

INSPECTION REPORT

ACOMB PRIMARY SCHOOL

York

LEA area: City of York

Unique reference number: 121271

Headteacher: Mr H Robinson

Lead inspector: Mr K Bardon

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th September 2003

Inspection number: 255291

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	258
School address:	West Bank
Postcode:	York YO24 4ES
Telephone number:	01904 798453
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss J Pinder
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 258 pupils on roll and the school is a little below capacity. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Fifty-five pupils have special educational needs, which is a broadly average figure, and five pupils have a statement of special needs. These cover a wide range of areas including sensory impairment, physical disability, emotional and behavioural difficulties and moderate learning difficulties. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of English acquisition. When they first join the reception class many children have the expected range of basic skills, although attainment on entry varies widely year on year. The school is a centre for family learning which takes place each week. It is also part of the Acomb Early Years partnership, along with a small number of nursery providers. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Mark in 2001 and has recently gained Investors in People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11807	Keith Bardon	Lead inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, physical education, English as an additional language
13459	Eva Mills	Lay inspector	
31012	Ann Welch	Team inspector	English, art and design, music, religious education, special educational needs
16761	Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, information and communication technology, design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Acomb Primary is a **satisfactory school with a caring ethos**. There is a pleasant atmosphere because adults and pupils get on well. In most subjects standards are around the levels expected of primary age pupils. Teaching, learning and pupils' achievements are sound. The headteacher and senior staff have successfully brought the school through a period of frequent change resulting in a unity of purpose amongst the staff. The value for money the school provides is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils become confident and competent readers but they do not learn to write as well as they should
- Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support and achieve well
- Teachers do not make clear enough to pupils what they need to learn next in order to improve
- The good provision made for children in the reception class gives them a solid start to their formal education, although there is a need to extend the range of outdoor activities that is provided
- Staff provide a good level of care and welfare for pupils and, along with the governors, show a strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all
- Pupils' learning is good in history and art and design but unsatisfactory in geography
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well enough across the curriculum as a whole
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities for its pupils and the curriculum is enriched with regular visits and visitors
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education

Since the school was inspected in 1998 it has made **steady improvement**. National initiatives, such as the strategies for literacy and numeracy, have been adopted constructively and standards have been maintained at a nationally average level. The majority of the issues raised in the last report have been addressed satisfactorily although more needs to be done to ensure the school has sufficient information to determine what is influencing pupils' achievements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	B	B
Mathematics	A	D	C	C
Science	D	D	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.*

Although the majority of children in the Foundation Stage attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, this varies considerably year on year. In some years a significant proportion of children lack basic skills when they first join the school and are still behind where they should be for their age when they enter Year 1. **The achievements of pupils in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.** Reading, history and art and design are the subjects in which pupils do best, reaching standards that are above average. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' writing is below average and they do not make enough progress in geography. Although the table above would suggest otherwise, pupils' achievements in

science are satisfactory, but because of weaknesses in preparation they do not do as well as they should in the tests. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in all classes.

Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good overall and most grow into caring individuals who are sensitive to the needs of others. They show interest in lessons and have **positive attitudes to learning**. The **majority of pupils behave well** but there are **a few whose poor behaviour causes difficulties** for staff and other pupils, although the effect these pupils have on the smooth running of the school is kept to a minimum. **Pupils attend regularly** and arrive at school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education.

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and sound in Years 1 to 6. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers ask well-judged questions to keep pupils thinking. Reading is taught effectively and as a result pupils learn to read with understanding and confidence. Pupils' learning in writing is far less productive because teachers do not give the pupils clear enough guidance on how to improve. Pupils with special educational needs learn well because the teaching is tailored carefully to their individual needs. Teaching assistants play an important role in pupils' learning and the working relationship between teachers and assistants is good.

The school provides a **satisfactory curriculum** which meets national requirements. Literacy and numeracy feature regularly in the curriculum, although they are developed better in some subjects than in others. In general, there is insufficient use of ICT in different subjects. A shortcoming in the other wise good curriculum for children in the reception class is the limited range of outdoor activities. The enrichment provided by visits and visitors is a particular strength and adds much to subjects such as art and design and history. The school's **partnership with parents is sound** and constructive links have been established with the local community and with the schools to which pupils transfer. The school provides a **good level of care** for its pupils and pays close attention to their welfare.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with some strengths. The headteacher shows a strong commitment to the school and has been instrumental in maintaining its caring ethos during a period of significant staff changes. New staff have been introduced into the school well and there is a unity of purpose which points towards a positive future. Strategies for evaluating the work of the school are firmly established but in some areas do not provide the information needed to root out weaknesses. The governing body fulfils its obligations conscientiously and makes a **satisfactory** contribution to management and decision making. **Financial management is secure** and the school budget is spent appropriately.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Many parents hold **positive views** of the school although some would like further improvements to the lines of communication between school and home. The majority of **pupils enjoy school** and feel they receive the help and support they need.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school now needs to do are:

- Improve the quality of the teaching and learning of writing and through this raise standards of achievement by Year 6
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning by making more effective use of assessment to set pupils better focused targets for improvement
- Increase the use of ICT in all subjects

- Raise standards of achievement in geography in Years 3 to 6 by providing a better structured programme of teaching and learning
- Further develop the learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage by extending the outdoor provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage is **good**. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** and in most subjects, pupils attain at the **level expected** for their age.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well in reading and attain standards that are above average
- Pupils' achievements in writing are unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and too many fail to reach the expected level by the end of Year 6
- Foundation Stage children achieve well in all the areas of learning and make significant progress in their learning
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well
- Standards in art and design and in history are above expectations and throughout the school pupils' achievements are good
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not achieve enough in geography

Commentary

Years 1 and 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9 (16.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.8 (15.2)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	16.7 (16.6)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In 2002, the test results for Year 2 pupils matched the national averages and they were much the same as those of pupils in similar schools. Results from the 2003 tests are as yet unverified. Indications are that the average points score for reading is likely to be close to the 2002 figure but will probably be a little lower in both writing and mathematics because fewer pupils reached the higher level. Overall, it likely that pupils' attainment in the national test will remain around the national average. This is an accurate reflection of the standards Year 2 pupils attain and represents a **satisfactory level of achievement for pupils in Years 1 and 2**.

Years 3 to 6

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.9 (27.0)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.3 (25.7)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	28.1 (27.6)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. When compared with both the national averages and the performance of similar schools the school results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were above average in English, broadly average mathematics but a little below average in science. The unverified 2003 test results suggest that results in mathematics and science have remained much the same but have fallen in English because fewer pupils attained the higher level in the tests. As with the younger pupils the test results are an accurate reflection of the **average standards** pupils attain and the **satisfactory level of achievement** they maintain.
3. The overall results in English mask marked differences between reading and writing in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' achievements are **good in reading** but **unsatisfactory in writing**. It is due to pupils' good reading skills that results in the English tests have at times been above average. However, even allowing for the difference that occurs nationally in these two aspects of English, the gap is too wide. The school recognises this and has tried a variety of strategies to improve writing. Up to now these have failed to bring about the desired improvements. Writing remains high on the school's list of priorities, but more detailed information about why pupils are failing to develop writing skills when they are doing so well in reading is needed to inform action planning and to guide school development. What pupils need to focus on in order to improve is not made clear enough to them.

Other aspects of standards and achievement

4. If the 2003 results are confirmed the school has successfully met the targets it set for pupils' performance in English and is only just short of its targets in mathematics. These were appropriate for the cohort and meeting them is a satisfactory achievement for the school.
5. The trend in Year 2 results is generally upwards in writing and mathematics. In reading, the fall in results the school has been experiencing appears to have been checked. Year 6 results in English and science show an upward trend, similar to the national improvements. Results in mathematics have fluctuated wildly and do not form a consistent pattern. The school is somewhat at a loss to explain why these variations occur but has rightly identified that it is the performance of the boys that is at the root of them. The work of the pupils currently in school provides indications that the problem is settling down and that the teaching that is currently taking place is producing a more even distribution of attainment between boys and girls.
6. The attainment of different cohorts of children when they first enter the school varies widely. Last year's intake had a large proportion of children who struggled to acquire basic skills. The first intake this year is showing a much more able set of children who are already well on their way to attaining the early learning goals (the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception). Irrespective of their attainment on entry children achieve well while in the Foundation Stage and make clear and positive progress.
7. Stimulating lessons in art and history help to ensure that pupils of all ages achieve well in these two subjects. The work pupils produce is at a consistently higher level than that expected for their age. Conversely, in geography, because of weaknesses in the curriculum, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not given sufficient opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge normally expected of junior age pupils and as a result they do not achieve enough. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. This is because teachers plan work to match pupils' specific needs and also because pupils receive good support and guidance from trained learning assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good attitudes** to their learning and the majority **behave well**. Pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school and **rates of attendance are good**. The school **successfully promotes pupils' personal development** and makes **good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is mostly good and there have been no exclusions from the school for several years
- On occasions the unsatisfactory conduct of a minority of pupils, mainly boys, adversely affects the learning of others
- The school successfully encourages pupils to become mature, responsible and caring individuals
- Relationships in the school are generally good – pupils get on well with each other and with all adults in the school community
- The school promotes pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures well

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 94.2%

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

8. More recent figures show that absence is continuing to fall; the school is promoting pupils' attendance well.
9. The school has maintained the strengths in pupils' good attitudes to their learning, their generally good behaviour and the positive relationships identified at the time of the last inspection. This has a significant and positive impact on their learning.
10. Some parents expressed concerns about instances of poor, and occasionally violent, behaviour, especially during break and lunchtimes. Incidents occur infrequently. These are mainly caused by a minority of boys who have behavioural difficulties and the school has effective measures in place to deal with any incidents. This is reflected in the success the school has had with pupils excluded from other schools and is confirmed by the pupils whose views were sought during inspection.

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	242	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

11. The vast majority of pupils behave well, get on amicably with each other and form warm relationships with all adults in the school community. In lessons pupils of all ages are keen to answer questions and take part in discussions. Most are pleasant, articulate, mature and sensible. They enjoy learning, listen well to their teachers and take part eagerly in all the school has to offer, including the wide range of after-school and lunchtime clubs. Pupils who have special educational needs show the same positive attitudes as other pupils. They are keen to learn and want to do well. The small number of pupils who have special needs linked to difficulties with behaviour and paying attention receive sensitive help from support assistants.
12. The school helps pupils to become responsible and to develop positive personal qualities. Pupils understand the need for school and class rules, value being involved in deciding what these are and, in the majority of cases, adhere to them closely. Pupils' views are sought through the school council which has representatives from pupils in Years 3 through to 6. These views are acted upon and pupils' ideas and concerns are taken seriously. Pupils raise funds for charities and older pupils help to look after younger children. Some Year 6 pupils 'entertained' reception children in the playground, putting on a show for them to the obvious enjoyment of all. The school operates a 'buddy' system with pupils of different age groups acting as friends and mentors. In the playground a 'buddy bench' is used to help to ensure that pupils are not excluded from play. Older pupils act as guides for parents at open evenings and carry out a variety of tasks during the school day.
13. The school encourages pupils' cultural development well, with an appropriate emphasis on cultural diversity. This is evident in music, art and literature throughout the school year and is reinforced through events such as 'Arts Week' when a number of visitors to the school hold workshops which celebrate a good range of cultures.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a **satisfactory** quality of education. The provision made for pupils' care and welfare is particularly effective.

Teaching and learning

The teaching and pupils' learning are **good in the Foundation Stage** and **satisfactory in Year 1 to 6**. Pupils' work is **assessed regularly** and teachers make **sound judgements** about what pupils should learn next.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- New teachers have settled in well, and throughout the school there is cohesion in the teaching
- Reading is taught well and pupils learn to read with understanding, confidence and enjoyment
- In contrast the teaching of writing is not effective enough and pupils learn far less than they do in the other aspects of English
- The setting of individual learning targets, so that pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve, is not yet embedded in the teaching
- Teaching assistants play an important role and have a positive impact on pupils' learning
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality teaching and support and this enables them to make good progress towards the targets set for their learning
- Teachers have positive relationships with pupils and in most instances class discipline is good with teachers managing the small number of difficult pupils well
- The teaching in the reception class provides children with a productive start to school
- Lesson planning is detailed, clear and functional and teachers ask well-focused questions
- The activities teachers provide usually allow for the differing abilities of the pupils but occasionally there are lessons in which higher attaining pupils are not challenged fully
- In the majority of lessons pupils are enthusiastic learners who respond well to the challenge the work presents
- The teaching of art and design and history is good but the teaching of geography does not enable pupils to gain sufficient knowledge and skills
- Teachers do not make enough use of ICT in different subjects

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (2%)	25 (54%)	19 (41%)	1 (2%)	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.

14. The school has had a considerable number of teaching staff changes in recent times. These have been managed well and there is a unity of purpose amongst teachers and support staff which bodes well for the future. Overall, a satisfactory quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. As the table above indicates, while the teaching is satisfactory overall, strengths are emerging. The working partnership between teaching assistants and class teachers is very good. Assistants have clear areas of responsibility, often with groups of pupils or individuals, and play an important part in promoting their learning. Pupils have come to

recognise this partnership as the norm and work as hard for the assistants as they do for the teachers.

15. The strategies used to teach reading work very well and as a result pupils become natural readers who tackle different forms of text with similar confidence. Teachers know that if they set work containing written information pupils will be able to read it for themselves and not have to rely on others. This releases the teacher to focus on those who need specific help with their learning and to pursue the objectives that have been set for the lesson. Teachers' planning was an issue in the last inspection but this is much improved.
16. Although teachers are using some target-setting procedures, these do not provide pupils with sufficient understanding of what they have to do to improve, nor do they give teachers enough detailed information about where pupils' difficulties lie. Consequently, teachers and pupils are unsure about just where they need to apply their efforts in order to raise standards. This is a general weakness in teaching and learning which affects writing in particular. Too few pupils learn to write well and when they sit the national tests in Year 6 the weaknesses are reflected in the results. Teachers lack a detailed understanding of how to move pupils' attainment from one National Curriculum level to the next and it is this that most seriously affects the teaching and learning of writing.
17. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. They are generally taught in the regular classes but on occasions are withdrawn for extra support. In Year 6 a small class is created to give extra help during literacy lessons. This works successfully. Support assistants have a key role to play within classes. They know the children well and are briefed before a lesson. They focus on the pupils' identified targets and make teachers aware of any outstanding issues. Individual educational plans include achievable targets that give direction to teachers' planning. Although some targets are too broad, teachers generally plan work to match pupils' abilities.
18. Teachers generate a positive atmosphere in lessons and establish good relationships with pupils. This elicits a positive response from the majority of pupils who concentrate hard and show a desire to learn and improve. As a general rule, teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is satisfactory, although the information generated is not always fully exploited. In most lessons teachers ask well-conceived questions which make pupils think. When the work offers a high level of challenge most pupils willingly apply themselves and try hard to meet the objective they have been set. On occasions teachers miss the opportunity to stretch the pupils mentally and this adversely affects the learning of those capable of higher levels of attainment.
19. Teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that they will interest and motivate pupils. This is particularly the case in the reception classroom where the school's youngest children are provided with well-structured experiences that give them an enthusiasm for learning and which get them away to a good start. Well-structured and innovative lessons in history and art and design in Years 1 to 6 elicit a good response from pupils and they learn quickly. In contrast the work pupils are given in geography does not build successfully on what has been learned in earlier classes and pupils' progress is much slower. The teaching of ICT has improved since the last inspection but teachers are still not building it into as many lessons as they could.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is sound. Pupils are able to take part in a variety of interesting learning experiences that extend beyond the school day.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall, insufficient use is made of outdoor activities
- The provision made for pupils' learning in reading, art and design and history is good
- Pupils' learning in writing is not planned well enough
- The curriculum provides pupils with equal opportunities to learn, and pupils with special educational needs are catered for well
- There is too little use of ICT in different subjects
- Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education and they are prepared well for future learning
- The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities and regularly incorporates visits and visitors into lessons
- The geography curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 lacks cohesion
- The accommodation and staffing levels are good

Commentary

20. In the Foundation Stage, strong emphasis is placed on giving children lots of well-structured and enjoyable practical experiences. This effective curriculum enables children to achieve successfully in all the areas of learning. Despite the curriculum for these children being good there is some imbalance, with indoor provision being of better quality than that planned for outdoors.
21. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have many well-planned opportunities to develop their reading skills so that they achieve well in this aspect of English. As part of the art and design curriculum pupils are able to work with a variety of professional artists, which contributes to the good standards that are achieved. In history, the pupils' knowledge and skills are developed well through the good quality activities that provide them with well-structured opportunities to analyse historical information and study people and events from the past.
22. The curriculum for writing is not rigorous enough and does not promote the systematic development of pupils' skills, leading to a lack of achievement in the older classes. In geography, the taught curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to develop the skills of using atlases and maps or to acquire the range of geographical knowledge expected of junior age pupils. The use of ICT as a means of supporting learning in other subjects is underdeveloped and is not planned well enough into lessons. The school has recently leased a number of new computers and this will provide teachers with more opportunities to plan for the use of ICT across the curriculum. Subject co-ordinators are aware of the need for this development.
23. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that further extends pupils' learning. Many pupils attend after-school and lunchtime clubs that include sporting and musical activities and gain much from the experience. The curriculum is regularly enriched by visitors who bring skills and experiences to lessons, and by visits to places of educational interest which bring subjects such as history to life. Included in these is a residential stay for pupils in Years 6 which does much for the development of their social skills
24. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to take full part in all lessons and other activities. Teachers pay due attention to the targets set for these pupils when planning the curriculum for them.
25. Good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to examine and learn respect for the values and beliefs of other

pupils and adults, and to develop their own self-worth and confidence. Programmes on sex and relationships, drugs and health education are good, with issues being dealt with in a sensitive manner. Pupils in Year 6 are very well prepared for their next school and for the changes they will encounter on moving to secondary education.

26. The accommodation is good, with spacious classrooms and large expanses of grassed and hard surfaced outside areas for pupils to use. This provides a comfortable environment in which to learn. The school is generously staffed, which enables pupils to receive effective support for their learning.

Care, guidance and support

The measures that are in place to ensure the care, safety and welfare of pupils are **good**. **Relationships** between staff and pupils are **also good** and pupil's personal **development** is supported **well**. There are **weaknesses** in the **guidance** pupils receive in how to improve their work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are well established and effective
- Arrangements to ensure health and safety of pupils and staff are fully in place. Parents are confident that their children are looked after well
- Academic targets are not sufficiently clear in providing pupils with guidance on ways in which they can improve their work
- The school has very good procedures for the induction of pupils
- Pupils are well supported in their personal development. Staff have good knowledge of pupils and are aware of their personal circumstances
- Pupils are consulted about aspects of school life and their views are valued
- The school does not have a register of gifted and talented pupils

Commentary

27. The school's provision for the personal support and the welfare of pupils has improved since the time of the last inspection. It is now good and the minor issues raised at that time have been addressed.
28. Appropriate health and safety checks are made and safe practices observed. Child protection procedures are good and all members of staff have received training. There is good access for pupils and parents with physical disabilities, which helps to ensure that all pupils can participate in the curriculum and in social aspects of school life.
29. The personal development of pupils is tracked well. Pupils' records are detailed and staff have good knowledge of pupils, are aware of their individual needs and have good relationships with them. However, although pupils are given some targets to improve, these are insufficiently matched to the individual and pupils are often unclear about what they have to do to improve so that they can meet the school's expectations of them.
30. Pupils with statements of special needs receive support over and above their entitlement from a learning assistant. Those with physical disabilities are given extra help when it is needed and teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that they are able to play a full part in lessons. For example, in games lessons, pupils with physical difficulties are given activities that they enjoy and can manage with support. There is no register of gifted or talented pupils and there is

a risk that those of particularly high ability or with particular attributes will not be recognised or catered for.

31. The school has very good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils new to the school settle in quickly and comfortably. This was evident during the inspection where reception children who had only been in school for two weeks appeared happy and secure. Pupils in Year 6 are prepared well for their transition to secondary school in personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons where all aspects of the transfer are addressed.
32. Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon in several ways. The school council which consists of pupils from Years 3 to 6 meets regularly and suggestions from all pupils are considered. Suggestions which have resulted in action include the provision of playground equipment, a buddy bench and non-uniform days. The school canvasses pupils who are leaving school and takes note of their view and opinions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Communication between home and school and the school's links with parents are **satisfactory** overall. **Family Learning** facilities **contribute well** to the good links the school has with the local community. **Liaison** with other schools for the transfer of pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information provided about the school in the prospectus and governors' report is clear and detailed
- A significant minority of parents feel that the school does not provide sufficient information about pupils' progress
- Annual written reports, although satisfactory overall, do not always give clear information about achievement in all subjects
- The school is used well by the community and parents for Family Learning
- There are inconsistencies in the setting of homework and in the use of pupils' planners and reading records which cause problems for parents
- The Friends of the School association provides good support and raises substantial funds for resources
- Liaison between the school and local secondary schools is very good and transfer arrangements are effective

Commentary

33. Parents are generally supportive of the school and work well with staff in the education of their children. Almost all parents agree that their children enjoy coming to school. Some parents have misgivings about aspects of school life, including the information provided. Adequate opportunities are provided to discuss pupils' progress with their teachers formally and teachers of younger children are available at the beginning and end of each day. The school's efforts to encourage the independence of older pupils has lessened the day-to-day contact between parents and teachers but most parents feel that they can approach staff if necessary and that the school encourages partnership with parents. Parents have recently been consulted about open evenings and their views have been considered. Information provided in annual written reports is good in English and mathematics but in other subjects information is rather brief and is less useful to parents. Letters and newsletters provide adequate information for parents about school issues and the curriculum. This aspect of the school's links with parents has improved satisfactorily since the last inspection.

34. The school has a successful Friends of the School association which is instrumental in providing additional funding for resources and visits. Recent acquisitions subsidised by the association include play equipment for the infant playground and for the reception play area. A regular amount is allocated each year for library books and means that a regular supply of new books is available to encourage pupils to read. This makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
35. The use of pupils' planners and reading records varies from class to class and in many cases these are not used well as a means of communication between home and school. Planners are not used to record what pupils have to do at home and inconsistencies in the way in which homework is set leave parents unclear about the school's policy.
36. The school is involved in a local education authority initiative to provide Family Learning and this is successful in giving parents the opportunity to gain a better understanding of their child's learning in numeracy and literacy. Classes are well attended and provide a useful facility for members of the local community not only to support children's learning at home but to improve their own literacy and numeracy skills.
37. The transition arrangements for Year 6 pupils into secondary education are very good and the school helps pupils prepare for this during their last year in school. Arrangements for the exchange of information between schools are good and particularly strong with the main receiving high school. Year 6 pupils undertake linking units of work in core subjects which are continued and developed at secondary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory** with some strengths.

The quality of leadership is **satisfactory**.

The quality of management is **satisfactory**.

The overall quality of governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher actively promotes an inclusive school in which each individual matters
- The headteacher has led the school successfully through a difficult period of staff changes
- Procedures for the school's self-evaluation do not always provide the detailed information the school needs to bring about improvement
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but governors strategic role in shaping the direction of the school is less developed
- The monitoring and evaluation targets in the school's action plans vary in quality and at times lack rigour
- Good management of special educational needs has improved the provision for this group of pupils

Commentary

38. As in the last inspection, the headteacher's caring leadership sets the tone for the school. He is highly committed to all pupils and staff and has sustained the positive, family ethos over this period of time between inspections. All staff and governors work towards the school being one where educational inclusion is of paramount importance and where everyone has an equal opportunity to make progress with full access to the curriculum. This key aspect is managed well and the efforts in making the school inclusive were acknowledged when the school recently gained Investors in People.
39. During the last two years there have been a number of staff changes, including significant change in the senior management team. Periods of staff absences added further complications. These changes have not only disrupted the programme of school improvement but also posed problems in strategic planning and management. The care and effort taken by the headteacher and the governing body in recruiting staff to strengthen both curriculum expertise and the senior management team place the school in a good position to move forward. Good procedures are in place to introduce new teachers to the school so that pupils' learning is least disturbed. They are given additional support and help over and above that normally expected from established staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, who act as mentors.
40. The strategic plan includes intents, priorities and targets which provide staff and governors with an overview of developments. However, separate action plans for each priority, generally drawn up by the relevant subject co-ordinator, are of variable quality and may lack specific criteria for monitoring and evaluating the success of planned initiatives. Consequently, targets carried forward are very similar from year to year and often with too little indication of how the much the gap has narrowed between the starting point and the target. This makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness and value of any action taken. This issue was also raised during the last inspection and while some improvements have been made some action plans still lack sufficient rigour
41. There are satisfactory systems in place for evaluating the work of the school, although some of the information these provide lacks the detail needed to determine the root causes of the school's weaknesses. For example, although performance data is used to determine pupils' progress in English year on year, the school has not taken the next step of analysing the data in more detail to ascertain the precise reasons why some pupils' progress in writing is not good enough.
42. The headteacher and special needs co-ordinator make an effective team and the provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. Strategies for ensuring pupils' needs are identified early and that their learning is supported appropriately are fully in place and contribute positively to the good achievement pupils make.
43. The school benefits from a committed and conscientious governing body. They fulfil their statutory requirements and several take an active part in the daily life of the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, recognising, for example, that standards in writing and test results in science are not high enough. The headteacher and governors ensure that systems for performance management and the continued professional development of all staff are working effectively. Although the governing body play an active part in making decisions that affect the future of the school, they rely quite heavily on others for the picture of how well the school is doing. This lessens their ability to contribute to the vision and direction of the school or to challenge the headteacher and senior staff on the school's performance.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	673788
Total expenditure	610813
Expenditure per pupil	2197

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	116655
Balance carried forward to the next year	179630

44. As the table above indicates, the school has accrued a large surplus, mainly as a result of its move to new premises a few years ago. Senior staff and governors are aware that this level of budget surplus is unacceptable and has secure plans in place to reduce it significantly over the next two years. These spending plans centre mainly on maintaining high staff levels in order to drive up standards. In some areas the impact is already being felt. The governors' decision to increase the number of support staff has proved to be a wise one. They have helped to raise the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs and to increase their levels of achievement.
45. Financial planning and control continue to be efficient. The staff manage the day-to-day spending very well and were rightly commended for their diligence in the school's latest auditors' report. Governors keep a close eye on the school's finances and have a thorough understanding of the principles of best value

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The quality of education provided for children in the Foundation Stage **is good**, and constructive improvements have been made since the last inspection. (In this school the Foundation Stage refers to children in the reception class.)

There are currently only 12 children in the reception class. These children have settled in quickly and have already begun to achieve well. It is very early in the term but there are clear signs that these children will at least meet the early learning goals in all the areas of learning at the end of their time in reception. Not all cohorts are as capable and in some years a significant proportion of children struggle to achieve the targets for their age. Irrespective of their starting points, children make good progress while in the Foundation Stage. This is the result of a very caring environment, where children may explore and repeat experiences, according to their need, and in which secure foundations are laid for the future demands of the National Curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and relationships between children and adults are very good
- The curriculum is good, with a strong emphasis on developing children as independent learners
- The accommodation is spacious and the resources are of good quality
- Planning and assessment arrangements are good
- The use of outdoor play to develop children's' learning is limited
- Some activities in the sand and water areas lack a sufficiently clear focus

Teaching, learning and the curriculum

46. The quality of teaching is good, with the teacher and teaching assistant working well as a team to create a very caring and secure environment. They manage children well and have developed very good relationships with them. The activities effectively challenge the ability of all children, so that they make continual progress and achieve the goals they are expected to reach in all the areas of learning. There is a happy atmosphere, in which children feel secure and grow in confidence through the helpful praise that they receive.
47. The curriculum effectively addresses all the areas of learning and links well to the National Curriculum for pupils in Year 1. Strong emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy and also on the children's personal, social and emotional development. The planning procedures are comprehensive and provide clear guidelines for moving children through the stepping-stones for learning to the early learning goals. The learning objectives usually have a clear focus, though some of the activities in the sand and water areas lack sufficient structure and purpose. Despite the curriculum being good there is some imbalance, with the broader and more effective range of activities provided indoors compared with those planned for outdoors.
48. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are comprehensive and these enable the progress made by individual children to be monitored. Parents are kept informed of this progress and they are welcome to discuss this with the teacher. There is good use of day-to-day assessment to inform the planning of children's learning experiences. There is spacious indoor accommodation and a secure outdoor area. However, the use of this area to provide a full range of outdoor experiences is limited. Resources are plentiful and of good quality across all the areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

49. The good progress children make in this area results from the many well-planned activities staff provide to develop this aspect of children's learning, especially their independence as learners. Children are encouraged to involve themselves in classroom tasks, such as getting equipment out and tidying up when they have finished. Routines and rules are well established and children know what behaviour is appropriate and what is unacceptable. They make good progress in learning to play harmoniously with others, to share and to co-operate with adults. Most children are able to look after their personal hygiene and can undress and dress themselves, with some help, for physical education. Children's attitudes to learning are positive and their response in lessons is good. They co-operate well with each other, especially when participating in activities that are not under the direct supervision of a member of staff.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

50. The children are taught the basic skills of reading and writing effectively and are given many opportunities to talk about their work and personal experiences. They listen to stories attentively and give their opinions sensibly, as when they were discussing the different kinds of fruit in the story of *Handa's Surprise*. The children enjoy books and handle them with care. They are beginning to associate sounds with patterns, words and letters, and are able to recognise simple familiar words. Children enjoy basic writing experiences, and use a range of implements carefully for drawing, marking, scribbling and writing.

MATHEMATICS

51. Many practical activities are given to children to develop their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills. They show an interest and curiosity in numbers and enjoy trying to solve simple mathematical problems. In one lesson they sang number rhymes well and the majority counted confidently to five, with higher attainers responding readily to 'one more' type questions. They know the names of simple shapes such as circle and square and can describe objects with words such as 'round'. They are developing simple mathematical language such as 'more than' and 'less than' during their mathematical and play activities.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

52. Adults encourage the children to develop their powers of observation and ability to ask questions as part of their natural curiosity. This was evident when they were using magnifying glasses to look carefully at their hands and then talking about the differences between their own and those of others. Children use a paint program confidently on the computer to draw pictures, showing secure mouse and keyboard skills. They work together well on their practical activities and select sensibly from a range of resources.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

53. The children can walk, run, skip and hop with confidence and their awareness and control of their own and others space are developing well. This was seen in a good quality physical education lesson in which they were effectively taught how to balance on different parts of the body. They show suitable skills with scissors, writing tools and painting equipment, and know that these need to be used safely. The outside area is not used as well as it could be by adults to develop the children's skills in using larger pieces of outdoor play equipment and this is preventing a further rise in standards.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

54. Good provision is made for children to use paint, crayons, pencils, play dough and glue each day. The stimulating learning environment and good teaching encourage children to use their ideas in their creative work. In their painting activities, the children know the differences between colours and can use this to make representative images. They are being taught well to use a variety of techniques, such as making a collage of their handprints. They are making satisfactory progress in their understanding of how sounds and noises are made and show great enjoyment in using their own voices in musical activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school achieve well in reading
- Achievement in writing is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6
- Assessment lacks the rigour to set targets for improvement for individual pupils
- There is good provision and support for pupils with special educational needs
- Teachers make very effective use of teaching assistants
- There is limited use of ICT in English

Commentary

55. Standards in speaking and listening have been maintained since the last inspection and remain at the expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards in reading are good and are above average throughout the school. Although pupils' achievement in writing remains satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, there is a fall in Years 3 to 6; by the end of Year 6 standards are below average.
56. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory overall and the teaching of reading is good. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make good use of the class shared reading session to develop pupils' appreciation of a wide range of books. During these sessions teachers review many points of grammar, spelling and how language is used for effect, as well as teaching basic reading skills. Pupils' learning is helped by parents' diligence in hearing their children read at home. A good feature of teaching is the focus and structure of guided reading sessions with small groups. Questions such as "What do you think.....?" encourage pupils to discuss and justify their views. By the end of Year 6, the many opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to read books pay dividends as they have a good understanding of the themes and characters of books and talk with enthusiasm about their preferences in reading.
57. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given a variety of opportunities to develop their writing and they make a good effort to complete their work, whether it be, for example, an extended story or a set of instructions. Pupils in Year 2 have individual 'word banks' of interesting words to enliven their stories and use, for example, 'After a while' and 'Meanwhile' to start a sentence. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are given opportunities to develop their skills in writing to entertain, inform and persuade, particularly in the Year 3 class. However, the teaching of writing in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory overall because it does not enable pupils to achieve well enough. There is a lack of understanding of how to move pupils from one National Curriculum level to the next. As a result, teachers do not set sufficiently sharp targets for individual pupils or give them a clear enough understanding of exactly what they need to do to improve.

58. Regular testing gives teachers a useful indicator of progress. Until recently, however, there has been too little analysis of the outcomes to discover why some pupils have made less progress than others. The tests themselves have not helped teachers to identify what should be taught next or to set targets that relate precisely to the work of individual pupils. There are some examples of marking which inform pupils of the progress they are making, but this practice is inconsistent. Comments in pupils' books tend to provide praise but not to help pupils to recognise the next steps in their learning. Occasionally, all pupils are given the same work regardless of ability. When this happens, some pupils struggle to make sense of the task or to complete it, while for higher attaining pupils it has insufficient challenge.
59. Teachers' concerns over the lower achievement of boys compared with that of girls, in national writing tests, have led to an additional emphasis on topics that appeal to boys. This initiative is already showing success. For example, particularly skilful teaching in Year 6, including an excellent choice of story to motivate both boys and girls, resulted in a high level of involvement from pupils of all abilities. Consequently, even the more reluctant writers came up with lively phrases, such as "children flocked to see me" and "I gave the ladies a modest wink".
60. Teachers make particularly good use of initiatives such as early and further literacy schemes to help pupils who have special educational needs or who just need an extra push with their reading or writing. Teachers plan work that matches pupils' targets on their individual educational plans and enable them to complete the same range of work as other pupils but at a suitable level. Pupils benefit considerably from the good help they get from trained support assistants. They help pupils to concentrate and encourage them to have a go before stepping in to help.
61. The co-ordinator, although new to the job, has a clear idea of what needs doing to raise standards. A start has been made on analysing test results to identify where the weaknesses are. Plans to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, with the support of the local education authority's literacy consultant, will provide additional information, putting the school in a better position to improve standards. There is a firm will to ensure that action is taken to meet the school's targets for improvement. All staff share this commitment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. This is **satisfactory overall**. Teachers use correct language in all subjects to extend and develop pupils' vocabulary. In music, for instance, pupils in Year 3 use *pitch* and *dynamics* as they appraise a piece of music. Pupils listen politely to each other during discussions in pairs or groups or as a class. Pupils' writing skills are extended satisfactorily in most subjects. In history, for example, pupils in Year 6 empathise with evacuees in World War II, while pupils in Year 2 write a sequenced account of the Great Fire of London. In science, however, inconsistencies in the approach to report writing detract from the use of written language to aid learning. The lack of a computer suite has meant that the use of ICT in English has lacked development. This is now being rectified following the school's leasing of laptop computers and pupils are rapidly developing their skills in drafting.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils receive a balanced curriculum which enables them to achieve satisfactorily in all aspects of the subject
- The teaching is consistently sound with examples of good teaching in both key stages
- Pupils are taught a range of strategies for making accurate calculations and encouraged to make decisions about the best way of working out
- There are no individual pupil targets against which pupils can measure their own learning or to indicate what they need to do to improve – marking also lacks information for pupils
- Teachers' planning is clear and functional and activities are modified to ensure that pupils of differing abilities have work that is appropriate
- Pupils apply themselves well to their work and show a good level of interest in the subject

Commentary

63. Results in the national tests for Year 2 pupils were broadly in line with the national average in 2002, for the second year in succession. Unconfirmed results from this year's test suggest that this level has generally been maintained. This represents a satisfactory level of achievement. In the four years up to 2002 the results attained by Year 6 pupils fluctuated between well above and below average. Last years' results were broadly average and the unvalidated data from this year suggests that this is likely to be the level again this year. This is a satisfactory achievement for the school.
64. Teachers have a secure grasp of how to teach the subject and provide activities that interest pupils and encourage them to learn. A strength of the teaching is the way in which pupils are taught different methods of making calculations and encouraged to choose the ones that work best for them or which best fit the problem they are trying to solve. For example, Year 6 pupils are learning different ways of multiplying large numbers and have been told that one of the first things they need to do is to decide how much can be achieved mentally and how much they need to write down. By encouraging decision making in this way teachers are helping pupils to develop independence and flexibility in their approach to a new problem.
65. All aspects of the subject are taught in the same positive manner and pupils receive a well-balanced range of experiences. As a result, pupils maintain a similar satisfactory rate of progress in learning about numbers, being able to use measurement and in handling various forms of mathematical data. Pupils are given regular opportunities to solve problems and carry out mathematical investigations, and their skills and understanding of how to apply their mathematics move forward progressively. In the most effective lessons activities are modified well so that pupils of differing abilities have work that is appropriate to their individual needs. Teachers use carefully structured questions to make pupils think and intervene at key points to maintain the pace of the lesson.
66. Pupils' learning is helped significantly by the interest they show and their willingness to concentrate on the work in hand. Most pupils are trying hard to memorise number facts, such as their multiplication tables, but many find it difficult to recall an answer at random and often have to recite the whole table. This slows the speed at which they are able to work but does not detract from the good level of accuracy that is often achieved.

67. Although pupils' progress through the levels of the National Curriculum is monitored systematically and targets are set each year for their achievement, pupils are not given a sufficiently clear picture of what they need to do to improve and keep on improving. There are no step-by-step objectives to which individual pupils and their teachers can refer.
68. The subject is led well by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has helped the school maintain standards at a satisfactory level through a period of considerable change. The provision the school is making for pupils' learning in mathematics is closely monitored but senior staff have still to get to the bottom of why Year 6 test results, particularly those of the boys, have fluctuated widely over the past few years. There are some indications that standards are settling down. However, the school has insufficient information to say for certain that this is the case and lacks a more detailed picture of pupils' development. Overall there has been satisfactory development since the last inspection, particularly in the positive manner in which the school has adopted the National Strategy for Numeracy.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils receive **appropriate opportunities** to use and apply their mathematics in other subjects and this provides a **satisfactory extension** to their learning. In science, for example, pupils are encouraged to measure accurately as they are investigating and to record the data clearly in tables and charts. The sequence of time is taught as an integral part of history lessons, and temperature and directional compass points form part of the geography curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and in Years 1 to 6 pupils make steady progress
- The co-ordinator has created a good action plan for improvement, although she has limited time to monitor it
- The teaching has good features and pupils with special educational needs are supported well
- Pupils enjoy their science work
- Assessment procedures, pupils' skills in making scientific conclusions and the use of ICT to support learning are underdeveloped

Commentary

70. Teachers' assessments present an accurate picture of the broadly average standards Year 2 pupils attain. Although National Curriculum test result for Year 6 pupils have been below average for some time, this is not a true reflection of standards pupils achieve, which are satisfactory and in line with expectations for pupils in Years 1 to 6. The main reason for the below average results over the last few years is the way the curriculum is planned. This has resulted in the pupils in Year 6 not being sufficiently prepared for the tests, as they have not had enough time to revisit and consolidate what they have learned in previous years. The co-ordinator's action plan prioritises modifying the curriculum so that enough time is set aside for this consolidation. The plan also involves auditing teachers' subject knowledge and then providing training to help overcome any gaps. These initiatives are correctly targeted at the problem of weak test results and should enable pupils to turn the average levels of attainment they are currently showing into better test results in the future.

71. The co-ordinator works the equivalent of two and a half days per week and so has limited time available to oversee the effective implementation of this plan. The school has yet to ensure that this does not impede improvement. After dropping significantly in 1999 standards have risen steadily and kept pace with improvements nationally. There has been satisfactory progress in the subject since the last report in 1998.
72. Where teaching is good the lessons are motivating, with pupils being clear about what they are to learn and what is expected of them. They are asked challenging questions and the work builds well on their prior learning. The end of the lesson is used well to review and consolidate learning, with pupils being asked if they feel they have met their targets for the lesson. Teaching assistants are used very well and provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, so that they are fully involved in all activities.
73. It is obvious that pupils enjoy their work in science, particularly when involved in practical activities. They are well behaved, work well together and show interest and curiosity in what they are doing. Pupils in Year 6 talked with enthusiasm about their investigation into reversible and irreversible change that they were in the middle of planning.
74. The school's assessment arrangements allow the progress of pupils to be checked and to identify the levels at which they are working. However, these procedures are not rigorous enough to enable teachers to set clear targets for improvement that pupils can use to measure how well they are doing. In addition the quality of marking varies between teachers and in general does not give pupils sufficient information.
75. Although pupils' investigative skills are satisfactory overall, most tend to draw conclusions from their enquiries that are a description of what has been observed rather than an evaluation of what they have found out. This prevents them working at the upper levels of the National Curriculum. There is some use of ICT by pupils to research information and record findings, but this is at an early stage of development. There is no common format for recording information in science lessons and different classes record their work in a variety of ways. This leads to confusion and pupils are unclear as to what is expected of their writing in science. To some extent this reflects the problems the school has with writing in general.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently acquired laptop computers are providing pupils with good opportunities to learn, and teachers are becoming more confident in using ICT
- Lessons are taught competently and the teaching has some good features
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject
- Procedures for assessment do not provide sufficient information to aid teachers' planning
- The use of ICT in other subjects is still at an early stage of development

Commentary

76. The lack of a computer suite has been a hindrance to whole-class teaching of ICT skills, with pupils not having enough time on computers. This has now been overcome by the leasing of 20 laptops that are timetabled into each class weekly. Though there are still some teething troubles in setting these up at times, the teachers are gaining in their confidence in the flexible use of these laptops. Consequently, pupils now have more time on computers to learn and practise

their skills in ICT. Teachers have undergone training to improve their expertise and are able to help pupils overcome difficulties that arise when using the various computer programs. These developments are beginning to have an impact on pupils' achievement, which is satisfactory at present but showing signs of increasing. Improving teacher expertise was one of the key issues in the last inspection report. This has been addressed well and there has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection.

77. In the best lessons, the teachers are confident in their ability to demonstrate the various new techniques for pupils to use. They set work that builds on previous knowledge and which effectively challenges pupils of all abilities. The pace of the lesson is brisk but pupils are given time to reflect and evaluate on their performance as the lesson develops. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 on developing a multi-media presentation on an aspect of Ancient Egypt. They were able to draw on their work from the previous week on carrying out a search on the Internet. Pupils were confident in logging on and beginning the search for themselves. When any problems arose, the teacher had the expertise to quickly help the pupils to solve them.
78. The pupils have positive attitudes when working on computers and treat them with respect. They are enthusiastic, well behaved and work well in pairs when required to do so. The assessment procedures are in the process of being reviewed by the subject manager so as to provide a better system of checking the progress of pupils and of letting them know what they need to do next to improve their work.

ICT across the curriculum

79. There are some good examples of teachers using ICT to develop pupils' learning in other subjects. This was evident in a literacy lesson for pupils in Year 5 when they were working in pairs on the laptops to draft a poem on the theme of 'feelings'. However, the use of ICT is not yet an integral part of classroom activities and is underdeveloped across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

No history lessons were seen and findings are based primarily on the work pupils completed last year and evaluation of the curriculum.

Five lessons were seen in geography and three in religious education and findings were confirmed in discussion with staff and pupils and from examining pupils' work.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are not developing a cohesive body of geographical knowledge or the skills they need to learn effectively in this subject and by Year 6 standards are below expectations and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory
- Although the teaching is unsatisfactory overall there are sufficient positive features in lessons to form a foundation for improvement

Commentary

80. Although the teaching in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to achieve satisfactory standards by Year 2, pupils' learning is disjointed in Years 3 to 6, which leaves Year 6 pupils with gaps in their knowledge and weaknesses in their skills. A significant proportion of Year 6 pupils have difficulty

naming key features on a map of the world and a minority do not recognise it for what it is. Even when looking at places closer to home they make fundamental mistakes and have problems positioning the city in which they live on a map of the United Kingdom or identifying the river that runs through it.

81. The teaching in lessons has some positive attributes, such as the way in which teachers encourage pupils to think about how geographical features and local events have an impact on peoples' lives. However, the teaching and learning programme and the way in which the subject guidance of the National Curriculum is used do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to progressively develop their knowledge of the geographical structure and features of the world or to grasp securely how they came about.
82. The school is aware that it is some time since geography was made a focus for development and 'the cracks are beginning to show'. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to make a full evaluation of the provision the school is making and is not yet fully aware of what needs to be done to bring about the required improvements. Pupils are not learning as well in geography as they did at the time of the last inspection.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages achieve good standards
- Teaching is good throughout the school
- A lively curriculum is enriched with a range of interesting visits and visitors

Commentary

83. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' knowledge and skills are **above expectations** and throughout the school **achievement is good**. This is the result of effective teaching and learning with pupils expected to consider events for themselves, arrive at decisions independently and record what they think is important individually.
84. Teachers only use worksheets when these are appropriate so that much of what pupils write shows a good level of original thought. Work of this nature presents pupils with a high level of challenge to which they respond very well, paying close attention to detail and trying hard to explain themselves clearly. Pupils' understanding of how historical events unfolded and how they influenced the lives of the people who lived at the time is the strength of their work.
85. Pupils' positive response to the subject is due in no small part to the interesting activities teachers provide. Periods of history are often brought to life with a well-planned visit to an exhibition or event. Visitors in role, such as Florence Nightingale, add a further dimension and add much to the quality of learning experiences pupils receive. There have been constructive developments in history since the last inspection and pupils' learning has improved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a broad and balanced curriculum
- Teaching is consistently sound and has positive features
- Pupils enjoy the subject and show respect for the beliefs of others
- There is limited use of ICT

Commentary

86. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. The curriculum is now broad enough and pupils have a sound knowledge of Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism as well as Christianity, thereby addressing a criticism raised at the time of the last inspection.
87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. When teaching is good, teachers use their expertise well to allow pupils to develop their own faith by exploring their feelings. They are skilful at using pupils' own experiences to provide them with starting points for religious education. This helped pupils in Year 2 to gain a good understanding of being 'special', a basic concept necessary to the understanding of religions. Resources are chosen carefully to stimulate pupils' interest in the subject. Pupils in the Years 3 and 4 class were enthralled to see a video of part of their teacher's wedding ceremony, used to extend their understanding of symbolism and ritual in worship.
88. Pupils enjoy religious education, particularly when finding out about world faiths. They are taught to look for similarities and differences between religions and consequently are aware that festivals of worship, special books and rituals of prayer are shared by more than one religion. They show respect for the beliefs of others. One pupil commented, "Everyone should be allowed to make up their own minds." Although pupils use their literacy skills well enough during discussions, reading for information and when making written recordings of their work, the use of ICT to enhance the curriculum is at an early stage of development.
89. The co-ordinator has implemented the new agreed syllabus and has dedicated time to monitor and evaluate its impact. A comprehensive action plan is in place which includes the development of first-hand experiences of other faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two lessons were seen in art and design and further information was gained from looking at samples of pupils' work.

Two lessons were seen in design and technology and because it is early in the school year evidence is limited.

Three lessons were seen in music in Year 3 to Year 6.

One physical education lesson was seen in Year 2. Three lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6, one of which was swimming

ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning are good
- The school draws upon the expertise of local artists
- There are strong links with the performing arts
- Art makes an effective contribution to pupils' personal development

Commentary

90. Pupils achieve well in art and design. Standards are above average throughout the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. By the time they leave school, pupils work confidently with a wide range of materials, tools and techniques. They take great pride in their work and develop ideas with care, attention to detail and growing skill.
91. The main reasons for this positive picture are the enthusiasm and hard work of teachers, a rich curriculum and the school's investment in good materials and expert support. The school regularly uses the expertise of local artists and potters, particularly during the week dedicated to the arts. Art and design also has a considerable impact on the school's integrated arts programme throughout the year. Art and design makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development because they all experience success and this is generously appreciated by adults and other pupils. Pupils' cultural development is also augmented, not only by their knowledge of local art but also by their knowledge of the work of famous artists such as Constable, Monet and Picasso.
92. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. A strength of the teaching lies in the confident demonstrations, given by teachers, of the techniques and skills they want pupils to acquire. This helped most pupils in the Years 4 and 5 class to create a colour chart with a gradual change in tones. In the Years 1 and 2 class, the teacher showed her appreciation of the pupils' first attempts at working with pastels by immediately displaying their finished portrait for everyone to see. Pupils use their developing ICT skills in art, for example using a paint program or finding out more about the life of a famous artist.
93. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject has retained its high profile and remains very popular with pupils. A useful system to record what pupils know and can do has been introduced since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has gained a good understanding of the strengths in the subject through examining pupils' work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Insufficient design and technology was seen to make a judgement about the quality of provision.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and interesting
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and have full access to the curriculum

Commentary

94. There is insufficient evidence on which to base secure judgements about standards of achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, and development since the last inspection.
95. Pupils are able to develop their design and making skills through being involved in a variety of interesting activities, which require them to learn about and use a broad range of suitable materials. Pupils are taught to make simple evaluations of their finished products and begin to appreciate how this brings about improvements in design and construction. There are some good links with other subjects, as was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 3 when they were using their scientific knowledge and understanding of forces to help them compare the effectiveness of two different pneumatic systems.
96. Most pupils respond well to the opportunities provided and readily involve themselves in the activities. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of all pupils and give those with special educational needs the help they require to maintain concentration and to participate fully in lessons.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are strong links with the performing arts
- Music makes an effective contribution to pupils' cultural development
- In some lessons too many activities are planned for the limited time available
- Recorder clubs and the school choir enhance provision

Commentary

97. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and continue to match those expected by the end of Year 6. Through a variety of visiting musicians, music makes a strong contribution to the school's integrated arts programme. Pupils' cultural development is widened as they sing traditional Maori, Hindi and African songs. Their knowledge of local cultures is strengthened when they make a musical contribution to a Viking Festival as part of the integrated arts programme.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator teaches music throughout the school and this ensures continuity between classes. Teaching is characterised by demonstrations of the techniques needed to play each instrument, the use of notation and opportunities for pupils to perform. Difficulties arise when too much is packed into one lesson and some aspects are covered superficially or time runs out for pupils to practise to improve their performance. Pupils enjoy singing and using musical instruments. Pupils in Year 3 accurately named their instruments, including an octachime and a cabassa, and handled them with care as they used them to indicate the smooth or jerky sound of the 'Spinning Jenny'.
99. The integrated arts programme has raised the profile of music and a number of pupils benefit from instrumental tuition from music specialists. The co-ordinator is responsible for recorder clubs and the choir. These enhance the provision and increase pupils' enjoyment of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **sound overall** and for swimming the provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning of swimming is good
- The teaching in other aspects of the subject is at least sound and on occasions good
- Pupils show interest and want to improve
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well
- Some lessons are too short

Commentary

100. The majority of Year 6 pupils swim well and attainment in this aspect of the subject is above average. This represents good achievement and is the result of well-planned and effective teaching. School staff, a governor and professional coaches employed at the swimming pool combine effectively to provide good quality tuition for pupils of differing abilities.

101. Skills shown by pupils in games and dance are in line with expectations for pupils' age and their achievements are satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate the techniques they want pupils to acquire clearly and confidently and this gives pupils a secure grasp of what they are trying to achieve.

102. The majority of pupils behave well during lessons and show a desire to improve and progress. Equality of opportunity is provided for all pupils and those with disabilities receive sensitive and effective support from teaching assistants to enable them to access the curriculum. As a result pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

103. Some of the lessons which take place in the hall are not long enough. The teacher has insufficient opportunity to develop key aspects of the activities, such as how to evaluate performance, and pupils have too little time to consolidate and improve on the things they have learned.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one short lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school provides a good programme for this aspect of pupils' education, further details of which are contained in the curriculum section of this report.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
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).

