

INSPECTION REPORT

ARTHUR DYE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cheltenham

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115597

Headteacher: Ms E Ramsay

Lead inspector: Harold Galley

Dates of inspection: 14th - 17th June 2004

Inspection number: 255367

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	316
School address:	Springbank Rd Cheltenham Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL51 0PH
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	John Morris
Date of previous inspection:	June 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Arthur Dye is a larger than average primary school with 316 pupils. There are slightly more girls than boys. Almost all pupils are white British, with no more than four pupils from any other ethnic groups. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 14 per cent, is slightly below average. Five pupils have statements of special educational needs which is an average proportion. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has remained slightly above the national average over recent years. The school serves a mixed area, with relatively high levels of unemployment. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. The school's governing body has recently agreed a five year plan with the Local Education Authority to recover from a significant deficit budget, only identified after the last inspection. This has involved a reduction in the teaching staff of 2.8 teachers and a reduction in classes from 14 to 12 for September 2004. At the time of the last inspection, in June 2002, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses because of shortcomings in leadership and management.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21313	Harold Galley	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology, Personal, social and health education.
9644	Mike Whitaker	Lay inspector	
24342	Denise Franklin	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage, Science, History, Geography, Physical education.
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	English, Art and design, Design and technology, Music, Religious education, Special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Arthur Dye is an **effective school** that has improved significantly under the **outstanding leadership** of the headteacher. The school provides **satisfactory value for money**. Children make a **very good start** to their education in the Foundation Stage (reception). Pupils achieve well in reading throughout the school. Arthur Dye is a very caring school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has an extremely clear vision for the school's development and provides excellent leadership.
- Children make a very good start in the Foundation Stage.
- As a result of good teaching pupils achieve well in reading throughout the school.
- Achievement is good in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- Attitudes to learning are good overall and outstanding in Year 6.
- More able pupils are not challenged enough in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics and science.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.
- Attendance is well below average.

Improvement since the last inspection is good overall, with significant improvements since the appointment of the present headteacher last year. There is evidence throughout the school and across subjects that, after a period of stagnation, standards are beginning to rise. Teaching and learning are much improved and previous strengths, such as the good quality of education in the Foundation Stage, have been at least maintained. The school no longer has serious weaknesses and is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	A	C	B
Mathematics	C	C	C	B
Science	D	D	D	C

*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.*

Attainment on entry to the school is below average. Children make a flying start in the Foundation Stage and most children reach the expected levels in all areas of learning by the end of the school year. This very good start is not maintained in Years 1 and 2, partly because more able pupils are not challenged enough, particularly in mathematics and science. In reading, pupils in Years 1 and 2 do achieve well and standards are average at the end of Year 2. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests and assessments for pupils in Year 2, standards were below average in writing and well below average in mathematics and science. When compared to other similar schools, standards were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. A feature in all areas of learning, apart from writing, was the low proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3. The table above shows that in the 2003 National Curriculum tests, pupils in Year 6 attained average standards in English and mathematics, but below average in science. Compared to similar schools, standards were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards observed during the inspection were higher than last year in Year 2 and broadly similar in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily throughout the school, although pupils' individual

targets are not always challenging enough. Standards in other subjects are at the expected level apart from ICT where standards are below the expected level in Year 6, and personal, social and health education where standards are above the expected level in Year 6. Pupils' personal development is good. Attitudes to learning are good overall, but very good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, good in Years 3 and 4, unsatisfactory in Year 5 and excellent in Year 6. Attendance is well below average and has declined since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory, with several good features. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Years 1, 2 and 5, and good in Years 3, 4 and 6. The teaching of reading is consistently good throughout the school. A positive feature of teaching in all classes is the high quality of teachers' planning which leads to well organised, clearly structured lessons that have at least a sound pace. In almost all lessons the good management of pupils leads to a calm, purposeful atmosphere. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour, and effort and sustained concentration are features of most lessons. In Year 6, in particular, a dynamic pace of work has been sustained throughout the school year. Alongside these positive features, there are some weaknesses. In Years 1 and 2, not enough is done to challenge more able pupils, especially in mathematics and science. The over reliance on the use of workbooks and worksheets restricts pupils' investigative and problem solving skills in these subjects. Throughout the school, teachers do not make enough use of ICT to support pupils' learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school provides an interesting, broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by a sound range of visits and visitors and by several stimulating after school activities. The school gives very good support, advice and guidance to pupils. Arthur Dye is an especially caring school. Good links with parents make an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning, especially in reading. Links with the community and other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher is an outstanding leader and has an extremely clear view of the school's priorities for development. The school has made significant progress since her appointment. She leads with tremendous energy, determination and commitment, and is ably supported by key staff. Governors are well led by a very experienced chair, take a keen interest in the development of the school, and share the headteacher's vision for the school's development. Overall the governance of the school is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are positive. Parents appreciate the caring ethos of the school and the approachability of all staff. Pupils are proud of their school and feel their views are valued and acted upon.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide more challenge for able pupils in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics and science.
- Raise standards in ICT and make better use of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- Continue to tackle the recent decline in attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

From a below average starting point, pupils **achieve well** to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils achieve well in reading throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
- More able pupils are not challenged enough in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics and science.
- Standards in ICT are below the expected level in Year 6.

Commentary

1. When children join the school their attainment is below average. In the Foundation Stage (reception) they make very good progress in all the areas of learning as a result of consistently very good teaching in both classes. By the end of the reception year, most children have reached the expected level for their age group.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (15.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.1 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.3 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests and assessments, standards at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, slightly below average in writing and well below average in mathematics and science. When compared to other similar schools, standards were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. A feature of pupils' performance in Years 1 and 2 is that, while average proportions of pupils reach the expected level 2, few manage the higher level 3. In reading, mathematics and science, the proportion reaching level 3 was well below average. Standards observed during the inspection were higher in reading, writing, mathematics and science, although the proportion of pupils reaching level 3 remains well below average in science and is still below average in mathematics. In other subjects at the end of Year 2 standards are at the expected levels

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (29.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.8 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.9 (28.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, standards were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. When compared to other similar schools standards were above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards observed during the inspection were broadly similar to last year's results. When compared to their attainment in the Year 2 tests four years ago, pupils' achievement is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science. In other subjects, standards are at the expected level, apart from ICT, where standards in Year 6 are below average, and personal, social and health education (PSHE), where standards are above average. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.

4. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress toward the steps noted in their individual education plans and gain in self-esteem and confidence. Targets are not always sufficiently broad or challenging but most are achievable and manageable. The school uses assessment information and observations to identify pupils' needs at an early stage in their learning and checks pupils new to the school to ensure that any needs are not missed. The very few pupils from ethnic minorities achieve as well as their peers.

5. A scrutiny of pupils' work across the school shows that, after a period when standards have remained stubbornly static, standards are now beginning to rise. However, some recent improvements in provision have not yet had time to impact fully on standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' positive attitudes to school, good behaviour and good moral and social development result from good provision, strong relationships, a caring ethos and clear expectations. Attendance, however, is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and to the opportunities offered by the school.
- Pupils behave well as a result of clear standards, high expectations and skilful classroom management.
- A strong ethos and very good relationships ensure that pupils' social and moral development are good.
- Attendance, despite much hard work on the part of the school, is well below the average for primary schools and, consequently, unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are good. The majority of pupils are keen, interested and enthusiastic as was seen, for instance in a Year 1 literacy lesson, in which the pupils were considering unlikely locations for 'The Fish who could Wish', and in a Year 6 art lesson, in which pupils were studying landscape painting techniques with a local artist. The picture, however, is uneven. There are very positive attitudes to school in reception and the younger classes, and attitudes in Year 6 are excellent. In Year 5, however, there are a number of disaffected and disruptive pupils whose attitudes in lessons are negative. These pupils, nonetheless, are happy to contribute to the life of the school, for example, by taking part in training for the school's peer mentoring scheme. Pupils of all ages are keen to take advantage of extracurricular opportunities offered by the school.

7. Behaviour is good. There have been no permanent exclusions and only one fixed period exclusion over the preceding twelve months. As with attitudes, the behaviour pattern is uneven, with a dip in standards in Year 5. In Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaires, a number of parents and pupils expressed concerns about behaviour. However, the inspection has found that the overall standard of pupil behaviour is good, and in many classes, during many lessons, it ranged from very good to excellent. The school is aware of a behaviour problem with a minority of pupils and has a number of initiatives in place to deal with it. The high standards of behaviour normally seen in the school are a consequence of the establishment of good basic routines in the reception class and high expectations expressed within a supportive environment. The school is an inclusive community; the

few pupils from minority backgrounds are fully involved in the life of the school, and no instances of sexual or racial harassment were observed.

8. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and, within that secure context, pupils' social and moral development is good. Pupils are involved in discussing class rules and most pupils feel that the school is fair. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities; a school council, involving, at this stage, Year 6 only, has recently been established, and all pupils in Year 5 are trained in peer mediation. Social development, although good overall, is constrained by the limited range of opportunities for boys and girls to work and play together. Following the training, a number of pupils volunteered to act as 'playground buddies'. The school's good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education contributes significantly to the appreciation of social and moral issues. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory.

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	293	0	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	1	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

9. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Authorised absence for the last complete academic year was, at 9.5 per cent, well above the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence, at 0.1 per cent was below the national average. The school has good data on attendance and is well aware of those pupils whose attendance causes concern. The education welfare officer visits the school weekly and is in contact with the families concerned. Figures for the current year suggest that attendance is in the order of 93 per cent, still below the national average, but an improvement over the previous year. Unauthorised absence has increased to 0.5 per cent, possibly as a consequence of the school's firm policy regarding lateness – arrival after 09:30 is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Term time holidays are a factor contributing to the low attendance rate – the school's figures suggest that 14 per cent of all absences are related to holidays. Whilst the level of attendance is unsatisfactory, the school's procedures for addressing the issue are good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall, with several good features. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school is well regarded by parents and pupils and has a long term reputation as a valued part of the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in Years 1, 2 and 5 and good in Years 3, 4 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and lead to a calm, purposeful atmosphere in almost all lessons.
- Teachers' planning is good, leading to well organised, clearly structured lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and sustained concentration is a feature of lessons.
- The quality of learning is enhanced by pupils' positive attitudes, especially in Year 6.
- An over reliance on worksheets, mainly in mathematics and science lessons, means pupils' investigative and problem solving skills are not developed well.
- In Years 1 and 2 more able pupils are not stretched enough.
- Teachers' use of ICT to support learning is consistently weak in all classes except the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not always get enough support due to the below average number of learning support workers (LSWs).

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	11 (24%)	23 (50 %)	11 (24%)	1 (2 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

10. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. A key factor here is the exceptionally good team work between the staff, providing the children with a wide range of well organised, stimulating activities. Children's progress in all the areas of learning is carefully tracked by teachers and this ensures that the work presented to children, including those with special educational needs, is well matched to their differing needs.

11. A consistent strength of teaching in all classes is the good teaching of reading. Teachers give this aspect of English a very high priority and are very successful at motivating pupils to take a keen interest in a range of books. Teachers have been successful in encouraging some parents to play a key role in developing pupils' skills in reading. Teachers' planning across the school is good,

especially in English and mathematics. This ensures that lessons are well organised and purposeful and proceed at a lively pace. In all classes, teachers make good use of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. A high proportion of the good teaching observed during the inspection was in English and mathematics lessons.

12. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Alongside the positive features mentioned above, there are some weaknesses which led to some otherwise good lessons being judged satisfactory. Teachers prepare appropriate work for pupils of average and below average ability but do not always take enough care in setting work for more able pupils. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 in Year 2 is well below average in mathematics and science. In these subjects, teachers rely too much on pupils filling in workbooks and worksheets. While these help pupils develop some important skills, it means that there are weaknesses in pupils' learning in terms of investigative and problem solving skills. A positive feature of teaching, especially in Year 1, is the good use teachers make of humour to engage and motivate pupils.

13. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, despite some weaknesses in Year 5. A feature of pupils' work in these classes is the good pace, especially evident in Year 6, where pupils work with particular diligence and determination. Teachers have a warm rapport with pupils and have high expectations of behaviour and effort. As a result, the quality of learning is good overall for older pupils, although it is only satisfactory in Year 5. In this year group there are a number of pupils who present challenging problems for teachers in terms of their attitudes, and one lesson in this year group was unsatisfactory because of weak pupil management.

14. One feature of teaching that has improved significantly since the last inspection is teachers' use of a range of formal and informal assessments. Teachers set challenging targets for individual pupils, although the use of these targets is variable. In their verbal feedback to pupils, and in their marking, teachers make effective use of praise and encouragement, but rarely give pupils any critical evaluation of their work. As a result, pupils' knowledge of their own strengths and weaknesses and what they need to do to improve further is underdeveloped.

15. One key factor underpinning recent improvements in the quality of teaching and learning has been the school's positive use of Advanced Skills Teachers. These are teachers from other local schools noted for their excellence who have visited Arthur Dye and have shared their expertise with teachers in the school. The open-minded and reflective attitude of teachers at the school has led to many new, constructive ideas being introduced.

16. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of learning is constrained by the open plan nature of the accommodation. In many lessons, intrusive noise from other areas adversely affected pupils' concentration. The school has plans to remedy this situation, with building works planned for the forthcoming summer holidays.

17. A weakness in teaching across the school is the limited use teachers make of ICT to support pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum. During the inspection, computers were rarely used and many opportunities to enhance pupils' learning were wasted. Older pupils do use the Internet effectively to research their work in history and geography, but such positive examples are too rare.

18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory throughout the school. Class teachers, the special needs teacher and learning support workers plan carefully for pupils with special educational needs both in lessons and when withdrawn for support. The additional help pupils receive promotes learning effectively, but there are not enough learning support workers to ensure that lower attaining and special needs pupils can be supported better in the classroom. Teachers work very hard to give pupils with special needs additional support in lessons.

19. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, with higher proportions of good and very good teaching, and less unsatisfactory teaching.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities and there is a very good range in the Foundation Stage. There are satisfactory opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences through extracurricular activities. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and children achieve very well.
- Planning is good and subjects are linked carefully in order to assist learning.
- ICT resources are limited and unreliable and not used enough to support pupils' learning.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good
- There are fewer learning support staff than needed to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

20. Skilled staff, good accommodation and very good learning resources contribute well to the challenging and interesting curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. Planning is very clear, ensuring that all areas of learning receive a suitable emphasis and children achieve well. The good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship programme throughout the school has very clear links with every subject and the use of circle time is well established.

21. Teachers use national subject guidance consistently to provide a good range of work. Their planning is good, but teachers do not always plan sufficiently challenging activities for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils know what they are expected to learn in lessons but do not always check whether they have achieved their objectives at the end. There are good links between subjects. For example religious education, literacy and art in Year 4, and art, literacy and geography in Year 6. Teachers value the support they have received from Advanced Skills Teachers in several subjects, and from the Local Education Authority in planning. They have benefited greatly from the support and suggestions made. This has added considerably to the quality of pupils' learning. Writing is used consistently to support other subjects, although there is limited use of ICT to extend pupils' skills. These limitations have been exacerbated by problems with the reliability of resources in ICT. Whole school projects are planned carefully to encourage learning and raise standards. For example, writing assessments introduced this year provide an opportunity to track pupils' progress as they move through the school and inform teachers about what pupils need to learn next.

22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Some historic weaknesses in special needs provision have been addressed recently by the headteacher, and planning for a consistent level of inclusion in lessons and the life of the school is improving. The alterations to the building due to begin in July should include alterations to the doors in the corridor so that any pupils with wheelchairs can move around the school as independently as possible, for example, to take registers. The school is aware of the need to ensure that all pupils have experience of every subject and activity and is working hard to deal with any such issues.

23. The school provides a satisfactory range of extracurricular activities including sport, needlework and gymnastics. The school plans to increase the number of clubs and include a residential trip for Year 6 next year. Most classes have visits to enhance the curriculum. For example pupils in Year 2 went to Weston-super-Mare and Year 1 went to the Nature in Art exhibition. Members of the community share their expertise, the visiting artist who worked with Year 6 contributed very positively to the standards attained.

24. The open plan building contributes well to teamwork and the community ethos because everyone knows everyone else. However, acoustics are poor in the separate areas and the noise from adjoining rooms can reduce the effectiveness of pupils' learning. Resources are satisfactory in most subjects, except ICT where they are due for replacement this summer. The library and

computer area are very small but alterations to these areas are being addressed. The school makes good use of its attractive grounds and studio to react flexibly to pupils' needs and help raise standards. For example, pupils explore the grounds for natural materials for art, and growing plants for science. Year 5 pupils go outside for their composition lesson in music, and Year 4 pupils carry out speaking and listening assignments in the quieter atmosphere of the studio. Teachers are deployed carefully and are suitably experienced. There are, however, fewer learning support assistants than in most primary schools. The school is currently addressing this deficit. Members of staff work very hard to make the school a stimulating and welcoming place. Extremely attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the school enhance the accommodation and the quality of learning.

Care, guidance and support

This is a school that places a highly priority effectively upon pupils' emotional and physical welfare. All necessary health and safety and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils' involvement in the life of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a high standard of care for pupils.
- The high degree of trust between pupils and adults ensures a supportive learning environment.
- Procedures for involving pupils in the life of the school and the management of their own learning, although of recent origin, are good.

Commentary

25. All the necessary procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are in place. Procedures for health and safety, dealing with medical needs, building security, and risk assessments regarding activities are thorough. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection purposes; all staff, including meal time supervisors, are aware of the procedures to be followed in cases of concern. Further training, so as to comply with new requirements, is planned. The social and emotional wellbeing of pupils is of paramount importance and the headteacher has developed effective links with other statutory agencies. There is close co-operation with the education welfare officer. Outreach work with parents is carried out in co-operation with other neighbourhood organisations. Careful attention is paid to pupils' physical welfare – there is emphasis upon healthy lifestyles and diet, and a Breakfast Club for Year 5 pupils ensures a good start to the day.

26. Pupils feel secure in the school environment. In the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire, 95 per cent of children said that there was an adult in school to whom they could turn in case of need. Inspection evidence supports that view. Non teaching staff, including the school's administration officer, demonstrate a high degree of care when dealing with distressed pupils. Induction arrangements are very good; reception teachers make home visits to children (if their parents wish it - and the majority do). Children visit for a familiarisation day in the summer term before they start and they are eased into full-time attendance over the first few weeks of the autumn term. Parents are welcome to stay with children to help settle them.

27. Procedures for involving pupils in the life of the school are good. The school has recently introduced a school council, consisting at present of six Year 6 pupils. The council has already considered bullying and drawn up a discussion paper on the issue, including definitions and suggested courses of action. The present council believes that staff do listen to them and act upon their views. There is a suggestion box to enable other pupils to pass on concerns, anonymously if they wish. There are plans to extend the membership of the council to other year groups. All Year 5 pupils attend a series of meetings on peer mediation and those who wish to can act as 'playground buddies' helping to resolve playground disputes without adult involvement. In the view of the pupils concerned, the system is effective. Pupils discuss their class rules and all older pupils are aware of their targets in the core subjects (English, mathematics and science) and regarding behaviour.

28. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and staff know pupils very well. The school has revised its policy for special educational needs to meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. There is good liaison with external agencies

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works hard at establishing and maintaining good links with parents, partner institutions and the community. The majority of parents appreciate the school although only a minority are actively involved in supporting it.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is friendly and welcoming, and seeks further involvement with parents; staff are informally accessible.
- Information for parents, overall, is good, although pupils' annual reports are pedestrian.
- Links with the community and other schools and colleges enhance pupils' learning.
- Parents of pupils with special educational needs have not always been involved enough in their child's provision.

Commentary

29. The school's recent past has been troubled; it has experienced both staffing and budgetary problems. Because of the sensitive nature of some of these problems, school management has had to be careful over how much parents could be told. This caution may account for the 14 per cent of parents who felt, in their Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaires, that their views were not taken into account. The atmosphere in the school, however, is relaxed, friendly and welcoming. At the end of the day, a number of parents can be seen in the playground, discussing matters with staff. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, 94 per cent of parents said that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem, a view echoed by the parents spoken to during the inspection. The school now has its full complement of parent governors and it is the headteacher's intention to create a parents' consultative group. Parents have already been consulted over a number of issues, including the safety of the site. There is an active 'Friends' association that raises funds for the school and acts as a social bridge between school, parents and community. Many parents, however, are passive and take no part in school activities, nor do they actively support the school's homework policy.

30. Information for parents overall is good. Newsletters are frequent, regular and couched in parent-friendly language. All aspects of school life are addressed. The school's prospectus is equally chatty, informative and friendly. Parents have termly opportunities to meet their children's teachers and discuss progress. Meetings are arranged to meet governors, to discuss aspects of the curriculum and for parents of children who are about to sit national tests. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory insofar as they comply with statutory requirements. They are, however, descriptive rather than evaluative and lack the focus of targets for the ensuing year. There is no provision for the child's view of the year. The headteacher is revising the format of such reports.

31. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have not always been sufficiently involved in discussions about their children's needs (although they, and their children, contribute to annual reviews). The school is introducing new procedures to provide more opportunities for parents to discuss individual education plans with teachers.

32. Links with partner institutions and with the community are satisfactory. Pupils transfer to several secondary schools and transition arrangements with all of them are satisfactory. Secondary staff visit the school and pupils have the opportunity for a familiarisation day at the secondary of their choice. Consultation takes place over matters such as special needs and friendship groups. Art staff from one comprehensive work on projects with Year 5, and language staff from another take a French class. The school works with a local special school over the re-integration of two pupils into mainstream education and an Advanced Skills Teacher from a neighbouring primary school works

with school staff. In addition, there are effective links with the local college of further education. Community links include the sponsoring of the Breakfast Club by a large, local employer, and another large, local, public sector employer provides 'reading buddies'. A particularly effective link is with a local artist who comes in every week to work with Year 6.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The leadership of key staff is good. The effectiveness of management is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership.
- The two senior managers support the headteacher very effectively.
- The role of the subject managers is developing well.
- The school has a very experienced chair of governors who is providing very good support to the school.
- Professional development for staff is good and is having a positive impact on standards.
- Financial management has improved significantly in the last year.
- Subject leaders, although much improved, do not have a sufficiently clear idea of standards of attainment in their subjects.

Commentary

33. Following the last inspection, when the school was put into serious weaknesses because of its leadership and management, the school has gone through a very difficult period. The new headteacher, appointed a year ago, has very high aspirations for the school. Her vision and sense of purpose are excellent. She has very successfully gained the respect of the staff and provided them with a very clear sense of direction. This is excellent improvement since the last inspection.

34. The two deputy heads are very committed and have worked extremely hard to put systems in place to improve planning, assessment and monitoring across the school. Their roles and responsibilities have recently been clearly defined and this has strengthened the management team. Both are very effective in their leadership and management roles. Delegation of responsibility is now a feature of leadership and is proving successful.

35. The role of the subject managers is developing rapidly. All subject leaders are enthusiastic, hardworking and are providing at least satisfactory leadership and management of their subjects. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good and are reasons why provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. All subject leaders are empowered and are beginning to accept their responsibilities willingly. Monitoring of samples of pupils' work, walks around the school to look at coverage and attainment in each subject, and observations of teaching have provided subject leaders with an appropriate overview of their subjects, particularly English. Subject leaders are beginning to collect data to inform planning. This has successfully addressed the issue of the role of subject leaders identified in the previous two inspection reports. However, the key subject managers of English, mathematics and science still do not have a clear picture of pupils' attainment against the National Curriculum levels at the end of Year 2 or the predicted levels of attainment at the end of Year 6, which is necessary to raise standards.

36. A new chair and vice chair of governors have recently been appointed. The chair is very experienced and together with the rest of the governing body, is determined to move the school forward. The governors are committed and have become much more involved in the management of the school. They are beginning to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and to take a more active role in monitoring the school improvement plan. The current school improvement plan is of very good quality, provides clear educational direction, and fully reflects the work of the

school. This was identified as an area of significant weakness in the last two reports and has been successfully addressed very well.

37. There are now good opportunities for staff development, both linked to the school improvement plan and for teachers' personal professional development. The headteacher has organised visits to the school by Advanced Skills Teachers and this initiative has been welcomed and very well supported by staff. All parties feel this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching, which given time, will further raise standards.

38. The headteacher is acting as temporary co-ordinator for special educational needs and has set in place systems to improve the current satisfactory management of special educational needs. A new part-time co-ordinator will be appointed for next term and the team of learning support workers will be increased substantially. The appointment of an experienced special needs teacher this term has been successful. It has enabled the school to give better support within some classes in the morning and continue with individual and small group programmes in the afternoon.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	861,599	Balance from previous year	6,912
Total expenditure	905,382	Balance carried forward to the next	-43,782
Expenditure per pupil	2,794		

39. Financial management is now good. The finance officer, who has been in post for just over a year, has put systems in place that enable the financial management to be much more rigorously monitored. Budget management in the past has resulted in a large current deficit. All of the available funds are now carefully prioritised, closely related to the school improvement plan and used to best effect. Bids are now being made for additional funding, and specific grants are being used well. The financial manager works closely with the headteacher and the governing body is becoming much more proactive in budget management. Following recent successful improvements the school now gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good** and a strength of the school. From year to year there are variations in children's levels of attainment on entry to the school, although overall attainment on entry is below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills. Most children achieve very well and when they enter Year 1 of the National Curriculum many are expected to achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning except in personal, social and emotional development where many exceed them. This is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when many children were expected to exceed these goals in all areas. The current year group of children did not start school with as well developed skills in several areas of the curriculum and at the time of the last inspection there was a higher ratio of adults to children supporting in both classes. Very good provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

The quality of teaching is very good and consequently all children are making good progress in learning. The two teachers plan interesting activities to meet the needs of the children, including specific activities for children who have special educational needs. They work exceptionally well as a team and provide children with a stimulating environment in which to learn. They are well supported by learning support workers, although reception does not have a full time support worker who is employed solely to work in the Foundation Stage. Children's progress is very carefully checked and tracked and this ensures children achieve very well. Group targets in literacy and mathematics support learning very well.

Leadership and management are very good. The manager has secure subject knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and provides very good support and guidance for her colleagues. Resources are very good and used very well to support children's learning. The classroom has a covered area either side of the room which were not in use during the inspection because they were both far too hot for children to work in. There were no opportunities for children to move spontaneously between indoor and outdoor environments.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a wide range of learning opportunities that promote their personal, social and emotional skills.

Commentary

40. By the start of Year 1 many children exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. Achievement is very good. Children understand what is acceptable behaviour and have a very good awareness of the consequences of inappropriate behaviour. This was demonstrated very effectively in a role play activity when the teacher provided the children with a number of difficult situations for the children to discuss. Children are beginning to be responsible for their own learning and plan some of their own activities. For example during a mathematics session one group of children was able to choose from several activities organised in the middle of the room, such as water, sand or role play in the animal hospital. Several children speak confidently about why they like a particular friend and know that friends are very important.

41. The quality of teaching is very good and this supports children's learning very well. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and do not miss an opportunity to develop children's personal and social skills. Children feel comfortable, relaxed and valued.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strength and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well.
- The strategies used for teaching sounds, letters and words are very good.
- Opportunities for developing communication skills are very well planned.

Commentary

42. Many children start reception with poor language skills. Very good teaching enables them to make very good progress and by the start of Year 1 many are attaining the expected levels in the early learning goals. All children, including those with special educational needs, are achieving very well.

43. Children speak confidently in a range of situations, such as the playhouse and the animal hospital. They enjoy listening to stories and know how a non fiction book is organised. Many are beginning to recognise familiar words in text and talk about the pictures in detail. In writing children are writing a sentence unaided, sometimes using punctuation. Less capable children use letters and marks to communicate meaning.

44. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers use a very good range of strategies to teach communication, language and literacy skills and are skilled at making learning fun. Planning is comprehensive and there are clear objectives for all activities, including objectives for developing communication skills in role play areas. Good use is made of support staff in literacy sessions and all staff have very good relationships with the children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and this enables children to achieve very well.

Commentary

45. On entry to school, attainment is below average. Most children attain levels expected for their age because of very good teaching and are achieving very well. Children of average ability add two numbers accurately to equal 5. Less capable children count reliably to 10 and select the correct domino to represent up to ten. Many children use mathematical language correctly and are confident to make repeated patterns using shapes. Teachers provide the children with a very good range of activities, which support children's learning very well. Activities are very well planned to meet the different abilities of the children and targets for those who find learning difficult are clearly identified in teachers' planning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of interesting activities that children enjoy.

Commentary

46. Very good teaching and organisation give children plenty of opportunities to develop in this area of learning. Achievement is very good because many children enter school with limited skills in this aspect. They make very good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 of the National Curriculum most are achieving the early learning goals. For example children sit in a circle and talk confidently about their pets. The teacher skilfully helps them to identify the animals' different habitats. With support, children sort a number of pictures of electrical goods and put them in the correct room in the house. They know what plants need to grow. Good use is made of the outdoor areas to support children's learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Commentary

47. By the end of the Foundation Stage many children are exceeding the early learning goals. They move around the classroom and playground with confidence, showing good awareness of space. They have good understanding of safety. They handle tools such as scissors, paintbrushes and pencils with good control. They mould, roll and shape play dough well. In a physical education lesson, in the playground, children threw and caught balls with increasing accuracy.

48. Very good features of teaching include the way the teachers worked together in a team-teaching situation, well supported by the learning support worker. They use praise effectively to promote children's confidence and good behaviour. Teachers' planning indicated a very wide range of activities are planned to develop children's physical skills, using the two covered areas either side of the classroom but these were not observed during the inspection because of the extreme heat in these areas.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

49. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of teaching or standards in this area of learning, but work seen was good. Work on display covered a wide range of media. Children paint pictures that are of a good standard. They experiment with bubbles to make attractive patterns and copy pictures of buildings in the style of Lowry. They print repeated patterns to make their own wallpaper. No music was observed during the inspection but is included in teachers' planning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, especially those in Year 6, have very good attitudes towards learning.
- Teaching of reading is good throughout the school and pupils achieve well.
- Good assessment procedures are now in place, but information gained is not yet used effectively for the formation of groups and setting of individual targets.
- Literacy skills are developing well in other subjects.

Commentary

50. Standards of work seen during the inspection, along with the schools' assessments and formal testing, show that Year 2 pupils are on target to attain average standards in reading and be slightly below the national average in writing. These standards are, however, higher than those in similar schools and indicate at least satisfactory achievement from entry into the school. In 2003 few pupils attained at the higher levels but indications are that more will do this in both reading and writing in 2004. There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' achievements. The standards of work seen in Year 6, together with the school's assessments, show that pupils are on target to attain standards that are in line with national averages. This represents good achievement from the start of Year 3 and compares favourably with similar schools. Although many pupils are articulate, listening and speaking skills are at average levels and are not helped by the open plan classrooms, where intrusive noise is often a problem.

51. A good feature of lessons is that teachers share the learning intention at the start of each session and use their evaluation of the previous lesson well in their planning. This ensures that pupils know what they are expected to learn and are able to consolidate or extend previous learning. Teachers are enthusiastic and thoughtful about the subject, which motivates pupils to achieve well. This is particularly evident in the teaching of reading. Pupils know which strategies to use to tackle unknown words and use their knowledge of sounds well to work out new words. Staff are assessing a new reading scheme and most have already identified where additional or alternative material is needed. They insert their own materials successfully to help pupils progress and make good use of 'reading mornings'. Learning support workers and the special needs teacher give good support to pupils with special educational needs, but there are often occasions when teachers do not have enough additional support. The school is aware of the need to increase the number of support staff.

52. The very good attitudes shown by pupils towards their work make a significant contribution to achievement and improving standards. Teachers are aware that pupils' writing is not as good as their reading so they plan interesting and challenging activities. Pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically compose poems in different formats and their enjoyment of poetry stimulates them to produce imaginative poetry with very good use of vocabulary and imagery. Pupils in Year 2 find the task of writing an information book about the seaside challenging but they search books and the computer for information, and discuss with the staff the sentences they are writing. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to write in a variety of forms and practise handwriting and spelling each week, but handwriting is not of a consistently high enough standard. Most pupils are well behaved, listen carefully and have the confidence to ask and answer questions. Teachers question pupils skilfully and this enables them to extend their answers and thinking.

53. The subject is led well and the school has analysed areas of weakness in pupils' performance in national and school tests. However, this information and checking of termly assessments of a piece of writing by each pupil are not yet used effectively throughout the school. Teachers are not always able to give individual pupils clear information about what they have to do to improve. In addition, this information would help teachers assess which pupils need additional support in 'booster' groups or extension work to achieve at a higher level. Marking in pupils' books is mostly helpful and often gives pupils an idea of what they have to do to improve. Teachers use assessment well to check pupils' skills in reading and this is another factor leading to good achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Literacy is being developed well through pupils using their writing skills to support work in other subjects. In art, pupils write about the portraits they are drawing and in religious education they retell stories and give their views on temptation. Computers are used effectively for word-processing, writing up poems in unusual formats, and making attractive posters.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**. From a below average starting point, pupils achieve well to reach average standards by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers' planning is good and leads to well organised, clearly structured lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall, and outstanding in Year 6.
- In Years 1 and 2 there is an over-reliance on the use of workbooks and worksheets, and pupils' problem solving skills are underdeveloped.

Commentary

55. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and the proportion reaching the expected level 2 is only slightly below average. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was well below average, making overall standards well below average. Teachers focus a great deal on developing early number skills and most pupils are adept at traditional addition and subtraction. Progress in this aspect of mathematics is enhanced by the regular use of worksheets which gives pupils plenty of practice at adding and subtracting. However, there is too great a reliance on these worksheets with the result that some skills are underdeveloped. Pupils are especially weak at applying and using their knowledge to solve problems. When pupils do work in their exercise books, the quality of presentation of work is often poor. The standard of work seen during the inspection was higher than last year, but still below average. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, although more able pupils do not achieve well enough.

56. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move through Years 3 to 6, although the pace of progress slows in Year 5. A feature of pupils' work in these classes is the good pace, especially in Year 6, where the pace of work is outstanding. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain average standards and their good levels of achievement are reflected in the fact that standards are above those of other similar schools. Standards in the present Year 6 are at least as good as last year and reflect the rising trend in attainment in mathematics. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. There are some common features to teaching across the school. Lesson planning is consistently good. Teachers make effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy and lessons are well organised, with learning objectives being shared with pupils at the start of the lesson. Apart from one lesson in Year 5, pupils were managed very effectively. Teachers have a positive and warm rapport with their pupils and humour is often used as a potent tool to engage and motivate. There are some weaknesses in teaching, which mean that some otherwise good lessons were judged to be satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, teachers cater well for pupils of average and below average prior attainment, presenting appropriate and challenging tasks. However, more able pupils are rarely challenged enough.

58. A consistent weakness across the school is the limited use of ICT to support learning in mathematics. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, although pupils' individual targets are not always sufficiently challenging.

59. Teachers use a range of formal and informal assessments and set challenging targets for individual pupils, although the use of these targets is variable. In some classes, targets are a positive tool that underpin the nature of tasks presented to pupils of differing prior attainment, but there are cases of work being presented to pupils being unrelated to targets.

60. Leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. The process of self-evaluation is becoming embedded in practice and the subject manager now has a clearly defined role. A

number of positive and effective strategies have been introduced in the last year, including lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work and an analysis of pupils' attainments. These initiatives are too recent to yet impact on the school's test results, but have improved provision significantly. One weakness in leadership, outlined in a Local Education Authority review in February 2004, is that the manager does not have a clear picture of standards across the school.

61. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Provision is satisfactory. There are some good links with science, with detailed graphs and pie charts, but the value of mathematics across the curriculum is weakened by the limited use of ICT to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are below the national average.
- In Year 2 the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 is well below average.
- Opportunities for scientific enquiry have improved and these are having a positive impact on raising standards.
- Good use is made of specific scientific vocabulary in lessons but there is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets.
- Marking is inconsistent and few pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Commentary

63. Standards of attainment in science are below the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Both test results last year in Year 6 and teacher assessments in Year 2 were below the national average and similar results are expected this year. This is confirmed from looking at samples of pupils' work and lesson observations. Although a reasonable percentage of pupils attain the expected National Curriculum levels too few are attaining the higher levels, particularly in Year 2, where no pupils are predicted to attain level 3 in any of the attainment targets. This was identified as an issue at the last inspection. Evidence from pupils' work and in the majority of lessons indicates satisfactory achievement for most pupils because many start school with limited knowledge and understanding of the world around them. However, the achievement of the higher attaining pupils is not good enough.

64. The school has adopted the national recommended guidelines for teaching science and this is beginning to have a positive impact on attainment. It has appropriately identified the need to focus more on scientific enquiry and some good examples of investigative work have taken place. For example pupils in Year 3 investigate the best kitchen paper for mopping up water. They confidently plan, predict, test and draw conclusions. Pupils in Year 4 investigate the habitat of snails, and older pupils look at plants in their environment. Younger pupils in Year 1 sort objects that move by pulling and pushing and in Year 2 they investigate how to make a simple electrical circuit. Evidence in lessons and from looking at samples of pupils' work indicate that standards are beginning to rise, and in several year groups standards are as expected for their age.

65. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, although some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Consequently the majority of pupils are making satisfactory progress and achievement is satisfactory. Lessons are appropriately planned and objectives clearly shared with pupils at the start of lessons. This has successfully addressed an area for development

identified in the last report. Good use is made of specific scientific vocabulary, which is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers question well to extend pupils' thinking in lessons, often taking the more able pupils to the higher levels. However, the worksheets used by many teachers do not give pupils the opportunity to record their scientific knowledge and thinking in sufficient depth. Therefore, expectations are often not high enough. Marking is inconsistent and provides very little information for pupils to know what needs to be done to improve their work. This was identified in the last report and has still to be addressed in several classes.

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. Evidence of monitoring and collection of data has enabled the subject manager to contribute to the development of science across the school, particularly in scientific enquiry. However, a clearer view of pupils' attainment, particularly towards the end of Years 2 and 6 is needed to enable the subject manager to know what needs to be done in order to raise standards in science. Resources are good and used well to support pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the expected level at the end of Year 6.
- The range and amount of work covered is much less than that normally seen, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers do not make enough use of ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum.
- There are historic weaknesses in the level of resources for ICT.
- The school is aware of these shortcomings and ICT features strongly in the school's priorities for development.

Commentary

67. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use word processing satisfactorily and can save and print their own work. Pupils use the cursor confidently and can give accurate instructions to a floor robot. Pupils complete a reasonable range of work, and standards by the end of Year 2 are at the expected level.

68. Provision in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory. This judgement reflects a similar view outlined in a Local Education Authority review in February 2004. A scrutiny of pupils' work over the course of the year shows that the work completed is lacking in both depth and range, although word processing is used well to support the development of pupils' written work. One frustrating problem for the school has been ongoing resourcing problems, with many computers proving unreliable. Repeated problems with the server have meant that computers have often not been available. As a result, pupils have not had the chance to build on their skills. The scrutiny of pupils' work shows significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. One satisfactory area of work is the manner in which pupils use the Internet to support their studies in subjects across the curriculum. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 reveal that few know how to use e-mail, a skill usually expected of pupils in Year 3. Levels of achievement in Years 3 to 6 are unsatisfactory.

69. Although teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory, it is clear that teaching over time has been unsatisfactory. Teachers' planning shows inadequate knowledge of the National Curriculum's programmes of study. Although the school has an average number of computers, teachers rarely use them. The marking and assessment of pupils' work are weaknesses throughout the school. Pupils are rarely given clear guidance about the strengths and weaknesses of their work nor what they need to do to improve.

70. Although the subject has suffered from ineffective leadership recently, a new subject manager has been appointed during the present school year, and the school, recognising the weaknesses outlined in this report, has drawn up an ambitious action plan in order to improve provision.

Strategies include the adoption of a nationally recommended scheme of work, and staff development, as well as the appointment of a part-time technician to remedy some of the aforementioned problems. A new server is due to be in place shortly after the inspection and there are plans to introduce a mobile laptop suite.

71. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory, but there have been recent initiatives that mean the school is now well placed to improve significantly.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. As described in the section above, the use of ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are pockets of good practice, such as the use of word processing to support pupils' literacy skills, the use of the Internet to help research in history and geography and the constructive use of programs in art and design, but such examples are too rare.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

No lessons were observed but a range of pupils' work in history and geography was sampled.

Commentary

73. It is not possible to make a judgement on provision, standards, teaching and learning in **history** or geography because no lessons were seen during the inspection. However work seen was of a satisfactory standard. Pupils are demonstrating an understanding of factual knowledge of the past and using an appropriate range of sources for information. For example, pupils in Year 6 have studied various aspects of the Second World War. In Year 2, pupils recall key features of the life of Florence Nightingale and compare conditions in hospitals during her life with those of today.

74. In **geography** most pupils satisfactorily compare physical and human features of a number of different places. They understand how these change the features of places and how these changes affect the lives and activities of people living there. Year 2 pupils are beginning to interpret simple maps of routes to school and the local area. Older pupils, in Year 6 understand why coastal erosion occurs. They are beginning to discuss wider issues of pollution. Resources are satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils have well planned opportunities to explore artefacts and improve their understanding of world religions.
- Work is presented well with effective use of literacy skills, although there is often too great a dependence on worksheets.

Commentary

75. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed guidelines, and achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In assemblies the school places an emphasis on caring for others and supporting pupils' personal development. This has a positive effect on learning. Teachers' planning reflects an understanding of pupils' learning needs and the needs of the subject. This enables pupils to investigate beliefs from a factual, as well as a spiritual, perspective.

76. Lessons are linked creatively with other subjects to deepen pupils' understanding. For example, pupils in Year 5 'make a tour' of a mosque on the computer before answering questions about the building either on computers or by looking at books and leaflets. Pupils in Year 4 have their art topics linked to a study of journeys and pilgrimages, and pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 produce interesting booklets about the raising of Jairus' daughter and the Easter story. Teachers encourage pupils to make good use of their literacy skills in religious education when reading and recording work, but there are occasions when too many worksheets are used. These do not help pupils, especially the higher attaining ones, to develop their thinking skills as much as they could because simple answers and few words are frequently required, or assist lower attaining pupils who need support with the reading.

77. Pupils develop a secure understanding of the purpose of symbols and festivals associated with different faiths. The school has a good range of resources to support the learning about Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Pupils in Year 6 write sensitively about Jewish and Christian beliefs and customs, and pupils in Year 2 clearly understand what is special about a synagogue. Different stories about the Creation are written and illustrated well.

78. A caring ethos pervades the whole life of the school and enables pupils to develop their personal skills. Photographic displays emphasise the joys of working together and displays around the school give clear ideas about improving relationships. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection but there has been an improvement in that pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 now regularly record their work in religious education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART AND DESIGN

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy art and design because they learn about the work of a wide range of artists.
- Pupils achieve well and standards are above expectations because skills are taught systematically and used effectively in most subjects.

Commentary

79. Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and emphasis on the different techniques that they can use in their work. Pupils in Year 5 painted their elegant bird masks in the vibrant style of Van Gogh very effectively, and pupils in Year 4 listened to an Aboriginal story before creating very attractive, colourful patterns in the style of Aboriginal artists. Pupils have a very good appreciation of the characteristics of various artists and create fascinating designs in the style of Paul Klee, giving them a title after completion, as the artist did.

80. There are many eye-catching and colourful displays of pupils' work around the school. These are enhanced by humorous and informative captions by pupils. Pupils use computers to make pictures and patterns, indicating an enjoyment of design and use of colour, as well as good skills of ICT. The development of three-dimensional work is seen in models, mobiles to support learning about shape, and tessellation in numeracy and masks. These have character and are well made. Very good links with literacy are evident in the 'talking textiles stories' in Year 5, with imaginative use of colour and materials to illustrate each page.

81. Pupils' observational drawing skills develop well as they move through the school. On a visit to Weston-super-Mare pupils in Year 2 made good sketches of buildings. They enlarged these very competently in school, adding tone and shading well to give good detail. Pupils are very pleased with their work. "Am I an artist now?" asks one pupil when his work is rightly praised. Pupils in Year 6

produce high quality sketches from a print. The skilled teaching of a visiting artist enhances their understanding of perspective and construction of landscape pictures very effectively. Pupils clearly appreciate the work of the artist and are keen to learn from him.

82. The subject is led effectively and the subject manager ensures there are sufficient resources and that displays are used well throughout the school. Purposeful visits support learning well. Standards have improved since the last inspection because the quality of teaching of art skills throughout the school is now good.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Only one lesson in design and technology was observed, but a range of pupils' work was sampled

Commentary

83. The one lesson observed was in Year 5 and was a good example of the way in which pupils plan, design and make items in a carefully structured series of lessons. Pupils enthusiastically experimented with a wide range of containers and materials, working out which type of instruments they could make. As a result of the teacher's skilled questioning they demonstrated a good understanding of the various methods of joining and finishing the instruments they would make in the next session. Work displayed in all classes shows that pupils develop a good understanding of the 'design, plan and make' processes. All pupils evaluate their work thoughtfully, many showing humour and confidence in their comments. Pupils in Year 1 made delightful models from junk materials on a visit to a sculpture park, and pupils in Year 2 produced high quality winding mechanisms with backgrounds designed on the computer. In Year 4 pupils use a wide range of techniques for moving pictures in books effectively because they clearly understand the processes required. The quality of finished items is good. These items indicate that standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the judgement reported in the last inspection. Pupils in Year 5 enjoy the opportunity to work with a teacher from a local secondary school.

MUSIC

Commentary

84. No lessons were seen in **music** but discussions with staff and pupils indicate that pupils enjoy music and develop skills in performance and composing as they move through the school. Pupils have a clear idea of the names of most instruments and the sounds they produce from an early age. A small number of pupils have additional tuition from visiting teachers, and in a Year 5 design and technology lesson pupils were keen to share their knowledge and demonstrate the instruments they played to others. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 5 produce interesting graphic scores. The subject manager has introduced a published music scheme to support non-specialist teachers and there are sufficient resources to support the activities taught. There is a regular emphasis on the music of different composers for introductions to assemblies and pupils listen thoughtfully as they come in quietly. Pupils sing tunefully and learn a suitable range of songs for assemblies. Good use is made of the studio for music because of the open plan nature of the building that makes it difficult to have musical activities in the classrooms.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Commentary

85. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision, standards or teaching and learning in **physical education** because only one lesson was observed during the inspection. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be better than expected by the end of Year 6. This included the wide range of sporting extracurricular activities provided for pupils, many individuals achieving very high standards. Currently there are fewer opportunities for pupils to work at

this high level although several pupils took part in a national gymnastics competition last November. Other extracurricular activities available for pupils are athletics, football, rounders, cricket, ball skills and badminton. All are well supported by pupils and make a good contribution to standards achieved in physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of interesting and relevant topics are covered.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding in Year 6.
- There are limited opportunities for boys and girls to work and play together.

Commentary

86. During the inspection, just two lessons, both in Year 6 were observed. However, a well presented range of pupils' work from all classes shows that PSHE has a high profile across the school. Pupils cover a wide range of appropriate and relevant topics. These include 'rules for living together' as well as issues such as personal choices and work on diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety.

87. PSHE has a good profile within the weekly timetable, with regular lessons for all classes. In the lessons observed teaching was lively and interesting. A strength of teaching was the very good relationships between teachers and pupils giving every pupil the confidence to contribute to stimulating discussions about the rights and responsibilities associated with citizenship. For example, when pupils were asked to identify some of their rights, one of many interesting contributions was 'the right to walk my dog'. This led to a well led discussion about the responsibilities associated with this particular right. Teachers give all pupils the time to contribute in a calm and supportive environment. PSHE lessons make a valuable contribution to the development of pupils' speaking skills.

88. A satisfactory range of out of school activities makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils use a good range of resources on the playground, where the atmosphere is calm, with good examples of co-operation and collaboration. However, pupils' development is constrained by the limited opportunities for boys and girls to work and play together.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement**Grade**

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

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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