

INSPECTION REPORT

AMINGTON HEATH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Tamworth

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124176

Acting Headteacher: Mr P Finegan

Lead inspector: Mr J Heap

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 October 2003

Inspection number: 255341

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	234
School address:	Quince Amington Tamworth
Postcode:	B77 4EN
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Jenkins
Date of previous inspection:	25 January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Amington Heath primary school caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven. It is situated in Amington, near to the town of Tamworth. There are 226 pupils on the roll of the main school: 121 boys and 105 girls. This is around the average sized school in England. The roll has significantly decreased in recent years. Pupils arrive at school reflecting the full range of attainment levels, but overall attainment on entry is very low. Pupils are organised into eight classes, five of which have more than a single age group of pupils. The pupils come from a large, suburban catchment area which has significant signs of deprivation. Housing ranges from local authority estates to private individual dwellings. The vast majority of pupils are white and there are representatives from a small range of ethnic minority heritages. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. Thirty-one per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals: this is above the national average. There are 42 pupils (19 per cent) on the register of special educational needs and the majority have moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. This is around the national average. Nine pupils (4 per cent) have a statement of special educational need, which is above the national average. Around 11 per cent of pupils moved in and out of the school in recent times. There has been upheaval on the staff, with the headteacher and deputy head being away from school for a long period of time. The school has received a School Improvement Award and Investors in People in 2001.

The school has a 52-place nursery which is undersubscribed. Children enter the nursery at the age of three years, and the children in the most recent intake have low scores in English, mathematics and social skills indicators.

In January 2003 the school suffered a fire that destroyed two classrooms and burned the work of two classes. The replacement building with two classrooms is a very welcoming part of the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18824	J Heap	Lead inspector	English Geography History Physical education English as an additional language
19344	D Jones	Lay inspector	
30559	J Taylor	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs
30243	A Heakin	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall, this is an unsatisfactory school, that has significant weaknesses that far outweigh the strengths. From a very low base of attainment on entry, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory by the time they leave at the age of 11. Teaching is satisfactory, with strengths in the nursery and reception classes. However, there is poor leadership and management and an unsatisfactory and narrow curriculum. Given that the level of resourcing is poor and the school has a budget deficit, value for money is unsatisfactory.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall, provision and achievement in the nursery and reception are good.
- The quality of care for pupils is good.
- The acting headteacher is bringing much needed stability to the school and raising parent and staff morale.
- Behaviour in the school is good because the teachers' skills in management and control are effective.
- By the age of 11, standards are below average.
- The curriculum is too narrow, lacks sufficient enrichment and learning resources are poor.
- The quality of leadership and management is poor.
- Links with parents and the community are unsatisfactory.
- The school has a growing budget deficit.
- Attendance is poor.

In an overall picture of unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection, successes include; better teaching in Years 1 to 4; the rate of attendance is higher; procedures for judging pupils' levels of attainment have improved and the information gained is used better for lesson planning; resources for information and communication technology are much improved; results in national tests at the age of 11 are improving. However, there has been insufficient improvement in leadership and management. Owing to the instability in management over many months, aspects of the school have deteriorated, such as: links with parents; provision for pupils with special educational needs; financial management.

The work of the two acting headteachers has brought much needed stability and confidence to the staff and parents. During this period there have been developments in: performance management for teachers; links with parents; health and safety procedures; resources for literacy.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. This includes all pupils, including the few from ethnic minority backgrounds and those with special educational needs. Children enter reception with levels of ability that reflect a broad range, but are very low overall. Children achieve well in the

nursery and reception classes and by the time they enter Year 1 a small proportion will meet the goals they are expected to achieve by this age in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. There was too little evidence to make secure judgements in physical and creative development. By the end of Year 2, standards seen are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents satisfactory achievement for most pupils starting from a very low base. By the end of Year 6, results in national tests are below average when compared to all schools and well below average when compared to similar schools. Standards seen are below average in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Standards in basic skills are not good enough in Year 6, because there are too few opportunities in the curriculum to use them extensively. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education are below expectations.

Overall, pupils' personal development is **satisfactory** and the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The strengths are in the good behaviour and in the provision for developing children's self esteem and capacity to take responsibility in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school, but attendance is poor.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but inconsistent. The best teaching is seen in nursery and reception, where there is evidence of much good practice and children are interested in the lessons and do a great deal of work. Overall, in Years 1 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. During the inspection the amount of satisfactory teaching outweighed the good and there was a small amount of unsatisfactory work. However, the analysis of pupils' work shows inconsistencies in marking and in the matching of tasks to individual pupils. Pupils with special educational needs receive unsatisfactory support.

Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The programme for the nursery and reception classes is good. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is unsatisfactory, with too few opportunities for enrichment and low levels of learning resources. There is insufficient attention paid to providing opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the full range of their work. The steps taken to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good and this helps to consolidate the satisfactory working ethos in the school. Links with parents are unsatisfactory, and there are too few opportunities taken to seek parents' views and act upon them. However, recent improvements mean that the information provided for parents is good. The school has weak links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are poor. The governors do not have a clear vision for the school and their role in checking and evaluating the work of the school is weak. Consequently, the quality of governance is poor. This is particularly serious at a time when the management of the school has undergone such massive difficulties. Successive acting headteachers have been dynamic in identifying some weaknesses and bringing about improvements, often in partnership with the local education authority.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school. They are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, the school's approachability and the quality of leadership and management shown by the present acting headteacher. A small minority of parents are unhappy about the behaviour of a similarly small number of pupils, and there was some evidence in the inspection to support their view. However, this is managed and controlled by the effective work of the staff. Pupils enjoy school, and have a good opinion of it, they like their teachers and feel that they work hard and do well. However, they do not always find lessons are interesting and they are concerned about the behaviour of a few pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve leadership and management;
- raise standards in English, mathematics and science;
- improve the quality of the curriculum and bring the resources to, at least, a satisfactory level;
- improve attendance;
- develop closer partnerships with parents and the community;
- remove the budget deficit.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, achievement is **unsatisfactory**. This reflects the strengths and weaknesses in a variety of factors. For example, from very low beginnings in the nursery, standards in national tests at the age of 11 are approaching the average. However, in 2002, there was poor improvement in standards for the same group of pupils from seven to 11 years of age. Furthermore, the quality of work in books is too often poor, particularly in English. This is a similar picture to the one described in the last report. There has not been enough improvement, particularly in the day-to-day work in books. The few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds also fail to achieve soundly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improving national test results for 11 year olds.
- Achievement is good in the nursery and reception classes.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science at the ages of seven and 11 are not high enough. Work in books is too often of poor quality.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below national expectations.
- Standards in religious education are below the level expected of the locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Standards in literacy and numeracy are not high enough.

Results in national tests

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	12.9 (14.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.3 (12.7)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	13.9 (14.1)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 30 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- 1 Standards in the national tests for seven year olds in 2002 were well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing when compared with all schools and similar schools. These point scores show a similar picture to the year before in English and mathematics when the school's average points scores lagged behind the national picture. Over three years, results in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys. National trends have risen steadily. The school's results have been falling and below average since 2000. Early indications of the 2003 results show standards to be worsening.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.2 (25.5)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	25.8 (25.3)	26.7 (26.6)
science	28.1 (26.7)	28.3 (28.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2 In relation to the table above showing average points scores, results in the national tests for 11 year olds were below average in 2002 when compared with all schools. Improvement in English and mathematics is well below average and below average in science. Overall, improvement from ages seven to 11 is well below average. Over three years, results are well below average in English, mathematics and science. The trend is inconsistent but, overall, is similar to the national trend and rising. There are no significant differences in the results of boys and girls in English and mathematics, but boys outperform girls in science. Early indications of the 2003 results are that standards remain low, but the trend in the school's results is better than the national trend.

Work seen during the inspection

3 Early judgements of pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the nursery show very low levels of attainment. Standards in literacy, numeracy and social skills are particularly weak. By the time children leave the reception class, around 20 per cent of them have attained the goals children are expected to reach in communication, language and literacy, mathematics knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about physical and creative development. Children with special educational needs achieve well. The good leadership and management of the nursery and reception classes are important factors in the relative success of this part of the school.

4 By the age of seven, standards are below the nationally expected level. However, achievement is satisfactory and this is due mainly to some good teaching in Year 2. In English, standards are below average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. In mathematics, standards are below expectations but, again, achievement is satisfactory. This is due to:

- good teaching in Year 2 that emphasises the importance of good planning and maximising the support of learning support assistants;
- some good work in the mental and oral starter to the lesson which develops positive attitudes in the Year 2 pupils.

However, in both English and mathematics, standards and achievement are not as high as they ought to be because of shortcomings in:

- the use of English skills across the wide range of subjects, and in particular, geography, history and religious education;
- the amount and range of learning resources;
- inconsistencies in teaching and, mainly, the poor quality marking.

5 By the age of 11, standards are below national expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory. In English and mathematics, the standards in workbooks are often poor. This is particularly noticeable in English books, where the basic skills are not taught well enough and this leads to poor handwriting, spelling and punctuation. In mathematics, there are significant inconsistencies in the quality of marking and in the expectations of teachers. Poor leadership and management have failed to ensure the highest standards.

6 In science, standards at seven and 11 are below expectations. These standards are not high enough because:

- marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance on where they can improve;
- presentation of work is poor and acts as a barrier to understanding;
- inadequate learning resources leave pupils with insufficient experience of investigation and problem-solving.

- 7 Standards in information and communication technology are below the nationally expected level at ages seven and 11. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because of the gains they are making as a result of the newly acquired computer suite. Standards are not as high as they might be because:
- resources in classrooms are inadequate;
 - there is insufficient use of information and communication technology skills, knowledge and understanding in other subjects.
- 8 Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Achievement is unsatisfactory. These standards have not moved on from the last inspection because there have been inconsistencies in the leadership, teaching and resourcing of the subject. There is insufficient work in books, and opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding are missed.
- 9 In other subjects, standards are below the expected level in geography at the age of seven. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on standards and achievement in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education and geography at the age of 11.
- 10 The achievement of pupils with special educational needs at the ages of seven and 11 is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient notice taken of individual learning plans and the general lack of learning resources also affects these pupils. This is particularly evident in reading.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, the behaviour of pupils is **good** and their attitudes to school and work are **satisfactory**. Attendance is **poor** and punctuality is **satisfactory**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**. These are similar judgements to the last inspection, except in pupils' attitudes, which have deteriorated. Attendance and spiritual development continue to be in need of improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The example set by school staff for moral behaviour.
 - The good quality of relationships.
 - Good behaviour.
 - The good attitudes of children in the nursery and reception classes.
 - Opportunities for older pupils to take on responsibilities around the school.
-
- Attendance is poor.
 - Lack of consistent planning across the school for pupils' personal development and responsibility.
 - Lack of opportunities for pupils to think deeply, thus developing self knowledge and spirituality.
 - Lack of visits or visitors to enrich pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness.

Commentary

- 11 The school is successful in providing a supportive environment for pupils who, in many cases, attend school with low self-esteem and little understanding of the need for self-discipline and social responsibility. Pupils work in an environment free from oppressive behaviour and the school deals effectively with such issues. Through effective behaviour management, the pupils mainly sustain a good level of behaviour and show positive attitudes to their work and the school. Pupils in Year 6 undertake a range of responsibilities, including delivering registers, ringing the bell and helping to lock the school gates. Pupils are expected to apply for the jobs in writing and be interviewed before taking part. Occasionally, an older pupil will 'buddy' a younger pupil until they become confident to join playground activities independently.

- 12 Within the nursery and reception classes, children's personal development is well supported. They quickly adopt the routines for good conduct and meet expectations for them to engage in learning activities. The children are confident and happy and they benefit from good relationships with their teachers and peers. For example, whilst sharing their 'Bear Hunt' in the school grounds with a visitor they became very excited, but well behaved and responsible.
- 13 Attitudes to learning in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory. A significant proportion of pupils are unable to sustain concentration and, too often, the quality of their work is untidy and lacks pride in its presentation. For instance:
- pupils produced poor work in response to a well-planned and resourced history lesson in Years 5 and 6;
 - in Year 1, pupils compared household items old and new, but their written work did not match their interest and enthusiasm for the topic.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	230	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0

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

- 14 Overall, behaviour is good. This is due to:
- the application of effective behaviour management techniques;
 - the good relationships that exist in school at pupil and adult/pupil level.
- Pupils are happy in school and a number accept responsibilities and support the younger pupils during recreation and lunch breaks. However, the school's provision of opportunities for all pupils to develop initiative and maturity and to encourage responsibility is not well established. There were three fixed-term exclusions last year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.3	School data	1.7
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

- 15 Unauthorised absence levels are poor and are more than three times the national rate. Attendance levels are poor and they are affected most significantly by absence through sickness and pupils being taken on holiday during term time. Late attending is not widespread but, for a minority, it is persistent. The levels of absence are a barrier to learning for a minority of pupils because:
- the school's provision for monitoring and encouraging regular attendance is not sufficiently rigorous;
 - a significant number of parents fail to support the school or their child's learning through ensuring prompt and regular attendance.

- 16 The strongest elements of the school's provision for pupils' personal development are in the moral and social areas. The key factors are:
- pupils learning from the good role-models of the adults;
 - the promotion of good levels of respect for adults and each other leads to the development of positive relationships;
 - the consistent application by staff of sensible and caring rules, such as the restrictions on parts of the playground so they can all play safely;
 - the appropriate highlighting of the needs of others through encouraging fundraising activities for NSPCC and Barnados;
 - fostering and encouraging an awareness and pride in the environment through links with a local supermarket which donated bulbs and trees for planting at school.

However, too few opportunities are sought to develop pupils' cultural development and most particularly their knowledge and understanding of multicultural matters. For example, the small number of visits do little to broaden pupils' knowledge of their locality and cultural opportunities. With the exception of the local vicar, there have been very few visitors to the school to stimulate pupils' interest in different faiths or cultures. Similarly, spiritual development is underdeveloped. The school uses a system of awarding house points and there are regular assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements, but the opportunities for pupils to reflect on ideas and beliefs are inconsistent. However, in nursery and reception, the 'thought for the day' gives these younger children good opportunities for reflection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, provision is **unsatisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. There is much less unsatisfactory teaching than at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum is **unsatisfactory**, which is a deterioration. Links with parents and the community are **unsatisfactory**: again this is a deterioration since the last inspection. Care and welfare are **good**.

Teaching and learning

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	18 (38%)	27 (57%)	2 (4%)	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.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, this over-arching statement masks a range of considerations, such as:

- the inspection is early in the first term of the year and staff are still getting to know their classes;
- the quality of work in books is unsatisfactory;
- the amount of good and better teaching is too low and well below average;
- the upheaval in leadership and management has led to low morale amongst staff and weaknesses in the checking of practice;
- the few pupils from ethnic minorities receive the same quality of teaching as all the other pupils;
- the results of the unvalidated tests for 11 year olds in 2003 are the highest ever.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strongest teaching is in the nursery and reception.
- Teaching in Year 2 and a Year 3/4 class is good.
- Management of behaviour is good throughout the school.
- Most teachers make good use of the sparse resources.

- The quality of marking is sometimes poor and often unsatisfactory, and this ought to have been resolved by senior management.
- Planning does not include sufficient references to the use and development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 17 Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes are good. Teachers and learning support staff are very good at encouraging and engaging children who have very weak skills. For example, in a reception circle time (class discussion) the children clearly developed confidence as the adults praised and encouraged their efforts, even when they became a little tongue-tied. In the nursery class, the nursery nurse managed to extend children's language as they played by taking a full part in the activity and being a good role model. In lessons like these, although the children have low standards, their learning and achievement are good. Good work is also evident in the hard work done to gather judgements of children's attainment and use these to frame future work.
- 18 In Years 1 to 6, the lessons observed were mainly satisfactory, with two lessons in one Year 3/4 class judged to be unsatisfactory. The best teaching was observed in Year 2 and in the other Year 3/4 class. Throughout these classes it is clear that there are pupils who find concentrating and behaving to be major challenges and it is to the credit of staff that this is never allowed to spoil lessons. Furthermore, teachers in Years 3 to 6 are particularly effective at making good use of the poor resources on offer. The very inadequate resources is a significant reason why teaching, learning and achievement are not as good as they ought to be. On too many occasions, marking is poor, and sometimes not done at all. There is some, but not enough, use and development of individual targets. All of these shortcomings mean that pupils do not have sufficiently good basic skills. Furthermore, they find difficulty in learning and working independently because they do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of how they can improve. This leads to unsatisfactory achievement and should have been dealt with by senior management.
- 19 The unsatisfactory lessons were in geography and physical education. The geography lesson had such inadequate learning intentions that it had nothing to do with geography at all and was, in fact, an art and design lesson. Even as an art lesson, it lacked challenge. The physical education lesson lacked pace and challenge and as such failed to be sufficiently vigorous. Opportunities were missed for discussion of the dance performance with, and between, pupils. Furthermore, there was little reference to the effects of exercise on the body, and health and safety matters in general.
- 20 In Years 1 to 6, there has been a satisfactory improvement in the development of procedures to judge pupils' levels of attainment. The data is being collected and used appropriately to:
- check and follow the rate of achievement of pupils;
 - inform the formation of teaching groups in English and mathematics.
- However, the picture is an inconsistent one, particularly in relation to marking work.
- 21 Overall, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Teachers have copies of recent individual education plans but the targets for individual pupils are not used well in lesson planning. The role of the support assistant within a lesson is left to the discretion of the individual class teacher so that there is no clear picture of the extent or effect of this support throughout the school. Assessment and tracking procedures of pupils identified as having difficulties in learning are not sufficiently developed to allow teachers to ascertain accurately the rate and levels of their achievements. For example, in one class, the teacher had taken too little notice of the targets set in previous individual education plans to set appropriate new ones. A specialist teacher from the local authority special educational needs support service and a representative from the educational psychological service provide adequate support and advice for teachers who are responsible for pupils experiencing learning

and behavioural difficulties. There are too few opportunities for pupils with special educational needs to have access to information and communication technology so that they can practise and develop their skills. In addition, there are too few opportunities to develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills using alternative strategies provided by the software.

- 22 Progress is measured against the targets set in pupils' individual education plans but there is no systematic tracking of individual pupils' progress. Progress is monitored when the targets set for individual education plans are reviewed and this is not often enough. Targets are not clearly stated and often not easily measurable. Reviews take place regularly but there is no evidence to indicate that pupils or parents are invited to participate. The provision within the classroom does not always provide appropriate challenge.

The curriculum

The school provides an **unsatisfactory** curriculum which does not meet the needs of all pupils. Opportunities for enrichment are **unsatisfactory**. The accommodation supports learning **well**. The amount and quality of learning resources are **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Accommodation is good and supports teaching and learning.
- Learning resources are poor and are a major impediment to raising standards.
- Procedures for reviewing the curriculum are ineffective, particularly in relation to the development and use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in other subjects.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory.
- The range of clubs available for pupils and opportunities for them to visit places of interest and meet visitors to school are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 23 Overall, the judgements about the curriculum are worse than at the time of the last inspection. This is particularly the case in relation to enrichment and the quantity and quality of resources.
- 24 The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes is broad and well balanced between teacher-led activities and child 'choice' activities. Staff plan imaginatively and provide a stimulating classroom environment. The good procedures for judging children's levels of attainment are used as soon as they arrive. The information is used well by staff to ensure that all children receive appropriate learning opportunities. Children who have special educational needs are identified early and this means they benefit from the good teaching planned to meet their particular needs. Children are prepared well for the next stage in their education because of the links through regular assemblies with the older pupils.
- 25 The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 meets legal requirements because all subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, as well as religious education that is guided by the locally Agreed Syllabus. There is satisfactory provision for teaching personal, social and health issues including sex and relationships education for senior pupils and advice on the misuse of drugs.
- 26 All pupils benefit equally from what the school offers. Teachers of those pupils who are withdrawn from lessons for specialist teaching, for example instrumental tuition, ensure that they have the opportunity to join in with parallel classes at a later date. However, pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from elements of some lessons for specialist skills tuition. Although all pupils have equal access to activities outside lessons, the range of activities is too narrow; but, there are plans to improve on this in the near future.
- 27 The recommendations of the revised Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs are fully implemented. Although records are kept of pupils' progress and their

movement between the stages of the Code of Practice, they are difficult to access by adults who need to know. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the care provided by the staff and the good relationships which generally exist throughout the school.

- 28 Effective procedures for reviewing the curriculum are lacking and this is a significant reason for the ineffective provision. Consequently, the amount, breadth and quality of work in too many books is poor. The main weaknesses are:
- inefficient checking of plans to ensure that pupils are building on prior learning. For example, in design and technology lessons pupils of mixed ages are taught how to construct houses in exactly the same way, with no planning for older or more able pupils to extend their earlier knowledge and experience;
 - too little planning of opportunities for pupils to deploy literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. This is a barrier to learning that is most noticeable in reading and writing;
 - the curriculum does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to visit places of interest that would widen and extend their learning experiences and develop their personal and social skills. There are too few visitors to school to contribute to pupils' learning about the wider world.

Owing to the seriousness of these weaknesses, the curriculum is narrower than it should be. This has a pronounced effect on pupils' ability to confidently find, record and make links between a range of information from different sources. Thereafter, using their knowledge to work effectively and independently.

- 29 A further barrier to learning is the poor state of learning resources. All curriculum areas need further investment in resources to allow teaching to be more effective and to raise standards. For example:
- there are insufficient books for pupils to read and research information;
 - there is a well-equipped computer suite but pupils do not have frequent access to computers to help them practise and develop their newly acquired skills. Some of the computer equipment in classrooms is more than ten years old and will not operate recent software programs. Consequently, progress is limited because there is not enough equipment to support learning in all subject areas.

These shortcomings have an adverse effect on all pupils. Specialist resources to match the particular needs of pupils with special educational needs are lacking, including dedicated access to information and communication technology to enhance their learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

- 30 Children in nursery and reception benefit from good support from adults. Overall, the school's accommodation is good. It has extensive and attractive grounds that allow a wide range of sports and outdoor activities to take place, including scientific investigations. Although some classrooms are small, there are rooms available for specialist music tuition, areas adjacent to classrooms for practical activities, a room for specialist tuition in literacy and numeracy, as well as a library. However, the use of areas such as the library is very limited.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. The provision for guidance and support is **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good relationships that exist between the staff and pupils.
- The safe and secure learning environment provided in school.
- The good support and understanding that staff show to the children in the nursery and reception classes.

Commentary

- 31 Overall, the judgements about care and welfare are similar to those of the last inspection.
- 32 Pupils are well known to staff, who have a strong commitment to their safety and welfare. Relationships are trusting and secure and pupils are confident in approaching staff with their concerns. Within the nursery and reception classes, the children quickly settle and involve themselves in activities with confidence and appropriate independence because:
- adults are calm, fair and firm;
 - careful observation of children and their skills provides information that is used sensitively to cater for individual needs. Consequently, children make a good start to their school career and achieve well.
 - good staff teamwork fosters reassurance and confidence in children who often have low self esteem.
- 33 The school provides a safe and secure learning environment by:
- ensuring the school building and grounds are well managed and maintained. This has been a particular target for the newly arrived acting headteacher;
 - developing sound policies that advise and guide practice in managing behaviour, bullying and harassment.
- The acting headteacher is also the designated officer for child protection and he recognises that there is a need for information to be shared with staff and training to be updated.
- 34 Pupils with special educational needs benefit from working alongside their peer group but several are taught outside the class group and follow programmes of work that develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Older pupils are taught in groups according to their prior levels of attainment so that their needs can be met more efficiently. The school judges and monitors the progress of special educational needs pupils in the same way that it does for all pupils and particularly through the review of individual education plans. However, the targets in these plans are too general and fail to give teachers and pupils the guidance needed to make good progress.
- 35 The school has adequate access to visiting specialists from the local education authority, special educational needs support service and educational psychologist service. These professionals provide good guidance.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **unsatisfactory**. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher is successfully developing trust and relationships with parents.
- Annual reports of pupils' progress are good and an improvement since the last inspection.
- The quality of its links with parents is weak.

Commentary

- 36 Overall, the links with parents have worsened since the last inspection with some parents expressing great dissatisfaction with management and governors. However, the acting headteacher is working extremely hard to improve matters and these are proving to be popular with parents.
- 37 The response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and the meeting with inspectors was limited, but parents hold mainly favourable views about the school's provision. Many of those who responded felt that relations between home and school have improved over recent weeks, mainly due to the work being done by the acting headteacher. However, there is evidence that parents have lost confidence in the headteacher who is presently on indefinite leave, to the extent that petitions were raised that indicated their concerns. The school acknowledges that there is much work needed to develop confidence, co-operation and partnership.
- 38 Parents are not active in supporting their children's education or the work of the school. Community links are unsatisfactory and make little contribution to pupils' learning or personal development. There are limited links with other schools and colleges. The quality of annual reports of pupils' progress is good and adequate opportunities are provided for parents to attend formal consultation evenings to discuss their child's progress. In the nursery and reception classes, parents are regularly seen when they come into school at the start of the day. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are appropriately invited to attend the annual review of statements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are **poor**. Governance is **poor**. Management of subjects is **weak**. The school has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection because of **poor** management. Even though a range of weaknesses was identified at the last inspection, this represents a deterioration in the way the school is run. The school has undergone enormous upheavals in the past eighteen months, with both the headteacher and deputy headteacher out of the school for prolonged periods. For example, the headteacher has been on indefinite leave since March 2003. In his place there have been two acting headteachers: one from the present staff and, since September, an experienced headteacher brought in by the local education authority.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management in nursery and reception are good.
- The energetic approaches to their work of the two acting headteachers, one of whom is a senior member of staff at present.
- The present acting headteacher has managed to foster confidence in the parents.
- Weak financial management has failed to support educational priorities and has led to chronic shortages in learning resources.
- The most recent school development plan provides little direction and priorities are not identified.

- Senior management has failed to halt the poor practices in marking and as a result the work in books is not of the quality it ought to be and is a significant cause of pupils' unsatisfactory achievement. This is a failure of leadership.
- The work of the governing body is poor.
- Many subject coordinators do not have the resources or expertise to lead their subjects effectively.
- Poor leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

- 39 Governors have found it very difficult to work with much effect because:
- they have relied too heavily on limited information from the headteacher;
 - they have failed to introduce effective procedures to check on provision in the school;
 - they have an unclear view of strengths, weaknesses and the direction the school is going in;
 - they do not know how to articulate a vision for the future and lead strongly.
- 40 As a result, they have been unable to perform the duties of 'critical friend'. Furthermore, inconsistencies in spending have led to poor levels of learning resources in most subjects. Also, there have been purchases of large items that are costly but used by only a few. For example, a mobile cricket pitch has been purchased at a large cost and not used by many in the school. Consequently, the procedures for ensuring that the school gets value for money in its spending are weak.
- 41 The aims of the school have not been re-examined for some time and, as a consequence, there are significant shortcomings in evaluating the school's work. Some parents at the meeting with inspectors felt that the governing body lacked effectiveness and a sufficiently high profile in the school. However, the school has managed to improve standards in national tests and this is due to useful tracking of pupils' achievements, including pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 42 The weaknesses in the leadership shown by the senior management have led to:
- a slump in staff morale;
 - hard working teachers having less impact than they ought on pupils' standards and achievement in lessons;
 - bad practices slipping into the work of the school, such as weak marking.
- 43 Financial management is poor and as a result the school faces a growing deficit and significant shortages in resources. The school development plan is not clear enough about priorities and so it is not possible to judge if the funds are well spent. However, an area of activity which has brought benefits is the funding of extra staff to reduce group sizes in the older classes before the national tests. Results are rising, partly because of this.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	609010
Total expenditure	623500
Expenditure per pupil	2164

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	2000
Balance carried forward to the next	-14490

- 44 Both of the acting headteachers have worked extremely hard to improve provision through identifying the significant weaknesses in leadership and management. For example:
- the first acting head has made good improvements in performance management and her leadership of the nursery and reception stage is good. There is a very clear sense of purpose, to raise children's achievement and promote good, calm behaviour. The staff are successful in this because they have high expectations. Adults share the common vision and form a very good team. The care and welfare of children is of prime importance and the focus on the development of children's personal and communication skills is well chosen.
 - The second acting headteacher has instigated developments in health and safety and parents are being encouraged to have more confidence in the management of the school. This was made clear by the comments of the small number of parents at the meeting with inspectors.
- Of course, these developments are relatively recent and have had little time to impact successfully on the work of the school.
- 45 Subject coordination is weak. The main shortcomings are:
- a lack of direction and leadership;
 - poor levels of support and resources;
 - a lack of opportunities and expertise to check on provision.
- Subject co-ordinators manage curriculum development in their subjects as well as they can, given the constraints of time, money and the training they need to develop expertise. They work with good commitment to improve the provision in their subjects. They lack the active support by the governing body, particularly in checking on provision and having a plan that will overcome the weaknesses in resources.
- 46 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed by the special educational needs coordinator. There are weaknesses in the management of this provision:
- the draft policy which outlines all procedures in accordance with the recommendations of the Code of Practice has yet to become a useful working document;
 - comprehensive information related to special educational needs is not easily accessible;
 - the policy for teaching pupils outside their usual group is not clear and, consequently, the curriculum for these pupils is narrowed to an unacceptable level.
- 47 The co-ordinator is not in school full time. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is not actively involved in the management and provision of education for those pupils who have special educational needs. There is insufficient checking and supporting of provision from the governing body and from the management of the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in nursery and reception continues to be one of the **strengths** of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mainly good teaching.
 - Very good teamwork between the teacher and the support staff.
 - Very good encouragement so children want to learn.
 - Good focus on language and personal skills.
 - Good assessment of children's educational needs.
 - Good leadership and management.
-
- Unsatisfactory provision of resources, particularly in the reception class.

Commentary

48 The children enter nursery with very poor levels of attainment. Their social skills, ability to communicate, confidence and general experiences are limited. By the time they leave the reception class around twenty percent of the children achieve the goals they are expected to reach and the remainder have made good progress particularly in personal and communication skills. Children benefit from the secure and happy learning environment that has been fostered by the good leadership and management of the coordinator. Adults are calm but firm, combining reassurance with a range of challenging learning opportunities. Teaching is mostly good both in adult-led tasks and in the good range of activities that children can choose. In the nursery and reception classes, adults carefully observe children and make judgements about their skills. This information is used carefully to plan appropriate activities based on children's individual needs. The planning is of good quality, based on the nationally agreed six areas of learning and takes into account children's existing knowledge and the next stage in their learning. The very good teamwork between the adults means that no time is wasted, lessons are well prepared and adults work confidently with the children. The good quality provision results in all children achieving well, including those with special educational needs. Even though at the end of reception their attainment is still well below national expectations they make a good start to their school life. The accommodation is satisfactory but the school is too reliant on staff making and bringing in their own teaching resources and using the toy library particularly in the reception class. The nursery benefits from being part of the local authority early years partnership and is well resourced.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good, encouraging early independence; as a result children make good progress towards the expected standards.
 - Good procedures for judging children's levels of attainment means adults get to know children well and are able to match work to individual needs.
-
- Children arrive at the school with very limited social skills.

Commentary

- 49 Overall, standards are well below average, but the children are achieving well. Children in both classes behave well and they are learning classroom routines, for example putting toys away. Adults encourage children to be independent in putting on coats for outside play. Children are given good opportunities to take responsibility. Very good opportunities to improve confidence and self-esteem are provided when children sit in a circle and talk about what has made them happy. The teacher and assistants are good role-models, encouraging the children to be friendly and show concern for each other. When one child was poorly, there was no end of volunteers to look after him. When there is a class activity such as registration or story time the reception teacher is very clear in her expectation that children will sit and listen. Children enjoy the interesting activities prepared for them. There are good opportunities for children to play and work together, sharing the sand, office area and hospital role-play. Despite the good opportunities to play collaboratively many reception children still need a lot of encouragement to do so, often content to play without interactions with other children.

Communication, Language and Literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Adults take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.
- Children arrive at the school with very poor language competence.

Commentary

- 50 Only a small proportion of children are on course to attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. This is because most start school with poorly developed language skills, for example, speaking single words or using body language to communicate. Snack-time is used well in nursery as an opportunity for adults to demonstrate good language and to encourage children to talk about the activities of the day. Children's responses are limited and adults work hard to encourage them to speak. In reception children are more competent but their speech is still immature. Some children are unable to answer clearly when the register is taken so their teacher sensitively repeats and encourages them to improve. When stories are read to them, reception children join in with repeated words. They follow the very good lead of the teaching assistant, who works closely with the teacher to encourage language development. Children's experience and knowledge of books is poor and very few children know letter sounds. The display of children's 'Get Well' cards to Humpty Dumpty is an example of the good range of activities promoting writing skills. Adults have made 'Incredible Hulk' writing mats and successfully encouraged boys to take an interest in writing. The highest attaining children in the reception class are learning to write their first and last names, with the lowest attaining children learning to hold a pencil with confidence. The good teaching leads to good achievement.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching introducing the early stages of numeracy at every possible opportunity.
- Children's limited language skills make it difficult for them to explain their mathematical ideas.

Commentary

- 51 Standards are very low. Adults emphasise mathematical vocabulary and children learn terms such as 'big' 'small' 'more' and 'less'. Nursery children looked at pictures of Titch, seeing that he was small and his brother was big. When their teacher showed a picture of Titch wearing a sweater far too small and asked 'how do we know it is too small?' children merely echoed 'too small' and had little understanding of what it meant or that they had to think about the picture. Reception children gain an understanding of time because their teacher regularly goes through the 'Pattern of the Day'. The theme of the three bears was used effectively to learn about size. Numbers and number words are well displayed around the classroom, combined with imaginative teaching and frequent opportunities for children to count and join in with number rhymes. This results in good achievement in mathematical development. The playground markings are used well, children learn to count as they play hopscotch.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good, imaginative teaching.
- The good opportunities for children to use computers to support their learning.
- The limited knowledge and experiences children have encountered before coming to school.

Commentary

- 52 Overall, standards are low but children's achievement is good. The teacher and assistants work hard and successfully to provide a stimulating classroom environment. The 'sense' table is an important focal point. Children tried to identify a variety of smells. The task created interest, children's natural curiosity was stimulated and they became eager to know what was actually in the containers. Good quality planning shows nursery children learn about past and present when they look at baby pictures. Planning shows the theme of past and present is continued in the reception class, as is children's awareness of locality. Reception children were excited to receive a letter from 'The Three Bears'. The letter was an invitation to visit the bears and included a map. In this well prepared lesson children followed the map, became more aware of their immediate locality, collected a range of interesting items for the nature table and found the three bears. Porridge making helps children become aware of scientific changes when heat is used and they record whether they like or dislike of porridge on a chart. The fun of the experiment links well with the need to develop writing skills. A strength of the provision is the nursery friendly computer used to good effect for children to learn to control the mouse, but many still need physical support and prompts. Reception children have a regular session in the computer suite, the time is organised to good effect so that each child has their own computer and is able to achieve very well, clicking and dragging with increasing accuracy.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision for physical development. Planning indicates that children get regular opportunities to learn to control gestures and movements through role-play and when they use the hall for physical education. The good range of activities planned for 'choice' times and the display of children's work shows children learn to manipulate modelling clay, use simple tools and construction toys. The nursery and reception classes have the benefit of a well appointed and secure play area where children can safely run, climb and slide. Nursery children enjoyed the physical challenge of painting the outside walls with water and trying to throw and catch balls with their teacher.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

It is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in creative development. Adults are very aware of the need to promote imaginative play and encourage role-play and story re-enactments wherever possible. Display on the walls and samples of work show children have good opportunities to use paint, collage materials and modelling clay to express and communicate their ideas. During inspection week all reception children used their cutting, sticking and painting skills to produce the 'Three Bears' frieze.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in national test results over time for 11 year olds.
- Poor basic writing skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Parents identified this as a worry, particularly standards in spelling.
- Shortcomings in reading, including lack of expression by the oldest pupils, and weak library and information-gathering skills.
- Far too few opportunities to use and develop literacy skills in the other subjects.
- The satisfactory quality of teaching is not good enough and workbooks provide evidence of poor marking and low expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not achieve well enough because there is insufficient attention paid to the targets in individual learning plans and there is a lack of a resources.

Commentary

- 53 Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities. At the ages of seven and 11, standards are below the nationally expected levels. This represents satisfactory achievement at age seven and unsatisfactory achievement at age 11. These standards and achievement are not good enough, particularly in the basic skills. In national tests at age 11, results have been improving over the last couple of years and the 2003 unvalidated scores are the highest ever. These improvements are due in no small measure to:
- the arrangements for grouping pupils according to prior levels of attainment;
 - higher expectations and revising for the test.
- Although the school has raised standards in the test scores for 11 year olds and this responds adequately to the key issue raised in the last report, the work in books looks to have worsened.
- 54 By the age of seven, standards in national tests are worsening. Standards seen in speaking, listening, reading and writing are below the expected level. Seven year olds join in conversations and concentrate for short periods of time. The majority of readers have poor understanding of the simple books they read. However, higher attaining pupils (around 20 per cent) are accurate and fluent readers who have a sound understanding of the books they read. They also express themselves well. Writing standards are low, with the majority of pupils having very weak handwriting, spelling and punctuation skills. Higher attaining pupils are achieving well and producing some pleasing and accurate pieces of work, such as interesting letters. Overall, achievement is satisfactory because of good teaching in Year 2, where the quality of marking is positive and helpful.

- 55 By the age of 11, there has been satisfactory improvement in speaking and listening. Around half the pupils read accurately and fluently and with understanding. However, the lower attaining pupils do not understand the books they read, even though they read their simple books with adequate accuracy and fluency. A significant weakness in the reading standards relates to poor library and information-gathering skills. The lowest attaining pupils are adversely affected by the lack of a wide range of suitable reading materials. Writing skills are poor and in relation to the books analysed from the previous academic year the standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation worsened during the year. The main reasons for this poor work are:
- weak marking by teachers that fails to iron out inconsistencies in work and set high expectations;
 - too few opportunities to write in other subjects.
- Unfortunately, because of difficulties in leadership and management, one of the Year 6 teachers had to provide significant support for the acting headteacher, and his class had supply teachers for a large proportion of the year. This has made for inconsistent standards.
- 56 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, poor and inconsistent work in books over time show weaknesses in marking and expectations that are unacceptable. Furthermore, there is insufficient attention in lesson planning to the targets identified in the individual learning plans of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless, the school is right to group pupils according to prior attainment and this has led to progress in speaking and listening, in particular. The best work is seen in Year 2, where the written work shows evidence of longer pieces of writing, higher expectations and sound marking.
- 57 Overall, leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The main reasons for this are:
- the coordinator has not been provided with sufficient resources (time and finance) to do the job properly;
 - the coordinator had to concentrate on leading and managing the school for the summer term of 2003;
 - basic structures to improve and then maintain standards have not been in place. For example, there is no rigorous, well thought-out and checked marking policy.
- The curriculum is too narrow and the level of resourcing is poor, for instance the range of reading books. All of these factors have a limiting impact on pupils' standards and achievement.
- Language and literacy across the curriculum**
- 58 This is poor. There are insufficient opportunities for reading and writing in other subjects. This is one of the main reasons why standards are lower than they ought to be. Furthermore, the lack of resources is also a major factor in there being low standards in exercise books.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Satisfactory subject management in difficult circumstances.
- Lack of consistency in the quality of teaching.
- Lack of useful marking to show pupils what they have achieved and what the next step in learning should be.
- Unsatisfactory use of mathematical skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

- 59 Across the school, standards in mathematics are below nationally expected levels. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels in the national tests in mathematics is low. Though the recent unconfirmed 2003 results show a slight dip in the percentage of pupils achieving the national standard, it is evident there is an improvement in standards during the last three years in line with the improving national picture. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory and this leads to unsatisfactory achievement. This is because there is a dearth of appropriate resources for these pupils and insufficient notice is taken of the targets set for pupils' development.
- 60 By the age of seven, standards are below national expectations. Higher attaining pupils understand the value of numbers to three digits place value, however this is not good enough and they ought to be using fractions and understanding the value of each individual digit up to a thousand. Lower attaining pupils work successfully on number sequences up to 60. By the age of 11, standards of work seen are below national expectations and achievement is satisfactory for most pupils. Higher attaining pupils respond well to the lively start to their lesson and become fully involved in mental calculations based on percentages. They learn rules to help find 20, 30 or 50 percent of a number and are able to decide when to work out an answer in their heads and when to use a calculator. Pupils do not go on to reach the above average levels of performance, for example, sequencing of negative numbers, or the drawing of angles accurate to a degree.
- 61 Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. However, the analysis of pupils' exercise books reveal that teaching over time is inconsistent and this leads to achievement over time that is unsatisfactory. Marking is poor, often reduced to ticks, and sometimes even when answers are wrong, rather than acknowledging pupils' new knowledge and indicating the next step to be achieved. Though classes have group targets for mathematics, often displayed in classrooms, there is little reference in lessons or in pupils' exercise books to their achievement against these targets. The school is attempting to overcome shortcomings in pupils' achievement by grouping pupils according to prior levels of attainment to ease the problem of teaching classes with more than one age group and a very wide range of ability. This initiative and the spending of additional money to make smaller teaching groups prior to national tests is helping test results to rise.
- 62 Though teachers use assessment information to plan their lessons appropriately, insufficient use is made of individual educational plans to help pupils who have special educational needs improve their mathematical achievements. In the majority of lessons teachers take care to ask pupils to explain how they have worked out answers. This helps teachers to assess pupils' understanding and shows pupils that there are often different ways of arriving at a correct answer.
- 63 The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has maintained a focus on raising pupils' achievement despite the recent difficulties sustained by the school. The subject co-ordinator has not been given the necessary regular opportunities to monitor the teaching of mathematics and, as a result, is unable to gain an informed overview of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. However, staff have been provided with training opportunities outside the school and additional support from local authority consultants. Analysis is made of national test results and the information is used to predict future results and analyse limitations in the school curriculum. For example, the school now recognises a need to focus on pupils' ability to solve problems expressed in words.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 64 The promotion of numeracy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. The limited evidence shows that in science, Year 6 pupils monitored and checked their heartbeats, recording their results in a table and line graph, and Year 3 pupils recorded in graphical form the results of their cress plant experiment in light and dark, but there are very few other

examples. The contribution of information and communication technology to the learning in mathematics is unsatisfactory.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are well behaved and interested in their lessons.
- The judging of pupils' levels of attainment based on tests has improved.

- Standards are not high enough.
- The quality and frequency of marking is weak.
- The quality and range of resources is inadequate.

Commentary

65 Overall, standards of work seen are below national expectations and not high enough for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minorities. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory because:

- the quality of marking is poor and often not done at all;
- the matching of work to individual pupils is weak;
- the use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in science is weak;
- presentation of pupils' work is below the standard expected for pupils of this age.

By the age of seven, standards shown in teacher assessment are below average. By the age of 11, standards in national tests are below average. However, early indications from the 2003 national tests show attainment to be much better than at the time of the last inspection, particularly for the higher attainers. The school has introduced 'booster classes' and the science club and these have helped to raise standards.

66 By the age of seven, pupils of all levels of attainment follow the same work at the same level, usually by working through similar worksheets to each other. For example, pupils are familiar with a range of materials and some of their properties. However, they have difficulty describing the similarities or differences between the materials. The progress of higher attaining pupils is limited by their weak literacy skills. By the age of 11, the achievement of the majority of pupils is inhibited by several factors, for instance:

- continuing weak literacy skills inhibits the quality of recording;
- insufficient guidance through high quality marking.

The range of work is satisfactory, but the amount of work completed is inadequate, most particularly for the highest attainers.

67 Overall, the quality of teaching observed is satisfactory. The strengths are:

- the good management and control of pupils throughout the school;
- the good teacher knowledge and effective use of sparse resources in Years 3 to 6, and particularly with the oldest pupils.

However, the examination of pupils' workbooks shows that teachers do not mark books frequently and with sufficient rigour to enable pupils to know how they can improve the standard and presentation of their work. Younger pupils record most of their work using commercially produced worksheets, which restricts the opportunity of higher attaining pupils to increase their skills and competence as recorders of their own work, which they are capable of doing. Pupils are well behaved and interested in their lessons as a result of good teaching. During lessons pupils showed a good attitude to learning. They showed an interest in the topics and enjoy taking part in question and answer sessions. They are able to work together to discuss problems but there were few opportunities to see pupils working

together in practical situations to investigate scientific problems.

- 68 Leadership and management are unsatisfactory because the co-ordinator has had few opportunities to actively manage the subject, for example, by checking teaching and learning. The judging of pupils' levels of attainment has improved. The subject co-ordinator has introduced a procedure so that pupils are tested at the end of each topic. Teachers use this information with increasing effectiveness to plan, using their knowledge of their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This has led to increases in the proportion of pupils gaining the nationally expected Level 4 in national tests. The quality and range of resources, including information and communication technology resources, are inadequate. This is having an adverse effect on standards because pupils are not able to gain sufficient experience of practical experiments. There are very few computers available so pupils do not have easy access to an alternative form of recording, use data analysis, or do research.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a recently established and well-stocked computer suite.
- The resources generally available within classrooms are inadequate.
- Pupils are beginning to achieve satisfactorily from a very low starting point but the standards they attain are below those expected for pupils in similar situations.
- There is insufficient use of information and communication technology in other subjects.

Commentary

- 69 Standards at the ages of seven and 11 are below expectations. The recently established computer suite is providing impetus for work in the subject and pupils are beginning to make satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, standards are unsatisfactory in relation to what the pupils should be able to do. The inadequacy of resources and equipment is having an adverse effect on achievement in spite of the enthusiastic and improving teaching they receive.
- 70 The resources generally available within classrooms are inadequate. Pupils usually use the computer suite once a week. This is insufficient for them to practise and develop their newly acquired skills. The computers situated in classrooms are out of date, some are more than ten years old, and they are unable to accommodate the most recent software programs. The range of software is unsatisfactory, so pupils do not have access to programs that would enable them to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills. Pupils do not have access to digital photography or scanners that would help them record their work more efficiently and effectively and raise their overall standard of competency.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 71 There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to enhance learning across other subjects. This is partly as a result of the poor level of resources available. Consequently, information and communication technology does not often feature in teachers' plans for other subject areas. As a result, pupils do not benefit from being able to record their work using graphics, for example.

HUMANITIES

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lack of improvement since the last inspection.
- Lack of co-ordination and checking of the subject.

Commentary

- 72 Overall, achievement is unsatisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- 73 At the time of the previous inspection (1999) standards were below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Immediately after the last inspection the school appointed a co-ordinator for the subject. As a result, the curriculum was reviewed and planned in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus. Resources were bought to support teaching and a portfolio of work samples was initiated. Since then the subject has been managed by three other members of staff and is in the process of being reallocated. This means that the good work resulting from the previous inspection has lost impetus. Standards still remain below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and examination of the very limited samples of pupils' work indicates a lack of focus on the subject and the inconsistent quality of teaching.
- 74 The subject is taught primarily through the topic approach. For example, within the topic of travel older pupils learn about the conversion of Paul on the way to Damascus, and Gladys Aylward and her missionary journeys. They know the Bible is important to Christians. In understanding other faiths, older pupils learn the Hindu story of Rama and Sita, categorise the characters into good or evil, appreciating the links with the Hindu celebration of Divali. In preparation for Lent, pupils hear about the forty days spent by Jesus in the desert and then make their own Lenten resolutions. A collection of paintings and writing show members of Years 5 and 6 have presented an assembly based on the life of Jesus. An example of good quality work by a higher attaining pupil from Year 6 was a piece of reflective writing based on an imaginary pilgrimage to Lichfield. However, this was an isolated example. It was clear in this lesson that written work was poor and that pupils were held back by their weak library skills. The problems of the fire in the school resulted in no written work being available from pupils in Years 3 and 4. During the inspection good quality teaching in one of the combined Year 3 and 4 classes focused on how people can change as Zaccheus changed after his meeting with Jesus; pupils thought carefully, discussing personal happy and sad feelings and the reasons why those might change. Pupils learned to be empathetic and achieved well in their personal development. A well planned lesson based on looking for evidence of the sort of person Jesus was, elicited interest and good quality discussion from Year 6 pupils. However, their limited written skills restricted their readiness to record information, and their writing did not do justice to their thoughts and ideas. In Year 1, the teacher showed pupils a good range of religious items associated with the Hindu faith. Though pupils enjoyed the smell of joss sticks and looked at the items, their lack of maturity was evident. At the end of the lesson pupils could with prompts recall the names of the items but had little understanding of their significance.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision in geography is **unsatisfactory**. Three lessons were observed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make the most of very sparse resources to produce good lessons.
- Insufficient work done by many pupils.
- The evident strengths of the coordinator are not being used properly.
- Insufficient resources (time and money) to support the coordinator.

Commentary

- 75 Standards at the age of seven are below the national expectation. There is insufficient work to make a judgement about standards at age 11.
- 76 Year 2 pupils recognise landmarks in the locality and have opinions about their likes and dislikes among these landmarks. Most are able to place photographs onto a quite complex local map. The highest attainers talk about their field study and show that they are interested in what they do. In Years 3 to 6, pupils understand the use of maps and have knowledge of the use of keys. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their literacy skills and produce examples of extended writing and independent research.
- 77 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the three lessons, one was unsatisfactory and two were good. In the good Year 2 lesson, the strengths were:
- the fact that the lesson was part of a series and included supporting material such as field studies, helpful displays, on-site photographs and most of these resources were supplied by the teacher;
 - innovative ways of helping the lowest attainers to understand the work. For instance, setting up a dolls house in a tray as a concrete example of a bird's eye view.
- In the unsatisfactory Year 3 / 4 lesson the most significant weakness related to the poor lesson objectives. They were so weak that the lesson did not have a geographical base and was more an art and design lesson.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good use of artefacts in some lessons.
- Work in books is below expectations and too few opportunities are taken to develop reading and writing skills.
- Coordination is unsatisfactory because of lack of resources and time.

Commentary

- 78 There is insufficient evidence to judge standards and achievement up to the age of seven. Standards at the age of 11 are below expectations. Achievement is unsatisfactory. There is too little work completed and where it is completed the standards of presentation are weak. In lessons, standards are around the expected level. Younger pupils look at artefacts and show that they recognise that objects belong to different eras, for example a coal scuttle and toasting forks from the nineteenth century and a mobile phone of the twentieth century.

- 79 Overall, teaching is satisfactory. The strongest lesson was a good Year 1 session and the main strengths were:
- good planning and resources;
 - interesting discussion based on comparing photographs from homes in different eras.
- The other two lessons in Years 3 and 5/6 were satisfactory. In both lessons the planning was good and teachers' had clearly worked hard to provide interesting artefacts for the pupils to look at. However, the behaviour and quality of work was below the expected standard and this lessened the impact and the achievement.
- 80 Overall, subject coordination in geography and history is unsatisfactory. The coordinator has a great deal of knowledge and has published much work on the subject. However, she recognises that the interesting and comprehensive schemes of work and records of attainment that she has devised have had only limited impact. Clearly, her ideas have not been accepted by all and she has not had the resources to check on matters, except through looking at displays and listening to citations in merit assemblies. These are poor ways of checking on important matters.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

In **art and design**, one lesson was seen during the course of the inspection. Discussion took place with pupils in Year 6 and examples of pupils' work were scrutinised. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision.

- 81 Pupils achieve as well as other pupils in similar situations but little use is made of sketchbooks to encourage them to explore the design aspect of their work. They were enthusiastic and well motivated in the lesson observed in Year 2. They responded very well to probing questions posed by the teacher to stimulate their learning. They listened attentively and worked well together in small group situations and produced work similar to the standards expected for their age. They produced sketches in the style of Lowry and Quentin Blake. They were particularly successful in producing prints of houses, which were closely linked to their current topic.
- 82 Teachers endeavour to provide a range of artistic experiences, for example, pupils draw from observation using chalk and pastels and paint in the style of different artists including Monet, Van Gogh, and Matisse. There are some examples of work with clay to produce medallions in the style of The Ancient Greeks. However, in discussion with pupils in Year 6, they were unable to offer any information about famous artists beyond the names of Van Gogh and Leonardo da Vinci. They have had very limited access to computer programs and equipment or visits to local art galleries and museums, which would enhance the curriculum. The lack of a wide range of good quality resources limits the artistic experiences available. Teachers work well with the equipment in school to devise imaginative artistic activities which compensate for the poor quality of basic items such as paintbrushes.

In **design and technology**, one lesson was seen during the inspection, discussion took place with pupils and their work was examined. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on the quality of provision, standards or achievement.

- 83 Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about the subject. Pupils in Year 6 were able to explain how they had constructed cams and how they devised fair tests to test the design of shelters they had made. They do not have access to a range of tools such as drills and saws. They were unfamiliar with the need to trial designs using sketchbooks. Examples of joining materials to make doors for houses were discussed with pupils in Year 1 but they were unable to select their own materials, which were restricted to staples, sticky tape or glue as a means of connecting the materials. There were examples of this activity in more than one class and age group, which suggests that the development of skills is not sufficiently monitored. Pupils do not use the computer to investigate designs and products which they may need to construct.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **satisfactory**. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards and achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good opportunities to access instrumental tuition and the curriculum is enriched by choir and instrumental groups.
 - Teaching is imaginative and pupils show interest and enthusiasm for the subject.
- 84 Pupils sing tunefully and are able to sing 'rounds' to add interest and create more imaginative sounds. Some pupils accompany singing with recorders, glockenspiel and xylophone. Many pupils participate in instrumental tuition provided by the local authority music service.
- 85 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons seen was largely dependent on the knowledge and understanding of the subject co-ordinator. Groups were often too large, for example on two occasions all the pupils in each key stage group joined together for singing tuition. This did not deter the teacher from introducing imaginative strategies and ensuring all pupils were involved in the activity. Music makes a good contribution to the cultural education of pupils. There is a range of instruments from other cultures and countries and the pupils joined together to sing a Jewish Harvest song.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**. It is not possible to make a secure judgement about attainment, achievement and leadership and management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for swimming is good and this is an improvement from the last inspection.
- Poor resources reduce the breadth of the curriculum.
- Insufficient improvement since the last inspection.
- Inconsistencies in teaching lead to some lessons where the vigour of activity is less than it ought to be. This is a similar shortcoming to that related in the last report.

Commentary

- 86 In the small number of lessons seen, work was observed in games, dance and swimming. The best work was seen in swimming because:
- there are very good facilities at the local pool with main and beginners' pools;
 - there is good swimming instruction and accurate setting of groups based on prior attainment;
 - lessons are vigorous and pupils achieve well.
- 87 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning observed was satisfactory, but inconsistent. In the unsatisfactory dance lesson in Years 3 and 4, there was insufficient attention paid to:
- ensuring that pupils expend a lot of energy;
 - making sure that pupils understand the effects of exercise on the body.
- 88 Resources are unsatisfactory. The acting headteacher has had to use his own money to buy sufficient footballs for practice. However, good links have been forged with the local football team, who provide coaches to help with the development of pupils' skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Useful links with subjects such as religious education and science.
- Good social development in nursery and reception.
- On occasions, opportunities are missed to discuss and illustrate health and safety matters in physical education lessons.

Commentary

- 89 Throughout the school, issues relating to personal development are dealt with in lessons and in several subjects. For example:
- in Years 1 and 2, there are good links with religious education;
 - in Years 3 and 4, pupils discuss and reflect on the need for class rules and the further need to accentuate the positive. This session proved to be useful, not least as an opportunity for speaking and listening.
- 90 Health education and knowledge about the human body have their place in science lessons, for instance:
- healthy eating and diet;
 - human circulation and an experiment on the pulse rate which led to the production of a line graph.
- 91 Social development is encouraged through school visits, including residential visits such as the one to the Kerryswood Education Centre. At its best, social development is good in the nursery and reception classes. This is particularly important because the children come into the school with very weak social skills, but achievement is good and they progress well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	6
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	5
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	5
The quality of the school's links with the community	5
The school's links with other schools and colleges	5
The leadership and management of the school	6
The governance of the school	6
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	6

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