivation and quiet opportunities to make their own personal contributions. In subjects across the curriculum they are encouraged to explore their feelings and to express themselves in a variety of ways. For example, younger juniors reflected the mood created by different types of music in their paintings, and other pupils expressed in their writing how grateful they are for the wonders of creation. Even the very youngest Nursery children are encouraged to sense and express the wonder of nature as they experience first-hand the mystery of butterfly life-cycles, or the vulnerability of small furry pets. The school provides a multitude of opportunities for social development which culminate in the *Matters Group*, for which all classes have representatives. All pupils feel a sense of ownership for this group, and teachers say that pupils make sure they keep their promises! The members of the *Matters Group* are extremely effective ambassadors for their school. Other pupils, like those who run the early-morning healthy snacks tuck shop, contribute well to the social fabric of the school.
13. Pupils are very well prepared for life beyond school and learn how to make informed choices. They enjoy the input of many visitors from the world of work, and develop a sense of respect for law and order. They are enthusiastic supporters of charity fundraising, like the special day for Comic Relief, and support for child victims of crime. Multi-cultural opportunities like the study of different places of worship contribute to their understanding and respect for those of other faiths, and the school is very successful in its eradication of racism.
14. Attendance is good and is consistently above the level achieved by primary schools nationally. Pupils are punctual and registration sessions are efficient, ensuring lessons begin on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data: 2004/5	5.0	School data: 2004/5	0.0
National data: 2003/4	5.1	National data: 2003/4	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **very good**. The curriculum offers very worthwhile experiences for the pupils with **excellent** enrichment. Pupils receive **very good** care and support. The school has an **excellent** with parents and with other schools for the benefit of pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good**. Assessment is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Boys and girls of all ages and backgrounds are fully included in all learning opportunities.

- Teachers and support assistants work together as a high performing team and relationships are excellent.
- Teaching methods capture pupils' interest and 100 per cent application.
- The excellent use of ICT engages the pupils in active learning in all of the subjects they study. However, very occasionally this is at the expense of other key skills being developed to the full.
- The very good involvement of pupils and parents in homework is working to good advantage.
- The school gives excellent attention to setting high standards of behaviour and as a result classes are calm, happy and productive places of work.
- Assessment is good overall but there is room for improvement in target setting and pupil review.

Commentary

15. Teaching is better than at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher and senior leaders have set about selecting staff for their complementary skills and talents and for personal qualities that include a strong determination to seek sustained improvement and a genuine commitment to serving the pupils' best interests. Many staff are new to teaching and they have been mentored by existing staff who are very generous with their time and encouragement and who help induct colleagues into the *St Matthews'* way of doing things. A highly effective programme of staff development, the good emphasis given to performance management, and the upbeat attitudes of the staff to work together as a well-bonded team underpins the very good teaching. Staff are reflective about their practice and ready to spearhead new initiatives and are very willing to take on new challenges as they arise. Very supportive and respectful relationships stand out as an excellent feature of the school's Christian ethos and these underpin the pupils' very effective learning.
16. Teaching and learning were never less than satisfactory in the 53 lessons observed by inspectors and in most were of good or better quality. Pupils are at the heart of the school's provision and the *Can Do* culture promoted helps many overcome personal barriers to learning. Teachers and assistants are fully aware of inclusion issues and make excellent provision for promoting equality of opportunity. Pupils have very good capacity to work both independently and collaboratively because of the consistent approach to providing carefully structured learning experiences. Pupils told inspectors they find learning fun and enjoyable and can't wait to come to school. Parents told inspectors that they rate the teaching highly and pinpoint this as a key feature in helping the pupils achieve so much and in some cases against the odds.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (8%)	20 (39%)	21 (38%)	8 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

17. Teaching is very good overall in the Foundation Stage with some excellent features in the Nursery. Between them the teaching team in the early years have a good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well with confidence.

18. The teaching of basic skills is very good and pupils build their skills successfully. Teachers plan interesting lessons that motivate the pupils and sustain their interest very well. Pupils are taught how to use and apply their knowledge and understanding and there is clear purpose to their learning from a very early age. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and pupils know what is expected of them as a result. Most teachers make good use of the closing part of lessons to reinforce key points. There is more limited use of closing sessions to check up on what has been learnt and few engage the pupils in self-review. These features are missing links in the school's implementation of assessment for learning. In the excellent lessons, a key feature was the way in which teachers gave enough time for the pupils to consider their responses to questions, insisted on the correct subject-specific vocabulary in their answers, and asked follow on questions that deepened pupils' thinking skills. Some lessons use *talking partners* (pupils discussing a possible solution to a problem with a peer) as a strategy to involve pupils in sharing views and giving opinions. There is scope for this practice to be more widespread to aid pupils' speaking skills.
19. All teachers make very good use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' interest and engage them in the subject content right from the outset. The good emphasis given to visual and *hands-on* learning was seen to engage pupils for prolonged periods and to give them confidence to *have a go*. It is also proving very positive in widening the understanding of those pupils who previously had only a very narrow range of educational experiences on which to base their responses. ICT is used very effectively to support pupils' reading and writing skills. However, occasionally, the use of ICT is too early in the lesson and, although pupils' independent activities on the computers reinforce their knowledge and understanding, it cuts off opportunities for extended group discussions.
20. Parents of pupils with special educational needs praise the many qualities of teaching that are helping their children achieve so much, and are right to do so. A consistent approach to planning and ongoing evaluation and review is in place to support these pupils' next steps in learning. Highly effective teaching assistants give very good support to these pupils.
21. Assessment is good overall, especially for those with special educational needs or with gifts and talents. However, it is not sharp enough in supporting the learning of the higher attaining pupils and does not indicate how they can improve. The marking of work is regular and offers positive encouragement to the pupils. At its very best, marking draws on personal targets to support on-going learning and shows a clear way of improvement in child-friendly language. Target setting for higher attaining pupils does not do enough to help teachers plan consistently challenging work.

The curriculum

The **very good** curriculum provides a range of high quality experiences across subjects and meets statutory requirements. There is excellent enrichment from all the *added extras* beyond the school day. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum very well but space is very tight, especially for Year 6 pupils.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school is very inclusive; equality of access and opportunity is excellent for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and emotional needs to achieve very well.

- The curriculum is excellent in the Foundation Stage and very good for older pupils. Its strength lies in the promotion of basic skills, cross-curricular use of ICT and well-conceived topics.
- There is an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.
- Display is of the very best quality; it gives high status to pupils' work and provides an environment of which they can be justifiably proud.
- The space allocated to Year 6 is too small for the size and number of pupils as is the furniture in these classrooms.

Commentary

22. There has been good innovation to the curriculum since the time of the previous inspection. Topics are planned on a five-year cycle and cover the requirements of the National Curriculum as well as promoting basic skills. Planning shows good attention to meeting pupils' different needs and aptitudes with very good provision made for those pupils with special educational needs and emerging strengths in the provision being made for those with gifts and talents. The next step is to ensure that the potentially high attainers are provided with the curriculum they require to make the best rates of progress across the subject they study and in all years.
23. The curriculum is very successful in promoting pupils' positive enjoyment with outstanding enrichment that helps heighten pupils' physical, aesthetic and creative awareness. Pupils told inspectors they especially like the extra-curricular clubs and the chance to learn new things. Parents told inspectors that the use of ICT has grown and provision today is much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. ICT can be seen in pupils' work in all subjects and this is an excellent feature, as in for example, the use of ICT to help pupils in Year 4 look at predicting the weather forecast as part of their geography studies. The next step is for the global dimension of education to be further expanded as well as planning for the provision of a modern foreign language.
24. There is an excellent curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. The team of adults plan together very effectively to ensure that the children have a very wide range of practical activity that enables them to *learn by doing* and grow quickly into independent learners who take full advantage of the exciting experiences being provided. The quality of accommodation and resources is very good and they provide very positive enrichment to the children's learning.
25. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. As a result of the thoughtful planning by teachers and teaching assistants the curriculum is well matched to the pupils' specific needs. A very good feature is the way in which teachers share specific planning with teaching assistants who are highly effective in their work with these pupils. The targets set in the pupils' individual education plans are very precise, and well-focused reviews enable on-going interventions to be well made. The format of the individual education plans is very well conceived and enables parents and pupils to review progress and write comments alongside those of the teacher.
26. Excellent use is made of visits and visitors to extend pupils' experiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 benefit from the expertise of sports coaches in football. Local artists have shared their talents to help pupils in Years 1 and 2 to create stunning abstract expressions of imaginary buildings. Visits are equally well chosen to aid pupils' understanding of the topics they are studying. For example, a visit to the local church has helped infant children to understand about baptism, supported their superb silk screening of stained glass windows, and promoted a secure understanding of the importance of the church to the village and its historic and geographic setting. The school is involved in a range of external projects for

example, pupils made Fairground rides as part of a design and technology project organised by the Telford Museum of Enigenuity. The residential visit to Arthog was carefully planned to aid pupils' knowledge and understanding about history and geography as well as to develop personal and social skills whilst living away from home. Extra-curricular clubs include choir, recorders, netball, football, hockey, computer, homework, sewing, French, German, Spanish, cooking and *Fun Faith* and these add further value to the curricular experiences provided.

27. The school is very well staffed and resourced. Accommodation has significant strengths and some weaknesses. The strengths lie in its high standard of maintenance and very good presentation, which is stimulating and vibrant if rather cluttered. The quality of display is excellent in all areas of the school. It gives high status to pupils' work and provides an environment of which they can be justifiably proud. The chief weakness is the lack of space indoors and the layout of rooms. In particular the classroom used by Year 6 pupils is cramped for space, though groups working under supervision, outside the class, relieve the pressure to some extent. Additionally, the furniture in use in this year group is too small for the size of the pupils. The school has attached playing fields and good quality hard surface outdoor space that the *Matters* group is currently planning to improve. Resources are chosen carefully to add interest to lessons and are of very good quality in most subjects. ICT resources are excellent. The school has recently been successful in securing a bid to enable the building of a new Interactive Technology Centre in order to stay at the cutting edge of ICT developments.

Care, guidance and support

The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is **very good**. Pupils receive **very good** support, advice and guidance for their personal and academic development. There is **excellent** involvement of pupils in the daily life of the school by seeking and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places the welfare of its pupils first and ensures their health and safety when in its care.
- Pupils are encouraged to contribute to school life and they take on this responsibility with maturity and enthusiasm.
- There is very good support for pupils' individual needs, both pastoral and academic.
- Pupils enjoy excellent trusting and respectful relationships with adults in the school.
- There are excellent measures to ensure a happy and secure start when pupils first begin school.

Commentary

28. The very positive Christian ethos which pervades school life underpins all the elements of this area of its work. The care and welfare of pupils is of top priority and the procedures to ensure their health and safety are very good. Parents are confident that their children are in very good hands. The school's policy and practice for monitoring child protection are comprehensive and in line with local area guidelines.
29. There is a thorough package of information about starting school and staff availability to ensure that the youngest pupils have an excellent experience as they join the school. All pupils quickly build up extremely respectful and trusting relationships with the adults who care for them and this allows pupils' needs to be very well known and well catered for. As a result, pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and are able to achieve very well. All pupils receive very good support and guidance from their teachers, both for their personal development and their academic

progress. Pupils are very clear about what they need to do next to improve, although there are some occasions when the high achieving pupils could be given even more challenge to reach their potential. The very good expectation of pupils' behaviour and attitudes is very successfully promoted and supported by the teachers' use of rewards and only slight, discrete sanctions are necessary.

30. The pupils are very proud of the contributions they make to the smooth and pleasant running of the school day. They feel they have a genuine voice in affairs which affect them and are confident about how to raise suggestions or concerns. The *Matters Group* is an extremely effective pupil voice which the school gives full opportunity to share with class members. The group can list several ways in which it feels it has helped to improve school life, including the use of water bottles, a newly designed infant playground, and eating their packed lunches outside at picnic tables when the weather is fine. Other pupils have influenced healthy eating by running an early morning tuck shop for breakfast snacks and increased their understanding about how to manage a small enterprise.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **excellent** mutually supportive links with parents. Partnerships with the community and with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents hold the school in extremely high regard and fully support it in its work.
- The school ensures that parents are very well informed and feel completely involved in matters affecting their children.
- There are very good links with the parish church and the local community which help to enrich the pupils' learning experiences.
- Very good partnerships exist with local schools and colleges through which expertise can be shared, and pupils can experience broader horizons.

Commentary

31. The school has built on the strengths found at the last inspection and has now won the full support of all parents such that the impact of the home-school partnership is now excellent.
32. Parents are enthusiastic and fulsome in their praise of the school and the headteacher, and say that it is definitely a school of first choice. They particularly value the open-door policy and feel that the way in which concerns are dealt with is excellent.
33. The headteacher and staff have built up an atmosphere of trust based on very good information and a resolve to involve parents in all aspects of school life. Parents' views are sought regularly and they are welcomed into the partnership both in support of their own children's learning, and in group activities for the benefit of the whole school. One such activity is the annual grounds week in which parents, pupils and staff join forces to create and develop the outdoor environment for pupils to enjoy. The school recognises and supports the different needs of families and in return parents volunteer their time and energy for the school. Support for the well-organised homework programme is very good.

34. There are very good links with the parish church which provides an excellent resource both for spiritual development and to support the curriculum. Pupils enjoy trips to the church to give them inspiration for art and design, interesting shapes to investigate for mathematics, and a wealth of material for history, geography and science studies. Members of the local community, particularly from the police, judiciary and health services, contribute very well to the personal and social education programme and give the pupils introductions to good citizenship. The school also makes itself available for family learning courses, and has very good links with the Lifelong Learning Centre.
35. The school enjoys very good partnerships with a range of schools and colleges. Provision for information and communications technology has benefited considerably from the supportive links it enjoys with Thomas Telford Technology College, and it shares expertise through the Excellence cluster of schools. As an active partner with various colleges the school supports and benefits from trainee teachers. The children's university provides preparation for Year 6 pupils who are about to move on to a wide range of secondary schools with whom a co-ordinated transfer day is arranged.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **very good** overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management that result in a school in which the quality of education is consistently very good. The governance of the school is supportive and committed but not always sufficiently critically challenging.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's very good effectiveness.
- Excellent attention is given to equality of opportunity. Everyone has very high expectations and aspirations for the academic and personal development of each pupil.
- A very strong team ethos permeates the very good quality of education.
- Robust and rigorous management systems result in a very high level of consistency across the school.
- The school implements good improvement strategies which are reflected in its very positive performance however, the school improvement plan is an unwieldy document that is not sufficiently evaluative of what works to best effect and why.
- Governors and managers are rightly prudent in decisions relating to finance; the school gives very good value for money.

Commentary

36. Very good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's effectiveness and continue to be significant strengths of the school. The very caring headteacher provides excellent leadership and very good management through his clarity of vision, sense of purpose and very high aspirations. He gives very clear educational direction and enables others to play a full part in moving the school forward. The headteacher is very well supported by those with leadership responsibilities, the deputy and senior team play a key role in developing priorities and managing change. Subject leaders fulfil their leadership roles with confidence and enthusiasm. Excellent attention is given to equality of opportunity. The school knows its pupils as individuals and there are high expectations and aspirations for the academic and personal development of each

one. The strong team ethos is a major strength. The commitment and dedication of all staff is very apparent as they endeavour to respond to individual needs. Parents, too, recognise these special qualities as a major strength in the school. The school is highly effective in adding value to pupils' education and gives very good value for money.

37. Clear strategies are in place for on-going well-paced improvement. Careful analysis of test data is used very well to support improvement in teaching and learning. The very detailed school improvement plan prioritises raising standards and involves all stakeholders fully in its pursuit of excellence. However, it does not contain specific success criteria that school leaders can use to pinpoint the intended outcome and help focus specific monitoring and evaluation.
38. Robust and rigorous management systems result in a very high level of consistency of provision across the school. The headteacher acknowledges the talents and skills of his staff and harnesses these through excellent performance management which links closely to professional development. This is a rigorous and meticulous process which considers the school needs, individual needs and personal desires with appropriate training to meet these. As a result, all staff share a common desire – to see the children succeed – and work towards that goal together. However, there are inconsistencies in the system of target-setting, sharing and tracking between different subjects. It is working effectively in English, for example, but is less developed in some other subjects. In order to improve further, teachers' on-going assessment, tracking, target-setting and pupils' involvement in self-assessment all require strengthening.
39. The governors are supportive and are very committed to the school, working in successful partnership with headteacher and staff to promote a *Can do* ethos in which pupils can achieve both academically and socially. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Workforce reform deadlines are all on track. The next steps are for them to fully implement their subject link roles and play a more pivotal role in holding the school to account in terms of quality and standards. Governors and managers are prudent and careful in decisions relating to finance. Finances are well-managed and controlled. The school administrator plays a central role in ensuring very efficient day-to-day oversight of the budget. The balance carried forward of 5.4 per cent shown in the table below was as a result of the new Information Communication Technology and Resource centre falling behind schedule and therefore expenditure in that year was less than initially anticipated.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	76,8515
Total expenditure	76,2437
Expenditure per pupil	2,346

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	37,099
Balance carried forward to the next year	43,177

40. The school has made very good improvement to the quality of provision and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection in 1999. It is now a very effective school giving very good value to parents, who hold the school in very high regard. It is well-placed to achieve its ambition *to be the best* because its capacity for sustaining improvement is good.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good** with some outstanding features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall, resulting in very good achievement.
- The quality of curriculum planning and delivery is excellent and provides very positive enjoyment for the children.
- Leadership is highly effective and promotes whole team working in close partnership together, so that children's individual needs are fully met in both Nursery and Reception classes.
- Accommodation is good overall and the opportunities provided in the outside play area for both Nursery and Reception classes support highly effective opportunities for all areas of learning.

Commentary

41. There has been good overall improvement in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection, particularly in the outside space for physical skills and the range of computer equipment, including the acquisition of interactive white boards in both classes.
42. There are very good arrangements for children starting in Nursery and Reception classes and for those moving into Year 1. The Nursery and Reception classes effectively provide very stimulating activities for all areas of learning. Very effective use is made of the accommodation. Consistently very good and often excellent teaching in the Nursery, and very good team-work amongst all the practitioners, mean that children of all ages are very well supported in their learning. Children are achieving very well but, because of their very low baseline standards on entry, are not likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of Reception class with the exception of their physical development. The very high quality of the curriculum ensures that there is a very good balance between adult-focused activities and those children choose for themselves. The timetable is well structured and the contribution classroom assistants offer to planning is very positive. The classroom assistants also take a responsible role in leading groups and making observations of children's progress in consultation with the teachers. Lesson planning is very detailed and thorough and all practitioners are involved in careful observation and assessment of individual children's responses to their wide range of experiences. Systems for tracking and recording children's progress are very good. Foundation Stage practitioners ensure a consistency of approach with clearly defined targets in the books and marking, which is diagnostic, encouraging, supportive and advisory. The team of practitioners is very well led and there is a clear team approach successfully overcoming the potential barriers of having a separate building and shared outside activity area.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and the majority are likely to attain the goals expected for their age by the end of Reception.
- Well-established routines help children to learn about acceptable behaviour.
- Opportunities for choice enable children to develop very good levels of independence.
- The very caring and stimulating atmosphere enables children to establish good relationships.

Commentary

43. The Foundation Stage day is organised very well with regular routines established. Teaching and learning are very good and support the children's good achievement. There is a very good level of consistency of provision across the Foundation Stage. The day starts very warmly and very successfully with a '*meet and greet*' session where parents bring their children to the classroom, exchange courteous greetings and leave their children securely in the charge of highly competent and caring staff. It is clear from the children's faces that they are happy to be in school. They seek out their friends and are keen to start the day's work. This very good start to the day enables children to understand how to behave. They observe the very good modelling of the teachers, support staff and parents who display courtesy and a mutual concern for the well-being of their children. The very good quality of personal relationships between all adults and the children underpins the very effective learning that takes place in the Foundation Stage. Children are eager to please and enjoy relevant and interesting activities. They learn quickly how to share with each other and take turns. Stimulating activities are planned to give children choices to play with others and build up their social skills. Boys and girls play happily together and the teaching of good manners has high priority. Children learn how to be polite and helpful to each other and adults. Nevertheless few will fully meet the goals expected for personal, social and emotional development by the time they are ready to transfer to Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that children are making very good progress towards the Early Learning Goals from a baseline which is very much below that normally expected.
- Children are learning very well and the focus on sustaining attention to listening skills and to pre-reading and recalling stories are promoting a basis for independent writing.
- The way that the Foundation staff work and plan together to ensure similar learning opportunities for all children is very good.

Commentary

44. Children make very good progress in the Nursery class which very carefully and very securely establishes a firm foundation in which children make measurable progress towards their Early Learning Goals. The low baseline from which they start, together

with the very good achievement, mean that although the children move significantly towards attaining their Early Learning Goals, the majority will not have had time, despite their rapid progress, to achieve them before they leave the Reception year. In the Nursery, the children discuss pictures, sing songs, play games, and use the computers confidently to help practice their letter sounds. Such activities together with story times, with children following the words in the large –sized books used by the teachers, contributes well to develop their emerging reading skills. Staff work very hard to extend children’s speaking and communication skills through effective questioning and their own careful use of language and probing questioning. Vocabulary is a key focus of the children’s learning in the Nursery and the team of staff take every opportunity to promote purposeful talk. Children of Reception age experience well-organised group reading sessions. They read big books, practise their phonic skills and learn how to sequence events of a story. They develop positive attitudes towards their work in language and literacy. They enjoy handling books and some are beginning to confidently retell the story in its correct sequence and use whole sentences to explain the storyline. Some are beginning to write letters and words on their mini white boards. They persevere to form their letters correctly and gleam with pride when they receive a ‘well done’ or ‘that’s good’ from their teacher. Assessment information is used successfully to match work to individual needs. Children with special educational needs are given very good support, resulting in improved attainment.

Mathematical development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are achieving very well due to effective teaching.
- Singing mathematical songs has a very positive impact on the acquisition of number skills.
- All adults use every opportunity to encourage pupils to count.

Commentary

45. As a result of very good and often excellent teaching in numeracy, children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well, even so many will not achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Every opportunity is taken to encourage children to learn to count and build confident numeracy skills. Singing songs involving numbers are used frequently and effectively to make learning purposeful and fun. For example, in a lesson observed by inspectors the children sang, ‘How many are left when the first little man in a flying saucer’ flew away. The children enjoyed the singing and also learned very quickly that number bonds relate numbers to objects and the number gets progressively smaller. Children’s mathematical development is well advanced with teachers and support staff planning appropriate learning opportunities. Introductions to lessons and task-based learning sessions promote and extend mathematical vocabulary and provide opportunities for children to confidently place numbers in order of size. Visual representation is used well with effective use of the interactive white board which helps children develop a secure concept of size and order. Children in Reception class have homework books which extend their learning and provide opportunities for parents to help their children with such activities as sorting odd and even numbers, classifying heavy and light objects, labelling numbers to match objects and identifying and naming a range of

different shapes. Teachers and support staff encourage children's thinking skills by asking them to predict and hypothesise and in doing extend key skills well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good overall and children are achieving very well, although, they are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.
- Children make good progress with their acquisition of ICT skills.
- Structured play gives children a wide range of opportunities to experiment.
- Children have very good opportunities to enjoy and learn from role-play activities.

Commentary

46. Teaching is very good overall and children are achieving very well, although, they are unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Children in both Nursery and Reception classes have regularly planned opportunities to use computers. They make good progress in following verbal instructions and are beginning to use mouse skills with confident dexterity. Most click and drag the screen icons successfully. They choose which program they intend to use and confidently follow instructions, for example, to build and spray a car orange or blue, using the attached tools, such as drill, screwdriver and spray gun. The children are encouraged to look after their environment. They tend the plants in the outside area and recognise that they need water and sun to grow. They gain a sense of their local community through such activities as drawing the route to Grandma's house from school or when visiting St. Matthews Church to find out about baptism. The children are very aware of healthy eating and enjoying a good diet because of the school's good programme that also includes the children eating fresh fruit daily.

Physical development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and the majority are likely to attain the goals expected for their age.
- Very good use is made of outdoor areas, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- Provision in this area strongly supports the children's personal and social development.
- Good hand and eye co-ordination is encouraged in a variety of activities.

Commentary

47. The very good use of various facilities indoor and outdoor enables the children to achieve well and by the end of Reception year most will attain the levels expected for children of this age and some above. They share equipment with others and learn how to use space effectively. They use the wheeled vehicles with increasing control and

sustained effort and are careful to stay within the road markings. At the end of sessions, children park in the clearly marked bays. In both Nursery and Reception, a good range of activities helps children to develop their skills with small cutting tools, scissors, brushes, pencils and crayons. Children move around the playground with control and behave very well. The use of outdoor areas for all ages has a positive impact on children's learning and learning is very good, as a result of innovative and creative teaching.

Creative development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well as a result of the effective teaching in both Nursery and Reception classes.
- There is a good focus on music and art.
- Children's work is valued and attractively displayed.

Commentary

48. Children make very good progress in this area so that most attain the levels expected for their age by the time they leave Reception. In the Nursery there is a concentrated focus on music. It has a sufficient impact on raising children's attainment in the subject as well as promoting collaborative learning and developing their social skills. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Children start on cue and sing in tune. They paint colourful pictures and make models out of junk materials. Their paintings are carefully displayed and well presented indicating the value teachers place on the efforts of the children. Effective teaching means that children learn specific skills, such as painting and cutting. Through role-play areas, teachers stimulate imagination by creating real life experiences where children can develop story lines and play together. The focus on imaginary play is well developed and the singing contributes to the very harmonious community which exists in the Foundation Stage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 overall. Pupils of different capabilities achieve very well as a result of very good quality teaching.
- Key skills of reading and writing are consistently well promoted. However, there are insufficient opportunities to extend pupils' speaking skills.
- Handwriting and presentation skills are inconsistent.
- Very good relationships, behaviour and attitudes to learning enable pupils to learn successfully.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, helping them to build good literacy skills over their time in school.
- The very good curriculum provides very good opportunities for enrichment.
- Cross-curricular links to other subjects, such as art and design and history, are a strength. The use of ICT to support pupils' work in English is excellent.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

COMMENTARY

49. Standards in English are better than at the time of the previous inspection. The standards reached by pupils in Year 2 in the 2004 national tests were below average in reading and writing. However, standards were well above those seen in similar schools. In the 2004 national tests, pupils in Year 6 reached average standards in English and they achieved very good results when compared with those seen in similar schools. Current standards are average in Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Throughout the school pupils achieve very well in English. The subject has many strengths and is well-placed to improve further.
50. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers but the weakest aspect of English is the development of speaking skills. Many pupils enter school with levels of speech and communication well below the expected level. By the time they leave the school speaking skills are average, although many higher attaining pupils speak at length and engage in extended conversations. The majority of pupils do not use a wide variety of complex vocabulary with confidence. In discussions, pupils listen well to adults and each other but would benefit from better questioning to extend ideas and widen their command of English. More planned opportunities for drama and 'hot-seating' activities would increase pupils' confidence in speaking skills.
51. Standards in reading are average across the school. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read with increasing fluency and expression. They have a good range of strategies to help them read unknown words. Average readers are able to use the text to predict and are developing fluency and confidence in their reading ability. Reading skills are built upon successfully in the junior classes. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of texts, fiction and non-fiction, within literacy lessons. All pupils read regularly at home. Reading diaries are regularly maintained and include parents' and teachers' comments. However, they lack diagnostic comments to help pupils to know how to improve.

52. Standards in writing are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Writing is the strongest aspect of English. In Years 1 and 2 writing is organised, imaginative and clear. Pupils demonstrate an increasing use of adjectives and connectives to enhance writing and sentences are more extended. For example one pupil wrote, 'Shining among the wet pebbles ... was an old bottle, chipped and covered with seaweed'. They use an increasing range of punctuation for effect. Writing is used effectively in other subjects including history, such as when writing a diary account in the first person, waking up in Pudding Lane to the Great Fire of London. Pupils write for a good range of purposes and audiences, including letters, poems, stories, instructions, interviews and dictionary skills. Higher attainers and average pupils are developing a cursive writing style but letter formation for some lower attainers is not yet secure. In Year 6 higher attainers use powerful descriptions and more complex sentences. They present well balanced arguments using persuasive language with good understanding. The range of writing is further extended with evidence of journals, note-taking, glossaries and autobiographies. Spelling for higher attainers and average pupils is mostly accurate. Pupils in Year 6 are familiar with a range of poetry forms. They use personification effectively; for example one pupil wrote, 'The angry sea, punching the rocks, rages and roars at the fish.' Dictionary skills are well developed and contribute to the good levels of independence shown by pupils. Pupils use similes and metaphors for effect, such as when writing about the journey of a balloon: '... the mass of colour, up and down, like a fisherman's boat on the sea'. Higher attainers present work neatly with a good cursive style, but handwriting and presentation skills are not always as good as they could be. There are good opportunities for pupils to write at length. The excellent provision and use of ICT to support English is contributing very effectively to the good standards being achieved both in writing and in ICT. Teachers and pupils use ICT, including interactive whiteboards, with skill and confidence.
53. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teachers provide very good role models for pupils. They challenge pupils well because they have high expectations and aspirations for every pupil. This is evident in the good use of target-setting in English books and linked well to the marking of pupils' work. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and specific targets are set for them within an extended learning plan. All pupils are highly motivated by interesting and well-matched tasks. As a result they behave very well, have very good attitudes to learning and work with very good application. Pupils enjoy very good relationships with their teachers, other adults and each other, which helps them to learn successfully. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported. The very good provision for these pupils enables them to achieve as well as their peers. Attention to inclusion is excellent. Another factor contributing to pupils' good achievement is the very good use of homework, well supported by parents, and valued by teachers through regular marking. Assessment and its use is good; however, pupils are not yet sufficiently involved in self-assessment which would increase their awareness of their own learning and areas in which they could improve.
54. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader is knowledgeable and has a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in English. The very good curriculum offered to pupils is richly enhanced through theatre visits, visitors to school and the many cross-curricular links with other subjects, particularly art, history and ICT.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Overall, pupils use their literacy skills well to support work in other subjects. They listen very attentively in lessons, but speaking skills are the weakest aspects of English and would benefit from better questioning in all subjects and increased opportunities for speaking at length, such as in feedback during plenary sessions. Pupils competence in reading and their ability to research, retrieve and collate information from a range of sources are used well in many subjects. The excellent use of ICT for research skills supports this learning very well. Writing skills are used very effectively in subjects such as history, science and religious education but less effectively in mathematics.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils throughout the school in mathematics is very good.
- There has been good improvement in learning in mathematics since the last inspection.
- The use of ICT to help learning in the subject is very good.
- Teaching and learning are very good.
- Assessment and target setting systems are of good quality, but the use of data is not sufficiently focussed on ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential.
- The quality of leadership and management is good.
- Numeracy skills are being well developed across the curriculum, especially through the use of ICT.

Commentary

56. In the national tests in 2004, standards in mathematics were above average at the end of Year 2 and very high when compared to pupils' standards in similar schools. This inspection finds that these standards have been maintained in the current year. This shows that the achievement of these pupils is very good as they come into school with well below average mathematical skills. This is a considerable improvement on the findings of the last inspection. In 2004 national tests, Year 6 pupils were attaining average standards against schools nationally, and well above average standards when compared to similar schools. This has been maintained in the current Year 6. The achievement of pupils is also very good as their standards when in Year 2 in 2001 were well below average. This is also good improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection. The school does particularly well in helping lower attainers to reach standards expected for their age, although in both Year 2 and Year 6 the school finds it more difficult to enable its higher attainers to reach above average standards. A major factor in the successful achievement of pupils in mathematics is the very good and effective use of ICT in lessons throughout the school which is another considerable improvement since the last inspection.
57. Teaching and learning are very good. This is because teachers have very good subject knowledge, are consistently challenging to almost all pupils and use the very good resources, especially computers, very effectively to enhance learning. Teaching assistants also make a very good contribution to the learning of pupils, especially those with special educational needs who also achieve very well. Teachers work closely with pupils on self-evaluation and setting individual targets. Pupils usually have

a good understanding of what they need to do to improve, but some younger pupils could not read or understand the written targets in their books. However, teachers' marking is generally accurate and purposeful. Teachers' use of assessment is good. Procedures are good, and teacher assessment during lessons is sharp and enables pupils to move on quickly with their learning. Just occasionally, data on pupil progress is not interpreted early enough to identify pupils who may not be making the progress they should. Consequently a few pupils who could become higher attainers do not quite reach the levels of which they may be capable. In discussion, many pupils said how much they enjoyed maths, especially through their often independent work on computers, and their attitudes in lessons are always good or better than good. The learning in mathematics makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, especially through cooperation and independence.

58. A further reason for the consistently good teaching and learning in mathematics is the good quality of the leadership and management of the subject leader. He has held the post for a number of years, is a good teaching role model in the subject and has a good understanding of the learning in mathematics throughout the school. He has been especially effective in ensuring that boys make good progress in their learning, by the encouragement to staff to use ICT as a teaching aid. He has also, with the whole-hearted support of the headteacher, ensured that very good resources for learning are available throughout the whole school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The basic skills of numeracy are being well developed throughout the school. Teachers take every opportunity to enhance numeracy skills, for example through data handling in geography and science, and the links between ICT and numeracy are extremely well embedded across the whole curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been an improving trend in national test results for a number of years.
- Current standards are above average.
- Achievement is very good overall.
- Science is integrated very effectively with other subjects of the curriculum particularly ICT.
- Levels of challenge should be more carefully matched to pupils' capabilities in Years 3 and 4 with extended opportunities for pupils' oral responses built into lesson planning.
- The subject leader has made a very positive impact on raising standards through analysing data and evaluating teaching and learning in science throughout the school.

Commentary

60. There has been an improving trend in national test results for a number of years. The 2004 national test results showed that standards were well above average in science at the end of Year 6. Current standards are above average at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school's capacity for sustaining positive performance in science is good.

61. Achievement is very good overall as a result of very good teaching in most year groups. The comprehensive sample of pupils' work seen shows a picture of consistent improvement year on year with particularly high levels of achievement during Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' work during these two years shows a rapid rate of progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other pupils as they are given well-matched tasks and good support. The sample of work evaluated by inspectors shows a good coverage of the science curriculum with a developing picture of investigative work being recorded independently by pupils and good links to other areas of the curriculum. For example, good opportunities for extended writing were seen in a piece of Year 2 science work entitled *Learning about Edward Jenner*.
62. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in science is consistently very good and in some classes the practice is excellent and provides an exemplary model. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good. However the use of closed questioning in some classes caps higher attaining pupils' ability to develop reasoning and follow their own lines of scientific enquiry. Teachers' planning is very good, being thorough and based on appropriate learning objectives which are consistently shared with pupils at the start of a lesson. However, in some classes work is not matched as carefully as it might be to pupils' capabilities, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Marking of pupils' work consistently provides developmental comments and assessment data is regularly recorded and used to set clear targets to identify the next steps in learning. Teachers manage their classes very well and pupils focus very well on their tasks, form very good relationships and overall work together very effectively. Learning partnerships between pupils are used consistently well and as a result pupils' learning is secured and extended through discussion and reflection. Overall opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate are planned thoughtfully and assist the very secure development of skills.
63. Curriculum provision in the subject is very good and is enhanced by links to other areas of the curriculum, particularly ICT, by whole school projects such as *Health and Well Being* and *Recycling* and by the regular setting of homework which encourages pupils to be independent learners and to continue their learning at home.
64. The subject is very well led and managed and there has been a very good level of improvement since the last inspection. The analysis of test results and assessment data is used very effectively to regularly set group targets and to identify areas for improvement. The process forms part of a whole school system of data analysis, target setting and tracking pupil progress which is impacting positively on the raising of standards and achievement. So far the subject leader has not given sufficient attention to monitoring the relative rates of pupils' progress in science throughout the school and this is a missed opportunity to draw on the evidence gained to ensure high rates of progress are achieved in all year groups and especially for those capable of high attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good** with some examples of excellent practice.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made huge strides forward in recent years in terms of resources, the quality of teaching and learning and in particular the way that ICT has been embedded across the curriculum.
- Current standards are well above average throughout the school.
- Achievement is very good overall and pupils consistently make very good progress across all year groups.
- Pupils use ICT as a natural tool to support themselves as independent learners.
- The subject leader has made a very positive impact on the use of improved resources, in terms of both hardware and software applications, to raising standards in ICT throughout the school.

Commentary

65. ICT provision has continued to improve since the last inspection and was recently awarded the *Naace Mark* for the high quality of its provision in terms of resources, teaching knowledge and skills, and curriculum support. The school has created a well-equipped ICT suite for the focused learning of skills and knowledge in the subject. Provision has been further enhanced by the introduction of interactive whiteboards in all classrooms and a large number of laptops which is a further indication of the school's pursuit of very good quality provision.
66. Standards are well above average throughout the school and pupils achieve very well. Pupils enjoy ICT and demonstrate confidence, enjoyment and an enthusiasm for learning. The skills of individual pupils are building very successfully. Achievement is very good overall as a result of very good teaching in most year groups and some outstanding practice in some classes, building on the flying start that pupils in the Foundation Stage are given in ICT. Through observation of lessons and of pupils' work on display throughout the school and through the scrutiny of exemplars of pupils' work in each year group and pupils' ability to demonstrate the content of their own individual portfolios, a consistent picture of high levels of achievement can be seen. This results in very good standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' work during these two years shows an even higher rate of progress with some excellent examples of ICT being used very effectively across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at least as well as other pupils. The sample of work evaluated by inspectors shows a very good coverage of the ICT curriculum for example, in addition to traditional word processing, data handling and modelling software, pupils experience good opportunities from an early age to use control technology. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are introduced to computer aided design packages and the use of animation and digital video editing using Windows Movie Maker. Their work in these areas is of high quality.
67. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum is consistently very good. There is a clear policy to use ICT as a tool for learning in all areas of the curriculum. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good and results in the pupils building a high level of skill and expertise in the subjects. The setting of more open-ended challenges would result in even better achievement, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Teachers' planning is very good, being thorough and based on appropriate learning objectives which are consistently shared with pupils at the start of a lesson. Assessment is still in a developmental stage and given the current capabilities and confidence of pupils, the subject leader is working towards a tool to aid skills development and target the next steps in individual learning. Teachers manage the resources for ICT in their classes very well and pupils are highly

motivated to concentrate very well on their tasks, forming very good relationships and overall working both independently and with peer partners very effectively.

68. The subject is very well managed and the ICT subject leader gives inspirational leadership and encouragement to others, resulting in the subject making huge strides forward in recent years. The next step is for the subject leader is firstly to secure the assessment processes, including pupils' self-assessment and the use of skills ladders, to more accurately inform the school's existing target setting arrangements; and secondly to move the school onto the national and international stage by seeking out appropriate networks for the sharing and dissemination of good practice.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The integration of ICT with other areas of the curriculum, particularly English, mathematics, science, art and design and design and technology, is exemplary and constitutes outstanding practice. These should be shared, along with other dimensions of ICT practice, with other schools which are also at the leading edge of ICT not only locally, but also nationally and internationally, as a focus for development and even further improvement.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

This subject is to be inspected separately under section 23 of the School Inspections Act 1996.

History and geography

70. History and geography were not a focus for inspection. No judgement is made about provision as these subjects were only sampled. Nevertheless, scrutiny of work in books, the observation of three lessons and displays on walls suggest that attainment is in line with national expectations in both subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school is now teaching both subjects through themes such as the development of the local area, for example the mines, over time. The theme is presented to all age groups who develop their skills and knowledge at appropriate levels for their ages and abilities. In lessons seen in Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils learned about the development of Donnington Wood and the history and present use of the Granville Country Park. A feature of the learning is the exceptional use by pupils of ICT to develop their research skills, and increase their factual knowledge. Pupils also work very well in pairs and small groups, help each other and really enjoy their practical learning. They especially relish the residential trip to Arthog where adventure activities are linked to these two subjects. Geography and history have been given a higher profile in the curriculum since the last inspection and more attention is being given to the improvement of the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills of the pupils. Pupils are also given regular opportunities to assess their own learning. The work of a range of non-core subjects completed in related studies books in random order makes it very difficult for the quality of geography and history and pupils' progress to be assessed easily.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

71. No judgement is made about provision as this subject was only sampled. Pupils' work indicates that standards in art are well above average. Pupils receive a wide range of worthwhile experiences through a very good curriculum with excellent opportunities for enrichment. Art and design is used very effectively across the curriculum to support learning in other subjects. In religious education, for example, displays feature Noah's Ark and the Creation; Year 2 experiment with colours to create Joseph's fabric patchwork coat; while Years 4 and 5 consider what Jesus looked like and create press prints and painted images of His face. Stained glass windows, paintings and sketches of different places of worship and silk paintings to show the beauty of the Creation are other examples of art through religious education. Pupils work in two and three dimensions using a variety of modelling media. There is very good attention to the work of an artist such as an abstract expressionist in Years 1 and 2 and exciting collaborative artwork based on Monet's Garden and The Japanese Bridge, whilst Years 5 and 6 focus on the artist Lowry and the industrial era and Year 6 on Henry Moore. The use of ICT in art and design is a strength. However, the recording of art within the related studies books as opposed to sketchbooks limits opportunities for experimenting with media and techniques. It does not allow the subject leader to track for continuity and progression easily. Art and design contributes very effectively to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, including multicultural awareness. West African painting in Years 1 and 2 and intricate Sari patterns created in Years 5 and 6 are very good examples of this. Through excellent standards of display, teachers enhance the learning environment, value pupils' efforts and celebrate their success. The subject is very well led and managed with enthusiasm and commitment. Very good resources, including a wide range of visits and visitors, enhance learning opportunities well.

Design and technology

72. This subject was sampled during the inspection but not in sufficient detail to provide a judgement on provision. From the evidence seen from a scrutiny of the pupils' past work, standards are above average in design and technology at the end of Years 2 and 6.
73. Pupils have access to a broad range of worthwhile experiences within the subject including food technology and control and links are made with other subjects wherever possible. For example, in a Year 5/6 project linked the design of a fairground with ICT, science and mathematics where flow diagrams were used to describe a sequence of movements which were then carried out to produce a moving fairground. Good cross-curricular links support learning in design and technology. For example, in the infants classes, pupils have made hand-bells from ceramic pots using beads and pipe-cleaners to decorate the finished article. In Year 4, super quality lighthouses have been constructed with flashing beacons operated by a simple electrical circuit that pupils learned how to make in science. Skills in modelling using construction sets are developed from Year 1 through to Year 6 and evidence shows well-designed, made and evaluated artefacts usually linked using ICT applications such as *Learn and Go* and *Flow-go* software for extending pupils' programming and control skills.
74. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader makes the most of links with ICT to develop and improve design technology but has yet to seek

opportunities to further improve standards through more open-ended challenges particularly for the high attaining pupils.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables pupils to develop their knowledge of music, high quality singing and confident performing.
- Teachers focus effectively on skills development.
- The subject is very effectively organised, successfully managed and very well led.

Commentary

75. Strengths in the subject have been sustained since the time of the previous inspection. Standards in music are well above average overall. All pupils in the school participate and enjoy music. Experiences in music not only provide opportunities for pupils to explore the richness and diversity of different music but also enable them to express their passion, feeling and sensitivity to what they hear. Opportunities for listening, appraising and performance are provided in weekly lessons and during daily assembly.
76. Teaching and learning are very good with lessons being carefully prepared to give pupils many opportunities to enjoy all aspects of music. Pupils in a lesson in Year 5 displayed focused concentration when following a graphic score which they had composed as a class and performed with orchestral precision. As pupils progress through the school, they learn to distinguish between rhythm and pitch and develop their skills of interpreting music. From inspectors' observations of singing practice across the full age range, it is clear that pupils display confidence in their approach to music. They are comfortable and enthusiastic when asked to perform in small or large groups, but above all the key word is enjoyment. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are developing their skills of interpretation, composing and performing well. Visits of string and woodwind groups to the school enhance the statutory curriculum. The school does not however provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn to play different instruments but has identified this area as an issue to be addressed.
77. The subject is very effectively organised and managed and maintains a high status. The subject leader has provided teachers with quality 'in service' training in compositional skills which gives them confidence in teaching this aspect of music. The headteacher and subject leader are passionate in their belief that music is an important contributory element in supporting the spirituality within the school as a community. Music is a way of life with high numbers in the school choir. Pupils participate in musical events and concerts and this confirms the enjoyment, happiness and pleasure they receive from sharing celebrations together.

Physical education

78. No judgement is made about provision as this subject was only sampled. In the two lessons and one football club session observed during the inspection, standards were broadly average. However, swimming records indicate that standards are above average in swimming in Year 6. Only two pupils cannot swim in Years 5 and 6, which indicates good teaching by those who take responsibility for the teaching of the pupils at Telford Leisure Centre. A very well presented portfolio of evidence shows the progression of learning in dance throughout the school. Well-attended sports clubs, sometimes with outside coaches, and competition with other schools make a positive contribution to the excellent enrichment of the curriculum. The Football Charter Standard in 2003 reflects the quality of this work. The school also links physical education effectively with its work towards the *Healthy School* award, and encourages very good personal development through its stress on the *Can do* philosophy and emphasis on team spirit and camaraderie. Self-assessment by pupils is also encouraged, with the result that pupils have very good attitudes to physical education and sport. Resources for learning, particularly the outdoor facilities, are very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. No judgement is made about provision in personal, social, health education and citizenship (PSHCE) as it was only sampled.
80. The school gives excellent attention to the development of the whole child. Preparation for life outside school is fundamental to the school's philosophy and is woven throughout the PSHCE curriculum, as well as having discrete teaching time. The programme is extremely well managed and looks to outside specialists to add expertise and a 'real world' feel to many of its aspects. For example, health visitors talk to infant children, a magistrate works with pupils in Years 4 and 5 on aspects of citizenship, and the police run the *STAR programme* about drugs awareness in Year 6. Sex and relationships education is also provided by the school nurse with contributions on morals and emotions from the local clergy.
81. A current focus for PSHCE is the drive for a Healthy Schools award. An audit has revealed that much of the necessary work is already in place and the pupils are well aware of the need to avoid unhealthy snacks, to eat more fruit and vegetables, and to exercise well. The staff and pupils are justifiably proud of their anti-baiting charter which has provided a focus to ensure that pupils work and play secure in the knowledge that they will be free from harassment or threat. The *Matters Group* are currently spearheading the re-design of the school grounds to add interest such as a sensory garden and to bring in equipment to aid positive play.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	1

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