

INSPECTION REPORT

THE WILLIAM DE YAXLEY CE AIDED JUNIOR SCHOOL

Yaxley, Peterborough

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110849

Headteacher: Mr Graham Cooper

Lead inspector: Raymond Jardine

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 January 2005

Inspection number: 268102

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	234
School address:	Landsdowne Road Yaxley Peterborough
Postcode:	PE7 3JL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Nigel Green
Date of previous inspection:	21 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

William de Yaxley Junior is a voluntary aided Church of England school that serves the village of Yaxley on the outskirts of Peterborough. The school is about average in size. Its roll has fallen over the past five years from 310 pupils then to 234 pupils at present, mainly due to reduced numbers of children in the locality. There are eight classes; two in each year group. Almost all pupils are of white UK origin but there are small numbers of pupils of mixed Asian and European backgrounds. Only nine pupils have English as an additional language; none are at an early stage of learning English. The socio-economic backgrounds of most pupils' families are broadly average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving other than at the usual times is low. There are 39 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is about average. Fifteen of them receive additional support from outside agencies; two have statements of special educational need. Their needs include moderate and severe learning and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some have autistic tendencies. Pupils' attainment on entry from the nearby infant school is typically below average, particularly that of the current Year 6, and it is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school gained Healthy Schools Award in 2000.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7428	Raymond Jardine	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology English as an additional language
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22831	Clive Lewis	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Physical education
17522	Nigel Stiles	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

William de Yaxley is a fairly effective school that provides satisfactory value for money. The school's warm and caring ethos strongly promotes very good attitudes amongst its pupils; they enjoy school and work hard. The teaching is satisfactory; much of it is good and consequently pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory and good in some subjects. Leadership and management are satisfactory; the headteacher provides good leadership.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English and information and communication technology (ICT) but insufficient emphasis is given to mathematical problem solving and scientific enquiry skills.
- Pupils are well cared for and supported. They have very positive attitudes and enjoy good relationships with their peers and adults and as a result, behaviour is good.
- Systems for self-review are not yet embedded in the school's practice, although these are improving considerably. The role of subject co-ordinators in particular is not developed enough.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. They are supported well in class and through small group work and make good progress as a result.
- The new headteacher provides strong leadership and direction for the school focused on improving standards in key subjects, and is supported well by the deputy.
- The curriculum is enriched through residential visits and a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended.

Since the last inspection, standards declined in some subjects because systems for monitoring the school's performance have not improved enough compared with other schools. Consequently, overall improvement has been insufficient. However, during the past year, potentially very robust systems have been implemented, involving all the staff and governors as a result of the new headteacher's prompt actions. These are already having a positive impact on teaching and pupils' standards. The use of ICT in particular is much improved and standards in the subject are higher.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall achievement is satisfactory and it is good in English and ICT. In 2004, standards in English were in line with those nationally but in both mathematics and science, they were below. The pattern is the same when compared with similar schools. Pupils' overall achievement, taking account of their attainment on entry, was about average compared with other schools and was lower than in previous years. The current Year 6 group was considerably below average on entry to Year 3. Standards seen in Year 6 currently are about average in English and pupils are achieving well. Standards in mathematics are below average; there is too little emphasis on mathematical problem solving. In science, overall standards are also below average. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science principles are good but their investigation skills are not developed enough. In both subjects, pupils' overall achievements are satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in acquiring ICT skills and competence and attain about average standards. They make effective use

of the school's good ICT facilities to apply their skills well across subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the effective support they receive from well trained learning support assistants.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Consequently, pupils have very positive attitudes and enjoy school. Relationships are very good and pupils behave well. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is satisfactory.

Teaching quality is satisfactory. Much of the teaching is good but there are inconsistencies in teaching methods across the school. The teaching of English and ICT are both good. Most teaching is stimulating and engages pupils in learning for themselves. Most lessons are well structured to achieve a good balance of whole class teaching and individual or group work. Relationships are good and pupils managed well. A minority of less effective lessons are unimaginative and do not involve pupils in discussion and independent work enough. Most lessons are adapted well for pupils of different abilities, particularly those with special educational needs, who are supported and guided effectively by well trained learning support assistants. Assessment in English and mathematics is good but it is not so systematic in other subjects. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched well through residential visits and a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended. The accommodation is good but some resources such as the library are limited. Pupils are well cared for and much is done to seek and act on their views. Partnerships with parents are good and improving.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The headteacher provides good leadership and direction, strongly focused on raising standards and encouraging closer teamwork and more delegation of responsibility throughout the school. The leadership of other staff is satisfactory. Much is being done to make self review and improvement integral to the school's work but the role of subject co-ordinators is not yet developed enough. Governance is good. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and are increasingly involved in shaping the school's direction and challenging its work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school's work in key areas. They report that their children like school, staff are approachable and encouraging. Some would like better information about how their children are progressing and how they can help them and inspectors agree. The school is working on improving both these aspects. Pupils are also very satisfied; most say they work hard and enjoy school but some find lessons are not always interesting and fun.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the school's potentially good systems for monitoring and reviewing its performance become embedded into its practice, especially involving subject co-ordinators.
- Place more emphasis on problem solving and so raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve the teaching of scientific enquiry skills to raise standards in science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in Year 6 in English are broadly average but they are below in mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in English and in information and communication technology (ICT).
- While overall achievement in mathematics is satisfactory, problem solving is not emphasised enough, especially amongst more able pupils.
- Pupils acquire a good grasp of scientific facts and principles but their scientific enquiry skills are not as good because such skills are not taught systematically.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; they are supported well in lessons and through targeted small group work in literacy and numeracy.
- The decline in standards evident in the 2004 results is being reversed as a result of current actions being taken.

Commentary

1. In 2004, standards in Year 6 national tests were about the national average in English but below it in both mathematics and science. In relation to schools whose pupils attained similarly in Year 2, the comparisons were the same. A good proportion achieved the higher Level 5 in English but the proportion at this level in mathematics and science was about average. The school exceeded its 2004 target for English but missed it for mathematics. Overall, the results represent a dip compared to the previous year when standards were above the national average in all these subjects. Overall measures of value added by Year 6 have typically been good or very good in previous years but they were about average in 2004 compared to similar schools and all schools nationally. The school has since worked closely with local education authority advisers to analyse these results and put in place an action plan to address the decline in standards evident in 2004. Its analysis of the 2004 results showed underachievement on the part of some girls and in mathematics in particular.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.9 (27.9)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.5 (27.7)	27.0 (26.8)
science	28.0 (29.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The current Year 6 was considerably below average on entry to the school in Year 3 and the proportion with special educational needs is higher within this cohort than in other year groups. Inspection findings show that standards in English are broadly average and most pupils are achieving well. The subject is well led, teachers are knowledgeable and assessment is used well to identify pupils who would benefit from additional literacy support. In mathematics, standards in Year 6 are below average. Taking account of pupils' prior attainment, their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' competence in mathematics is sound because they are taught basic skills well and practise them to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. But there is too little emphasis placed on applying mathematics to solve problems with pupils devising their own strategies for a solution. More able pupils are not

challenged enough in this respect. There is no evidence of different achievement amongst boys and girls seen during the inspection. The school has identified improving pupils' numeracy in particular as a current priority and actions are being taken with support from local education authority consultants to improve standards within their current action plan.

3. Science standards are also below average overall. Overall achievement in the subject is satisfactory. Most pupils acquire a good grasp of scientific facts and principles by Year 6 with some more able pupils exceeding the expected level in this respect, but their scientific enquiry skills are not as good. Too little emphasis is placed on teaching scientific enquiry in the curriculum and these skills are not taught systematically as pupils move through the school. The more able pupils in particular are not achieving as well as they could in these skills. This weakness has been identified by the new science co-ordinator, who is focusing attention on improving scientific enquiry skills through training and support.
4. Pupils achieve well and acquire good basic skills in most aspects of information and communication technology and they apply them well within most subjects. Overall standards are about average but they are above in some elements of the subject such as communicating information. Their standards have improved considerably in the past two years as a result of the school's major investment in a new ICT suite and the effective training and guidance provided by the subject's co-ordinator, who is providing good leadership and direction for the subject. Humanities and creative, aesthetic practical and physical subjects were sampled. Standards were broadly in line with the expected levels for the year groups seen in geography and history, art and design and in music, design and technology and physical education.
5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the objectives in their education plans. These are clear and specific and use effectively to guide the support given and in reviews. Learning support assistants are well trained and provide good support to these pupils, both within lessons and through targeted small group sessions in literacy and numeracy. Those few pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language are fully integrated into school life and achieve as well as their peers.
6. The decline in standards evident in 2004 was most likely the result of inconsistent teaching methods across the school; the school's own evaluation suggests this was a factor and is consistent with inspection findings. Its self-evaluation procedures and practices had not developed as well as in other schools and few staff outside the senior management team were involved in monitoring the school's provision and standards. The new headteacher, appointed last year, is providing strong leadership and direction in his actions to put in place robust systems for monitoring and self-review that involves all staff. These systems are not yet fully embedded in the school's practice but are already showing signs of success in reversing the decline of 2004.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school's warm and caring ethos strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and consequently, their attitudes to school and to learning are very good. Pupils behave well and attendance levels are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and good behaviour in the classroom help them in their achievement.
- The caring ethos of the school and the very good example set by the staff contribute to the very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
- The spiritual, social and moral aspects of the pupils' development are fostered very well, but more could be done to encourage an appreciation of cultural diversity.

- Pupils are willing to show initiative and take responsibility and are given many opportunities to do so.
- Pupils' attendance levels and punctuality are good.

Commentary

7. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and collaborate very well with other children. They listen attentively, undertake tasks enthusiastically and are keen to answer questions. This is particularly noticeable when teachers plan lessons that pupils find interesting and set appropriately challenging tasks that ensure that pupils of all level of attainment have the opportunity to achieve well. Pupils enjoy school and play a full part in school life and the range of activities offered. Attendance levels have been above average for the last two years and pupils are punctual to school. Parents are made aware of the school's expectations of them when their children are absent and most work well with the school to promote good attendance. However, unauthorised absence is above average due a very small minority being absent despite the school's efforts to obtain reasons. The school is working with education welfare officers to reduce this figure.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.0	School data	0.6
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Standards of behaviour are good in classrooms and around the school. All pupils discuss and agree class rules. They are fully aware of the high standards expected and insisted upon by all staff. The caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. The pupils play harmoniously together at playtimes and no signs of aggressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils confirmed that bullying occurs very rarely, and that any instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and efficiently. The recent introduction of playground games and equipment has had a significant impact on the standards of behaviour at playtimes. Racial harmony is promoted well. There was just one temporary exclusion during the past year which was recorded and dealt with appropriately.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	219	1	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	6	0	0

Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

9. Pupils are encouraged to become independent and willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. These include acting as monitors and prefects and being members of the school council. They co-operate well when raising funds for others less fortunate than themselves and take their responsibilities of living in a community seriously. They work happily together and show increasing maturity and self-awareness as they progress through the school.
10. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Pupils are very well aware of right and wrong. This is because staff give a very positive lead in engendering very good relationships and, for example, by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity. Socially the pupils are encouraged to play a full part in their own community and they participate very enthusiastically in the weekly meetings of the relatively new school council. Well attended extra-curricular activities enable pupils to develop their social skills effectively. Pair and group activities in lessons allow pupils to learn how to negotiate and manage people and residential journeys for Year 4 and Year 6 pupils enables them to learn about working with others closely. The school ensures all pupils are included effectively in activities and so they make good progress in their personal development.
11. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop self-awareness during times for reflection and prayer. Collective worship allows pupils to learn effectively and develop a sense of empathy with others and they pause for reflection and thanks after they have eaten their lunch. They show respect for the feelings of others and enjoy the activities they engage in. Every pupil is valued.
12. Pupils have good opportunities to understand their own culture through their learning in subjects such as history, geography, and religious education. However, although these lessons also provide some opportunities to promote understanding of other cultural traditions, not enough is done to promote pupils' understanding of the different cultures that make up contemporary British society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although there is a considerable amount that is good. The curriculum is broad and much enriched through extra-curricular activities and visits. Arrangements for pupils' care and welfare are good; guidance and advice to them based on monitoring is satisfactory. The school has very good arrangements for involving pupils through seeking their views and acting upon them. Consequently, pupils are influential on school life. There are good and improving links with parents. Links with the community and with other schools are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. A considerable amount of teaching is good, particularly in Years 4 and 5. Assessment is satisfactory. Pupils are regularly assessed in their English and mathematics and assessment is generally used well to target additional support to where it is needed in them, but systematic assessment needs extending further in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in English and in ICT is good.

- Teaching is more consistently good in Years 4 and 5 where there is closer planning between teachers. Some teaching is unimaginative and does not engage pupils enough.
- Lessons are planned around clear learning objectives and most lessons feature a balance of teaching methods, but some closing plenary sessions are too short.
- Learning support assistants are well trained and effective in supporting less able pupils and those with special educational needs so that they learn well.
- Teachers generally plan for pupils' different needs well, but the current setting arrangements are no more effective than other grouping methods used in the school.
- Pupils are systematically assessed in English and mathematics but targets do not yet extend to all pupils and assessment in other subjects is not as well developed.

Commentary

13. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory; much is good but there are some areas of inconsistency in teaching methods across Years 3 to 6. Teaching is more consistently good in Years 4 and 5, where teachers share their planning and expertise more closely, but in Year 6 some teaching methods do not engage pupils' interest and involvement as well and it is mainly satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	16	12	0	0	0

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

14. The teaching of English and ICT are generally good. In mathematics and science, teaching is satisfactory. In science, teachers are not consistent in their approaches to teaching scientific enquiry skills across the school, particularly in ways of guiding pupils in their procedural decisions about experiments. In both subjects, opportunities are missed to practise skills such as speculating, predicting and planning scientific investigations or applying numeracy skills to solve mathematical problems, and this affects achievement, particularly of the more able pupils in these aspects of the subjects. In most other respects, teachers' subject knowledge is good; they use questioning well to enable pupils to recall their learning and to argue and reason in whole class discussions. New ideas and concepts are accurately taught. They also have good ICT competence so that the data-projector and white-board facilities in classrooms are used effectively to enhance their teaching, for example, through lively inter-active illustrations and when teaching new techniques. The introduction of new technical vocabulary is also given due emphasis in teachers' planning and within lessons.
15. Lessons are generally planned around clear objectives and in stimulating contexts that pupils relate and respond to well; they enjoy learning and relationships in lessons are good. Consequently, little time is lost in managing pupils' behaviour or attention and time is generally used well. In the better lessons, teachers achieve a good balance of whole class teaching and individual or group activity that engages pupils in learning for themselves through first-hand experiences. Sometimes, the closing plenary sessions are too short. In a good Year 3 English lesson, pupils listened attentively and discussed features of animals from a book set in Australia. The subsequent group activities enabled pupils to define their own interesting descriptions of these animals and improve their descriptive vocabulary as they worked at the range of tasks set. Resources such as computers are also used well to provide stimulating activities and tasks in several subjects. However, some lessons, particularly in Year 6, use rather unimaginative teaching methods such as extended whole class teaching, with too few opportunities provided for discussion or for pupils to work independently and at their own level. In mathematics and science there is a lack of basic resources to help illustrate key concepts through practical experience, although these are being built up through recent purchases by the new subject co-ordinators.

16. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning because they know the pupils well and because their support is appropriately targeted at those individuals and groups who would most benefit, both with lessons, and through additional small group sessions in literacy and numeracy. Close liaison between class teachers and the learning support assistants ensures that the work for those pupils with special educational needs is tightly focused and appropriately challenging. The good relationships between the learning support assistants and those they help lead to co-operative working and good learning. Support assistants use open-questioning strategies which encourage pupils to think carefully and to take some responsibility for their own learning.
17. Teachers plan well for the range of pupils' needs in most lessons. English, mathematics and science are set across two parallel classes by ability within each of Years 4, 5 and 6. However, pupils are often also organised by ability groups within the same class for some subjects, for example, in Year 3. The setting arrangements in later years do not provide any clear advantage over grouping by ability within the class. There are some disadvantages in the time taken to re-arrange these classes for each lesson and the constraints imposed on the school's curriculum, for example, the timetable, to achieve it. The school has doubts about the effectiveness of these arrangements and is currently reviewing them.
18. Homework is set regularly and effectively extends the learning from lessons, although some parents report that it is uneven and occasionally too much is set. Marking is satisfactory overall. Pupils' work is marked regularly; the best provides useful guidance in written comments on how to improve so that pupils are well informed, for example, that in Year 5. However, some provides little comment other than praise.
19. While pupils are formally assessed in their English and mathematics each half term, assessments in other subjects, notably science and ICT, are not so regular or systematic. The headteacher has introduced the use of individual challenging targets based on pupils' prior attainment that are being used as benchmarks against which to review their progress. But these will not extend throughout the school for another term and are presently used mostly in Year 6. The school's central database provides a sound basis for monitoring and review, although its scope needs extending to other subjects and to include the new targets set. The senior management team is currently working hard to enable all staff to use this data routinely to inform their work as subject co-ordinators and within year group teams to better analyse patterns in pupils' achievements.

The curriculum

The school provides satisfactory and appropriately broad curricular opportunities with a good range of opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation is good and the range of learning resources is satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses in some subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good range of opportunities to support learning outside the school day through extra-curricular activities and residential visits.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; their needs are carefully assessed and effective support provided by well trained learning support assistants.
- The school's accommodation is good.
- The library is currently unsatisfactory, but action is currently being taken to refurbish and stock it.
- Pupils apply their good ICT skills well within most subjects, although their literacy and numeracy skills are not applied as systematically.
- There are insufficient resources in some subjects that limit pupils' learning through first-hand experience.

Commentary

20. The curriculum, planned around nationally available schemes and strategies, enables teachers to build progressively on pupils' knowledge and skills from year to year in most subjects, although more needs to be done to build on pupils' scientific enquiry skills systematically from year to year. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education and drugs awareness education. The School Council, with elected members from each class, meets regularly and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. ICT is used well by teachers to enhance their teaching, especially to illustrate and explain in whole class discussions. Computers in classrooms and in the ICT suite are also used well to enable pupils to apply their good ICT skills across the curriculum in most subjects. However, the use of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum are not so well planned, for example, teachers tend to use a lot of worksheets in humanities that limit the scope for more extended writing.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) liaises very closely with class teachers and learning support assistants. They make appropriate adaptations to the curriculum and set tight measurable targets for pupils which are recorded in their individual education plans. Parents are closely involved in the review of their children's targets and are increasingly supporting their children at home. Learning support assistants are well trained and know the pupils' strengths and weaknesses well. The school deploys available resources, including human, very effectively and as a result pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their curriculum targets are reviewed regularly.
22. The school provides pupils with a good range of interesting, relevant and well-attended extra-curricular activities at lunchtimes and after school. Sporting and cultural visits linked to the curriculum are organised to extend pupils' experiences and an appropriate range of visitors works in the school during the year. Residential visits for Years 4 and 6 pupils also enhance their learning in subjects and their social development.
23. There is a satisfactory match of teachers with a wide range of experience and expertise to the curriculum and an appropriate number of experienced, hard-working and effective support staff. The accommodation is good, having particularly spacious outdoor facilities and a good hall. The school's library is currently under-resourced and under-used but plans to refurbish and improve it are well-advanced. Resources for ICT are now good and much improved since the last inspection. However, there are some weaknesses in resources in some other subject areas, particularly reading books for older pupils, practical mathematics and science equipment and in the number of musical instruments available. New resources for both mathematics and science are currently being acquired by their respective new co-ordinators.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a good standard of care and welfare. The support, advice and guidance pupils receive are satisfactory. Pupils are involved very well in school life because the school seeks, values and acts on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel very secure and well cared for in school.
- They have very good and trusting relationships with all adults in the school.
- The school does much to seek pupils' views and acts on them when appropriate.
- Pupils are introduced to school life very well.

Commentary

24. The school provides a happy environment that is conducive to learning. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues. Pupils' healthy and safe living is promoted through the

Healthy Schools Initiative and through personal, social and health education lessons. Child protection procedures are good and there is good liaison with other agencies. Designated members of staff are fully up to date in aspects of first aid, and risk assessments are undertaken regularly.

25. Assessment procedures for tracking and improving pupils' academic progress are well developed in English and mathematics but are less systematic in other subjects; they are satisfactory overall. There is also a formal procedure for the transfer of information from one teacher to another in July. This system is proving effective in tracking and supporting the pupils' personal development. Teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families very well and this contributes much to pupils' personal guidance and development. The very good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically. The pupils enjoy coming to school, they say that the staff are 'very nice and very kind'. Almost every parent who responded to the questionnaire and who attended the parents' meeting before the inspection said that their children like school.
26. All pupils are highly valued and their views are sought on a regular, formal basis through the school council, established shortly after the headteacher's appointment a year ago. It is proving a great success. This council is influential on school life and has recently been involved in, for example, the purchase of playground equipment. Pupils spoken to during the inspection were confident that their ideas are sought and acted on when appropriate.
27. Very good induction arrangements and much improved liaison with the infants' school ensure that children settle happily into school. Parents at the parents' meeting held before the inspection commented that these arrangements have improved considerably since the new headteacher was appointed.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are now good and the school is working hard to involve parents even more through seeking, valuing and acting on their views. Links with the community and with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The great majority of parents are now very supportive of the school and appreciate what it provides for their children. They think very highly of the new headteacher.
- A minority of parents do not think they are well informed about their children's standards and progress and how they can help them at home.
- The headteacher has increased the amount of information about the school which is given to parents and is now involving parents more through seeking, valuing and acting on their ideas.
- There are very good procedures to deal with any concerns or complaints.

Commentary

28. Most parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel it is very well led by the headteacher and are comfortable about approaching it with any concerns. They say that their children are encouraged to be mature and they appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities. Parents value the school's caring attitudes highly and say that the staff expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. They now see the school as more open and welcoming to parents and the wider community. The inspection team agrees with all these positive views.
29. Parents have expressed their appreciation of what the new headteacher has done to improve communication between themselves and the school. They are provided with very good information about the school through, for example, the brochure, weekly newsletters and

frequent other correspondence. Information is given out each term on the areas of the curriculum and topics to be studied by their children and the home/school books are now being used effectively as a two-way communication process. However, several parents said that they would like more information on how they can best help with their children's learning at home. The school is aware of this and is working to set up programmes and sessions to address this aspect. Parents receive information about their children's progress through consultation evenings and annual reports, but these reports, although satisfactory, do not consistently give information on targets and on the progress of the pupils across all year groups.

30. The views of parents are actively sought by the headteacher through regular questionnaires and the 'parent forums' which enable parents and staff to meet formally each term. These views are acted upon when appropriate, and, for example, as a result of parents' suggestions, the times of the consultation meeting have been changed. Parents are always willing to come in to school for specific purposes and are keen to help on educational visits. Some parents are now coming in at lunchtimes to help with playground games. The headteacher is also encouraging more parents to come in to help in the classrooms. The 'Friends of William de Yaxley School' is a small but enthusiastic group of parents which has recently been formed to help raise money for the school. They have already contributed towards the playground equipment. All these aspects contribute to pupils' learning and help to raise achievement.
31. A minority of parents expressed concerns about incidents of harassment or bullying at the school, although they did say that any such instances are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Pupils say that instances of bullying are rare and that behaviour has improved. The inspection team saw no evidence of bullying during the inspection period and they agree with the parents that any inappropriate behaviour is recorded and dealt with consistently and well. A few parents were not happy with the arrangements for induction when their children entered the school. The headteacher is working very hard to improve this aspect and the inspection team judge that induction arrangements are now very good. Overall, procedures for dealing with concerns or complaints are very good.
32. Satisfactory links with other schools and the community are used to pupils' benefit but the school is very aware that this is an area for development. The school has good links with the Church and the pupils have visited the local shopping centre. Very good links are now being forged with the local library and the school contributes to the parish magazine, which is printed on the premises. The school is used for meetings of, for example, a sewing club and St. John's Ambulance Service. The wider community is also used as an educational resource. For example, Year 4 and Year 6 pupils enjoy residential visits to activity centres and pupils regularly take part in activities with other schools including the A1 Sports Day and the A1 Music Festival. Pupils from a local secondary school come in for work experience and the school takes in students from a local university for their initial teacher training. Satisfactory links with the local secondary schools ensure that pupils are prepared and are able to move confidently to the next stage in their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher provides good leadership and direction for the school, focused on raising standards and encouraging closer teamwork and consistency throughout the school. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. The school's management is satisfactory but the role of subject co-ordinators is not developed enough. Governance is good and has improved in recent years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's new cycle of monitoring and self-review is potentially robust and involves all staff but it is not yet fully implemented or embedded in the school's work.
- The headteacher's analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses is good and he is supported well by an effective deputy in bringing about improvements.

- Governors know the school well. They are much involved in monitoring, influencing its direction and in challenging its work.

- Assessment is used well to analyse patterns in English and mathematics but the central database is not developed enough in other subjects.
- The school's ethos is driven by common aims and values that strongly promote very good attitudes, relationships and a commitment to inclusion.

Commentary

33. Since the last inspection the school's leadership has changed twice, including a period of temporary leadership prior to the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2004. The new headteacher identified a number of weaknesses in the school's relationships with parents and in its management. In particular, systems for monitoring and reviewing the school's performance were centred on senior management with too little delegation and responsibility amongst the rest of the staff. These aspects of management have not developed to the extent of those in some other schools and there was a fall in pupils' formerly good achievements in 2004. The headteacher has set about radically changing the school's culture amongst the staff to make it more open and involved with parents and the community and to make self-review and improvement more integral to the school's work. He is ably supported by his deputy. Together they are providing good leadership and direction and are strongly supported by governors. Parents at the consultation meeting commented on improvements they have already seen in consultation and information provided and they appreciate the headteacher's work in opening up the school to them.
34. A strength in the headteacher's approach to improvement has been the way in which all staff have been involved in developing the school's management. The school improvement team, established in the spring of 2004, has devised a systematic cycle of self-review and improvement that encompasses all staff and governors and makes their respective roles very clear within it. The role of subject co-ordinators in particular is much more prominent. This cycle of monitoring and review is currently being implemented and training is also being provided to develop key staff's management skills. There are already signs of substantial improvement; the new subject co-ordinators in mathematics and science have audited their subjects and are working with local education authority consultants on an action plan to improve standards. The school's analysis of its strengths and weaknesses for this inspection is very consistent with inspection findings. There is good leadership of English and ICT and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is also led well. However, self-review is not yet embedded in the school's practice and much still needs to be done in this respect to develop and consolidate the role of subject co-ordinators and year group teams.
35. The school's central database of assessments has focused mainly on English and mathematics through regular standard assessments. Patterns in achievement are analysed and individual pupils identified for additional support in both subjects, although assessment is not so systematic in other subjects such as science and ICT. The senior management team is improving these practices to make the use of assessment more extensive and analytical in guiding its work. For example, individual targets are now set for all pupils in Year 6 and shortly for pupils in all year groups. Equally important, subject co-ordinators, year group teams and governors are being given full access to the database to help them in their monitoring role. The school analyses its performance in national tests thoroughly and is taking action to address the downturn in results in 2004. Its ethos strongly promotes good attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils; they respect and care for each other. Overall there is a strong commitment to inclusion due in no small part to the headteacher's and deputy's work in encouraging better teamwork and a commitment to common aims and values throughout the staff.
36. Arrangements for staff's performance management are well developed. Individual objectives are linked to school priorities and the system has been used well to encourage staff to be more accountable and involved in the school's management. New staff have settled well and are given strong support and guidance. Strategic planning through the school's development plan is good. The plan is soundly based on a thorough analysis of the school's performance;

it has clear long term goals and appropriate strategies for achieving the more immediate priorities identified within it.

37. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well; the effectiveness of governance has improved in recent years and is good. They have had much training, for example, in analysing patterns in pupils' achievements using national benchmarks. Consequently they understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are increasingly involved in challenging its work in improving areas of concern. Governors strongly support the headteacher's focus on changing the school's climate to make it more open and engaging of all staff. They monitor priorities in the school's development plan through a programme of focused visits and members of the curriculum committee attend the improvement team's meetings regularly. Appointed governors monitor the headteacher's work in bringing about improvements and the Chair of Governors also keeps in close touch with the school. Governors are excited by their developing role within the school's management cycle and are increasingly involved in shaping the school's development, for example, in improving the provision for ICT.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	563,112	Balance from previous year	69,286
Total expenditure	570,684	Balance carried forward to the next	61,714
Expenditure per pupil	2,439		

38. Governors have managed a fall in roll and consequent reduction in budget well and they use information about local demographic patterns to guide their strategic planning. The relatively large carry-forwards of the past two years have been planned to improve the school's ICT facilities, refurbish the library this year and retain levels of learning support assistance and expertise through a period before an upturn in pupil numbers is expected. The anticipated carry-forward for this year is very small. Governors seek good value for money through tendering and other strategies and the budget is closely monitored and managed. Overall expenditure per pupil is below average. Current developmental work is showing signs of impact in promoting closer teamwork and consistency in teaching methods amongst staff but its full effects on standards have yet to be seen. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Year 6 standards are broadly average. In relation to their attainment on entry, pupils are achieving well.
- The quality of teaching in English is good overall.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; they are supported well by learning support assistants, both in class and through additional literacy small group sessions.
- The school makes good use of ICT to enhance teaching and to enable pupils to draft and edit their work.
- Opportunities to involve pupils in their own learning are inconsistent across the school.
- The subject is well led by an experienced co-ordinator but teaching has not been monitored sufficiently.

Commentary

39. Standards in 2004 dipped compared with previous years and were about average compared to both national and similar schools averages, although the proportion achieving above the expected level was good. The current Year 6 pupils entered the school with considerably below average standards and the proportion with special educational needs in this group is higher than in other years. Pupils have made good progress. As a result, standards in reading and writing by the age of 11 are broadly in-line with national averages, with pupils' reading skills being considerably stronger than their independent writing skills. Overall standards of spelling, presentation and handwriting, however, are barely satisfactory and vary considerably from class to class, indicating some inconsistency in teachers' expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and every effort is made by the school to raise their attainment through the very good support and encouragement provided by learning support assistants. Those few pupils who have English as an additional language also achieve well. Boys achieved better than girls in 2004 but there is no consistent pattern of better achievement over time and none noted during the inspection. Achievement has been good in most years since the last inspection, although the management role of the co-ordinator has not developed enough. Improvement overall is satisfactory.
40. Teaching in English ranges from satisfactory to good and is good overall. Pupils' good progress is mainly due to this good quality of teaching. It is characterised, in most instances, by the strong encouragement and engagement of pupils and teachers' skilled classroom and behaviour management which leads to a high level of application and productivity. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and relationships and classroom management are very good. Consequently, pupils respond and behave well in class and the pace of learning is good. Data-projectors and inter-active whiteboards are used well to enhance class discussions and to illustrate ideas. Historically, pupils across the school have been 'set' for English into two ability groups within each year. Evidence for the continued effectiveness of this strategy is mixed; there is no clear advantage to it over other methods of grouping used. The headteacher and the co-ordinator are actively considering the value of continuing the strategy. Most teachers use day-to-day assessment and marking well to match tasks to pupils' abilities and learning needs. For example, in a good Year 5 lesson, a lower set of pupils were comparing different versions of the same story. The teacher had amended her detailed daily lesson plans to reflect (the lack of) progress in the previous lesson and used questioning very skilfully to challenge pupils and develop their speaking and listening skills. Relationships were very good and pupils behaved very well. The challenging and

appropriately adapted group work and very good support for pupils with special educational needs resulted in a good quality of learning and good progress throughout. In a small number of otherwise satisfactory lessons, however, teachers provided insufficient opportunities for pupils to participate in their learning and to develop their speaking and listening skills. In these lessons, there was too much whole class teaching, making very few allowances for the substantial differences in ability within the set.

41. The subject-co-ordinator provides good leadership. She has organised a number of in-service training sessions for teachers and learning support assistants; for example, on encouraging speaking and listening and on the use of 'genres'. She has a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has been focusing attention on improving writing in particular. However, management is not as well developed and is satisfactory. Systems for tracking pupils' progress have improved and they are used well to identify those in need of extra support through additional literacy or booster sessions. Even so, more could be done to analyse patterns in achievement across the school and currently targets are being set for all pupils to provide benchmarks that will make the process more rigorous. The school's monitoring and review cycle is currently being implemented and teaching quality in English is being monitored systematically within it. The literacy co-ordinator has not yet observed the majority of teachers teaching a literacy lesson and, given the wide range of teaching styles observed during the inspection, this is an essential development. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall, although the library is currently unsatisfactory and under-utilised and there is the need for more relevant reading books for older pupils. The school is about to refurbish the library and the stock of books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. The use of literacy within other subjects is satisfactory overall. Although the co-ordinator has encouraged the use of literacy across the curriculum in all subject areas, uptake of these opportunities varies and is not yet consistent. In humanities, pupils research and compare using a range of evidence sources but opportunities for more extended writing are limited because a lot of worksheets with short responses tend to be used. However, ICT is used well to write and edit in different styles and genres across subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement has typically been satisfactory or good but dipped in 2004 when standards were below similar schools. There are signs of recovery; pupils' achievements are now satisfactory.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator has not developed enough until recently. The new subject co-ordinator is developing her monitoring role within the school's management cycle.
- Teaching is more consistently good in Years 4 and 5. Relationships are good and pupils managed well so that they are eager learners.
- There is insufficient focus on investigative and problem-solving work and this affects the level of challenge for the more able pupils in particular.
- ICT is used well to enhance discussions and to enable pupils to practise and consolidate their knowledge and skills.

Commentary

43. In the national tests in 2004, standards in Year 6 were below both the national and similar schools' averages, although the proportion achieving above the expected level was about average. There was some underachievement amongst girls in 2004 but there is no significant pattern of difference over time or seen during the inspection. These standards represent a dip in performance on that of previous years when achievement was average or good compared

to similar schools. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 6 are below average, but taking account of these pupils' considerably below average attainment on entry to the school, achievement is satisfactory. This is a sign of some recovery from the dip in 2004, although achievement is not yet as good as in some past years. Pupils with special educational needs make better progress than some other groups because well trained learning support assistants provide good individual and small group work opportunities which enhance learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve as well in mathematics as other groups. The monitoring role of the subject co-ordinator has not developed enough since the last inspection and, in this respect, improvement has been insufficient. Actions now being taken to reverse the decline in standards are showing signs of an impact.

44. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; some teaching is good. Good teaching and learning were seen in Years 4 and 5, where shared planning between teachers is closer, and this good aspect is leading to higher standards in those years. Teachers' effective use of interactive white boards and data projectors enhances their class teaching. Good relationships between teachers and pupils support learning and pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils make good use of ICT, for example, to create graphs and bar charts and to practise their numeracy skills. In a particularly good lesson, Year 4 pupils in the ICT suite were engrossed in applying their knowledge of compass points to navigate their way towards specific points on a map and made good progress in consolidating their knowledge as a result of the stimulating and challenging activities provided. Homework is set regularly to extend the learning from lessons and is regularly marked and corrected.
45. Teaching quality is not yet consistent across the school. The headteacher is working to ensure teachers plan and share more closely together within each year. Teachers put an appropriate emphasis on number work, although some pupils in Year 6 do not have a secure enough knowledge of basic multiplication tables. However, there is not enough emphasis placed on investigative and problem solving tasks where pupils decide on the steps to a solution and this affects the level of challenge for more able pupils in particular. The school's implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy as a basis for planning is contributing to pupils' overall progress but it is uneven. Whilst most teachers adapt tasks well to pupils' abilities, some rely too much on the setting arrangements within each year and do not adapt the suggested tasks sufficiently for the range of abilities within the set. In this respect there is no advantage to setting arrangements over other grouping arrangements in the school.
46. Until last year, the monitoring role of the subject coordinator has not been developed sufficiently and standards have declined. There has not been enough monitoring of teaching and learning to identify areas for development, although this is planned for from this term as the school's new monitoring and review cycle is implemented. The new co-ordinator took over responsibility for mathematics at the beginning of this school year; her developing leadership and management skills are satisfactory. The school is receiving good support from a mathematics consultant and together they are implementing strategies to lead to more effective and consistent teaching and learning. Greater use of assessment information is leading to identification of gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, which teachers can address in their teaching. Teachers do not have an adequate supply of a range of resources, for example calculators, to enable pupils to practise some important skills, although the new co-ordinator has audited resources and is addressing this weakness.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Pupils use mathematics satisfactorily as part of their work in some other subjects and consequently begin to develop a practical appreciation of the use of these skills. For example, they create time lines to express chronology in history. Year 3 pupils create bar charts to present scores in spelling tests. Year 5 and 6 pupils measure and cut shapes accurately in design and technology and use formulae to derive information in spreadsheets. However, this aspect of pupils' experiences is not specifically planned for; it tends to occur as the need arises.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their knowledge and understanding of key facts and principles but their scientific enquiry skills are not developed enough.
- There is too little emphasis placed on scientific enquiry in the curriculum and teaching methods are not consistent across the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are effectively supported in lessons and progress well.
- Most lessons are planned around clear objectives with an appropriate balance of whole class and individual or group work but in some, methods are unimaginative.
- Data projectors and white-boards effectively enhance teaching quality but pupils do not use sensors and data-loggers in their investigations.
- The new science co-ordinator has made a good start but her management role in monitoring teaching and pupils' achievements is not yet developed enough.

Commentary

48. Standards in Year 6 have been typically above average but have fallen, particularly in 2004, when they were below both the national average and that of schools whose pupils attained similarly in Year 2. Boys achieved better than girls in 2004 but there is no significant pattern of difference over time and none was seen during the inspection. Standards seen during the inspection are also below average overall, although pupils' knowledge and understanding of key facts and principles are considerably better than their scientific enquiry skills. Taking account of pupils' below average prior attainment, they are achieving satisfactorily overall and there are signs of improvement compared to 2004. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons and generally make good progress. The more able are not challenged enough in their scientific enquiry skills, although they show a good grasp of science facts and concepts.
49. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of key concepts are good because these principles are built on and developed progressively from year to year and teachers have a good knowledge of science. In contrast, scientific enquiry skills do not receive sufficient emphasis in the planned curriculum. Not enough progress has been made in past years in improving the teaching of scientific enquiry. Teaching methods across the school are not consistent in their approach to guiding pupils when making decisions about their experiments and in reporting their findings. Consequently, by Year 6, pupils' skills do not develop as well as they should and the more able in particular are not extended in these skills sufficiently. However, the new science co-ordinator has made a good start in auditing the curriculum and science resources. She has identified scientific enquiry as a key area for training and development and is also improving the inadequate resources to support practical work.
50. Pupils build on their knowledge well from year to year. Year 3 pupils explore shadows and what affects their size. Such knowledge is built on in later years so that by Year 6, many can explain how we see objects as light enters the eye from them. The more able pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of the main functions of the heart and can describe features of blood circulation. However, their skills in planning and carrying out investigations are lower. Most pupils in Year 5 needed much prompting from their teacher to help them plan an investigation of what affects the sound transmitted in a string telephone because many are not yet secure in identifying the variables involved and the need to control them to carry out a fair test. While pupils do undertake practical explorations to help illustrate and understand key ideas, they generally do not investigate specific questions through fair testing enough. Pupils do not yet use ICT enough in the subject, particularly sensors and data-loggers to gather data

from experiments, because of a lack of such resources, although their introduction is planned for this year.

51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are planned around clear objectives, and most lessons have a balance of discussion and group or individual work. Technical vocabulary is introduced and emphasised well. Learning support assistants are well trained and briefed and provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are sometimes grouped by ability within the class with tasks matched well to their abilities. They are also set within some year groups but this arrangement is no more effective than appropriate grouping within parallel classes and places some constraints on curriculum organisation. Teaching methods in Years 4 and 5 engage pupils in learning more actively and are more consistent as a result of the shared planning that is evident there. However, some teaching in Year 6 is unimaginative and does not engage pupils enough in learning for themselves. Data projectors and inter-active whiteboards are used well to enrich discussions and other teaching methods. Homework effectively extends the learning from lessons but marking varies in quality; the best provides guidance on how to improve but some gives little commentary.
52. There has been a decline in achievement, especially in 2004, and the monitoring role of the subject co-ordinator in particular had not developed enough since the last inspection, until this year. The new co-ordinator has made a good start in her first term in auditing the curriculum and identifying weaknesses such as scientific enquiry skills. She is showing satisfactory leadership and management. Her management role in monitoring and developing the subject is not yet developed fully but training is being provided to improve her skills. There are plans in place for the co-ordinator to observe teaching and review pupils' work within the school's monitoring cycle currently being implemented. Assessment is not yet systematic enough across the school to enable pupils' progress to be monitored in relation to targets for their achievement and this undermines the co-ordinator's ability to analyse patterns in standards thoroughly.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils acquire good basic skills and achieve well in most aspects of ICT.
- A major investment in a new ICT suite and other classroom resources has led to good improvements in standards and provision.
- Teaching is mainly good. Teachers have good ICT competence and most use the school's resources effectively within the subject and across the curriculum.
- The subject is led well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has provided effective training and curriculum guidance for teachers.
- The co-ordinator's role in monitoring standards and teaching quality is not developed enough.

Commentary

53. Standards overall are broadly in line with expectations by Year 6. Pupils attain above average standards in some aspects of ICT such as in researching and communicating information appropriately for their intended audience. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds acquire good basic skills and achieve well in most aspects of ICT, but a lack of resources for control technology and for gathering data with sensors limits the standards they achieve in this aspect. Good progress has been made in improving provision and standards in ICT since the

last inspection, especially in the last two years. It is the result of major investment in computer

facilities made by governors, the impact of training for staff and careful planning provided by a very knowledgeable and committed subject co-ordinator.

54. Pupils build on their skills systematically as they move up from year to year as a result of a well planned curriculum which provides much guidance for teachers in making effective use of the available resources on the school's network of computers. The ICT suite, installed two years ago, is used effectively throughout the school to teach basic skills and enables pupils to apply them across most subjects. From Year 3, pupils quickly learn to log-on and to navigate their way within the network so that they can quickly get on with tasks given. Displays of artwork showing repeating patterns for carpet designs and card decorations made by Year 4 are very striking and show good skills in producing them. Pupils learn to interrogate databases and extract information from them and to use spreadsheets to enter and display data graphically. Year 3 pupils produced graphs of data from surveys they had undertaken. In Year 5, pupils use formulae to calculate budgets for a school trip. A particular strength is the standard to which pupils communicate information for specific purposes and audiences. Often the context is linked well to their topic work in subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils produced very well presented information leaflets covering subjects such as the life of Queen Victoria. They have also created slide presentations that combine text, graphics and sound with links to other slides so that they are inter-active for the user. Pupils co-operate very well on shared tasks as they work at computers, often engrossed in their work while in the ICT suite and their behaviour is consistently very good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in the ICT suite by well briefed learning support assistants who know them well.
55. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have benefited from effective training and guidance in recent years so that their own ICT competence is generally good. This is reflected in the way they use data projectors and computers to demonstrate new skills and illustrate key points. Class discussions are well balanced between demonstrating new skills and techniques and acting on pupils' suggestions for next steps. Teachers and learning support assistants monitor pupils well as they work to ensure they receive support and guidance where needed. In the better lessons, the more able are extended through more challenging activities as they complete tasks. However, pupils are not yet assessed in their skills as they progress through the school and in some lessons the tasks given tend to be similar for all abilities.
56. The subject is led well by a knowledgeable and very enthusiastic co-ordinator who is a very good role-model to others in her teaching. She has driven through the improvements of the past two years well, particularly in ensuring teachers and support staff are appropriately trained and that resources match curriculum needs. The gap in resources for data gathering and control using sensors is being addressed this term. Management is satisfactory. Although there has been considerable informal monitoring of ICT provision, the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor teaching quality to assess the impact of training or future needs and pupils' skills are not yet formally assessed to evaluate where strengths and weaknesses lie. In this respect, her monitoring role is not developed enough. However, this aspect of her work is being given due emphasis as the school's new monitoring cycle is implemented this year.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

57. ICT is used well in most subjects to help raise standards. Pupils draft and edit stories and poems and write in different styles and genres in their English. They create images and patterns as part of their art and design and undertake research to inform their topic work in history and geography. One Year 4 class was totally absorbed in their mathematics work about compass points and co-ordinates and made some very good progress in their mathematics as a result. However, ICT is not used enough within science to support pupils' investigative work when gathering and presenting data from experiments.

HUMANITIES

58. Religious education was not part of this inspection. Work was sampled in history and geography. One lesson was observed in history and two in geography. Pupils' work in each year group was also reviewed.
59. Standards seen in both **history** and **geography** were broadly average. The curriculum is broad and planned around national schemes; pupils study a range of features within each subject, and teachers devote a satisfactory amount of curriculum time to them. Good teaching was seen in both history and geography. In history, pupils study a wide range of historical periods so that they gain a sense of chronology. They study Ancient Greeks and Romans in some detail, learn about the Tudors and do work on the Victorians. They make comparisons between the latter and modern times, and this enables them to understand how civilisation has developed. In geography they study local areas and contrasting areas as well as geographical features in different parts of the world. Teachers have made good use of the recent Asian tsunami, which had such a devastating outcome in the Indian Ocean, to explain the scientific and geographical reasons behind it and the geographical and humanitarian effects it is having on the affected region. However, teaching relies heavily on the use of commercial worksheets for both subjects and this reduces the number of opportunities for pupils to develop their independence as learners and for more extended writing.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

60. All the subjects within this area of learning were sampled. One lesson of art and design was seen and samples of pupils' work on display and in sketchbooks reviewed. No lessons were observed in design and technology but pupils' work in each year was reviewed. In music, two lessons were observed and pupils heard singing in assemblies. Two physical education lessons were also observed and a discussion held with the subject's co-ordinator.
61. In a very good **art and design** lesson, Year 4 pupils discussed the design, purpose and use of chairs in preparation for a design task. The teacher made very good use of ICT to make a multi-media presentation of photographs and examples for discussion with the pupils. Her subject knowledge was very good; she used questioning very well to probe and extend pupils' learning and understanding. Her very good relationships with the pupils and high expectations of their work ensured they applied themselves with enthusiasm and made very good progress. There is a whole-school scheme of work in place for art and design, based on a national scheme. Examples of art and design work on display around the school confirm that pupils have opportunities to undertake work in an appropriate range of styles and materials. Sketchbooks have been provided for all pupils. However, the quality and relevance of the work in these varies considerably from class to class and year to year, reflecting variations in teachers' skills in using sketchbooks appropriately. In this respect, the monitoring role of the co-ordinator needs developing further to help promote more consistency. Overall, the standards seen in samples of work were a little below average for the age range.
62. In **design and technology**, standards seen in samples of pupils' work were about average in pupils' ability to design and make a range of products. Some examples seen were of good quality, although pupils' evaluation skills are less well developed. The curriculum includes a range of stimulating contexts for design projects that involve cutting and assembly using a variety of techniques, materials and tools, for example, making a money purse, producing toy puppets and making a windmill for a garden decoration. Year 6 pupils designed toy puppets on the theme of Punch and Judy, using a range of materials. Many of those on display were robustly made and appropriately shaped and decorated to reflect the theme. Pupils also evaluate commercial products to help them in their own work, for example, when designing a fruit cocktail for a party. Pupils make good use of ICT to design some striking and well designed leaflets to accompany their finished products, for example, to give instructions for their assembly and use. However, the use of ICT for control technology is not yet developed in later years to build on pupils' knowledge of control and sequencing instructions gained in Years 3 and 4.

63. In **music**, Year 3 pupils identified examples of solo, duet and choral singing from a compact disc of examples and Year 5 pupils sang and accompanied a calypso. Teaching in both lessons was satisfactory overall and was characterised by good classroom management skills so that no time was wasted in managing pupils' behaviour, and good subject knowledge, with a good use of subject vocabulary. However, particularly in the Year 5 lesson, the limited range of tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments available restricted the progress that could be made. Only a small group of four pupils were able to play instruments at any one time, at the front of the class, with the result that the majority spent much of the lesson as observers and did not get an opportunity to play the instruments. The school follows a published music scheme which includes detailed lesson plans and recorded examples for each lesson and which ensures appropriate coverage of the strands of the music national curriculum.
64. Both of the **physical education** lessons observed focused on indoor gymnastics. Teaching in these lessons ranged from satisfactory to good. Where it was judged to be good, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge, the lesson was well-resourced and well-paced, relationships were good and, as a result, pupils made good progress. From a scrutiny of planning and discussions with the subject co-ordinator, it is clear that all strands of the subject, including the provision of outdoor adventurous activities for older pupils, are regularly and appropriately taught. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 attend a local swimming baths for lessons for a term each year and the subject co-ordinator confirms that all pupils are able to swim 25 metres and beyond by the time they leave the school. Small resources and apparatus for physical education are satisfactory. The school hall is of a good size and the school has the distinct advantage of a large playground area and sports field for games. A good range of after-school sporting activities are provided for the pupils during the school year. The school has particularly good links with a local secondary sports college through the "School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership" and this has provided qualified coaching for athletics, gymnastics and dance during the year. The subject co-ordinator has introduced a scheme of work based closely on the strands of the National Curriculum and has overseen a steady improvement in the profile of the subject within the school. However, at the time of the inspection, insufficient opportunities had been provided for the co-ordinator to observe teaching in the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

65. **Personal, social and health education** was sampled. Two lessons were observed, note taken of contributions from other subjects such as science, and discussions were held with the co-ordinator.
66. The school places much emphasis on developing pupils' personal, social and moral skills through its ethos and it has ensured appropriate attention is given to health issues through its achievement of Healthy Schools Award. The overall programme is clearly planned around a published scheme and includes attention to issues such as health, diet, sex and relationships education, drugs and personal safety. Weekly lessons take place but elements of the planned curriculum are also inter-woven with other subjects. Year 4 pupils discussed a range of drugs, making the distinction between those intended to restore health and those illegal and harmful. In a well conducted and effective lesson, pupils understood the need to keep all medicines safe and out of the reach of children and their potentially harmful effects if misused. Year 6 pupils developed their knowledge of the effects of drug misuse further by discussing their harmful effects on individuals and on society in a sensitively led discussion and they became more aware of addiction and what it means.
67. Teachers work to promote good relationships which in turn lead to a willingness on the part of pupils to take on personal responsibility and they are provided with many opportunities around the school. The influential school council makes an important contribution to pupils' citizenship and their sense of responsibility to each other in a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

