

INSPECTION REPORT

Barnsole Infant School

Gillingham, Kent

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118419

Headteacher: Mrs S Abrams

Lead inspector: Ms S Billington

Dates of inspection: 16 – 18 September 2003

Inspection number: 255436

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	4 – 7 years
Gender of children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	240
School address:	Sturdee Ave Gillingham Kent
Postcode:	ME7 2JE
Telephone number:	01634 852976
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Armitage
Date of previous inspection:	9 February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The majority of children are of White British heritage. There are a few children from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds including mixed heritage, Asian and Black British or Caribbean heritage. Very few speak English as an additional language. Children have limited pre-school experience before starting school and on entry their skills are overall below average. The proportion of children with special educational needs is above average. The proportion of children that enter or leave the school each year, other than at the normal times, is above average. The school serves an area of social disadvantage and is part of an Education Action Zone (EAZ).

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
4343	Ms S Billington	Lead inspector	Foundation stage, English as an additional language, art and design, design and technology, music
8992	Mr J Vischer	Lay inspector	
4341	Mr D Clegg	Team inspector	Mathematics, information technology, geography, history, physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides an acceptable standard of education but has some serious weaknesses in the standards achieved and the quality of teaching. Specifically, some groups of children, particularly the more able, do not achieve as well as they should in English and mathematics. There is some good, and occasionally very good teaching for the reception year and in information and communication technology (ICT). However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of literacy and numeracy and the action that has been taken to raise standards is making limited impact. The school provides satisfactory value for money

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children have good attitudes to learning and generally behave well
- Standards in literacy and numeracy are too low
- Teaching of English and mathematics in years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory
- There is good support for children with special educational needs
- The school has a caring and supportive ethos
- There are good links with parents

The need to raise standards was identified in the last inspection. Although there has been some improvement, overall this has been limited. Other weaknesses found in the last inspection have been tackled with some success. In particular, accommodation has improved with all classes now housed together in a modern building.

Improvements have been hindered to some extent over the past two years by a high level of teacher turnover, some difficulties in recruiting senior staff and the move to new accommodation.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	E	E	E	D
writing	E	E*	E	D
mathematics	E	E	E	D

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

Overall achievement is **unsatisfactory**. Over the past three years, children's performance in national tests has been well below the national average and, in writing, in the bottom 5 per cent of schools. This is because too many children, in years 1 and 2, particularly the more able but also some of average ability, **do not achieve as well as they should** in English and mathematics. Recent improvements in provision for science and information and communication technology (ICT) are leading to **raised standards** in these subjects, although there is still some way to go to ensure that year 2 children attain the levels that they should.

Children in the reception year **achieve well** in their personal and social development and some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve **satisfactory** levels in most other areas of learning.

Throughout the school, children with learning difficulties **achieve as well as they should**.

Children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **overall quality of education is satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** and sometimes good in the **reception year**. In **years 1 and 2**, there is too much variation in the quality of teaching; overall it is **unsatisfactory**. Low expectations and the slow pace of some lessons affect children's learning, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall. It is broad and enriched well by visits and visitors. Parents are given good information to encourage them to support their children's learning. A high level of attention is paid to children's care and welfare. They get good support on a personal level, but there is not enough focus on helping them to achieve as well as they should.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The governing body largely fulfils its statutory responsibilities and is supportive of the work of the school; governors do not ask enough questions about the school's performance. There are regular checks on the quality of teaching and weaknesses have been identified, but not enough has been done to remedy these. Some key staff, who are new to their posts, are beginning to have an impact on the quality of provision in subjects such as mathematics and ICT. Work on improving standards in English has been hindered by the lack of a subject manager.

Systems that are used to track the progress of children through the school are very variable in quality. Not enough is done to check on the information being recorded and to ensure that teachers use it to extend children's learning as much as they should.

PARENTS' AND CHILDREN'S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally very positive about all aspects of the school. They feel that their children like school, enjoy a good range of activities and are making good progress. They like the way that their views are taken into account and the suggestions given for helping their children at home.

Children currently in year 2 and those who have recently moved to the junior school were also very positive. They enjoy school and feel well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English and mathematics
- Improve the quality of teaching

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the governors' annual report includes information on the success of the policy for special educational needs and accessibility for those with disabilities

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children get a good start in the reception year and most achieve, or are close to achieving, expected levels in most areas when they move to year 1. Work in years 1 and 2 does not build consistently on what children have already learned and standards in literacy and numeracy at the end of Year 2 are below average. Girls generally do better than boys, particularly in reading and writing.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in reception classes achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development
- In reception, children do better in reading than they do in writing
- Children in reception and year 1 are achieving well in ICT – lack of experience for year 2 children means that they are working at similar levels to those in year 1
- Throughout the school children with special needs get good support and achieve satisfactory levels in relation to their starting points
- More able children do not achieve as well as they should
- Standards in science are improving and the majority of children reach average levels at the end of year 2 – but too few reach higher levels

Commentary

1. Achievement at the end of the reception year is satisfactory overall given that children have below average levels of attainment on entry to school. The majority of children reach expected levels at the end of the year in their personal and social development. Around half the children reach expected levels in mathematical skills. About two thirds reach expected levels in language and reading but only a small proportion reaches expected levels in writing. This aspect of literacy is a weakness throughout the school.
2. Improved resources for ICT and teachers' confidence in teaching the subject are resulting in improving standards.
3. Overall standards in reading and mathematics are below average at the end of Year 2. Standards in writing are well below average. While children with learning difficulties achieve as well as they should, achievement for the more able children, and sometimes those of average ability, is unsatisfactory and too few reach the levels that they should in national tests.
4. The majority of children reach average standards in science and this represents satisfactory achievement.
5. The main reasons for under-achievement in years 1 and 2 are the unsatisfactory quality of the teaching and the limited impact of a variety of initiatives intended to raise standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (13.8)	16.0 (15.7)
writing	12.9 (11.3)	14.5 (14.3)
mathematics	15.2 (14.5)	16.6 (16.2)

There were 82 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Results show a persistent picture of well below average standards over the past three years. There is some recent indication of improvement, but there are still not enough children reaching average or higher levels in the tests.

Children’s attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children have good attitudes to being in school which reflects the impact of its caring and supportive ethos. Attendance and punctuality are good. Children’s personal development is well supported.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave well in lessons, and often very well around the school, in the dining hall and the playground
- Relationships between staff and children and children themselves are good
- Provision for children’s spiritual, moral and social development is good
- Sometimes children find it hard to maintain concentration in lessons

Commentary

7. Children like their school, are often helpful to one another and keen to participate in what the school offers; this is reflected in the good attendance figures. Their positive attitudes and good behaviour helps generate the happy atmosphere of the school. Playtimes are friendly and vibrant. There have been only two temporary exclusions in the last ten years.

8. The broad range of trips and visitors supports personal development well. Children respect the views of others and understand the importance of this which reflects the inclusive and caring ethos of the school. They are introduced to different faiths and festivals and they value fair play. They have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

9. Children are usually interested in their work and wish to achieve as well as they can. Sometimes they find it hard to maintain concentration in lessons, usually when they have been sat still for too long or the purpose of the lesson is not clear.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	95.9	School data	0.0
National data	94.1	National data	0.5

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 overall quality of education is **satisfactory** but there are some important weaknesses, specifically in the quality of teaching.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** in reception but **unsatisfactory** in years 1 and 2. There is not enough good teaching, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This was evident in lessons during the inspection, but weaknesses were also apparent in the scrutiny of pupils’ work, including samples from the whole of the last academic year.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	5	16	4	0	0

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

Main strengths

- Teaching in reception is effective in promoting children's personal, social and emotional development and they do well in this area
- Teaching of ICT is good and children are quickly learning new skills and show a good level of confidence in using computers
- Support for children with learning difficulties is well-targeted in literacy and numeracy lessons so that they make progress in their learning

Commentary

10. Good attention is paid to promoting children's personal, social and emotional development in the reception year. Teachers make good use of stories and discussions to encourage children to reflect on their feelings and to appreciate the impact of their actions on others. Classroom routines are well established and expectations of behaviour are clear; children respond well to this.

11. The new ICT suite is well used and teachers are generally confident in teaching the subject. This is leading to improvements in standards in this area.

12. Children with learning difficulties benefit from the support of classroom assistants in most lessons. This helps them to understand the tasks that they have been set and helps them to succeed.

Main weaknesses

- In years 1 and 2, some teachers struggle to maintain children's interest and they do not learn as well as they should
- Weaknesses in the teaching of literacy and numeracy in years 1 and 2 result in children not achieving as well as they should

Commentary

13. Teachers' skills in managing classes in years 1 and 2 are too variable. In some lessons, children are static for lengthy periods and have little or no involvement in introductory sessions. Teachers are not always clear about what children are to learn and this leads to some confusion when group work starts.

14. Weaknesses in literacy and numeracy teaching in years 1 and 2 include:

- low expectations of what children might achieve
- a slow pace of teaching resulting in slow learning
- support staff not being used effectively in the introductory parts of lessons
- assessment information not being used effectively to plan the next steps in learning
- the same task being set for all children regardless of their levels of ability

15. The weaknesses in teaching lead to children not making the progress that they should in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Most of these weaknesses have been identified in the past but have not been eradicated. There is too much variation in the quality of teaching and this hinders children's learning and contributes to the low standards.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is broad and balanced and provides good opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular provision. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for children with special educational needs is good
- Provision for children's personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good
- Good use is made of the locality and visits and visitors
- Accommodation and resources are good
- The teaching guidance in the numeracy and literacy strategies is not always used effectively

Commentary

16. The school provides well for children with learning difficulties. The strategies outlined in individual education plans (IEPs) are effective in ensuring children's needs are met whilst enabling them to have full access to the curriculum. There is a good number of teaching assistants to support these children. They give effective support and children make steady progress against their targets.

17. The good provision for PSHE leads to children's good attitudes and positive relationships. Themes discussed in assemblies and circle times encourage children to explore feelings and beliefs. There is a strong emphasis on promoting a healthy lifestyle and the need for keeping safe.

18. The curriculum is enhanced by clubs and a good range of visits and visitors. Children in reception classes visit the local park and a farming centre. In year 1 children's experiences are extended with visits to a local country park and Joss Bay. Year 2 go further afield to study Chatham dockyard, Rochester cathedral and castle and the Strand. There are valuable visits from theatre, music and dance groups. Religious studies are enhanced by visits to the Sikh temple and Christian churches. Extra-curricular activities at lunchtime also extend learning opportunities.

19. The accommodation is very good. All children are now together in one modern building which means that teaching time is no longer lost in crossing the road between two sites. Resources to support the curriculum are good. The provision for ICT is much improved and is leading to improving standards.

20. The numeracy and literacy strategies are in place and all staff have received training. There are inconsistencies, however, in the way that some elements of the strategies are used. For example, introductory sessions in numeracy do not always explore and extend children's understanding of number and skills in calculation. Review sessions in literacy do not always focus on what has been learned, but instead on what has been done or whether children enjoyed it.

Care, guidance and support

There is a strong ethos of welfare and support emanating from the top of the school which shows itself in **good** child protection and health and safety procedures. It is confirmed by the children's positive attitudes to school and their recognition that they feel well supported pastorally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for children's care welfare and health and safety are good
- Children feel well supported by a trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school
- The school operates good induction procedures
- Children have opportunities to express their views and put forward ideas

- The system for tracking and supporting children's achievement is unsatisfactory

Commentary

21. Staff are supported by good procedures in child protection and health and safety and supervise children carefully. There is a good number of trained first aiders and frequent checks are carried out on the new building and play equipment. Most children understand the importance of keeping safe.

22. Teachers know individual children well and children feel well supported by the adults in the school.

23. A detailed programme of induction ensures that new children are well cared for. Children are visited at home by staff before they join a reception class and they, and their parents, have good opportunities to visit the school prior to admission.

24. Children are not systematically invited to express their views formally but their views are specifically sought via their parents through regular parent questionnaires. They are also actively involved in the drawing up of their class rules and their suggestions are acted upon.

25. The school's response to children's personal needs is good. However, the quality and use of information on the progress that they are making is unsatisfactory. Not enough is done to make sure that they all children make a consistent rate of progress and achieve as much as they should.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**; there is a well developed culture of keeping parents informed and involved. There are satisfactory links with the community and the neighbouring junior school that nearly all children join in year 3. Good use has recently been made of some spare space in the school to accommodate a pre-school group.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents get good information on how they can help their children's learning and on their progress in school
- Parents' views are canvassed on a regular basis
- The school responds well to complaints and concerns
- There are some minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents

Commentary

26. The school provides good information to parents as to how they can get involved and help their children's learning. The prospectus has very good suggestions about activities that can be done at home to support work in different curriculum areas. Detailed annual pupil reports tell parents how their children are progressing and suggest what they need to do to improve in English and mathematics.

27. Parent questionnaires are a well established part of school life. Their views are taken into account and acted upon where possible – for example an extra session for parental consultation was introduced at the request of parents.

28. Parents are pleased at the way the school listens to, and acts on, any concerns and complaints.

29. There are some minor omissions concerning the effectiveness of special educational needs support and disability access in the most recent governors' annual report to parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. There are weaknesses in both however, that result in the school not making rapid enough progress in pursuit of its intentions to raise standards. Over the past two years senior staff have had to spend a great deal of time and energy dealing with factors beyond their control. These include a high level of teacher turnover, the need to support some newly qualified teachers and the move to new accommodation. This accounts to some extent, though not entirely, for the slow rate of developments.

The governing body works in a satisfactory manner, generally fulfilling what it should do by law and supporting the work of the school.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The way some subjects are managed is leading to some improvements
- The school has the right priorities and recognises the need to raise standards
- Leadership does not consistently inspire high aspirations for all children
- The checking up on teaching does not do enough to improve the quality of lessons
- The information about how well children are learning is not used enough

Commentary

30. Improvements in management are evident in both mathematics and ICT. There has been some very useful work done on finding out with which aspects of mathematics children are struggling and this has been passed on to teachers to help them to adjust what they teach. The enthusiastic management of ICT has helped all teachers to gain more confidence in teaching the subject and the improved resourcing is leading to some significant improvements, especially for the younger children. Provision for children with special educational needs is well managed. The team of support staff that works with these children is well-organised. Children's progress against the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs) is carefully tracked

31. The school accurately identifies that standards need to be higher and works hard to try to achieve success. The school development plan rightly identifies the need to improve the proportions of children attaining higher levels in English and mathematics. However, there are no specific targets in relation to this aspiration that would indicate how successful the school has been. There are occasions when external factors are given too much weight in explaining why some children do not achieve as well as they should. This is not helpful in driving through the improvements that are needed.

32. Following the previous inspection, the school has put in place a satisfactory system for checking up on the quality of teaching. Those involved have included senior managers, LEA advisers and colleagues who are part of the EAZ. The checks on teaching have often accurately identified weaknesses in lessons that are hindering children's learning. However, too many of the weaknesses persist, for instance, the slow pace of lessons and the need to ensure that all children are set work that is suitable for them.

33. The school collects information about how well children are progressing in a number of different ways, mainly through a series of tests, but also through regular checks on the achievement of a number of specific children. The information gained through the latter activity is too varied in quality. For instance, some assessments provide a very careful analysis of what children have achieved and indicate what they need to do next. Other assessments are very perfunctory and consequently are not helpful in planning what children need to learn next. The test results are used to set targets for what children might achieve in the future. This information is not analysed in any detail and contains significant variation in the targets set for children with similar abilities without any clear identification of the reasons for this. There are no regular checks by senior staff to pick up on the variations in quality.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	582942
Total expenditure	589363
Expenditure per pupil	2540

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	20755
Balance carried forward to the next	14334

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

At the time of the inspection, children in reception classes had been in school for less than two weeks and were still attending on a part-time basis. Judgements on provision in each area of learning are based partly on observations of these children but also through looking at planning, samples of last year's work and records of progress made by children who are now in year 1.

Direct observations were made of work in personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy, mathematical development and physical development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff pay a high level of attention to promoting children's self-confidence and social skills
- Children are encouraged to share equipment and to take turns
- Children are encouraged to try new activities and to work and play independently
- Relationships are good between staff and children
- Children develop positive attitudes to learning
- Children are encouraged to understand and respect similarities and differences and a range of cultures and beliefs

Commentary

35. Good teaching ensures that the majority of children reach the expected levels in this area at the start of year 1 and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff pay a high level of attention to extending children's vocabulary through questions, explanations and discussion
- Listening skills are successfully taught through structured activities such as games
- Stories are used well to link with work in all areas of learning, to introduce children to new vocabulary and ideas and to teach them how books work
- A good programme for teaching letter sounds and commonly used words is successful in helping most children make a successful start in early reading
- Opportunities for writing with the children, and encouraging them to write independently, are sometimes missed

Commentary

Overall the programme for teaching early language and literacy skills is successful but more attention could be paid to creating opportunities for writing. Most children reach expected levels in language and in reading at the start of year 1. Only a minority reaches expected levels in writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities encourages children to sort, match, order and compare groups of objects.
- Good attention is paid to learning to count, to recognise how to make 'one more' or 'one less' and to learn about addition and subtraction through practical activities
- Some children with a good base of mathematical knowledge could be given more challenging activities and could learn at a faster rate

Commentary

36. The majority of children benefit from a well-structured programme for teaching early skills in numeracy. Around half the children reach expected levels at the start of year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Commentary

37. Evidence was too limited to judge the effectiveness of provision in this area. Planning shows that a good range of experiences is planned to encourage children's interest in the world around. Work on 'ourselves and our senses' is planned to promote skills in observation and understanding of similarities and differences. The vocabulary of time and place will be introduced through sequencing everyday events and looking at features of places in the immediate environment. Practical activities ensure that children have good opportunities to learn to use a variety of construction equipment and everyday technology such as a tape recorder. Good use is made of the ICT suite to introduce children to the use of the mouse to command and manipulate images on the screen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are regular opportunities to use a variety of equipment in the outside area and to learn to move with control and co-ordination
- Adults encourage children to extend their skills and to develop awareness of space and of each other
- Staff participate in games and demonstrate well what children have to do
- A good range of practical activities promotes children's skills in handling tools such as scissors

Commentary

38. It is not possible to judge the proportion of children that reach expected levels at the start of year 1. However, children who have just started school were moving with confidence and a good degree of control in activities in the outside play area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

39. Evidence was too limited to judge the effectiveness of provision in this area. Good opportunities are provided for role play where adult support is effective in extending ideas and encouraging interaction between children as they take on a variety of roles. A range of equipment for painting and collage allows children to experiment with colour and design and to express their ideas using a variety of media.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **unsatisfactory**. By the age of seven standards are below average in speaking and listening and reading, and well below average in writing. Achievement is unsatisfactory.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Low literacy skills affect children's work across the curriculum
- Management is unsatisfactory
- Assessment arrangements are weak
- Children enjoy reading but their skills do not improve as much as they should
- Accommodation and resources are good

Commentary

40. With the exception of those with learning difficulties, children are not achieving as well as they could. Children with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants and make steady progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Other children are not challenged sufficiently and this results in them not achieving higher levels. Few children exceed national expectations at the end of year 2. Children's low achievement, particularly in writing, affects achievement in other subjects. Skills learned in English are not always carried over into other subjects. For example, opportunities are missed to develop literacy skills in science.

41. There have been difficulties in recruiting a subject co-ordinator with suitable expertise. A new co-ordinator has just been appointed and is working alongside a colleague who was holding the post temporarily. Over time, management has not been effective in giving clear direction and setting high enough challenges. Data has been monitored but resulting actions have not been sufficient to raise standards, which have been well below the national average for several years. Standards are lower than the average standards found at the previous inspection.

42. There are arrangements in place to assess children's attainment and track their progress, but they are not used rigorously enough to set accurate targets. Teachers are not always sure what levels children are at and what they need to do to move them on to higher levels.

43. Teaching and learning are not consistent. Although lessons seen during the inspection were mainly satisfactory, they often lacked pace and children capable of higher attainment were not challenged. Opportunities to develop speaking skills were sometimes given in paired discussion but there were occasions when children were mainly passive. At the beginning of literacy sessions, teaching assistants are not always well used. Opportunities are missed to involve them in teaching or in assessing children's responses. Written work is not always marked or completed. There is little to indicate how children could improve or to ensure that what is identified for improvement is

followed up. For example, a teacher reminded a pupil to use speech marks but there was no subsequent indication as to whether this target was achieved or not.

44. In most lessons children are attentive and behaved well. They enjoyed reading and most of those interviewed read at home. In some classes, time given to the teaching of reading is too limited. The time set aside for group reading is often eroded. This means that the one time each week that children read with the teacher in a small group is not well used.

45. There is a good range of books and materials to support learning and they are well organised. The library is attractive, although limited use was made of it during the inspection.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **unsatisfactory** although there are signs of some improvements due to recent changes in subject management.

Strengths and weaknesses

- There are indications that standards are slowly improving
- The quality of teaching is too variable; too many lessons are unsatisfactory
- The subject is beginning to benefit from sound management

Commentary

46. Over the past three years there has been a steady rise in the standards. The proportion of children who are reaching average and above average standards at the end of year 2 is increasing.

47. Despite this, the variability in the quality of teaching means that too many children are still not learning as much as they could in lessons. Over time, many, particularly the more able, achieve less than they should. The pace of lessons is often very slow. Very little account is taken of what children already know particularly at the start of lessons. Too often lessons begin with a series of questions, the answers to which children either do or do not know. Teachers do not make enough use of teaching methods that would make sure all children are thinking about the answers and are being asked questions that are challenging. Teaching assistants are not always effectively used in this part of the lessons; they often just sit and listen to the teacher.

48. Teachers plan different activities for children in the middle of lessons and this is often helpful and successful. This is because the work is building on what children already know and some groups are very well supported by teaching assistants who reinforce key teaching points and are able to help children complete their tasks. Occasionally, the activities are not as well planned as they should; children become distracted and the rate at which they work is very slow.

49. Expectations of what the higher attaining children might achieve, or the amount of work they might cover in a lesson, are often low. Teaching does not always take account of how quickly some children learn and so they spend too much time doing work that is too easy or undemanding, rather than being confronted with work that really makes them think.

50. Some recent improvements are due to the way the subject is beginning to be managed. Test results are beginning to be analysed to identify any weak areas of mathematics and this is influencing what is taught. However, the information used to set targets for mathematics is not shared as widely as it could be and this restricts the way in which the subject might be managed. It also restricts the uses to which the information might be put. For instance, no one scrutinises the targets to ensure that they are well founded or that they are sufficiently challenging for all children.

51. Some of the weak aspects to teaching have been identified, but this has not lead to significant improvements in the quality. Many of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection persist and standards have been slow to rise.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average but are beginning to improve
- The oldest children show a reasonable grasp of knowledge in all areas of the subject
- A good range of practical experiences helps children to learn
- Weak literacy skills hinder children's ability to record what they find out

Commentary

52. The proportion of children reaching average levels at the end of year 2 is rising but too few reach higher levels. The curriculum covers all the areas that it should and by the end of year 2 children show understanding of basic aspects of science.

53. The curriculum has been adjusted to allow more time for practical investigation and exploration. A 'science focus' week each year promotes children's interest in the subject.

54. Despite children's good levels of interest, weak literacy skills mean that even the more able struggle to record their ideas and observations. Written work for many children is often difficult to comprehend. The school has recently introduced a clear focus on improving children's understanding and use of scientific vocabulary. It is too early to judge the impact of this, but the initiative has the potential to improve standards further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision for ICT is **satisfactory**, the school has made big improvements that are beginning to benefit children. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection and all these were about one particular aspect of ICT.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are beginning to rise
- Some of the teaching is good
- Resources are much improved and are helping to improve teaching

Commentary

55. The children in the reception and year 1 are doing well in ICT and are successfully developing a range of key skills. In lessons they improve their skills with the mouse, learning to click, drag and drop as they begin to use different programs. Some of the very youngest children are working at levels above those normally found.

56. The opening of the recently created ICT suite is making a big difference to the standards achieved and the quality of teaching. The suite has resulted in all children now having much more time on the computers and having improved access to new programs that cover the full range of the curriculum.

57. Teachers are confident about teaching the subject and make good use of the equipment. Good introductions to lessons are very well backed up with demonstrations using the projector and screen so that children can see exactly what they have to do when being introduced to new programs. The teaching emphasises key points, particularly encouraging children to use the correct language such as *log on/off, click, drag and drop*.

58. Lessons are well planned to ensure that all children have a good opportunity to work on the computers although just occasionally the time spent in the suite is a little too short. The lessons move on at a good pace and teachers are successful in explaining the next steps in learning while one group is still practising their new skills.

59. Teaching assistants are used well to work with children who are experiencing difficulties and often keep a sharp eye out for children who are struggling and therefore need more practice.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in history and geography. The school makes good use of the locality to support learning in these subjects.

Provision for religious education is **sound**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the agreed syllabus.
- Children learn about and celebrate a range of festivals
- The curriculum is enhanced by visits and visitors.

Commentary

60. Children successfully learn from religion and about religion. In year 1 they learn about special people. In work on families they are taught about ways of welcoming a new baby. They learn about Abraham and the role of the twelve disciples. They learn about the beliefs of Sikhism. Year 2 children study Judaism and understand why God gave rules to Moses and why the Jews fled from Egypt.

61. Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and harvest are celebrated. Children also learn about the similarities in religions and the customs associated with Shabbat, Hannukah and Divali.

62. Children visit Christian churches and the Sikh temple. They receive visitors representing a range of faiths, such as a regular visitor from the synagogue. They learn about the features of the places of worship and the artefacts and symbols.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in these areas and work was too limited to form judgements on the quality of provision. Art and design, design and technology (DT), music and physical education (PE) are regularly taught in all classes.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Children's achievement	5
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	5
How well children learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for children	4
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	4
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	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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