

INSPECTION REPORT

BALLIOL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108603

Headteacher: Miss A P Higgins

Lead inspector: Miss K Manning

Dates of inspection: 6th - 8th October 2003

Inspection number: 255412

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	169
School address:	Chesters Avenue Longbenton Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE12 8QB
Telephone number:	0191 2007471
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Scobie
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Balliol Primary is a small school, with 155 pupils in classes from reception to Year 6 and a further 27 who attend the nursery either mornings or afternoons. Numbers fluctuate from year to year. Most pupils start in nursery and leave at the end of Year 6. The proportion that joins after the reception class is lower than the national average. When they start in the nursery children's attainments vary considerably but most lack the skills and knowledge expected for their age, particularly in language and in their personal and social development. The school is recognised by the local education authority as being highly effective in the management of pupils who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and it receives additional funding to support these pupils. At present no pupils have statements but 55 pupils have special educational needs linked to learning, physical or emotional difficulties. This is higher than the national average. A small number of pupils have been identified as gifted or talented. The area in general is far more disadvantaged than most and this is reflected in issues of high unemployment and poor health. Efforts to overcome the latter, by providing pupils with a breakfast and encouraging a healthy lifestyle, have earned the school two awards. Balliol is also the first School for the Future in the area. As part of this status staff are very much involved in community initiatives and provide training programmes for parents. Most pupils come from British families. Only a small number come from other ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is lower than in most schools.

The school has gone through a lengthy period of change but is now entering a time of greater stability following the appointment of the current head teacher. Recent appointments mean that only one class is currently being taught by a temporary teacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20267	Miss K Manning	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage
			Information and communication technology
			Art and design
			English as an additional language
12511	Mrs L Buller	Lay inspector	
30834	Mrs A Lowson	Team inspector	English
			Design and technology
			Physical education
23549	Mrs H Eadington	Team inspector	Mathematics
			History
			Music
			Special educational needs
11510	Mr K Oglesby	Team inspector	Science
			Geography
			Religious education
			Citizenship

The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	15
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a fairly effective school. Its strengths lie in the way that staff care for pupils and the success that they have in promoting positive attitudes and behaviour. There is a substantial amount of good teaching though it is satisfactory overall. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily and make steady progress. Those who have special educational needs achieve well. In music, the teaching is unsatisfactory and standards are not high enough. The good leadership of the head teacher and sound management by senior staff and governors have helped the school through a long period of instability. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teachers promote pupils' personal development very well so that many pupils overcome the barriers to learning that come from a low start and disadvantaged background.
- Very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
- Good teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to a fine start.
- The school is very effective at ensuring that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have equal access to the curriculum.
- The school does not meet statutory requirements to teach music and standards are not high enough.
- Standards in writing are not high enough.
- Teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always let pupils know what they need to do to improve.

The school has improved at a steady rate since the previous inspection. All of the key issues have been tackled successfully. Though standards in information and communication technology have risen considerably, standards in music have fallen.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E	E	E	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.*

Most pupils achieve satisfactorily. Children in the Foundation Stage and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Many children begin school with skills and knowledge that are well below what is expected for their age and so, despite achieving well, standards in all areas of learning except physical development are below what is expected by the end of the reception year. By the end of Year 2 standards in reading and writing remain below average but pupils do well in mathematics and in 2002 almost half of them achieved a higher level. This was a real success for the school. Another success is that standards in information and communication technology have risen since the previous inspection and now match those expected for pupils' ages. Pupils' work in class shows that by the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science continue to be below average. However, they are not so far behind as the results of national tests suggest. This is because, last year, almost a third of pupils in Year 6 had special educational needs and this brought the school's results down. In religious education standards match those expected. In music, standards are not high enough and pupils do not achieve as well as can reasonably be expected.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are generally good. Behaviour is satisfactory but reflects the hard work put into promoting this by all staff. Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their lessons. They are eager to take on responsibilities such as belonging to the school council and helping out around the school. They like school and attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6 it is satisfactory overall, though the teaching of music is unsatisfactory. The school's procedures for assessment are satisfactory. The school does not meet statutory requirements to teach music and because of this the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is a good programme of after-school activities and educational visits to enrich the curriculum. The accommodation is good and the school is reasonably well resourced. The care, welfare and health provision is very good and there are good links with parents, the community and other schools. This is a school with a particularly good ethos. Teachers know their pupils and families well and have their best interests at heart.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The head teacher is a good leader who has put together a strong team in the short time since her appointment. The leadership and management of key staff and of the governing body are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school and are very happy with what it provides. Pupils are proud of their school and talk animatedly about the lessons and activities that they most enjoy.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing by insisting that handwriting is neat and that pupils take care with spelling and punctuation.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning of music.
- Improve the quality of marking by ensuring that teachers' comments help pupils know what they need to do to improve and that any comments made by teachers are followed up by pupils.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the curriculum for music is taught in greater depth and that the programme of work covers all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Most pupils achieve steadily during their time in Balliol Primary School. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, though standards are below what is expected in all areas of learning except physical development. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well in mathematics and standards are above average. In English, where achievement is steady, standards are below average. Standards in writing are not high enough. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education match those expected. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to achieve at a steady rate though standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. Standards in writing are not high enough. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education match those expected. Throughout the school, standards in music have fallen and are now below those expected in all year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well but their low starting point prevents them from gaining the skills and knowledge expected for their age in most areas of learning.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- In 2002, more than a third of the pupils in Year 2 achieved a higher level in national tests in mathematics.
- Girls do better than boys in English tests.
- Pupils have a weak understanding of grammar and punctuation and their spelling and handwriting are not good enough.
- Standards in all aspects of music are not high enough.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.1 (15.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.9 (13.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.2 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.3 (24.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.3 (25.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.2 (26.0)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 31 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year
Care is needed when interpreting data where the numbers of pupils in each year group are small.*

1 Last year, the school's results in national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below average in English, mathematics and science. The main reason for this is that almost a third of the group had special educational needs. A number of these pupils had such severe barriers to

learning that they were ungraded in tests and this brought the school's results down. In addition to this, a number of pupils had special educational needs relating to emotional or behavioural difficulties that prevented them from performing at their best in tests.

2 Most children achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage. Good teaching and an appropriate curriculum help them gain confidence and independence at the same time as they acquire knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. However, because they are starting from such a low point at the beginning of nursery, they do not have the time to catch up. Consequently, standards in most areas of learning remain below what is expected by the end of the reception year. The exception is that children are well on the way to achieving the skills expected in physical development.

3 Several factors come together to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. In lessons, teachers plan work carefully so that it meets pupils' individual needs and challenges them at their own level. In addition to this, pupils are given all the help they need from teachers and well trained teaching assistants. Finally, some very good teaching of pupils in the base class¹ enables them to make the progress they need to join in with other classes for most lessons.

4 The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy and some good teaching of mathematics is beginning to pay dividends. Last year, almost half of the pupils in Year 2 achieved a higher level in national tests. This is a real success for the school and means that pupils have got off to a good start in the next key stage of their education.

5 Girls consistently outperform boys in national tests in English. By the end of Year 2, girls are working more than two terms ahead of boys in writing, though the gap has narrowed in the last couple of years. Girls' handwriting is neater and more consistent in size and form and they write at greater length using a more extensive vocabulary. It is a similar picture by the end of Year 6; girls are still about two terms ahead, for the same reasons. Teachers are aware of the problem and have tried to overcome it by introducing more exciting reasons to write in an attempt to motivate boys to greater effort. For example, stories have a bias towards adventure and teachers ask pupils to write accounts that they think will be of interest to them, such as football reports. Despite these efforts the gap remains and teachers are considering further strategies.

6 Standards in writing are not high enough in all year groups. Many pupils in Years 1 and 2 cannot form letters correctly and their handwriting is inconsistent in size and sometimes messy. Older pupils do not write in a good flowing style and a few pupils in Year 6 still use pencils for their best work. In addition to this, pupils have a weak understanding of punctuation and grammar and spell too many words incorrectly.

7 The teaching of music is unsatisfactory and consequently standards are not high enough. Pupils sing tunefully but have only a limited repertoire of songs. They have little idea how to compose or create music or musical patterns and do not get enough opportunities to develop the skills they gain through their involvement in a local music festival. Though pupils enjoy listening to music, they cannot talk about it in any depth.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They have positive attitudes towards school and learning and behave well in lessons. Attendance is satisfactory; most pupils attend regularly and arrive at school on time but a small number of persistent absentees bring the school's figures down.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are high expectations for pupils' behaviour and effective policies to achieve this.

¹ The base class is the school's additional provision of a class for pupils who have special educational needs. It is where they are taught away from other classes.

- One of the reasons why attendance has improved is that pupils enjoy school and are keen to take part in all the activities provided.
- Provision for moral and social development is good, pupils grow into mature and responsible members of the school community.

Commentary

8 Teachers expect and insist on high standards of behaviour from pupils and despite having a high number of pupils who have special educational needs relating to emotional and behavioural problems, the number of exclusions for unacceptable behaviour is small. This is a testament to the success with which teachers promote good behaviour and manage the challenging behaviour of a substantial number of pupils. Teachers manage lapses very well, through their good relationships with pupils and by applying the school's policies consistently. They are successful in ensuring that lessons are not disturbed, which means that other pupils can learn. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to this. The school has a significant number of pupils with emotional difficulties, and there were five short-term exclusions last year. These were the result of the school's firm and consistent behaviour management. Parents recognise this and think it is fair.

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	129	4	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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

9 The ethos of the school makes it a haven of calm and quiet for all pupils. Consequently, most pupils say that they feel safe and looked after in school and are keen to attend every day. Staff do all they can to encourage this by stressing the need for regular attendance and following up any unexplained absence. This has had the effect of raising the level of attendance in the last year and of helping with punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.9	School data	0.6
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.

10 The consistency and determination with which all staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is what makes it good. In part this is done through the very good, planned programme of personal and social development but it is also inherent in all aspects of school life. For example in the days following an assembly about making the right choices, teachers reminded pupils of what had been said and used this to manage their behaviour and help them gain self-discipline. In a more formal attempt to help pupils take on responsibility for their actions, older pupils have been involved in drawing up the school's 'Golden Rules' and talk knowledgeably about how they work. Those elected to the school council are proud of their role and take the responsibility seriously. Each day, pupils and staff come together in an assembly that helps promote their spiritual

development. Children in the Foundation Stage marvel at the wonders of nature, whether it is just watching the bicycles blowing across the yard in a strong wind or looking carefully at flowers before they paint them. In assemblies and lessons, older pupils regularly explore feelings and values that are important to themselves and others. Discussions about ‘the time that I was angry’ or ‘things that make me sad’ help them realise that these emotions are acceptable but can be managed. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture through lessons and from the first-hand experiences they gain from educational outings and visitors to the school. Most pupils have positive attitudes to other customs and beliefs, so they are open minded and interested. In this they follow the good example set for them by adults in the school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 to 6 it is satisfactory overall though the teaching of music is unsatisfactory. The school’s procedures for assessment are satisfactory. The school does not meet statutory requirements to teach music and because of this the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is a good programme of after-school activities and educational visits to enrich the curriculum. The care, welfare and health provision is very good and there are good links with parents, the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

Overall, the quality of teaching and pupils’ learning is **satisfactory**. It is generally good in the Foundation Stage. Although some lessons are taught well in every class in Years 1 to 6, the unsatisfactory teaching of music prevents it from being better than satisfactory in general.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the Foundation Stage work well as a team and ensure that activities are well matched to the different ages and capabilities of children in the nursery and reception classes.
- Throughout the school, teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and this has a marked impact on pupils’ attitudes to learning.
- In general, teachers make good use of the time and talents of teaching assistants, particularly to work with pupils who have special educational needs.
- In lessons, good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs enables them to achieve well. In the base unit teaching is often very good.
- Teachers’ lesson plans are thorough and detailed and show clearly how much attention is paid to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to make progress.
- The teaching of music is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	3 (7%)	23 (52%)	18 (41%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

11 Most of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and helps children to achieve well in all areas of learning. Teachers work together closely as a team, often leading similar activities but at different levels depending on the groups they are working with. They plan together to ensure that children in the reception class are given activities that are more challenging than those who are new to the nursery. For example, following a lesson on identifying the names and properties of well know shapes, children in the reception class were expected to draw around shapes and write their names

while those in nursery cut out shapes from dough. When appropriate, teachers also group children according to ability so that the most able children in nursery are challenged by their work and explore at their own level. Children who have special educational needs are given help when working in groups and individually and this enables them to achieve at a good rate and play a full part in lessons.

12 Teachers are very good at managing pupils. In general, this results from the warm and respectful relationships between pupils and staff, which ensure that pupils are keen to please their teachers and try hard to do their best. Any misbehaviour is dealt with quietly and firmly and staff follow the school's agreed procedures for promoting good conduct. For example, they praise pupils when they have done something right and speak quietly to them when they misbehave. Pupils know what is expected of them and they understand the consequences of misbehaviour. The procedures work well and ensure that pupils who have special educational needs linked to behavioural problems do not disrupt the learning of others. Teachers also ensure good behaviour and positive attitudes from pupils by planning activities that are interesting and challenging. The best lessons move along at a brisk pace and pupils have to concentrate in order to keep up. The result of all this hard work is that, most pupils behave sensibly in lessons.

13 The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is very good. Throughout the school, teachers are very knowledgeable about the difficulties faced by the pupils in their care. They put this to good effect to ensure that pupils who have barriers to learning are given the means to overcome these whenever possible. The fact that these pupils make good progress is mainly due to the very appropriate individual support that the school provides and the very good teaching, commitment and support of the teaching in the base unit. Pupils' difficulties are diagnosed early in the Foundation Stage and those who need help with reading, writing and number are given support in small groups or individually. Very often, this is planned meticulously and each child with special educational needs has an individual programme of learning.

14 Teachers make good use of the time and talents of teaching assistants and other support staff, who often work with small groups of pupils who have special educational needs or who need extra help. They make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and without them, pupils' acquisition of skills, the effort they make and their pace of working, would not be anywhere near as good as they are.

15 A strength of the teaching, throughout the school, is the detail that goes into teachers' planning of lessons and the way that they use it to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities to make progress and the same access to the curriculum. For example, as well as providing work that is pitched at the right level for pupils who have special educational needs teachers make sure that the most able pupils are given challenging work that deepens their thinking and stretches their imagination. Similarly, in classes of pupils from two age groups teachers ensure that the work is not repeated in the second year and that tasks are set at the right level whatever pupils' age.

16 The teaching of music is unsatisfactory. Teachers lack the knowledge and confidence needed to teach the subject successfully. Music is not given a high enough profile in the school curriculum. There are too few lessons and other opportunities to develop pupils' musical skills through assemblies are often missed. Teachers try to overcome their lack of expertise by commissioning musicians to teach guitar and a teaching assistant provides good tuition for pupils who want to play recorder. Only a small group of pupils attend these lessons and consequently benefit from the experience. Teachers also ensure that the school is involved in local music festivals but pupils do not gain enough from these infrequent opportunities to perform and listen to others. In total, the experiences that pupils have of performing, composing and appraising music are insufficient to ensure that standards match those expected for pupils' ages.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it does not meet the statutory requirement to teach music. However, many pupils enrich their educational experiences through attending a wide

programme of after-school activities. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The provision of accommodation and resources to support the curriculum are very good in the Foundation Stage and good elsewhere.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
- The curriculum for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education is very effective.
- All pupils have equal access to the curriculum.
- The high quality of the accommodation now meets the needs of all pupils.
- The music curriculum does not meet statutory requirements

Commentary

17 The school's provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good and is one of its main strengths. Underpinning all of its work are the key features of ensuring that these pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the same opportunities to make progress as everyone else. In order to achieve this, class teachers, the co-ordinator and the teacher in the base work very closely when planning work for individual pupils. Pupils each have an individual programme of work, which reflects their special educational needs. The targets they are set are manageable and in achieving them pupils gain a sense of success and belonging. Pupils know their own targets and, because they understand what is expected of them, many begin to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. Pupils who are taught for part of the time in the base class follow a well-structured programme, which focuses on developing their social skills, understanding of feelings and promoting their self-esteem. They also benefit from increasingly extended periods in the main school classes. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced by support from a range of external specialists including educational psychologists and other staff from the pupil support service and the local health authority. At the other end of the special educational needs scale, pupils who are gifted and talented are also given the help they need to do well. In lessons, they are generally set more difficult work and those who are talented in mathematics are given the chance to attend 'master classes' at a local secondary school.

18 The school makes very good provision for personal, social and health education. This is part of a planned programme where pupils learn to co-operate with others and respect their feelings, to make the right choices for a healthy lifestyle and, for older pupils, about sex and relationships. Alongside this planned programme, promoting pupils' personal qualities is always uppermost in the minds of teachers. Staff rightly decided that in a school with so many pupils from disadvantaged and sometimes difficult backgrounds their personal development must be a priority. Their success is evident in the ethos of the school and the mature behaviour of many pupils.

19 This school is an inclusive one and all pupils have equal access to what it offers. A clear strength in teacher's planning is how well activities are matched to the wide range of abilities present in most classrooms. This is a challenging task, but one which is done well. As a result of the school's commitment to inclusion, those pupils who have special educational needs and the very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well against the targets set for them.

20 The school accommodation is spacious, spotlessly clean and well cared for. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection, when the accommodation of the school was found to be unsatisfactory. Acoustics in the hall are poor however and this makes hearing teachers or other children difficult in assemblies and in physical education lessons.

21 Music is not taught in sufficient depth to meet statutory requirements and this is something that needs improving. At present not enough is done to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to perform, compose and appraise music.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for very well. The school ensures their health and safety and teachers provide them with good advice and guidance. Pupils are involved in the school's work and development and know that their views matter.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff know pupils very well and the relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
- There is very good liaison with other agencies and this has considerable impact on how pupils are cared for before and after school.
- Child protection procedures are very good.
- The school council enables pupils to have a say in how the school is run.

Commentary

22 Staff know the pupils and their needs very well. Relationships are very good and there is mutual warmth and respect between adults and pupils throughout the school. Pupils feel confident to approach staff and talk to them when they are worried about any issue. Other opportunities for discussion of personal matters are carefully planned, particularly through the programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education. For instance, during 'circle time'² pupils are very open about where they think have done well and where they could improve their work or behaviour. This gives staff the chance to monitor pupils' self-esteem and personal development. Teachers use information from assessment procedures very well to identify learning and behaviour targets in individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs. Lessons are planned to enable pupils of all abilities to succeed, thus promoting their self-esteem and confidence.

23 The school has entered into successful partnerships with other agencies who work on behalf of the welfare of children and families. As a result, pupils and their families have access to high quality provision before and after school. This includes the Longbenton early years centre, the after school club and the breakfast club. These, together with very good support and guidance during the school day, provide pupils with 'wrap around' care, which meets their needs very successfully and makes a strong contribution to the inclusive nature of the school. For example, the breakfast club is well-attended and ensures that pupils get a healthy start to the day. It is so successful that the school has won awards for the way it is run and the help it provides for children and their families.

24 Child protection issues are very well addressed. The head teacher and the lead teacher in the base are fully trained in accordance with the locally agreed guidelines. All staff are aware of the procedures to be followed and a whole staff training programme is in preparation. The significant proportion of the school's pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, including those in the base, are very well supported by the school's effective strategies for behaviour management.

25 The school Council provides pupils with a voice in the running and development of the school, and an official channel for their requests and suggestions. Pupils are very proud to be members of the council and take their roles very seriously.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school continues to have **good** links with parents, other schools and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

² This is the time when pupils talk about issues that are important to them and listen to the opinions and views of others.

- Parents receive good quality information about their children's progress from the school but the governors' annual report does not contain all the information that it should.
- Pupils benefit considerably from the strong links with the local secondary school.
- Strong links with the community help to enrich the curriculum and parents and pupils benefit from these.

Commentary

26 Parents know that, at the beginning and end of the day, teachers and the head teacher are always available to talk over problems or tell them how their children are doing. During the inspection, many were seen to take advantage of these times to chat informally about their children. On a more formal level, annual reports provide clear details about what pupils can do, as well as identifying areas where they could do better. Parents are also kept fully informed about life generally in school and about special events. The prospectus includes all of the information that it should but the governors' annual report is in need of reviewing because some information that should be in is omitted. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved from the time the teacher has an initial concern and kept fully up to date about all subsequent developments.

27 There are good links with other schools, particularly the local community college, which most of the pupils join in Year 7. Pupils visit regularly for lessons in subjects such as information and communication technology and science and these are often the ones that they talk about with most enthusiasm. For example, pupils in Year 6 were thrilled by a 'virtual tour' of the Tate Gallery, which enabled them to see works of art that they would not otherwise have had easy access to. This partnership enriches the school curriculum and helps to take away any worries the pupils have about moving on to a bigger school.

28 The school is outward looking and works very hard to establish productive links with other local services. The community nurse, policeman and vicar are all regular visitors and these make a good contribution to the pupils' well being and learning. Both parents and pupils benefit from the good links with health and education services which share the school site, for example the partnership with the early years unit. Pupils enjoy taking part in community events such as the music festival and athletics championships.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The head teacher is a good leader who has put together a strong team in the short time since her appointment. The leadership and management of senior teachers are satisfactory. In most respects governors are doing a sound job for the school, but with regard to the music curriculum they have not kept a close enough eye and therefore governance is unsatisfactory. Staff and governors have overcome the barriers to learning caused by pupils' behaviour problems and are now ready to focus on raising standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the head teacher is good.
- The school's provision for special educational needs is managed well.
- All staff now function as an effective team and have good potential for moving the school forward.
- The head teacher has the support and confidence of all staff, governors and parents.
- The school is clearly committed to the full inclusion of all pupils and school procedures are in place to ensure that this happens successfully.
- The governors do not have a strategic overview of the school and have not ensured that the school curriculum fully meets statutory requirements.
- The school improvement plan does not have a clear enough focus on raising standards, particularly in identified weak areas such as the quality of pupil's writing and the lack of a well-structured music curriculum.

Commentary

29 A new head teacher has been appointed since the previous inspection and the good quality of her leadership is already having a clear impact on the way all staff are now working as a team fully committed to raising standards. The school has worked very hard in the important areas of the care and welfare of pupils and in ensuring that all pupils are given equal opportunities to benefit from what the school can offer them. This work has been done well. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is good and pupils are taking an increasingly pro-active role in ensuring that they make mature decisions about living a healthy, responsible lifestyle. The head teacher has the full support and confidence of all staff, governors and parents and the school is now in a good position to tackle the changes needed to raise standards.

30 The leadership of other key staff in the school is satisfactory. A recently appointed senior management team is already beginning to have a positive impact on the running of the school but has not been in place long enough to bring about the changes needed to raise standards. Subject leaders in English and mathematics have observed teachers working in the classroom and have looked at the quality of pupil's work. However, their monitoring of teaching and learning has not been done with enough rigour to identify weaknesses in teachers' marking and the teaching of handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

31 The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very well led and managed. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the lead teacher in the base have high levels of expertise and are very experienced. They work closely with the head teacher and other staff to ensure there is a shared understanding of, and commitment to, the inclusive nature of the school. The co-ordinator cooperates with class teachers in identifying targets for pupils' individual education plans, and provides very effective support in classrooms and on a withdrawal basis. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The co-ordinator recognises the need to involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs more closely in the regular reviews of their progress. The provision in the base is recognised as a very strong element in the local education authority's continuum for behaviour management. The school's provision for gifted and talented pupils is also led and managed well. The head teacher, staff and parents have worked together to identify pupils with particular talents and to provide opportunities for promoting their achievement. Priorities for developing this area, and for further extending the school's provision for inclusion, have been identified.

32 Governors are supportive of the school but have not, in the past, challenged it about the curriculum for music. In other areas of their work they have been more successful. The previous inspection report highlighted weaknesses in the quality of formal written policies and procedures relevant to Balliol School, specifically sex education, child protection and special educational needs. Governors have tackled all of these issues successfully so that policies and procedures for these areas are now in place and being used effectively by staff. In addition to this, governors manage the school's budget prudently so that there is always sufficient in hand to ensure the high levels of staffing that the school needs to manage successfully pupils who have special educational needs linked to behavioural and emotional difficulties.

33 The school improvement plan lacks focus and does not identify the school's real priorities. While it includes many targets that are part of the school's ongoing work and provision, it omits essential priorities such as raising standards in writing or ensuring that the curriculum for music meets statutory requirements. As it stands there are too many priorities to be managed realistically by a staff who work extremely hard to maintain discipline and create the right ethos for pupils to grow and learn. Having got the discipline right, staff can now begin to look ahead to raising standards, but the school development plan is not helping them to do this. The head teacher recognises the weakness in this layer of planning and has scheduled a review of its effectiveness in the next term.

34 Performance management procedures are satisfactory and linked to school improvement. The school is committed to staff training and has recently been successfully re-assessed, for the

Investors in People status. Financial management is sound and the school has secure procedures in place to ensure that it gets value for money when purchasing new resources or supplies.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	586,418
Total expenditure	558,265
Expenditure per pupil	3304

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	31,380
Balance carried forward to the next	59,533

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

35 Good teaching ensures that children achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage. However, a low starting point means that few achieve the skills and knowledge expected for their age in any of the areas of learning except physical development.

36 Work in creative and physical development was sampled during the inspection. Each day, children have time to exercise their creativity by painting, drawing and making pictures and models, often working in small groups under the direction of an adult. A good musical activity was seen when children were given the chance to listen to African music and to tap out the rhythm on their knees and on a wood block. Teachers also plan daily opportunities for children to gain physical skills at playtime and in lessons, when they use the hall. Outside, children benefit from having an exciting play area where they can whiz around on wheeled toys or climb on adventure apparatus. In a lesson in the hall, children enjoyed playing games and moving like monkeys, elephants and other animals. Children know that their heart beats faster after strenuous exercise and put this to the test in a fast game of running at the green symbol and stopping when the red one was shown.

37 The activities aimed at promoting children's knowledge and understanding of the world are generally exciting and stimulate children to observe and talk about what they are doing. For example, after touching and smelling fruits that they were unfamiliar with children could name a pineapple and avocado. However, their limited vocabulary meant that they struggled to get beyond the word 'spikey' to describe the pineapple.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to talk about how they feel.
- Teachers manage children's behaviour well.

Commentary

38 At the start of each session, children sit in a small group with their teacher and everyone has a go at saying how they feel. The choice is limited so that children do not have to consider too many options but they all have to say why they feel that way. This is a good start to the day because teachers are able to find out which children are unhappy or angry and therefore likely to need more sympathy or attention. Children are very honest about how they feel though they do not always have the language to express themselves in full sentences and often need some help from the teacher. In addition to this, staff promote children's self-esteem by asking children how they feel when they have completed a task successfully or have done something for the first time. One child said he felt 'proud' about a picture he had finished and this gave the teacher a chance to talk about that with other children in the group.

39 Right from the start of nursery, teachers expect children to follow the basic class rules of following instructions, sharing equipment and behaving in a friendly way to other children. They do this quietly but firmly by reminding children of what is appropriate behaviour and praising them when they do it right. Children respond to this by trying hard to please their teachers and they beam with delight when praised. The youngest children in the nursery have quickly learned the rules for listening until it is their turn to hold the frog but still struggle to pay attention for any length of time. Staff also make a good job of managing children who have special educational needs linked to emotional and behavioural difficulties. They help these children to overcome their own frustrations

and outbursts and as a result they are able to play a full part in lessons, without disrupting the learning of the rest of the class.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers do all they can to encourage children to talk about themselves and listen to others.
- Each day, children are given sufficient time to read and write.

Commentary

40 Many children have poorly developed speech and language when they join the nursery. Some are hesitant to speak and find it difficult to describe what they are doing. In order to overcome this barrier to learning staff provide a wide variety of activities in which children can talk about themselves and their work and to listen to others. Sometimes this is in a large group, when nursery and reception children come together to hear a story and at other times it is in small groups when children are working with an adult. After only a short time in school children in the nursery are fairly good at listening to stories but their attention wanders more quickly than that of the reception class children who have learned to listen more carefully. Good teaching also successfully extends and develops children's language skills through everything that they do in the day. For example, while children give out the milk teachers talk about the bottles, the taste, the way that the straws fit in; anything to encourage children to give an opinion or join in the conversation.

41 Teachers ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for children to read and write each day. Children are encouraged to look at and read books and know to follow the writing from left to right. All children take books home regularly and happily join in the telling of stories they know well and re-tell a story by referring to the pictures. Teachers work hard to ensure that children have sufficient understanding of the names and sounds of letters to enable them to read and write independently. As a result, children in the reception class recognise a growing number of words and letters. The basic skills of writing are taught well. Staff ensure that children grip pencils correctly and teach them the correct way to form letters so that they get off to a good start with their writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good feature of the teaching is the way that all staff promote the use of mathematical language.
- Children count and use numbers every day and this helps them learn at a good rate.

Commentary

42 Staff work hard to widen children's mathematical vocabulary though it remains below what is expected for children's ages. Teachers use mathematical terms, such as 'more' and 'less' in their discussions and constantly ask children questions that require them to use words to describe the position of objects. Exciting activities, such as feeling shapes hidden in a bag, helped children in the reception class use the words 'rectangle', 'triangle' and 'circle' to describe the shapes to others. Though children in the reception class rose to their teacher's challenge to sort shapes by more than one attribute, such as colour and size, a small number of children in the nursery struggled with naming colours or other properties of common shapes.

43 A feature of the good teaching is the daily focus on counting routines and number rhymes. Sometimes children and teachers come together as a group to sing popular songs, such as 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five'. These number songs help children gain a practical understanding of adding and taking away. At other times during the day the counting and mathematics is more informal, such

as when children have to work out how many bottles of milk are needed or how many children there are in a group.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of speaking, listening and reading is good.
- Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening and reading is good throughout the school
- The subject leader has a clear vision to improve standards and has identified strategies to tackle the weaknesses in writing.
- Lessons are well planned and learning support staff are used effectively to support those pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards in writing by the age of 11 are not high enough and consequently pupils do not achieve well enough.
- The teaching of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and the presentation of work is not good enough.
- The marking of pupils' work is not good enough.

Commentary

44 The standards of speaking and listening meet expectations in Years 2 and 6 and this represents good achievement for these pupils. A strength of the teaching is the way teachers use the initial part of lessons to focus on and extend pupils' vocabulary. Even the youngest pupils in Year 1 are beginning to speak clearly and are confident when talking to the teacher. By Year 6, pupils make clear, appropriate answers to questions and make good attempts to explain words that are unfamiliar to them. For example, when the teacher asked what 'disorientated' means, a pupil suggested, 'It means going the wrong way doesn't it. The porpoise began to swim the wrong way'. The school provides pupils with many chances to listen to others.

45 Pupils are taught reading skills well throughout the school and although pupils reach standards that are below expectations in Years 2 and 6, this still represents good achievement for them. Teachers have not yet devised sufficient ways to challenge pupils to become better readers, for example, pupils do not have learning targets in reading. When asked, older and more fluent readers in Year 6 had no opinion about how well they read, or what they need to do to next to improve. A good feature of the promotion of reading in some classes is the wide range of reading material available to the pupils. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils quietly chose to read a variety of newspapers, books, magazines, tourist guides about the local area and in one instance, a glossy booklet from a car showroom. This reading material interested them and you could hear a pin drop in the classroom as the pupils read to themselves.

46 Standards in writing are not high enough. In Year 2, standards are below expectations and they are well below expectations in Year 6. Whilst younger pupils are making sound progress and their achievement in lessons is satisfactory, this is not the case for older pupils. The key skills of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and the presentation of work are not taught well enough. The marking of work is inconsistent and does not pick up common errors or tackle weaknesses with enough rigour. Spelling errors are marked incorrect, but evidence in pupils' books show that this has little effect over time and common errors persist. Pupils are given learning targets to improve their writing, but they are written in language that is meaningless to the pupils, indeed, when asked, most pupils could not even read their targets, so they are of no use to them. Most pupils in the juniors do not write well enough, so that by Year 6, they still do not use a joined style with enough consistency. A small number of pupils in Year 6 still write in pencil, so they do not practise how to write with a pen.

The quality and quantity of written work is not good enough and whilst pupils are given opportunities to write in a range of styles, they are given too few opportunities to write creatively at length. Information and communication skills are used appropriately to support writing and there are some good examples of letters and reports on display. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has worked hard to evaluate pupils' work, identify weaknesses and to plan strategies to tackle the weaknesses, but these have not yet had enough time to raise the quality of writing in the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and the quality of learning resources is much improved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47 Overall, the opportunities to use literacy skills in a range of other subjects are satisfactory. A clear strength is the way that speaking and listening skills are developed well in other subjects. In lessons, teachers use correct technical vocabulary and they use questioning well to extend the way in which pupils of all ages answer questions. One-word answers are not accepted and pupils are encouraged and supported to explain their thoughts with more clarity. A weakness is the acceptance of poorly presented or organised work in some subjects, with spelling errors not corrected. Examples of the good use of literacy to support history are evident in Year 2 when pupils made a booklet about the great fire of London. This was done well and extended writing and the skills of using books to research facts.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Use of assessment information in planning.
- Good match of work to the range of pupils' abilities.
- Teachers' high expectations of effort and behaviour.
- Strong emphasis on mathematical language.
- Briskly paced lessons.
- Insufficient attention given to improving the presentation of work.

Commentary

48 In comparison with similar schools, standards of work are good for seven year olds and satisfactory for pupils aged 11. The results of national tests are influenced by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy very well and this is having a significant impact on improving pupils' mathematical skills, particularly in mental calculation. The brisk oral and mental sessions, which begin all lessons make a valuable contribution to improving pupils' speed and accuracy. When planning lessons and identifying individual and group targets, teachers make very good use of the information from assessment procedures. Questions and tasks are adapted for the range of pupils' abilities. Consequently, pupils usually succeed in lessons and also move steadily towards their own goals for learning. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by the additional help they are given by the special educational needs co-ordinator and classroom assistants. Staff persistently challenge pupils of all abilities to extend their thinking, and are skilled at encouraging them to try to solve problems before stepping in with help. This helps pupils to develop independent learning skills. Assessment information is also well used in planning a years work. Analysis of test results identified data handling and written calculation as areas for development. The subsequent staff training has resulted in a more focused approach and has improved pupils' achievement and progress in these aspects of mathematics.

49 By the end of Year 2 most pupils show good understanding of the value of digits up to 99. Higher attaining pupils use their understanding of place value to order three digit numbers correctly.

During sorting activities pupils use between two and five criteria, according to their ability, and record their findings accurately using tally charts and block graphs. Between the ages of seven and 11 most pupils learn to identify and use appropriate operations to solve problems. The majority have a good understanding of place value, and they learn to convert percentages to fractions and imperial measures to their metric equivalents. Because teachers explain new ideas clearly and use the subject vocabulary well, pupils begin to use appropriate language when discussing their work. This was clearly demonstrated when Year 5 pupils named two-dimensional shapes with up to ten sides and referred to 'multiples', 'factors' and 'proportion'. As they move up the school pupils build on their skills in collecting and organising statistical information and in presenting it in pictograms, pie charts and line graphs. Pupils' learning is effectively reinforced and extended with regular homework from all teachers. Behaviour in lessons is good because teachers manage classes calmly and firmly, a brisk pace is maintained and work is planned to meet pupils' needs and challenge them to make good progress.

50 The subject is well led and managed. Assessment procedures are systematic and thorough. Teachers and classroom assistants have received good quality training in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Priorities for future development have been identified. The resources have been systematically improved and are well used to support pupils' learning. Pupils who have a particular talent for mathematics benefit from attending 'master classes' at the local high school. However, the presentation of work varies considerably, with an unacceptable proportion of untidy and carelessly written work seen. Additionally, pupils in Year 6 continue to use pencils for their work although this does not prepare them well for their forthcoming move to high school where they will be expected to use pens.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51 Mathematics is used effectively to support learning in other subjects including science, geography, history and information communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is at least satisfactory and often good.
- The school has good resources.
- Pupils enjoy science lessons and want to learn.
- There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Although all teachers provide opportunities for practical science, some lessons do not develop pupils' investigation skills sufficiently.

Commentary

52 A strength in the teaching is the way that teachers prepare and manage the lessons. They explain clearly what is to be done and what standard is expected. Teachers are good at making sure that everyone is involved and listening. They do this by providing plenty of equipment and things to examine, asking good questions and insisting on good standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils are building up a reasonable fund of knowledge of scientific facts. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils learned a lot about growth because there were so many well-chosen things to look at, touch and discuss.

53 At the last inspection, there were some weaknesses in the teaching of investigation skills. The school has gone a long way towards putting these right, but one or two inadequacies persist. Scientific enquiry is now a much greater part of lessons. This ensures that all pupils can handle equipment sensibly and carry out a fair test. They understand that scientific ideas are based on evidence, learn to make simple predictions and record their results. Pupils enjoy these lessons and

work together with care and common sense. However, teachers do not always make the most of this. In many lessons, all the pupils do an experiment prepared by the teacher. These are planned in every detail. This is helpful in ensuring that pupils are methodical, but does not give enough scope for pupils to use their initiative or suggest their own lines of enquiry. When pupils are given some responsibility they respond well. In Year 4, for example, pupils plan their own insulation tests and then think about how successful they were. This improves their enquiry skills and promotes good attitudes to science.

54 Teachers rightly encourage pupils to use their own words to explain what they did and what they found out. However many pupils find this difficult. Pages in their books are sometimes unfinished, or do not have a satisfying conclusion, which does not help pupils either to understand or remember. Teachers are aware of this, and are looking for solutions without resorting to copied notes. Some are trying the shared writing methods used in literacy lessons, or giving help with recording during the discussion parts of lessons. This gives the pupils useful models of what is expected and leads them towards more independent writing.

55 Teaching assistants and special educational needs support assistants make an important contribution to pupils' progress. When helping groups with practical work they ask good questions, making pupils think about the scientific ideas. For example, in a tasting test in Year 5, pupils were constantly prompted to make sure their tests and comparisons were fair. This showed them how to separate all the variables and think more logically. In other lessons, the unobtrusive support for pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties means that these, and the rest of the class, make good progress. In a lesson on heart rate in Year 4, for example, a group did just as well as the others because of the quiet but firm help they received. This helped their confidence and self-esteem.

56 Leadership in science has been effective. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is well qualified and has a good picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The school has begun to monitor the quality of teaching and there are good plans to make this more systematic and rigorous. There is a generous supply of good quality resources, which are added to through the useful links with the community college. An example of this is the use of computer microscopes, which led to some innovative research on the ways that infant pupils learn from these. However, apart from this, the use of information technology in science is an area for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has used its links with local colleges to provide pupils with regular access to a suite of computers.
- The clear explanations and demonstrations given by teachers help pupils acquire skills steadily and standards now match those expected for pupils' ages.
- Teachers use computers to promote pupils' learning in subjects other than information and communication technology.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are given the help they need to do well.

Commentary

57 The school has made good use of its partnership with local and further education colleges to provide pupils with access to a suite of computers that they would not otherwise have been able to afford. The group operates from within the building and is happy for each class to have one session a week using their up-to-date suite of almost twenty computers. This is a tremendous bonus for the school and is a significant factor in why standards have risen since the previous inspection. There are only two problems with the shared access; the group does not have a large screen or projector for showing functions to the whole class and it uses a black and white printer. This detracts from the

quality of pupils' printed work, particularly when it involves using paint software to create images or designs. Despite these shortcomings pupils are extremely keen to work in the computer suite and treat the equipment very carefully.

58 Teachers have a thorough knowledge of computers and the software that they use. This shows in the clear, step-by-step directions they provide for pupils when they are first learning new skills. For example, pupils in a class in Year 5, quickly grasped the idea of what a spreadsheet could do because the teacher took the time to demonstrate and explain in detail how it worked. As a result, they could see for themselves how it computes information in groups of cells. Consequently, by the end of the lesson the most able pupils could communicate their findings as a graph while others took longer to put their data into the spreadsheet.

59 Pupils who have special educational needs are given the extra help they need to make the same steady progress as others. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that they know what to do and understand technical terms. For example, in a class of Year 2 and 3 pupils, those who had special educational needs produced pictures that were of a similar quality to more able pupils because of the help they were given from adults. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties were able to play a full part in the lesson because of the praise and support given by staff, who kept a close eye on their progress. As soon as it looked as though pupils might be stuck, staff intervened to offer help, encouragement and advice. This worked well and resulted in a lesson where pupils were able to get on without too much fuss.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60 A strength of the teaching is that teachers use information and communication technology to help pupils learn in other subjects. Throughout the school, pupils use computers to publish satisfactory quality examples of their work and occasionally to make first drafts of stories and accounts. Teachers also use computers to promote pupils' learning in art and design, geography and history and alongside learning about these subjects pupils gain skills in information and communication technology. For example, pupils in Year 6 were keen to show off their skills in designing and furnishing rooms using a software program that enabled them to identify type of floor covering and position of doors, windows and furniture.

HUMANITIES

61 History and geography were sampled. In the one **history** lesson observed in Years 1, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The teacher captured pupils' interest in the subject of schools in the last century by producing an old suitcase. This resulted in high levels of anticipation and excitement about its possible contents. Pupils continued to pay close attention and by the end of the lesson had recorded old and modern objects as pictures in two columns. Average and higher attaining pupils had done this independently and those who had special educational needs completed their work with help from the teacher and teaching assistant. The work in pupils' **geography** books showed that pupils in Year 2 compare lifestyles in hot and cold climates. Older pupils make comparisons between the physical and human features of the local area and other countries, which led pupils in last year's Year 6 to produce some thoughtful writing on how changes in physical features affect the way people work and live.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the activities they plan help pupils enjoy their work.
- There is a good stock of well-organised resources.

- Teachers make good use of the national guidance for religious education, particularly in the links with literacy lessons.

Commentary

62 Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their work well. They make lessons interesting and relevant. A strength is the way that teachers relate the activities to pupils' own experiences and feelings. There are good examples of this in pupils' writing about 'my special place' or 'the most important beliefs of my life'. In oral work, teachers listen well and make sure that everyone is involved. For example, in a lesson on baptism in Year 1, the class began enthusiastically by putting together a long list of the things they belonged to. This helped them to understand what the ceremony means. Teaching like this means that pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to learn more. For example, one boy in Year 4 had followed up a lesson at home on the Internet and become quite an expert on Hindu gods.

63 The school now has a good collection of pictures, artefacts and books. Teachers use these well to bring lessons to life, for example pupils in Year 4 were kept interested by music, pictures, objects and costumes when they learned about Hinduism. Some teachers add to the resources by using their own family treasures, for example pupils in Year 1 were thrilled to touch a Victorian christening gown. The school enriches the curriculum where possible by visits and visitors. Pupils are building up a reasonable fund of knowledge about Christianity and the other world religions. Sensitive teaching means that attitudes are good, for example most pupils find the distinctive features of other religions interesting, rather than strange or funny.

64 Another strength of the teaching is the variety of ways that teachers help pupils to write about what they are learning. Many pupils do not have good literacy skills, but teachers help by choosing interesting tasks and using some of the methods recommended in the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils respond well to these, particularly where the task is challenging. In Year 5, for example, pupils re-write parables and fables in imaginative new settings, whilst in Year 4 they produce illustrated collections of bible stories or booklets on other religions. Pupils are proud of these, so they help to promote positive attitudes to the subject.

65 The curriculum is well-organised and meets the needs of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Teachers allocate sufficient time for religious education. Assessment in lessons is satisfactory, teachers know what their pupils understand and can do. However there is no whole school system in place yet to show progress over several years. The subject leader is well qualified but has had no opportunity yet to look at lessons or samples of pupils' work. This will be a useful process when time allows, because teachers work well as a team and there is plenty of good practice to share.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66 Provision in art and design, design and technology and physical education was sampled. The **art and design** work on display and that produced in the small number of lessons seen show that pupils' drawing is naive and simplistic and does not match the standards expected for their age. On the other hand, the paintings of flowers that they have produced show a sound knowledge of how to mix colours, apply washes and reproduce minute details on petals and leaves. In discussions about their work in **design and technology**, pupils showed that they understand the process of designing and making and know that the end product should resemble the final plan. Pupils in Year 6 talked enthusiastically about the Egyptian boats, pots and flamboyant masks they had made from wood, papier-mâché, card and textiles. The weakness in their knowledge was in the limited vocabulary they used to describe the materials and tools that they had employed. For example, they could not remember the terms papier-mâché or doweling or name any of the tools they had used. In the two **physical education** lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory and pupils' games and dance skills matched those expected for their age. In the dance lesson, pupils in Year 6 practised a sequence of movements and their performances were co-ordinated and controlled. In the games lesson pupils in Year 2 improved the accuracy of their batting through practice and enjoyed taking part in team games and shuttle races. In both lessons, pupils understood the importance of

warming up before a physical activity and of the effect that aerobic exercise has on the heart and blood.

Music

The provision for music does not fully meet statutory requirements and is therefore **unsatisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected for pupils' ages.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop musical skills
- The leadership and management of the subject have not been strong enough to overcome weaknesses in teaching and learning.
- The curriculum lacks breadth and fails to meet statutory requirements.
- Teachers are increasing the number of chances that pupils have to listen to music from other cultures.

Commentary

67 Without a clear programme of work teachers have, in the past, been unable to teach music so that pupils develop skills and knowledge sequentially. Similarly, without a programme teachers have not provided enough opportunities for pupils to appreciate, compose or evaluate music. The few opportunities that pupils have to take part in music festivals have not been sufficient to ensure that the curriculum is broad enough or that standards match those expected for pupils' ages. For these reasons the teaching is unsatisfactory overall.

68 Few staff are confident in teaching music and most lack the subject knowledge needed to be able to do this without clear guidance or the support of a carefully structured programme of work. However, some of the teaching is good. For example, a small number of pupils in Year 2 made rapid progress in learning to play recorders because of the good teaching provided by a teaching assistant. The clear demonstrations of fingering, posture and breath control helped them perform a short tune. They enjoyed their lesson and gained in self-esteem as they found that they could play notes correctly and rightly saw themselves as being 'proper musicians'. A small number of pupils benefit from good teaching by a musician who visits the school once a week to teach guitar. These pupils make good progress and are very enthusiastic about music.

69 Teachers provide an increasing number of opportunities for pupils to experience a range of music from diverse cultures through visits from musicians. Recently they have enjoyed listening to a Viking string quartet, a flautist and a harpist, South American dance music and African drumming and singing. The whole school is involved in a music and drama production at Christmas. In assemblies, pupils sing tunefully and they are able to clap in time to a simple rhythm. However, without someone out front encouraging them, their performance often lacks sparkle. This is not because pupils are not keen; most say that they enjoy singing and playing instruments and would like to do it more often.

70 There is no one to lead or manage the subject and this has been a contributory factor in why standards have fallen. Without strong direction or comprehensive guidance teachers have struggled to teach the subject and until the subject becomes a priority for improvement and the gaps in teaching and learning are remedied it is unlikely that standards will rise. However, the school has recently purchased a programme of work, which reflects the National Curriculum requirements and this is the first step towards improving provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is embedded in the day-to-day life of the school
- The school makes very good use of other agencies to support the curriculum
- All staff are fully committed to supporting the pupil's personal development

Commentary

71 The school is rightly proud of its work in the promotion of personal, social and health education. Lessons are carefully planned to help pupils to understand the benefits of having a healthy lifestyle, to develop good relationships with others and to become effective and supportive members of the school and the local community. For example, the school offers;

- drugs education, where pupils are made aware of drugs which are medicines and can help them and drugs that will harm them and the choices they need to make for themselves
- sex and relationships education, where the school nurse is closely involved in more formal lessons with older pupils
- pupils' are given the means of controlling the way they react to situations, for example a special area of the school is set aside for children to use as a 'cooling off' area. This is used well and pupils who use this area know that they are safe, but that staff will approach them and challenge them to make choices regarding their behaviour and attitude. This has been a successful initiative in developing a more mature approach to personal problem solving.
- good opportunities to learn about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The school actively promotes healthy eating. School lunches are presented well to children and they get to taste fruit and vegetables that they may not be familiar with. This is proving effective, with school lunch-time staff reporting that children are choosing to eat more fruit and vegetables
- citizenship is promoted actively and all pupils are encouraged to be aware of 'individual democracy', for example to take responsibility for the decisions and choices they make. The school council is an active group and staff consult the council regularly to ensure that pupils' views are taken into account.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

poor (6); very poor (7).