

INSPECTION REPORT

**ALDERMAN POUNDER
INFANT and NURSERY SCHOOL**

Chilwell, Nottingham

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122548

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Kimpson

Lead inspector: George Crowther

Dates of inspection: 17th – 19th November 2003

Inspection number: 255310

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	221
School address:	Eskdale Drive Chilwell Nottingham
Postcode:	NG9 5FN
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Shipman
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Alderman Pounder is an average-sized, community infant school for boys and girls who are 3-7 years old. It has 148 pupils organised in six classes, and 73 children who attend part-time in the nursery. The school is situated in the Chilwell area of Nottingham. About half of the pupils live in the area immediately surrounding the school, but about half come from further away. The school is popular with parents and usually full. A significant minority of families are visiting Nottingham from overseas to study at college or university. The school serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are similar to the national picture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is close to that expected for their ages, though there is a range of ability within each age group that varies from year to year. Twenty-six pupils, an average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, but none has a statement to outline specific needs. The great majority of the pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds, but about ten per cent are from other ethnic backgrounds and two are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18814	George Crowther	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education
9053	Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector	
27544	Sandra Herbert	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, geography, history, special educational needs
30244	Roger Tapley	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, religious education, English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Alderman Pounder is a good and effective school. When children join the nursery, overall standards of attainment are about the same as those expected for their ages. Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are well above average. Although standards in mathematics dipped below average in last year's national tests, they are currently above average. The quality of teaching is good, with some very strong features. Very good leadership by the headteacher is ensuring that high standards are maintained. The staff have created a very stimulating environment for learning and the friendly, caring atmosphere around the school supports pupils' achievements well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Children get a very good start to school in the nursery
- Pupils' good achievements have been sustained over a number of years, but the more able pupils did not do well enough in last year's national mathematics tests
- Teaching is good overall, and often very good, particularly in English
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to supporting pupils' learning
- Strong leadership by the headteacher, supported by the staff, focuses on further improvement of the school's work, but recent, positive developments now need to be seen through
- The curriculum provides a rich set of learning experiences
- A strong emphasis on caring for the pupils ensures that everyone is fully included in all aspects of school life

Since the school was inspected in 1998, improvement has been good. Standards in national tests have improved and have been sustained a high level. Despite a recent dip in the mathematics results, improvement has been in line with that seen nationally. The one significant issue from the last inspection, concerning raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT), has been dealt with very well. Achievement in ICT is now very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	B	A	A	A
writing	A	A	A	A
mathematics	B	B	D	D

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

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Pupils' achievements are good. In the nursery, children achieve very well because the wide range of well-planned activities stimulates their learning and adults provide very good teaching. In the reception year, children achieve well in reading and writing, and satisfactorily in mathematics. By the time they join Year 1, almost all of the children exceed the expected standards. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is very good in reading and writing, good in science and satisfactory in mathematics. By the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics and science. Achievement in ICT is very good and, by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average. Standards in art and design and design and technology are above average. All pupils who have special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, do very well because they are supported very effectively and given lots of encouragement.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and general approach to learning are very good. Their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are fostered very well by the school's ethos and the curriculum. From the time they join the nursery, pupils of all ages are very interested in all the activities and want to do their best. In lessons, and around the school, pupils' behaviour is very good. The school provides lots of opportunities that develop pupils' social skills, and there is a strong emphasis on pupils learning about right and wrong. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Very good teaching for children in the nursery is well planned and organised to provide a rich variety of experiences. Adults have high expectations of the children's achievements. They know just how to encourage and support the children, who are happy, confident and make very good progress in all areas of learning. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is good overall and particularly strong in Year 2 and for English. Strengths include an enthusiasm for learning that is transmitted to the pupils, lots of praise and encouragement to make pupils confident learners, imaginative teaching methods in many lessons, and the very good contribution made by teaching assistants. Very good teaching is typified by high expectations and challenging tasks that really makes the pupils think and work hard.

The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of activities. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are good, but some are recently in place and are not yet fully effective in helping teachers to know exactly what pupils need to learn next. Procedures for tracking the progress of pupils across the school are strong and improving. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils and has created a very good partnership with its parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school is good. The headteacher has made a very positive impact during her first year at the school. She has gained the confidence and commitment of the school community, which has enabled her to see through a number of improvements. Along with the staff team, she is firmly focused on sustaining and improving the high standards achieved by the children. The senior staff team, recently formed, is leading developments effectively. The governing body is very supportive of the school, takes a keen interest in its work, and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Whilst many governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need to be improved, this is based too much on information provided by the headteacher and too little on their own systems for finding out about the quality of teaching and learning.

Management of the school is good. The school runs very smoothly from day to day, and management has a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. The school improvement plan is a good document, which focuses correctly on a number of priorities. A number of positive, recent developments, such as improving the monitoring of teaching and learning, and systems for assessment, have still to have a discernible impact on pupils' achievements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. Almost all feel that their children are making good progress and that the school does a good job. Pupils say they like school, find lessons interesting and fun, and they have to work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Ensure that the more able pupils are fully challenged in their mathematics work
- See through recent initiatives aimed at raising pupils' achievements

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievements are **good**. Children in the nursery achieve very well in all areas of their learning, owing to a well-planned curriculum, very good teaching and excellent relationships with adults. Achievement continues to be good in reception. Almost all of the children are on track to exceed the expected standards by the end of the reception year. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is very good in reading and writing because very good teaching develops pupils' skills systematically, so standards at the end of Year 2 are well above average. In science, achievement is good. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory. Whilst almost all pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2, the proportion exceeding this standard is less than in similar schools. The school ensures that all pupils achieve well by paying attention to their particular needs and ensuring that they are fully involved in all learning opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a very good start to school in the nursery
- Pupils achieve very well in English and ICT
- More able pupils do not achieve well enough in mathematics
- Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs achieve very well
- Standards in art and design and design and technology are above average

Commentary

National test results and other performance data

1. Since the previous inspection, the school has sustained above, often well above average results in the national tests at the end of Year 2. The only exception was in the mathematics tests in 2003. In reading and writing, results have been consistently well above average, and much better than those gained by similar schools. In 2003, almost all pupils reached the nationally expected standard and about a third exceeded it in both reading and writing. Standards in writing are particularly high. In mathematics, although almost all pupils reached the expected level, only a fifth exceeded it, which was below average and depressed the overall comparison with other schools' results. This indicates that some more able pupils did not achieve well enough. The headteacher's decision to invigilate the new test for more able pupils herself, to ensure that it gave an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment, revealed some weaknesses in pupils' skills that the school is now dealing with. Standards in mathematics in the current Year 2 are above average, which suggests that test results will improve in 2004.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.1 (18.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.6 (16.4)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.1 (17.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Given that children start school with attainment that is about average overall, the test results, and the standard of work seen in pupils' books, represent very good achievement in English and good achievement overall. Pupils' attainment is tracked as they move through the school and records show that a high proportion of pupils are making better than expected progress. Very few pupils make less than the expected progress. The school has high expectations that all pupils can achieve well, which are reflected in the very positive encouragement that is given for each success. A well-planned curriculum, good teaching, and a strong emphasis on continually improving provision ensure that most pupils reach the standard of which they are capable.

Foundation Stage (nursery and reception)

3. Children achieve very well in the nursery. Excellent arrangements for starting nursery ensure that the children get a very good beginning. Adults quickly assess the level at which the children are learning and provide a very good range of activities to ensure that the children build their skills very well in all areas of the curriculum. Some skills are taught specifically and very effectively, using the talents of all the adults. In other areas, it is the richness of the activities, and the very good support provided by the staff that help the children to make very good progress. In some cases, advances in learning are rapid. As a result, the children are very well prepared for next step in their education. They continue to make good progress in the reception year, particularly in skills such as writing. The more structured pattern of lessons suits some of the children for some of their learning, but some activities are over-directed and focus more on teaching than the best way for the children to learn. Nonetheless, owing to the positive environment for learning throughout the Foundation Stage, the children get a very good basis for work in Years 1 and 2. Teachers and teaching assistants work in very effective teams to ensure that all the children are well supported in their learning.

Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2

4. Pupils' achievements are good in Years 1 and 2 because the curriculum is well organised and the teaching is effective. In English, pupils achieve very well in all aspects of their work. Teachers provide lots of opportunities in lessons for pupils to strengthen their speaking and listening skills. Reading is taught systematically, with the emphasis on enjoying books, and pupils learn a good range of ways to work out unfamiliar words and understand the text. Spelling, handwriting and punctuation are taught very well. By the end of Year 2, the content of many pupils' writing shows a maturity and imaginative use of language not often seen at this age. In mathematics, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, and best in their number work. The school is tackling some underachievement amongst the more able pupils. In science, pupils' factual knowledge develops well. By Year 2, they are beginning to carry out simple experiments, with support. Pupils' achievements in ICT are far better than at the previous inspection. Better resources, greater teaching expertise and a more coherent curriculum mean that, by Year 2, pupils reach standards that are much better than those expected for their ages. Standards in art and design are above average because pupils are encouraged to develop their skills through a wide range of techniques and materials. Design and technology projects are well planned and taught so that pupils reach standards that are better than those expected for their ages. Across a wide range of subjects, therefore, pupils make good progress.

Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language

5. Pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress in most lessons and towards the targets set for them. Teachers ensure that work is well matched to these pupils' needs and, in many lessons, very effective classroom assistants support their learning. These pupils consistently achieve the well-defined targets set out in their individual education plans. In lessons, teachers make sure that these pupils are fully involved. For example, in a very good English lesson for Year 2, after a lively introduction, teaching assistants worked with two groups of less able pupils to ensure they were successful at a challenging writing task. A small number of pupils join the school speaking little English, often having moved to Nottingham with their parents, who are studying locally. These pupils make remarkable progress and, if they stay at the school for an extended period, are often bi-lingual before they return to their home country. The school has developed particular expertise in supporting these pupils, who feel secure because their cultural heritage is celebrated within school.

6. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievements were good overall, but satisfactory in the nursery and for ICT. Pupils' achievements are now at least good in almost all the subjects inspected and very good in the nursery, for English and for ICT. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection underpinned by strong leadership and effective teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' **very good** attitudes and behaviour, their **good** attendance and very good punctuality provide a very firm foundation for all that they achieve. Pupils' personal qualities develop **very well** as a result of the school's **very good**, consistent attention to spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

Main strengths

- Pupils of all ages and abilities are very keen to take part in lessons and other activities
- Pupils behave very well as a result of the school's high expectations of conduct and manners; there have been no exclusions
- Pupils' personal development is very good because the school gives a high priority to nurturing it
- Relationships are very good and make a positive difference to the atmosphere in school in support of learning and all that pupils achieve

Commentary

7. From the time they join the nursery, where children thrive in the stimulating environment and come to love learning, pupils of all ages are very interested in all the activities offered by the school and want to do their best. As pupils said, they enjoy, "making things work and finding out things" so they respond very well when given the chance to think for themselves or have a challenge that they can meet if they try hard. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson, pupils with good writing skills seized the chance they were given to write creatively and thoroughly enjoyed being 'successful authors'. With help from skilled teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs are just as keen as everyone else is to have a go with the work they are set and are proud of what they achieve.

8. Pupils try to concentrate and to listen to instructions in lessons even on those occasions when they find it hard to follow the teacher's explanation of what they are to do. Their persistence and self-discipline help them to learn successfully. They know that they are expected to work hard, as they made very clear in their questionnaire responses. The school expects high standards of courtesy and conduct from pupils of all ages, who are very happy to do all they can to follow the example set by adults, led by the headteacher. As a result, pupils' behaviour is very good and they observe everyday courtesies very well, remembering to thank their dinner ladies and offering to help adults whenever they can. There is a very strong emphasis on thinking of other people and doing what is right. Pupils explained that, "if you do something really, really good, you can get a headteacher's award – that makes you feel proud".

9. The school's everyday life and work reflect the priority it gives to fostering high quality relationships and self-esteem in the way it teaches pupils to respect, value and celebrate each other's qualities. Pupils of all ethnic and social backgrounds get on well together. Vibrant displays not only create a rich and colourful environment for learning, but also celebrate individual and group achievements and cultural diversity. They powerfully reflect pupils' individual views of their world. This reinforces the school's values and its deep commitment to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness very well. Other routines, such as involvement in choosing to call the register in Korean to remember a friend who left the class, develop initiative and other personal qualities very well.

10. Relationships are very good. Pupils say that other children are friendly and bullying very rare. The fact that people are helpful and kind makes pupils feel happy and secure, so they are ready to make the most of lesson time to learn as well as they can. They feel comfortable about asking for help and contributing their ideas to quite challenging and illuminating discussions such as a scintillating session with a visitor exploring the significance of parts of the Christmas story.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good, with a number of very strong features. The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of experiences, with particular strengths in the nursery and for English and ICT. All pupils benefit equally from this, in accordance with their abilities and their particular needs. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very well and make very good progress. Good systems are in place for assessing pupils' developing knowledge and skills so that teachers know what pupils need to learn next. Pupils are cared for very well. The school has a very good partnership with parents and good links with other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**, with some very strong features. Teaching was good in just over three-quarters of the lessons seen, and very good, occasionally excellent in about a quarter. The pupils enjoy their learning and generally try hard with their work. Teaching is particularly strong in the nursery, in Year 2, and for English in general. The quality of teaching is better than at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery make very good gains in learning
- Teaching in English is very good
- Teaching interests and engages the pupils, and this is reinforced by much praise and encouragement
- Very good relationships between adults and children support learning effectively
- Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning
- Detailed planning for lessons guides teaching and learning effectively
- In most lessons, pupils try hard with their work
- In a few lessons, pupils do not make enough progress on the group and individual activities they are given
- Assessment systems are good, and the information is used well to manage pupils' progress

Commentary

11. Very good teaching in the nursery is based on excellent team work amongst the staff, a very skillfully planned, rich variety of activities, and excellent relationships between adults and children. Learning is organised, but not too highly structured. Teaching is always purposeful, but flexible enough to respond to the needs of the children. For example, a group of children were playing with some toy dinosaurs and tunnels made out of card. They were making the dinosaurs disappear and then reappear. An adult joined the play and introduced a range of language to describe what was happening, such as 'under', 'over', 'on top of' and 'through', which extended the children's thinking and their speaking and listening skills. In this way, adults capitalise on planned opportunities for learning. Sometimes learning is more directed, such as when letter sounds are taught or when a group of older children develop their literacy skills. These sessions are very well taught and highly appropriate. Adults know the children very well, assess and monitor their progress carefully, and give them the confidence to be successful. As a result, pupils' achievements are very good and they are very well prepared for learning in the reception classes.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3%)	8 (25%)	16 (50%)	7 (22%)	0	0	0

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

12. In Years 1 and 2, teaching in English is particularly effective. Reading is taught very well, with good emphasis on enjoyment, and understanding how stories unfold and the characters behave. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils used the text of the book *Amazing Grace* very well to discover the likes and dislikes of the central character. In most English lessons, the teacher's expressive, lively reading of books enthralled the pupils and encouraged them to learn. By Year 2, almost all of the pupils read competently and confidently, and standards are well above average. Writing skills are also taught very well and pupils are encouraged to write for a wide range of purposes. The content and the length of pupils' writing improve considerably during Years 1 and 2. The skills of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are also taught well so that, by Year 2, almost all of the pupils write imaginatively and accurately, and standards are well above average. Teachers have a particularly high level of expertise in this subject. They enjoy teaching it, which enthuses the pupils.

13. Teachers make learning interesting and enjoyable. They praise pupils when they get something right, and support pupils who need help to make progress. It is not surprising then that, in the great majority of lessons, pupils are engaged in their learning and achieve well. For example, in a very good science lesson for Year 1 about 'Light and Dark', in a darkened room, the teacher showed the pupils the different effects of lighting it with a candle, a torch, a lamp and the ceiling light. The pupils were very interested and excited by this beginning, but the teacher channeled their enthusiasm very effectively and the quality of discussion was outstanding. Because the content of the lesson was interesting, pupils were motivated to be very successful in their learning. Where teaching is good or better, the positive attitudes of adults result in positive attitudes from the children. Enthusiasm rubs off.

14. Teaching assistants sometimes help a pupil who has particular special needs or a child learning English as an additional language, and sometimes provide support for a group of pupils. These assistants make a very valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson for Year 1, a less able group of pupils made good progress because the teaching assistant used good questioning, which helped them to think carefully about how they would tackle calculations with money. Assistants who work with pupils who have special needs keep them focused on the lesson and provide invaluable support when these pupils are tackling activities. Teachers play their part by making sure that the assistants know what to do and by valuing the part they play in pupils' learning.

15. Teachers' good planning of lessons guides their teaching well. Plans include a clear statement about what the pupils should learn during the lesson, which helps to keep learning on track, and is usually shared with the pupils so that they know exactly what they are trying to accomplish. For example, in a good mathematics lesson for Year 2, the teacher planned that the children should understand that multiplication is the same as repeated addition. Careful explanation, good use of examples and ensuring that the pupils understood the vocabulary, all focused the learning on the objective and ensured a successful outcome.

16. In almost all the lessons observed, pupils tried hard with their work and got a good amount done. For example, in a very good English lesson for Year 2, the pupils learnt about the importance of time connective in stories, such as "The next day ...". They were enthusiastic in the whole-class discussion and they all worked hard on the reading a writing tasks they were given. As a result, they made very good progress in developing their skills. In a good physical education lesson, the pupils tried very hard to improve the quality of their movements and to combine them into polished sequences. As a result of their efforts, good progress was made, and many of the final performances were of good quality.

17. All the teaching and learning observed was at least satisfactory, but in the satisfactory lessons there were weaknesses. In a number of mathematics lessons, pupils did not make enough progress on the tasks they were given to complete independently. In some cases this was because the teacher had too many groups of pupils to manage, and some of the groups lacked support. At other times the work given to the pupils was too easy, so they were not challenged to make the progress of which they were capable. A fault in a few lessons was that the introduction lasted too long, or the teacher over-dominated the whole-class work, so the pupils were not sufficiently involved in the lesson or had too little time to complete subsequent activities. These weaknesses are the exception not the rule.

18. At whole-school level, there are good procedures for evaluating the standards pupils are reaching and for identifying areas for improvement, as exemplified by the current focus on the achievements of higher attaining pupils in mathematics. The school keeps a careful check on pupils' progress and monitors the value added by the quality of teaching and learning. At classroom level also, assessment procedures are good. A recently-introduced system in the nursery keeps careful track of the children's developing skills, which helps the staff to plan appropriate activities and provides valuable information when the children transfer to the reception classes. Teacher's marking of pupils' work is thorough, positive, and the best identifies what pupils need to do next to improve. Teachers use a judicious combination of schemes of work that identify appropriate learning for pupils of a particular age, and their own assessments of the stage particular pupils have reached, to plan work that will meet their needs. The use of individual learning targets is more consistent and successful in some subjects than others.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** curriculum, which enables pupils to achieve well. Strengths in a number of subjects support very good achievement. Enrichment activities provided outside lessons are **good**. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are **good** and support pupils' learning effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the nursery and for English and ICT enables pupils to achieve very well
- The use of workbooks in mathematics restricts the range of pupils' learning
- Effective links between subjects strengthen the curriculum and promote pupils' learning
- A very good personal, social and health education programme has been developed
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good
- The curriculum for the pupils in the mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class is well planned to provide similar opportunities for learning as in other classes

Commentary

19. Within a generally well-planned, good curriculum, provision in the nursery and for English and ICT is very good. The nursery staff provide a very good range and balance of activities, organised within a helpful structure, which catches the children's interest and encourages them to learn. A judicious mixture of activities that children can choose, those where they learn supported by adults, and ones where adults take the lead to teach specific skills, results in children thoroughly enjoying their tasks and learning a lot. In English, the teachers are very skilled in planning lessons that are interesting and challenging. Pupils develop their skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing very well because the curriculum provides many opportunities to use and develop these skills, often through work in subjects other than English. In ICT, very good resources and a well-planned curriculum ensure that pupils make very good progress and reach standards that are much better than those expected for their ages.

20. Links between subjects are good and enrich the curriculum in general. For example, during a history lesson, opportunities were planned and taken to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills when a visiting adult provided a good source of information about life during World War 2. Activities in design and technology develop pupils' skills in making things, but their writing skills are also enhanced, such as when they write clear instructions for making their puppets.

21. The mathematics curriculum has a number of strengths, as seen in the lively whole-class sessions where pupils' mental mathematics skills were developed well. However, the practice of using workbooks as the basis for many of the pupils' tasks results in a narrowing of the curriculum and insufficient challenge for the more able pupils. The element of the curriculum in which pupils use and apply their skills is not sufficiently emphasised. Pupils' work from last year showed that, too often, all the pupils complete the same page in their workbooks. The school is aware of this issue and is dealing with it.

22. From the moment the children join the nursery, the school considers developing their personal and social skills as very important. Much of the 'curriculum' for this aspect of pupils' learning is part of the fabric of everyday life at school, such as when pupils take on small responsibilities, or when an incident prompts a discussion in class. As well as this, opportunities in assemblies, in 'circle time' (when pupils gather in a circle to share their thoughts), through subjects such as religious education and science, and for aspects such as health education all constitute a very good programme to ensure that pupils develop the personal and social skills that are vital to support their good academic achievements. The 'Healthy Schools' award scheme supports many aspects of the overall programme.

23. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. The curriculum is very well planned to ensure they have challenging work, which meets their needs. Consequently, they achieve very well. Many of these pupils have a plan that sets out the next steps in their learning. These 'individual education plans' have clear targets, set in consultation with class teachers, shared with pupils and parents, and reviewed regularly. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make very good progress, often achieving high standards in national tests at the end of Year 2. The school works well with outside agencies to support these pupils.

24. Prior to the inspection, a few parents raised a concern about their children in the mixed-age class comprising Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. They were not sure that their children were receiving the same curriculum as Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in single-age classes. During the inspection, inspectors observed consecutive lessons, in both English and mathematics, first in a Year 2 class and then in the mixed-age class. Pupils' past work was also compared. Inspectors found no discernible difference in the type of work that is being planned for the Year 2 pupils and were satisfied that, as far as is possible, planning is ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils.

25. Learning in subjects such as history, geography and science is enriched by visits to a range of interesting places. Particularly successful are visits to Elvaston Castle to study history, Bestwood Park to study habitats, and 'Conkers', an environmental park. The school also makes good use of the local environment, for example walking to Attenborough to study the local church. A range of visitors is welcomed into the school to talk about their experiences and share their interests. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities, including an after-school sports club, French club and a particularly successful dance club, which involves pupils working with adults from local sheltered accommodation to produce a joint performance. There is also a lunchtime club, sponsored by a national company, to support less able pupils with mathematics.

26. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Strengths mentioned then have been maintained, and weaknesses identified in ICT have been dealt with. As a result, pupils' achievements are better in some subjects than previously.

27. The school is well staffed, with a strong team of teachers and teaching assistants. Resources for learning are good. The accommodation is attractive and imaginatively used, even though the open-plan nature of the building can lead to distracting noise between one classroom and the next. Accommodation and resources in the nursery are particularly good. The hall, however, is much smaller than normally seen in this size of school, which affects the range of physical education work possible.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very good** care for pupils, with **good** guidance to help with their work. Support for pupils with special educational needs is **very good**. Pupils have **good** opportunities to express their views and influence everyday school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent arrangements to settle children into the nursery ensure that they are eager to learn
- The school takes very careful steps to ensure that all pupils are safe, happy and ready to learn
- Support in lessons is not always focused sharply enough on the next steps individuals need to take to achieve as well as they can
- Pupils have very good, trusting relationships with staff
- Pupils have many good opportunities to express their views and to have them acted on

Commentary

28. Parents commented very positively on the arrangements for helping children to settle in when they start school. The impressive range of visits and meetings ensures that children feel happy, secure, confident and very keen to join in all the exciting activities available, so they get off to a flying start in the nursery.

29. High quality care is sustained throughout the school so pupils of all ages feel that, “there are a lot of kind people here” and can identify someone to go to if they are worried about anything. The school’s formal procedures for dealing with matters of health, safety and child protection are in place and very well understood by staff. Routines, such as the very positive way lunchtime is managed to allow children to develop very good relationships with supervisory staff, reflect these high standards of care. Pupils feel valued and very well cared for because adults know them very well and respond thoughtfully to their needs, such as helping to find friends or dealing with any rare cases of bullying. The way pupils are cared for is a key factor in their achievement because it ensures that they are ready to concentrate on their learning.

30. Teachers have a good idea of how individuals are doing, in general, based on monitoring of pupils’ academic progress, which results in positive support and encouragement. Support is not always based firmly enough on precise information about the targets which the pupil might be expected to reach and what steps to take next to get closer to those targets. As a result, good generalised guidance is not always focused on first rate achievement in a particular subject. Good foundations have been laid in English to improve target-setting and the specific advice that staff give pupils to help them reach higher standards.

31. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they receive very good support in lessons, which is very well matched to their particular strengths and difficulties. Teaching assistants coax them and give very careful help to enable them to make sense of work that they might otherwise struggle to complete. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on recognising coins and learning to find the correct money to make up 10p, the teaching assistant’s lively instructions and timely help ensured that the pupils wanted to have a go with the task and were able to succeed.

32. In and out of lessons, pupils have golden opportunities to share their views and express their feelings, which teachers usually listen to and probe sensitively with great interest. It is part of the school’s routine to give pupils the chance to draw up class codes of conduct. The school is good at seeking and acting on pupils’ views informally, particularly through such routines and in *circle time*. It has already planned more formal consultation through its introduction of a school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has built **very good** links with parents and **good** links with the community and other schools, all of which contribute well to pupils' achievements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very positive links with parents are fostering strong partnerships that support achievement well
- Links with the community enrich children's learning and experiences well
- Reports on pupils' progress are not always clear enough about what children need to do, or how parents can help, to improve achievement in particular subjects

Commentary

33. Parents and their children have very positive views of the school. A strong partnership has developed where parents feel very comfortable about approaching the school. Parents have no significant concerns about the way that the school works with them or what it offers their children. Recent improvement in the school's efforts to provide useful information, build bridges with parents, welcome them and encourage their involvement in its daily life are valued by parents.

34. As parents indicated, although information about their children's progress is generally satisfactory, the key points about what the child needs to practise, or do, to make better progress are sometimes lost in the detail provided. This makes it hard for the parent to know how to help the child make strides towards specific targets identified by the teacher.

35. The school has a good range of links with the local and wider community, which it uses well to extend pupils' understanding of other people's lives and experiences. The school has good relationships with elderly residents in sheltered housing who attend school functions and are working on an imaginative dance project with pupils. Students from the local theological college lead lively assemblies. Links with the university include a welcome for families from overseas whose children join the school for a while and give a very positive sense of a richly diverse worldwide community. All such links benefit pupils by deepening empathy and respect for others, which contributes well to personal development. Effective links have been established with Eskdale Junior School, to which most of the pupils transfer at the end of Year 2. Junior school staff recognise that the infant school does a good job in preparing pupils for the next stage of their education, and believe that their shared responsibility for children and their families is improving all the time.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. Management and governance are **good**, with some aspects that require improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is providing very good leadership and ensuring that the school continues to improve
- Management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good
- There is a rigorous approach to most aspects of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, but relatively new systems are not yet tried and tested
- Governors are very supportive, but do not gather enough information to enable them to question the school about pupils' achievements

Commentary

36. Since her appointment just over a year ago, the headteacher has played a crucial role in creating a constructive climate for change, motivating staff, gaining the confidence of parents and securing the commitment of everyone to school improvement. Rather than just maintain the existing high standards, the headteacher has started to raise further staff expectations of pupils' achievements. Her vision is to make the pupils more independent in their learning, within a warm, happy and caring environment. To this end she reviewed the school mission statement after

consulting with staff pupils and parents, so that all who are associated with the school have a clear understanding of what they are working towards. She is achieving these aims, having established a new senior management team to work upon the evaluation of school practice in an open and frank way.

37. Leadership of the school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. The headteacher has taken on this role and has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and has developed a clear and relevant action plan to deal with perceived shortcomings. Management is good, and training has been provided for a teaching assistant who works in every class each week with pupils with special educational needs.

38. The determination and capacity of the school to raise achievement are seen in the way that the headteacher is developing rigorous systems for monitoring and driving forward school improvements. The headteacher regularly observes teaching and checks that any weaknesses noted are overcome so that pupils' learning improves. Most subject leaders are managing their subjects well and time is planned so that they can do this properly. For example, the subject leader for English recently examined lesson plans and identified weaknesses in making the learning intentions clear. These improving systems are good overall, but still need to be strengthened, such as in mathematics where the monitoring of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough.

39. The school improvement plan provides a very useful tool for development. Action points are set out clearly and their success is carefully measured by how well pupils' achievements are being improved. There is a strong emphasis on raising the quality of teaching and learning, developing pupils' skills and evaluating success in comparison with national standards and with similar schools. All staff have made contributions to the plan by producing action plans for the subjects they lead, which are carefully thought out.

40. There is a strong emphasis on developing staff experience and skills so that the performance of the school is improved. Staff are well informed and up to date with educational developments. The school has introduced a good system of performance management for all staff. Targets have been set that focus on pupils' progress and subject management. Other objectives have been set aside pending the outcome of the inspection. This is to ensure the correct focus will be given to the setting of objectives, with reference to the school's post Ofsted action plan.

41. Governors are very supportive of the school and share the headteacher's aim of high achievement for all pupils, whatever their needs. They are aware of their statutory responsibilities and ensure requirements are well met. The headteacher gives them considerable information about the work of the school, including curriculum developments, through her very good reports, and minutes taken during school curriculum meetings. Governors were appropriately involved in an evaluation of the school and a review of its aims. Recently, all governors have taken responsibility for an area of the curriculum and have begun to work in a closer way with the subject leaders on curriculum issues. This has helped to inform the governors' good view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of what is needed to move the school forward. However, they do not provide enough challenge when discussing academic standards because their visits to school do not focus sufficiently on gaining a more informed view of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

42. The arrangements for the financial management of the school are good. The school has effective financial routines that are understood and followed by the staff involved. Day-to-day management of financial matters and the general smooth running of the school are helped considerably by the welcoming and efficient school secretary.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	538,858.00	Balance from previous year	57,461.00
Total expenditure	532,921.00	Balance carried forward to the next	63,398.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception) is **very good** overall and has improved since the last inspection. The classes now work together closely, leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good, and improving systems for assessing children's attainment and monitoring their progress ensure that their needs are met effectively.

44. There is a range of attainment amongst the children who join the nursery but, overall, standards are close to those expected for their ages. Procedures for introducing children and their parents to the nursery are excellent. Children are quickly immersed in a well-planned pattern of learning, based on a rich variety of experiences and excellent relationships with adults. This helps them to achieve very well and gives them an enthusiasm and confidence that permeates their learning. Very good teaching makes the best use of activities to develop the children's skills in all areas of their learning. For example, an activity such as making puppets develops physical skills of cutting, sticking and painting, but also nurtures creative abilities and personal skills such as concentration. Adults are always enthusiastic, and they plan, manage and enrich the children's learning very effectively. There is a good balance between activities that the children choose to pursue, developing important personal skills, and ones that are led by adults. The teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the children's learning. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in all activities and have extra support that enables them to make very good progress.

45. Children join the reception year at the beginning of the term in which they have their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, there was only one reception class. The children achieve well, and work from last year shows very good progress in important skills such as writing. The organisation of the children's learning is more structured, particularly in the morning, with lessons for subjects such as literacy and numeracy. Whilst some of the children are ready for this pattern of learning, others find it difficult to concentrate for the whole lesson. As a result, they can lack concentration both in the whole-class sessions and when completing independent tasks. Nonetheless, the quality of teaching is good overall and a greater range of activities each afternoon develops the children's skills well in all areas of learning. Almost all of the children are on track to exceed the expected standards by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Children achieve very well because adults create and capitalise upon opportunities to develop children's curiosity, confidence and independence
- Relationships between children and with adults are excellent
- Teachers have very high expectations that encourage children to behave well

Commentary

46. In the nursery, a very strong emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills is constantly evident as they work and play. For example, during outdoor play, a group of 'fire-fighters' drove the fire engine and tackled a 'blaze' with great enthusiasm, sharing the equipment and passing instructions to other members of the team. Children's good social skills and behaviour are praised by adults, and so these become the norm. Children show concentration and persistence in many of the tasks they undertake. For example, two children pegged out some clothing on a small clothes line and, although the clothes kept falling off, they persevered, working well together until they had achieved success. Activities such as 'snack time' are used very well to promote the children's understanding of sharing, being responsible for tasks and contributing to a group. The children know the 'rules' of the nursery and adults reinforce high expectations of good behaviour as part of daily routines. These very good personal and social skills are also evident in the reception class. The

children are confident and eager to learn, as seen in a physical education lesson where they changed their clothes independently and responded enthusiastically to music by moving like different types of toys. The children also learn to understand their own feelings and those of others, as seen in a lesson where they explored what makes them happy and what makes them sad. Almost all of the children are well on course to exceed the expected standard in this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths

- Children achieve very well because skills are developed during all tasks, as well as being the focus for some activities
- Basic skills in reading and writing are taught very well throughout the Foundation Stage

Commentary

47. Very effective teaching in the nursery gives pupils a flying start in this area of learning. Adults use all activities skilfully to develop the children's speaking and listening skills, asking questions and encouraging the children to say what they think or describe what they are doing. Adults are interested listeners. More focused sessions for all the children introduce them to the initial sounds of letters, such as 'ticking tess' for the letter 't', which led to lively discussion about which of the names of a series of articles begin with that sound. Excellent teaching for a group of the older nursery children started with sharing a book, spotting features of the text, and then focused on games to consolidate learning of initial and final letter sounds in words. The teacher's high expectations of what the children could achieve stimulated them to make rapid progress. Children 'write' all the time, such as adding their name to their paintings, or writing notes in the role play areas. Children's high achievement in the nursery gives them a very firm foundation on which to build in the reception year. They speak confidently in most situations, as seen when children identified their favourite parts of the book *Where's my Teddy* after reading it with the teacher. Pupils' writing from last year shows the very good progress they made, many starting by writing only a few words but, by the end of the year, writing a short story with clear handwriting and good spelling. Almost all of the children in reception read short, repetitive stories confidently and fluently. As a result of very good teaching, almost all of the children exceed the standards expected at the end of the reception year.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of mathematical language and processes is taught through a variety of activities
- Work books for children in the reception class do not always extend their skills sufficiently

Commentary

48. Very good teaching and an imaginative curriculum enable children in the nursery to develop a wide range of mathematical understanding and skills. Counting is part and parcel of many activities, such as counting the number of cartons of milk at snack time, and matching them to the children in the group. Many of the older children are confident counting to 10 and beyond and they recognise the numerals. Children learn the language of mathematics, often through their play or when carrying out practical tasks, such as comparing whether items are 'longer' or 'shorter' or discussing whether there are 'more' or 'less' items in a group. Eye-catching wall displays, such as *Ten in a Bed*, featuring teddies the children have painted, further reinforce the children's grasp of numbers. Numeracy lessons in the reception class consolidate the children's understanding successfully, such as the work on shapes seen during the inspection. Work from last year shows that children made satisfactory progress in all aspects of mathematics, but a reliance on work books results in most children completing the same exercises, and so not achieving to their individual capabilities. Nonetheless, most children exceed the standards expected by the end of the reception year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

In the aspects seen, provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Children have a very good range of planned experiences
- Teaching is very effective in raising children's curiosity about the world around them
- Teachers use a very good range of resources to bring learning alive and place it in a real context

Commentary

49. Not all aspects of this wide-ranging area of learning were seen during the inspection, but the work that was seen indicates that teaching and learning are very good. For example, in the nursery, the theme 'Autumn' has prompted a good deal of work developing the children's knowledge and understanding of their environment. The children know many types of trees lose their leaves. They have observed the changing colours and used the rich yellows, reds and browns of autumn in their painting and printing. Work about cold places extends the children's knowledge about different parts of the world, and includes a striking display of cold colours, featuring the children's art work. The children learn the skills of making things, including attractive stick puppets made from paper plates, or appetising pizzas, as well as having lots of opportunities to build things using construction kits. Children worked on the computer, showing good early skills using a few of the keys on the keyboard, and their computer-drawn pictures of *Elmer* the elephant are better than the standard expected for their ages. The children continue to broaden their experience in the reception class, for example finding out about dinosaurs, observing the way in which seeds grow, and being introduced to stories from the Bible. The children's re-telling of the story of Noah provided a good vehicle for developing writing skills, as well as consolidating their knowledge of the story. In ICT, almost all the children develop good early skills in using the mouse, keyboard and a range of simple programs. By the end of the reception year, almost all the children reach, and many exceed, the expected standard in this area of learning.

Creative development

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

Main strengths

- Very good opportunities for art work ensure that the children can be creative
- Role-play activities are well thought out to encourage imaginative play

Commentary

50. Children's very good achievements in this area of learning result in most of them exceeding the standards expected for their ages. The nursery is full of opportunities for children to be creative, whether painting, acting the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* using the puppet theatre, or working in the role-play areas. The children's art work is an outstanding strength, and all the displays have some element that has been painted or printed by the children. The main role-play area was 'Percy the park keeper's hut', which prompted a lot of imaginative activity, such as mowing the grass and collecting up leaves in the wheelbarrow. The children's art work is of equally good quality in the reception class, as seen in the masks they were making and their self-portraits. The 'Teddy Bears' Picnic' role-play area is a favourite place to be and, as well as encouraging imaginative play, creates many opportunities for developing a wide range of language and mathematical skills.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- The nursery outdoor area provides a good range of opportunities for physical development
- Adults plan a good range of activities that develop children's physical skills

Commentary

51. Children achieve well in developing their physical skills, which match the standards expected of similar aged children. In the nursery outdoor area, children engage in a wide range of physical activities, riding scooters, clambering on the climbing frame, throwing and catching, or climbing up ladders to put out a 'fire'. As a result, they move with increasing confidence and are not afraid to take risks to extend their skills. Their ability to control tools such as scissors and pencils is developed well through sewing, colouring and painting activities. In the reception class, a good dance lesson showed how the children develop increasing control of their movements. Their robot dances included simultaneous movements of head, arms and legs, jerking to the music, which captured the idea successfully. Lack of daily access to an outdoor learning area restricts opportunities for the children to develop their physical skills independently, but the school makes best use of the facilities it has. The quality of the children's handwriting in their work from last year shows that they have good finer control of pencils and other tools.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**, and better than at the last inspection.

Main strengths

- The school has maintained the high standards seen at the last inspection
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills are very good
- Reading is taught very well
- Pupils' writing is of very good quality
- The subject is led very effectively

Commentary

52. By the end of Year 2, standards in English are well above average. During the past few years, results in the national tests for reading and writing have been well above average both when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Work in Year 2 pupils' books from last year confirmed the picture of well above average standards in writing. It showed that most pupils made very good progress, particularly in their confidence to write at length, and in the skills of punctuation. Overall, pupils start school with average attainment in English. They achieve very well to reach the high standards seen at the end of Year 2. Those who have special educational needs and the more able pupils, together with pupils who have English as an additional language, achieve very well. This success is due to very good teaching, monitoring pupils' progress carefully, and very good leadership that continually improves the quality of provision.

53. In Year 2, standards of speaking and listening are above average. This is because teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills to speak for a purpose and listen actively. For example, a teacher in a Year 2 lesson used drama effectively by asking pupils to act out a quarrel. She asked the class to listen carefully and then questioned them as to how the conflict was resolved. As a result, the pupils gave clear explanations as well as sharing their feelings about disagreements they have had with their friends. In a number of lessons, teachers use 'response partners' so that pupils can discuss their ideas. In a Year 2 ICT lesson, pupils discussed with their partners the most effective way to save work recently finished. They described the correct method to the teacher. Most pupils are confident enough to reply to questions in school assemblies. This is because they are often asked to comment on what the assembly is about.

54. Pupils in Year 2 read very well. The more able read simple novels fluently and tackle more difficult texts using a wide range of skills to work out the meaning. They understand the plot and predict what might happen next. Those of average ability read accurately and correct words they have difficulty with by re-reading the text so that the meaning becomes clear. The lower attaining pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds well and feel confident with their reading, as the books read are suitable for their ability. Pupils are enthusiastic about their reading because of the evident enjoyment shown by their teachers. Reading is fun because they are given choices about what they

read, but are guided to choose books within ranges that are suitable for their ability. They are discerning readers. One pupil explained that her favourite books always made her laugh, “like in *The Rainbow Maker* when he puts different patterns in the sky”. They use reference aids well. A pupil found information on hosepipes by using the contents and index of a non-fiction book. Good support from parents at home, and reading to adults in school, are helping pupils’ to achieve very well. Emphasis on reading within literacy lessons reinforces skills. For example, in a Year 1 lesson pupils learnt a lot about letter sounds by playing a dice game to create simple words.

55. Pupils of all abilities are given many opportunities to write. They write for a good range of purposes, with examples of narrative writing and very good instructions when explaining how to make a hand puppet. Their writing is made into booklets when studying other subjects like ‘My School’ in geography and ‘Our Conker Hunt’ describing a visit to the local park. All pupils have a ‘special thinking book’ where they are encouraged to write for a variety of reasons. As a result, most pupils’ achievement in writing is very good. The school’s strong focus upon maintaining high standards in writing is evident in the amount of high quality work in pupils’ books.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers plan lessons very well to meet the needs of all abilities within the class, and the activities are full of challenge. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, the main focus was learning how to use alternative words or phrases to link sentences. After reading a story, the teacher asked the pupils to re-read it leaving out all words explaining time. She then asked them to re-write the story using their own words. At the end of the lesson, the teacher challenged the pupils to explain their reasons for the words they had chosen, praising pupils who used descriptive vocabulary. Basic skills, such as letter sounds and spelling are taught very well. In a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils thoroughly enjoyed making simple words when playing with ‘letter die’. As different letter sounds were thrown on the dice, there was much discussion about what words could be made. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the activity and achieved a high standard of work. Teachers and teaching assistants support pupils’ learning very effectively. They are always alert to opportunities to extend learning. For example, a teaching assistant encouraged a pupil with special educational needs to talk to her about a painting he had made in an art lesson. This encouraged him to explain his feelings in a more descriptive way. As a result of such good support, most pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Teachers have high expectations and this ensures more able pupils achieve very high standards. For example, a teacher would not accept the word ‘nice’ when a pupil described the character of Grace in the book *Amazing Grace* because the pupil had used this word too often in his writing. As a result, the pupil used the word ‘confident’. This accurately described the character’s performance in a pantomime.

57. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has only been in post for six months, but she has already had an impact by giving clear guidance to teachers on the way they should check and record pupils’ progress and by using this information to pinpoint ways in which standards can be raised. Lesson plans now focus more clearly on pupils’ learning. Pupils’ work is now recorded in books chronologically, which makes progress easier to measure. Further improving the teaching of literacy skills through other subjects has rightly been identified as an area for improvement, along with the marking of pupils’ work so that they know what to do next so as to improve. Strong leadership is driving up standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The use and development of pupils’ language skills through other subjects is good. Appropriate use is made of subjects such as geography when pupils write about their holidays in different areas of England and abroad. Descriptions of role models in religious education lessons are also a focus for the pupils’ spiritual and moral development. For example, a Year 2 pupil wrote about the new saint, “Mother Theresa was a very lovely lady who cared for poor children in hot countries”. Pupils are encouraged to write factually in science, mathematics and design technology, and to learn special vocabulary. Good use is made of ICT during lessons to develop the pupils’ writing skills. Although much evidence was seen of using language across the curriculum, it was a result of individual teachers’ interests rather than school-wide planning to develop particular skills according to pupils’ needs.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in the current Year 2 are above average
- In the most recent national tests, almost all pupils reached the expected standard, but too few gained the higher level
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress
- Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and work hard
- More able pupils are not challenged enough by some of the work they are given

Commentary

59. Results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that, since the last inspection, the school has maintained the high proportion of pupils who reach the nationally expected standard. In 2003, however, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 fell, and was below the national average, and below average compared with similar schools. This indicates that some more able pupils did not achieve well enough and compares unfavourably with results at the time of the last inspection, when the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was well above the national average. The headteacher's decision to invigilate the new Level 3 test herself, to ensure that it gave an accurate assessment of pupils' attainment, revealed some weaknesses in pupils' skills that the school is now dealing with.

60. Work from last year's Year 2 pupils shows that standards were average overall, but there is good evidence of progress over time. The work shows good coverage of the curriculum. Work on numbers and calculation was matched well to pupils' varying abilities, with more able pupils working with three-digit numbers and demonstrating an understanding of the links between multiplication and division. Work on measure, shape and space was the same for all pupils. This indicates a lack of appropriate challenge for the more able pupils in some aspects of mathematics. There was not enough evidence to judge pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematics skills to solve problems.

61. In the lessons observed, almost all pupils tackled work successfully at the level expected for their age. For example, in Year 1, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a range of strategies to find pairs of numbers to make 10 and are developing an instant recall of these numbers. The more able pupils use this information to find pairs of numbers that make 20 and 100. In Year 2, more able pupils use their knowledge of the two-times table and doubling to find the answer to questions such as 40×2 . Standards in the current Year 2 are above average and, as the school is already dealing with the issue of lack of challenge for the more able pupils, results in next year's national tests are likely to improve. Considering that pupils' attainment when they join Year 1 is above average, their achievements are satisfactory by the end of Year 2.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan in detail and resources are well prepared. Teachers' introductions and their whole-class teaching are the most effective parts of lessons and pupils' response is enthusiastic. Teachers use correct vocabulary and review previous learning well. Their demonstrations and good questioning skills in the opening parts of lessons enable pupils to make good progress. Groups of pupils working with an adult make good progress, but independent work is less successful. Where they are expected to work for sustained periods without adult support, pupils make less progress and sometimes, when sessions are over-long, simply reinforce their misconceptions. For example, a group of children using a number line inaccurately got a whole list of answers wrong by just one number, making the same mistake each time. The teacher did not see this until the end of the session. Where teaching is good, teachers make sure children are clear about what they need to do and they have high but realistic expectations. Weaknesses in satisfactory teaching are when work is not made clear enough to pupils or when tasks do not take full account of what pupils already know and can do.

63. Teachers ensure that pupils with special educational needs are well supported so they can make good progress. Where teaching assistants are available to support learning they are well used.

Teaching assistants help to maintain the high standards of behaviour during whole-class teaching and offer support to enable less able pupils to take part in the activities. When supporting group work, teaching assistants are clear about what pupils need to do, ask probing questions to develop pupils' understanding and offer a great deal of praise and encouragement.

64. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory, but the co-ordinator does not have a firm enough grasp of strengths and weaknesses in provision. Good support is provided for other teachers in areas such as planning and resources. The school is aware of the need to focus on improving the achievement of more able pupils, particularly girls. This is a priority in the school improvement plan, but decisions about how to ensure appropriate planning, teaching and resources for this group have yet to be agreed. There are good systems in place for assessment and tracking pupils' progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use and develop their mathematics skills in other subjects. They make and interpret graphs in geography and science lessons. Investigations in science help them to develop their skills in reasoning and problem solving. Work in design and technology, such as making puppets, involves measuring. Whilst these opportunities complement work in mathematics lessons, they are not planned systematically so that pupils' abilities to use and apply their mathematical skills are frequently challenged.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths

- Standards in the current Year 2 are above average
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- Work is well matched to pupils' existing attainment, which helps them to achieve well
- Teachers plan regular opportunities to assess pupils' progress
- The subject is well led and managed

Commentary

66. Results of the 2003 teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 showed that almost all pupils reached the expected Level 2 and just over a third gained the higher Level 3. This represented above average standards both compared with all schools and with similar schools. Pupils' achievements are good during Years 1 and 2. The school has done well to maintain similar standards found at the last inspection. Good teaching and a well planned curriculum help pupils to make good progress.

67. Standards in the current Year 2 are also above average because almost all pupils are working at the expected level. For example, pupils talk about the dangers of electricity and produce a health and safety booklet to demonstrate their knowledge. They understand that all living things need air, water, food and light to live, and make predictions about what will happen to a plant if it is deprived of light or water. They produce posters to promote healthy eating, and label a simple electrical circuit and explain how it works. Teachers' good questioning encourages pupils to make predictions and consider possible reasons for a particular outcome. Pupils are also encouraged to consider ways of making a test fair. Year 1 pupils decided that they needed to concentrate on one light source in a darkened room, in order to decide whether the torch or the candle gave out the most light.

68. Teaching was at least good in all the lessons observed. Lessons are well prepared and organised. Teachers make the learning intentions clear to pupils and encourage the correct use of scientific vocabulary. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and convey this enthusiasm to pupils, making learning exciting, with good opportunities to make first hand discoveries. For example, Year 2 pupils were asked to sort out a box of torches to help the teacher to find out why some would not work, rather than being told that batteries had to be placed in a torch in a certain way in order to create a circuit. This imaginative approach had a very positive impact on learning. Teaching

assistants also make a significant contribution to learning, particularly during activities where tasks have been matched to pupils of varying abilities. They frequently give very good, focused support to less able groups. Lessons are carefully planned so that all pupils are learning at the right level and can achieve well.

69. Links with literacy are very good. Apart from opportunities to discuss and explain, lessons offer good opportunities to write for a purpose. The more able pupils write independently about what they have done and describe the outcomes of experiments. All pupils label sketches and diagrams and create posters. They are helped to be independent by the provision of well designed, illustrated word lists to support them with the scientific vocabulary.

70. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a very good knowledge of the requirements of the subject and a good grasp of what is done well and what needs to be strengthened. She ensures that planning is thorough. For example, she makes sure that pupils in the mixed-age class have the same opportunities to study topics at the appropriate level as those in a single-age class. Staff have learnt to check that their assessments of pupils' work are accurate and the same as their colleagues. This has led to a folder of work that supports teachers' judgements when making assessments. Resources are good and enhance learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has improved standards considerably since the last inspection
- Teachers have very good knowledge and expertise
- Very good management and technical advice support teaching and learning
- Arrangements for ensuring pupils' safety on the Internet are not fully in place

Commentary

71. By Year 2, standards are well above average and all groups of pupils achieve very well. This represents a marked improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' were judged to be making barely satisfactory progress. Analysis of pupils' work and lesson observations indicate that teaching is very good.

72. The very good teaching of basic skills in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils quickly become familiar with the computer keyboard and enter text on a word-processing program accurately. Year 1 pupils make a good start at programming floor 'robots' and learn how the accuracy of their commands affects the movements of the machines. The more able pupils plan routes for the robots to follow, with accuracy. By Year 2, the pupils maintain this very high standard and nearly all can open files, work on them, and save again accurately to store their work.

73. Standards are much higher than at the previous inspection because of the very good leadership and management of the subject. The provision of a computer suite together with very good use of training has developed teachers' knowledge well. This is evident in the confident way they teach skills. Teachers are also alert to teaching ICT skills as part of pupils' work in other subjects. In a very good Year 2 lesson, the teacher's clear instruction and demonstration enabled all pupils to design patterns in the style of Kandinsky, by using an art program. All pupils controlled the mouse very well to make the patterns in the forms of circles. The more able pupils used the 'spray' command to merge colours successfully within the pattern. In the two lessons seen, pupils were enthusiastic and enjoyed learning. This was because the planned activities were challenging for all groups in the class. In a Year 2 lesson, a pupil with special educational needs achieved a very high standard for his ability, owing to strong support from the teacher, and the use of a computer projector and large screen. This meant he was able to produce large patterns which were easier to control. The school has focused upon using ICT to develop literacy skills. During a Year 2 English lesson, pupils were taught to underline words to emphasise anger and joy. This was to remind them to change these words to 'bold' when typing out their work. Some pupils are not as confident when using computers

in the classrooms applying what they have learnt in the computer suite. The school is alert to this and has recently paired each less confident pupil with a support partner who has more advanced computer skills.

74. The school is developing useful individual records of pupils' progress. An assessment of pupils' skills at the end of the Foundation Stage is built upon using a skills' checklist at the end of Year 1, and a more detailed analysis of skills is being undertaken for pupils in Year 2. These assessments provide teachers with a clear understanding of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The technician is an asset to the school. She is also employed as a teaching assistant, so she is always on hand if difficulties arise. Problems are sorted out quickly without impeding pupils' learning. She has developed a program to raise pupils' skills in map work in geography. The subject leader has rightly identified as a priority area for development the planning and use of ICT skills in science and mathematics.

75. Governors have not been consulted on arrangements that were being made during the inspection on regulations concerning the health and safety of pupils when using the Internet.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. The use and development of pupils' ICT skills through other subjects is good. Pupils use their editing skills to change text in their narrative writing, and in science they produced accounts of visits to parks to study habitats. Pupils who have special educational needs enjoy using programs that improve their reading and spelling skills. Year 2 pupils have used the Internet to carry out research on Mother Theresa and about making puppets in design and technology. Study of the local area has been supported well by photographs taken with the digital camera to identify significant features of the neighbourhood. Although the school has software to support the teaching of numeracy skills, little evidence was seen of this during the inspection. The school is dealing with this issue in its current action plan.

HUMANITIES

77. In religious education, one lesson was observed, inspectors talked to pupils and teachers, and pupils' work from the previous year was scrutinized. This provided a secure evidence base for what is said in the report. In history, two lessons were seen, but there was relatively little past work available. No geography lessons were observed. As a result, it is not possible to make secure judgements about overall provision in either of these subjects.

78. In **geography**, teachers' planning and the small amount of pupils' work available for scrutiny show that pupils experience a good curriculum, well linked to other subjects. In the two **history** lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good. In a Year 1 lesson, imaginative use was made of family photographs to help the pupils learn about change over time, and find out that some evidence of things in the past is real, whilst other images may be fictional. Skilful questioning extended the pupils' thinking effectively. The story *Grandma's Bill* was used very well to make points about remembering those who died in the past, introducing valuable spiritual and moral points that were discussed by the pupils. In Year 2, a visitor was questioned about his experiences as a child in World War 2. At first, the pupils found it difficult to understand some of the detail, but they gradually appreciated events such as evacuation and were fascinated by a real gas mask and the explanation of what it was used for. The pupils learnt a lot because the teacher managed a challenging first-hand experience very skilfully. These lessons, and teachers' planning, suggest that the history curriculum is good and that a strong focus on using real evidence helps pupils to understand the past.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths

- Above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection
- The subject is well led and managed
- Good systems for assessment help teachers to plan appropriate work for the pupils

Commentary

79. Only one lesson was observed, so judgements have not been made on the quality of teaching. Judgements on standards have been made after looking at pupils' work and talking to pupils and teachers.

80. By the end of Year 2, standards are better than those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Throughout the school, pupils develop a good knowledge of different spiritual and religious ideas from the major world religions. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of the meaning and significance of festivals. For example, they know that Christians celebrate Harvest by thanking God for crops that are grown, and that Hindus celebrate Diwali by lighting lamps and making cards. They make comparisons of how Christmas is celebrated in other countries, such as China and Mexico. Year 1 pupils have made booklets on the Jewish faith, and they understand the importance Christians place on worship and how churches are designed for helping us think about God our creator. One pupil wrote, "People go and pray in church because they believe in God". More able Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of the relationship between Jesus when he was on earth, his parents and God. For example, one pupil wrote, "When Jesus was a baby, he was powerful and he was really God's son, but he was Mary and Joseph's baby".

81. The subject is well managed. Assessment procedures are strong and, by the end of each year, pupils skills have been evaluated with reference to criteria in the Nottingham agreed syllabus. Good use is made of other subjects to broaden pupils' knowledge. For example, pupils have used the internet to find information on modern day saints and, in art, they have made Rangoli patterns and Diwali cards when studying Hinduism. Assemblies are often planned with religious education in mind and make an important contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. For example, during the lessons planned around Harvest time, pupils are encouraged to help others less fortunate by donating harvest gifts. At Christmas, pupils are asked to bring in boxes containing presents for less privileged children in other countries as part of 'Operation Christmas Child'.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. No lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology or music. Only two gymnastics lessons were seen in physical education. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about provision in any of these subjects. In art and design, and design and technology, a good quantity of pupils' work was available, which allows judgements to be made about standards. The views of subject leaders were also taken into account.

83. The high quality of pupils' **art and design** work is evident in attractive displays, which help to create the interesting, stimulating environment that is a very strong feature of the school. Teachers have built further on the above average standards that were noted at the last inspection. An outstanding feature of much of the work is the way that pupils are encouraged to develop their ideas in a wide range of media, using a variety of techniques. For example, Year 1 pupils took the theme of 'Autumn' and observed the natural environment closely to draw leaves and trees in pencil and pastels. Using a viewing frame, they looked in detail at the patterns on leaves, and made a collage from natural materials. Their autumn landscapes, created using a variety of fabrics, are stunning, and have a depth rarely seen in art work produced by pupils of this age. Dramatic, large-scale sculptures, decorated with images drawn from the work of Picasso, are eye-catchingly displayed in the library.

84. Year 2 pupils used sea shells as their starting point. Well-observed pencil drawings capture the shape and pattern of the shells, which the pupils have then replicated by cutting paper strips to re-fashion the image in a different way. High-quality printing, far better than normally seen for this age, began with a carefully-made polystyrene printing block depicting a shell, which was printed accurately to create a patterned design in a variety of colours. In the hall, a display about weaving includes examples of work from all ages, from the nursery to Year 2, showing a wide range of techniques and materials being used. The subject leader has rightly identified the need to collect examples of pupils' work to show how their skills develop as a consequence of the rich range of experiences provided by the school. From the quality of work produced by the pupils, it is clear that the staff have a very good level of expertise.

85. As at the last inspection, pupils' work in **design and technology** is better than expected for their ages because they pursue projects in some detail, including opportunities to design, make and evaluate, as well as developing specific skills. For example, Year 1 pupils made pizzas, first looking a range of commercial products and deciding on their favourite ingredients, before making a pizza to their own recipe. The staff are grateful that parents come into school to help with such activities. Good links with a history topic about the Victorians resulted in pupils making shoebox Victorian rooms, which are outstanding in their detail and quality of finish. The pupils drew a picture of their room using illustrations in books, then made the wallpaper and furniture from paper, card and fabric, using a range of cutting and jointing skills. The finished products are fascinating.

86. Year 2 pupils have been making hand puppets. They started by finding out how difficult it is to cut two pieces of material to exactly the same shape and size, which led to work on templates. They experimented with a variety of ways of joining the two halves of their puppet, such as using pins or staples. Some time was taken mastering the sewing skills required to make the puppets, but most show a good standard of work. Colourful design drawings itemise the materials used, and the finished articles are imaginatively decorated with a range of materials. Teachers exploited good links with literacy in the pupils' instructional writing about "How to make a puppet", and puppet shows add to the pupils' confidence in speaking to an audience. The subject leader has a good grasp of the strengths in current practice, and the good quality of the pupils' products, but wants to continue to focus on enriching the quality of the process.

87. In **music**, very little evidence was gathered. Pupils' singing in assemblies was as expected for their ages. An appropriate scheme of work has been introduced recently, which supports teachers in their planning of lessons. Pupils' social skills are developed well through concerts and performances in school, which are much enjoyed by parents, and through visits to sing to members of the local community.

88. In **physical education**, evidence from the two lessons observed suggests that, in gymnastics, standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages, which is a similar finding to the last inspection. Year 1 pupils jump, roll and stretch with a level of agility and range of control typical for their ages, and they are beginning to put together sequences of movements. Year 2 pupils show increased quality and confidence in their work, such as in controlling take-offs and landings when jumping. Almost all of the Year 2 pupils can put together a sequence of three movements, practising and refining their work, and the higher attainers show good style in their high jumping and cushioned landings. The pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and, guided by their teachers, work sensibly and safely.

89. In the two lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. The good teaching was based on very clear planning to develop specific aspects of the pupils' skills. The lesson had a good structure, with a brief, enjoyable warm up in which the pupils moved like 'jumping beans' or 'runner beans'. The teacher emphasised quality and control when the pupils practised movements for their sequences, but too little attention was given to pupils evaluating their own and other children's work. Lots of praise for good performance gave the pupils the confidence to improve. Where teaching was satisfactory, there was a similarly good structure to the lesson, but a slower pace of work, and less challenge in the activities resulted in less progress being made.

90. The school hall is much smaller than those seen in similar schools. Whilst teachers make the best use of the space available, pupils are restricted in the expansiveness of their physical activity, for example the speed with which they can run. When the weather is bad, it is not possible to teach games' lessons indoors. This weakness was also noted at the previous inspection. The subject leader has monitored teachers' planning and noted an improvement, which was confirmed by the inspection. Monitoring of lessons, to identify areas for improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, is planned. The inter-generational dance project, where Year 2 pupils work with local senior citizens, and after-school sports' clubs, are valuable additions to the physical education curriculum, as well as making a good contribution to the pupils' personal and social education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

91. No lessons were seen in this subject and there was no past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as **very good**.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

