

INSPECTION REPORT

BENTLEY C of E (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bentley, Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124754

Headteacher: Mrs S D'Or

Lead inspector: Mr Michael Raven

Dates of inspection: 26th – 27th February 2004

Inspection number: 255491

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	31.5 (including 4.5 FTE children in the Reception class)
School address:	Church Road Bentley Ipswich Suffolk
Postcode:	IP9 2BT
Telephone number:	01473 310253
Fax number:	01473 313152
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Charles Cripps
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bentley Primary School is a very small school that serves mainly the village in which it is situated, although a few of its pupils come from outside the immediate area. There is little social disadvantage in the area served by the school. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, depending upon the varying characteristics of the small groups of children joining the school. A higher than average proportion of pupils join the school part way through their schooling. There are very few pupils with special educational needs, and none has a statement of special educational need. Pupils come almost exclusively from White British ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the population in the area. No pupils are learning English as an additional language.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3961	M Raven	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education Foundation Stage of Learning
13828	R Ibbitson	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
17852	L Moscrop	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is good. It offers sound value for money. Children start school with skills and levels of development that vary from one year to the next between well below average and above average. Standards at the end of Year 6 also vary from year to year, depending upon the different abilities of the very small groups of pupils. The quality of teaching is good overall, and pupils' achievement is broadly satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides good leadership and management.
- Governance is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote pupils' learning.
- The school generally looks after its pupils very well, but it does not have a policy to ensure that pupils make safe use of the Internet.
- Pupils' awareness of cultural and ethnic diversity is unsatisfactory.
- The toilet facilities for the children in Reception are unsatisfactory.
- The school's partnership with parents and the local community is good.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Standards and achievement have improved in Years 1 and 2. Provision for information and communication technology has improved very well. The curriculum for the children in Reception now meets National Curriculum requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E* - very low.*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Great caution is needed in interpreting these data, as the number of pupils in each year group is very small.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 3 – 6 and satisfactory in each of the other year groups. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT, and average in religious education. These pupils started school with generally above average attainment, and have made sound progress since. No judgement can be made about standards in Year 6, as there is just one pupil in that year group. However, standards across Years 3 – 6 are average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 started school with below average attainment, and have achieved well to reach the current average standards. The children in Reception started school with broadly average attainment. They achieve satisfactorily, and are mostly on course to reach the learning goals set for them nationally in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in the other three areas of learning.

Pupils' personal qualities are good overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social cultural development is satisfactory overall, but too little is done to develop pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is satisfactory in Reception and Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 – 6. The learning needs of all the different groups of pupils, including those who find learning more difficult, are met well in Years 3 – 6, where pupils are appropriately grouped by ability rather than age. However, in Reception and Years 1 and 2, work is less well matched to pupils' needs. Good and thorough records are maintained of pupils' attainment and progress.

The curriculum is good. There is good provision in both classes for pupils' personal, social and health education. The curriculum is enriched by a range of appropriate activities outside lessons, and by regular opportunities for pupils to take part in dramatic and musical productions. The mobile classroom has no toilet facilities. This is unsatisfactory, especially for the youngest children in Reception. There are very good links with parents and the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership provided by the headteacher is good. She has a clear sense of purpose, and is committed to the school offering the best possible opportunities for all pupils. She leads her staff well, and works hard to bring on new members of the team. She has responsibility for leading most subjects and aspects of the school's work. Other members of staff, given the demands on their limited time in school, give adequate support. The headteacher's management is also good. An appropriate programme exists for the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching through lesson observations. Good advice and guidance are given where areas for development are identified. The work of the governing body is unsatisfactory. Governors have very little involvement in the school improvement planning. They leave this to the headteacher and her staff, despite invitations for them to contribute their own ideas.

PARENTS AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. They particularly like the arrangements for settling their children when they first start school, and the fact that staff expect their children to work hard and do their best. Pupils are also very pleased, and like being at the school. They report that they have to work hard, but get help when stuck; and that they have an adult to go to if they are worried.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, so that it can contribute much more fully to school improvement planning.
- Put in place a policy for pupils' safe use of the Internet.
- Promote more effectively pupils' understanding and appreciation of the cultural and ethnic diversity of British society.
- Improve the toilet facilities for the children in Reception.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory overall. This is true regardless of gender or ability. Standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and ICT by the end of Year 2. They are average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education in Years 3 - 5. No judgement is made concerning standards in Year 6, as there is only one pupil in this year group.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 3 – 6 achieve well.
- Standards are good by the end of Year 2.

Commentary

1. Great caution is necessary in interpreting the results of national tests because of the small numbers of pupils involved. The standards reached fluctuate markedly from year to year, depending on the characteristics of the pupils concerned. Because of generally below average attainment on entry until 2001, the school's trend in improvement in Year 2 and Year 6 tests has been below the national average. Only four pupils took national tests at the end of Year 2 last year, and there were only three pupils in Year 6, all boys. Standards in reading were in the lowest five per cent nationally. In writing they were well below average, and in mathematics they were below average. Teachers also assessed standards in science to be well below average. The school's records show that this group of pupils had well below average attainment when they started school. They also experienced instability in staffing during their time in Reception and Years 1 and 2. The inspection shows that the current group of Year 2 pupils, whose attainment on starting school was above average, are achieving above average standards in most of the subjects that were inspected in detail. The only exception is religious education, where standards are average. These standards represent satisfactory achievement on the part of this group of pupils.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	11.5 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.5 (16.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.5 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2. Standards in English, mathematics and science were well below average in the most recent national tests. In mathematics and science they were among the lowest five per cent nationally. They were well above the average achieved by other pupils who started Year 3 with similar levels of attainment, but well below similar schools in mathematics and below in science. The very small number of boys taking the tests joined the school in Year 4 with levels of attainment that were well below average for their age. Currently, standards in English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education are about average. This represents good achievement in these year groups, as the starting point of pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 was below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.0 (27.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	21.0 (29.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.0 (31.0)	28.6 (28.3)

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

3. Pupils in Years 3 – 6 achieve well for a number of reasons. They have very positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well in lessons, concentrating closely and trying hard to do their best. The quality of teaching is good, and work is well matched to pupils' capabilities and learning needs, regardless of year group. The curriculum is rich and stimulating, and places an appropriate emphasis on the development of basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance and punctuality are also good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and very good behaviour in Years 3 – 6 help them to achieve well.
- The school does too little to promote pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity.

Commentary

4. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons, and their desire to learn, are good overall. There is a particular strength in attitudes to learning in Years 3 – 6. Pupils listen attentively and are keen to contribute their own ideas in discussions. This is true of both boys and girls and of all ability groups. The few who have special educational needs join in enthusiastically, and confidently put forward their own ideas to the group or whole class.

5. Standards of behaviour are good overall, again with a particular strength in Years 3 – 6. Pupils behave well, not only in lessons, but also in the playground, in assemblies and at lunchtime. Pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2 listened very attentively, and sat very still, as Years 3 – 6 presented a lively and stimulating assembly on the life of Anne Frank. Parents report that behaviour is good, and they have no concerns about harassment or bullying. Pupils also say that behaviour is good, and they find other pupils friendly. Pupils play harmoniously together and work well together in groups. Relationships between the different age groups are very good, both at work and play. The older pupils happily take responsibility for caring for the younger ones, and this helps to settle them in well when they first start school – something that parents particularly value. There have been only two temporary exclusions from the school in recent years in response to particularly challenging behaviour.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black African

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
23	2	0
3	0	0
1	0	0

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

6. Pupils' positive attitudes to lessons, and their enthusiasm for learning, result from good teaching. Pupils report that they find their lessons interesting and fun. This is so because work is carefully matched to pupils' learning needs, offers a good balance of challenge, and the opportunity to make progress and succeed.

7. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. Pupils experience little of the traditions of cultures other than their own, although some of their work in religious education exposes them to some of the values, beliefs and customs of a range of different cultures. In discussion, even the oldest pupils show little awareness of the cultural and ethnic diversity of the wider community outside the immediate area.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Good quality teaching enables pupils to learn well, and the good curriculum is interesting and lively.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, with particular strengths in Years 3 – 6. Assessment of pupils' work is good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in Years 3 – 6 is stimulating and encourages enthusiasm for learning and hard work.
- Teaching generally meets the learning needs of all the different groups of pupils.
- Reception work is not always as well matched to children's needs as it could be.
- Good use is made of ICT to help pupils to learn and make progress in other subjects.
- Teachers keep careful and simple records of pupils' attainment and progress.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 13 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2	6	5	0	0	0

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

8. Most of the teaching seen in Years 3 – 6 was at least of good quality, and there was also some very good teaching. The analysis of pupils' work shows that this is typical of the teaching these pupils receive. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their lessons, and they try hard to do their best because the teaching is interesting and imaginative. A good science lesson was successful in promoting good learning and achievement because it offered pupils good opportunities to be practically involved in predicting and testing electrical conductors and insulators.

9. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and they do not accept second best. The small number of pupils in Years 3 – 6 means that teachers understand each pupil's capabilities and learning needs, and are able to tailor their lessons and expectations to get the most out of each individual. Pupils who find learning more difficult are well supported, often by teaching assistants, and achieve well. They are able to take a full part in lessons and gain in self-confidence. This was seen, for example, in an English lesson on the use of adjectives and adverbs to enliven a piece of writing. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had gained a greater understanding of how to make their writing more interesting. The least capable enjoyed the opportunity to present some of their work to the class. In the same lesson, the more capable were spurred on to try harder, when what they produced was not the best they could offer. The teaching in Reception and Years 1 and 2 usually meets the needs of all three age groups reasonably well. Teaching assistants and volunteer helpers are deployed appropriately so that pupils can be taught in small groups and given work that is suitable for their learning needs. However, at times the most able pupils are not provided with enough challenge, and this leads to some inattention or lack of effort on their part. This was the case during a small number of lessons for the most capable pupils in Reception and Year 2. The school is aware of the need to provide more challenging work for the most able in Year 2, and is tackling this appropriately. For example, for some lessons these younger pupils are taught together with Years 3 – 6.

10. There have been very good improvements since the last inspection in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use the computers to support their work in science, and also in mathematics, as they produce bar charts to represent data collected concerning mini beasts and the weather. Pupils in Years 3 – 6 also use ICT to represent data collected in science lessons; they also use desktop publishing programs to create 'newspaper' articles.

11. There have been good improvements in the assessment and recording of pupils' progress and achievements in all subjects since the last inspection. Teachers keep straightforward and manageable records of what pupils know, understand and can do, and these form a suitable foundation for the planning of future work. However, better use could be made of these records to match work more closely to the needs of the most able in Reception and Year 2.

The curriculum

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good, well balanced, curriculum that is enriched by a range of opportunities that enhance pupils' learning and their personal development.
- Good use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

12. The school provides an appropriately broad curriculum that meets statutory requirements for the National Curriculum, and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Sex education is addressed as necessary through the planned curriculum or during class discussions. Similarly, issues relating to drug and alcohol abuse are dealt with sensitively and appropriately. There is an agreed policy and curriculum for the Foundation Stage. This was a key issue for action in the previous inspection.

13. All pupils have equality of access to a curriculum that enables them to achieve well in all areas of learning. Through a programme of timetabled lessons, pupils' personal, social and health education is catered for well.

14. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Clear targets are identified for them to make progress, and they are fully included in all class and school activities.

15. The headteacher and all the staff work hard to provide learning opportunities that are as interesting, as enjoyable, and as relevant to the pupils' needs as possible. A range of valuable activities, planned through the school year, further enriches pupils' learning and personal development. Linked to strands of the National Curriculum, these opportunities enable pupils to work together on projects that develop their skills and understanding even further. For example, environmental and recycling issues were addressed during an 'Eco Schools' project that examined the waste created within the school and the school grounds. Currently, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are involved with a weather project in conjunction with Powergen. Further opportunities for development are provided through class assemblies. An assembly, presented by pupils in Years 3 – 6 re-enacting the life of Anne Frank, demonstrated not only the pupils' understanding of the historical facts, but also their confidence in public speaking, and their enjoyment of working together as a group.

16. An appropriate range of extra-curricular activities is provided outside the school day. The French Club provides a very good introduction to a foreign language, and pupils also have opportunities to develop their skills either in using computers or in sports activities. During the summer term, the older pupils take part in an adventure week consisting of a range of outdoor activities, either locally or at a residential centre.

17. When appropriate, pupils make visits to local museums, exhibitions or art galleries. Occasionally, theatre groups visit the school, and the pupils benefit from a visiting music specialist. The headteacher provides a wealth of creative ideas herself in the form of stories, and through her interest in art. An example of the latter can be seen in the Millennium Plaque to which every child contributed a tile.

18. A particular strength of the curriculum is the improvement that has taken place in the use of ICT. Pupils develop their skills in the use of the computers in a range of ways, including word processing, data handling, drawing and design, the use of sound and animation, and these are suitably linked to their work in the classroom.

19. Teachers are appropriately qualified to meet the demands of the curriculum, and they are supported by a number of teaching assistants. In addition, the school benefits from the expertise provided by volunteer helpers. Accommodation in the school is adequate for most purposes, but there are limitations in the indoor space available for physical exercise. Younger pupils do not have easy access to toilet facilities in the mobile classroom. This is unsatisfactory, even though staff use this as an opportunity for pupils to familiarise themselves with the school building, and to give responsibility to older pupils when escorting Reception children. The children in Reception do not have access to a dedicated and secure outdoor play area of their own. Resources in the school are satisfactory and are used well to support teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils are provided with good support and guidance, and the views of pupils are valued.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are good.
- The school offers a caring, healthy and safe learning environment.
- The school values the views of its pupils.
- There are good induction arrangements for children starting school.
- The school is unlikely to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- There is no Internet safety policy.

Commentary

20. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection, and keeps up to date through regular training. On behalf of the governing body, a governor is responsible for overseeing child protection matters. Staff are aware of the need for vigilance in child protection, and the school does not hesitate to use the services of relevant external agencies when needed.

21. Effective health and safety procedures ensure that children enjoy a safe and pleasant learning environment. There are several qualified first-aiders in the school, and all staff are familiar with the treatment of anaphylactic shock resulting from allergies. All accidents are recorded and parents advised, particularly in the case of injuries to the head.

22. Staff are very caring and have a good knowledge of pupils and their families. Because of the good relationships staff have with their pupils, and partly through the school council, staff have an access to pupils' views, which are valued.

23. Parents appreciate the very good induction arrangements that help children to settle quickly and happily into Reception. The headteacher, in conjunction with parents, ensures that each child can attend the school's Bunny Club prior to joining Reception. The amount of time initially spent in each is varied to suit each child. The entry into full time schooling is thus gradual, according to each child's needs.

24. Following an accessibility audit, the school considers that, because of its age and layout, it will not be feasible to modify the building to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

25. The school is mindful of the need to protect children using the Internet from harmful material, and uses the local educational authority's software for this purpose. It does not however have an Internet safety policy.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's very good partnership with parents is a major contributor to pupils' successful learning. Satisfactory links with other schools, together with good links in the community, are important factors in pupils' development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is highly regarded by parents and the community.
- The information sent to parents about the school, and about their children's progress, is good.
- Parents appreciate the openness of the school.
- The arrangements for the transfer of pupils to their next stage of education are good.
- Parents' views are sought and valued.

Commentary

26. The school's effective partnership with parents has a positive influence on pupils' learning. Parents like the well ordered school, and are pleased that their children are safe and happy there. Parents take an interest in their children's work at school, and are involved with their work at home. Large numbers of parents attend school events. Many parents come into school to help in the classrooms. Parents see the school as an integral part of the local community, and the school also has strong links with the parish council. Pupils are involved in community activities. Fund raising events run by the parents' and teachers' association are well attended by parents, staff and members of the local community. Although the school has satisfactory links with other schools, parents would like to see more inter-school sporting activities.

27. At the beginning of each term the headteacher sends letters to all parents giving full details of what pupils will be learning that term in all subjects. General newsletters are also sent out each term covering a wide range of school news and events. Detailed reports on pupils' progress are sent to parents towards the end of the summer term, and an interim report is sent out at the end of the autumn term. The school brochure and the governors' annual report to parents are both well presented and meet statutory requirements.

28. Parent consultation meetings are held each term at which parents have an opportunity to discuss their children's progress with class teachers. Notes of any concerns are made at each meeting. Parents appreciate the access they are given to the headteacher and staff at other times, and are comfortable about approaching the school should they have any concerns about their children's education.

29. Parents of pupils due to leave the school are seen by the headteacher who helps to ensure that, as far as possible, the most appropriate choice of secondary school is made for each pupil. Satisfactory links with several secondary schools enable pupils to have opportunities to visit and spend some time at the school of their choice. In some cases, teachers from the secondary schools visit Bentley to meet with prospective students. The arrangements result in a smooth transfer of pupils to their next stage of education.

30. The headteacher formally seeks parents' views through detailed surveys. As a result of the surveys, changes have been made to assembly times, homework, and the keeping of homework diaries. The headteacher and staff also ascertain views informally through meetings and casual contact. Staff have very good relationships with parents and take very seriously any complaints or concerns.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and management, and the support given by other staff is satisfactory. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is committed to providing a good quality education, and she effectively leads a team of staff who share that commitment.
- The governing body has too slight an involvement in shaping the direction of the school.
- The headteacher makes effective use of good systems for checking on the quality of teaching and identifying what could be improved.

Commentary

31. The headteacher leads by example and successfully takes her staff with her. Her own teaching is of good quality, and this sets a good example for other members of staff, especially those new to the profession, for whom she has provided model lessons. She has established good, trusting and respectful relationships with teaching and support staff, and this helps to ensure the good team working that is so important in such a small school. She exhibits enthusiasm for her work. This energises both staff and pupils, and contributes to the school's positive ethos and commitment to excitement in learning.

32. Despite the headteacher's attempts to encourage more involvement, the governing body plays little real part in identifying issues for development and planning for school improvement. Governors largely ignore the headteacher's annual invitation to contribute their own ideas to the school improvement plan, preferring to leave that to her and her staff. Although a few governors

have recently begun to make regular visits to the school, and the chair of governors takes 'booster groups' on a regular basis, links with subjects and aspects of the school's work are otherwise tenuous. Governors rely too much on the headteacher for information on progress being made on school improvement plan targets, rather than finding out information first hand.

33. Although she has half time responsibility for a class, the headteacher is active in monitoring and evaluating the work of her colleagues, including teaching assistants. She has the necessary skills to carry out this function effectively, helpfully identifying and bringing to colleagues' attention, not only what works well, but what could be done better.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	158,980.00
Total expenditure	147,162.00
Expenditure per pupil	4,459.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,097.00
Balance carried forward to the next	15,211.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children at the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

At the time of the inspection there were just three full time children in Reception and a further four attending part time. Their levels of development and skill on starting school are similar to those found nationally at this age. None has been identified as having special educational needs.

At the time of the last inspection the school lacked a suitable curriculum for the children in Reception. The curriculum has been developed since then and now fully meets National Curriculum requirements.

Teaching is satisfactory, and it promotes satisfactory learning and sound achievement. Appropriate use is made of teaching assistants to support the learning of the youngest children in this mixed age class. However, at times work is not well enough matched to the children's learning needs, and this limits their progress. There are times when work is beyond the grasp of the youngest children and, at other times, the most capable are insufficiently challenged and engaged in activities.

The children who attend full time are likely to reach the goals set for them nationally in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; and in mathematical development, by the end of their year in Reception. The part time children are not yet on course to do so, although they achieve reasonably well during their time at school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children feel secure in the safe atmosphere that has been created.
- Good relationships have been established in class and in the school as a whole.
- Very good arrangements for settling the children when they start school means that they get off to a confident start.

Commentary

34. The need for the Reception children to be taught together with pupils in Years 1 and 2 is turned to considerable advantage. The older pupils enjoy looking after the youngest ones, both in class and at play and dinner times. This means that the youngest children feel safe and develop confidence in their surroundings, and in those around them. They are very soon able to find their own coats and hats and put them on ready to go out to play, managing fastenings with little or no help. They take themselves to the toilet, even though they have to walk to the main building, and manage hand washing and drying successfully. The children are able to wait their turn, sitting quietly and attentively at registration, answering their name and stating confidently their choice of a school dinner or a packed lunch.

35. The children have a good chance to get to know the school before they start Reception because of the close co-operation that exists between the school and the local pre-school group. This helps to develop their confidence in the school setting, and in those who work with them. The opportunity for the youngest children to attend on a part time basis at first is also helpful in easing them in to full time attendance. Parents are very pleased with the way that these arrangements help to smooth the transition from home to school.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children get off to a sound start, and learn the basic skills of reading and writing.
- Work is not always well enough matched to the children's different learning needs.

Commentary

36. The full time children have a secure grasp of the names of the letters of the alphabet and their sounds. They enjoy rolling a die with a different letter on each face and matching the letter to a picture of something that starts with that sound. However, the part time children find such an activity very challenging, and it is quite beyond a small number of them.

37. The full time children trace over large individual letters and copy words accurately. They add the names of parts of the body to a picture of a human figure. They show good pencil control and produce neat, well-formed, regular letters. While a small number of pupils are able to write many words independently, most are just beginning to write their own words and rely mainly on copying text that an adult has written to their dictation. The children know that text can be used to derive information, and they read simple sentences, such as, 'The fox has a long body'. Although this is an appropriate task for most of the children, being matched well to their learning needs and capabilities, it is too easy for a small number of them who prefer to take little or no part.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children receive a sound grounding in the use of numbers.
- The good ratio of adults to children helps them to make progress.

Commentary

38. The children know the numbers one to ten. Most count objects up to ten, and a few go beyond this. They reorganise jumbled numbers and put them in the correct order to ten. They understand the terms 'larger' and 'smaller', and identify the number that comes between two other numbers; for example, placing 3 between 1 and 2. The children match one to one as they lay out number cards and thread the corresponding number of beads on a thread. They put the strings of beads in order from the smallest to the largest. They are learning to do simple addition and subtraction problems involving numbers up to ten in a practical setting. For example, they set out a given number of toy cars, and count to see how many are left if they take one away or add one.

39. The good levels of support available to this mixed age class are instrumental in meeting the children's learning needs. The availability of adult support enables work to be matched to the children's particular needs. The youngest children, who attend part time, are given less advanced tasks than the full time children, and the most able are given more challenging work.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in these areas of learning was not inspected in detail, but children's work was sampled and teachers' planning and assessment records were examined.

40. The children develop their knowledge and understanding of the world as they try out a range of different recipes for making scones. They experiment with different ingredients, such as cheese, mustard and treacle, and describe these ingredients using their senses. They learn about the weather, and about the wind as a force which cannot be seen, but can be demonstrated by blowing bubbles and watching them being carried away by the wind. The children make use of ICT by representing different types of weather through pictograms. They consider what clothes they would wear in hot, cold or wet weather.

41. The children have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills and co-ordination. They skip, hop and jump around the playground, and practise landing with good balance. They develop movement sequences consisting of a number of different jumps. They have appropriate opportunities to develop their small muscle control and hand co-ordination as they cut with scissors and use glue sticks to add labels to their pictures.

42. Children have appropriate opportunities for creative development as they explore colour and shape. They learn to sketch faces, and attempt to copy the style of famous artists such as Picasso. The children have regular opportunities to sing and make music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing are above average in Year 2.
- Pupils in Year 3 – 6 achieve well.
- Pupils have many good opportunities for speaking and listening.
- Work for pupils in Year 2 is not always well enough matched to their learning needs.

Commentary

43. Pupils currently in Year 2 started school with generally above average attainment. The teaching has built soundly on their capabilities, and they have maintained a better than average performance. As a result, standards in reading and writing are better than last year's and exceed national expectations. The teaching makes good use of questioning to keep pupils involved and thinking about their work. Pupils respond enthusiastically, and develop their understanding well. For example, they used information texts to find out about the Ancient Egyptians. Almost all pupils read with accuracy and confidence. They write their answers using a well-formed script, and they spell well for their age. Many common words are spelled correctly and, when there are errors, their attempts at spelling are plausible. For example, one pupil wrote, 'I went by *trane*.' Almost all pupils make accurate use of capital letters at the start of sentences and when writing proper nouns, and use full stops correctly. The standards of reading and writing reached by nearly all Year 2 pupils are better than those usually seen at this stage in the year. The very few pupils who have difficulty with reading and writing are given less demanding work that matches their learning needs and capabilities. Occasionally, work for the most able is not challenging enough. At such times, a small number of such pupils lose interest, and they do not work as hard and achieve as much as they could. This was seen, for example, when whole class questioning at the end of a lesson was insufficiently demanding for the most able, so that they took little part.

44. The good quality teaching in Years 3 – 6 is largely responsible for pupils' good achievement, although pupils' positive attitudes and enthusiasm also make a strong contribution to their learning. These pupils started school with generally below average attainment, and they have now reached standards that broadly match those expected for their age. Most are familiar with parts of speech, such as *noun*, *adjective* and *verb*. They make appropriate use of these to convey ideas and feelings, and bring to life a piece of writing that engages the reader. Teaching makes good use of the work of established poets, such as John Betjeman, to illustrate the effective use of language. Teaching is challenging, urging pupils to try hard, and not accepting less than their best. Work is well matched to pupils' learning needs and capabilities, and all make good progress and achieve well, whatever their starting point. Pupils who find learning more difficult produce some very good work. They are able to play a full part in lessons, and are eager to present their work to the whole class. Such pupils are well supported by being taught in ability, rather than age groups, and through the appropriate deployment of teaching assistants and volunteer helpers.

45. In lessons, and in class assemblies, pupils are given plenty of good opportunities for speaking and listening. Further opportunities for pupils to use their speaking skills occur during schools assemblies and performances, when all the pupils take part. In a very good class assembly presented by pupils in Years 3 – 6, the younger pupils (and many parents) paid very close attention as the older ones told the dramatised story of Anne Frank. Pupils acted their parts with impressive confidence, and expressed themselves very clearly and effectively.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. Pupils make satisfactory use of their reading and writing skills in the other subjects, and good use of their speaking and listening skills. They write accounts of visits, such as that made to the Science Museum, and write about recycling waste in connection with the environmental project. They use ICT to word process some of their creative writing. They read non-fiction texts to research topics such as Holocaust Memorial Day, and write their own accounts of events from history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well.
- Assessment is used effectively.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 – 6 is very good.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics.
- Effective use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- Numeracy skills are developed well in other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

47. In Year 2, standards are above the national average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, the current group of Year 2 pupils having started from an above average starting point. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils at this stage made unsatisfactory progress. In the class for pupils in Years 3 - 6, standards are average overall. In the recent National Curriculum Tests for 11-year-olds, standards were well below average. This is accounted for by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group, combined with the small size of the cohort. However, as a result of very good teaching, pupils achieve well whatever their starting point, and make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when progress was only satisfactory.

48. One of the strengths in both classes is the day- to- day assessment of pupils' progress. Teachers maintain clear, straightforward, records of what pupils know and what they can do. This helps them to organise their teaching to meet the needs of individual pupils.

49. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. There are a number of strengths. Relationships with the pupils are good, and activities are provided that generally match pupils' abilities. However, at times, not all pupils are kept fully occupied during lessons, and some are kept waiting. Teaching in Years 3 – 6 is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of all the pupils, and their individual needs are met through a good range of activities. There is a clear explanation of the purposes of lessons so that pupils know what the teacher expects from them. Activities are appropriate to pupils' learning needs, and are often related closely to the pupils' own experience. Pupils clearly enjoy mathematics. Younger pupils enjoy practising their skills of working with, and finding patterns in, numbers. Older pupils respond well to the challenges given to them, and compete with each other to achieve prompt and accurate answers to problems. They talk confidently about their work and try hard to do their best.

50. The headteacher takes responsibility for leading the subject, and carries out appropriate and helpful checks on the quality of teaching and learning.

51. Information and communication technology is used well to support work in mathematics. Part of the assessment procedures involves pupils working on a program which tests their skills and understanding in mathematics. In addition, pupils enter data into the computer to produce bar charts and pie charts, which they can then interpret to draw conclusions from the results. Older pupils use spreadsheets to display and calculate information.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Mathematical skills are practised and further developed in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in science pupils take measurements of temperature or of plant growth during investigations. In design and technology, accurate measuring is required when making their designs, and opportunities for counting are numerous in both classes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work throughout the school is based on the principles of investigation, making predictions and drawing conclusions.

Commentary

53. As a result of timetabling arrangements, only one science lesson was observed during the inspection, and that was in Years 3 - 6. It is not possible to make an accurate assessment of standards in Year 2. Pupils' work indicates appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. Work is presented well, and pupils accurately record the results of their investigations. Standards throughout Years 3 – 6 are in line with national expectations, and pupils make good progress in their understanding of scientific principles and concepts. This is a similar picture to that at the time of the last inspection.

54. Pupils are provided with a range of appropriate opportunities to carry out investigations. They are encouraged to make predictions and draw conclusions from their work. These are recorded in their books and also form part of a class discussion, giving pupils some good speaking and listening practise. In Years 1 and 2 pupils have investigated the number of mini-beasts to be found in the school grounds. They have categorised these and drawn graphs to display their findings. In Years 3 – 6 pupils pose the question, 'What do we want to find out?' They then set up investigations to discover the answer. In the lesson observed, pupils were thoughtfully making predictions and drawing conclusions from the results of their investigation into electrical conductors and insulators. Older pupils are quite clear about the principles of a fair test.

55. In the one lesson observed teaching was good. Revision of previous work was carried out at the start of the lesson, and the teacher demonstrated a good understanding of the subject. Pupils were encouraged to contribute their ideas and suggestions, and they responded well. Behaviour was good, and pupils showed great interest in their work. The examination of pupils' work suggests that the teaching seen was typical of that which pupils normally receive.

56. Information and communication technology is used to support teaching and learning. For example, in the collection and display of data following investigations. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Although the part time subject co-ordinator has no time to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, the headteacher sees that this is not overlooked.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good ratio of computers to pupils.
- A good range of software supports teaching and learning.
- Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum.

Commentary

57. Standards in ICT are above average in Year 2 and average in Years 3 to 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards throughout the school were below average. Very good improvement has come about as a result of staff training, and the purchase and use of software to ensure that all aspects of ICT are covered. Despite very good improvements, there is still further work to do in Years 3 – 6, where pupils have only limited opportunities for using ICT to sense and monitor physical data, such as temperature change.

58. As a result of training and support, teachers are able to use the resources in the ICT suite with confidence. They demonstrate specific skills to pupils by using the projector, and then give individual support when it is required. Pupils work well in pairs, taking turns and generally behaving well. Pupils enjoy the lessons which they have in the ICT suite, and older pupils welcome the additional opportunities provided by the computer club to use and develop their skills more independently.

59. In the one lesson observed during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 confidently logged on and accessed the correct program for their work. They carefully controlled the mouse to select items from the drop-down menus, and entered text into text-frames, selecting the font style and size to suit the purpose. Pupils present their work in a variety of formats, using text, art and multi-media presentations.

60. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator is well qualified in ICT and has willingly taken on responsibility for the subject. She is enthusiastic to extend the use ICT, and has appropriate plans for pupils to communicate with other schools by e-mail.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. Teachers have identified a good range of cross-curricular links so that pupils' ICT skills are used in a range of contexts. For example, pupils use word processing skills in a number of subjects, including English. They develop their mathematical skills as they use the computers to draw and measure geometric figures and work out their areas. Access to the Internet enables pupils to research information to support their learning in a range of subjects. Information and communication technology is used in science to record the results of investigations, and pupils create flow diagrams to illustrate a year in the life of a whale or the life cycle of the ladybird.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported below. Work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, but owing to timetabling arrangements during the inspection period, no lessons were observed in either subject. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

62. The analysis of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils, suggest that standards are average, and this is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection. Through a series of topics, satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum is ensured. In history pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of famous people and events in the past. They reflect on how things have changed over time, and develop an understanding of how particular periods or events in the past have had an influence on the present. In geography, pupils learn about settlements and the effect of human activity on the environment. They learn to read map symbols and how to use three figure grid references.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious faiths.
- Religious education makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

Commentary

63. Standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, both in Year 2 and in Years 3 – 6. Satisfactory teaching, and pupils' positive attitudes to learning, result in satisfactory achievement. The school gives appropriate attention to the development of pupils' knowledge of some of the main world faiths, especially Christianity. Assemblies give pupils some good insights into issues such as religious tolerance, and offer good opportunities for pupils to reflect on issues such as prejudice and fairness. This was seen, for example, in a very good assembly presented by pupils in Years 3 – 6 on the subject of Anne Frank and the holocaust.

64. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, an important point was well made as pupils were asked to wash their hands before handling a range of holy books and other sacred writings of a range of religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Moral and social development is promoted well. For example, as pupils consider rules at home, at school and in the wider society. In Years 3 – 6 pupils learned to appreciate the necessity of rules and the difference between rules and customs. They considered how rules affected them at home and in school. They went on to apply their understanding as they drew up their own sets of rules to ensure good and safe playtimes.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Work was sampled in **art and design, music** and **physical education**. No report can be made on **design and technology**.

65. The school features many very attractive displays of pupils' high quality and colourful work in art and design. Pupils have painted in the style of famous artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh. A display of work on the environment is enhanced by pupils' illustrations.

66. The singing in assemblies was enthusiastic and tuneful. Pupils benefit from the work of a specialist music tutor, but it was not possible to observe this during the inspection.

67. The school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to cover all aspects of the physical education curriculum. One lesson was observed during the inspection. Throughout the year, all pupils have a swimming lesson at a local indoor pool. This enables all pupils to learn to swim by the time they leave the school. This is also a valuable social activity because all pupils are involved together. Pupils have the opportunity to become involved in sporting events with other schools, such as cross country running and athletics. The small number of pupils in the school means that there are few opportunities for pupils to take part in team games. The school makes full use of their

playing field in the village and in better weather all the pupils are taken to the field for outdoor games. The school hall is small, and older pupils have limited scope for developing their gymnastic skills to the full. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils in Years 3 – 6 used the indoor apparatus to plan and perform a sequence of movements. Although they did this well, the scope for their movements was limited by the space available. The teacher and her assistant very carefully supervised the setting-up of the apparatus, and ensured the safety of the pupils. There was an appropriate emphasis on the need for warm-up and cool-down sessions.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

68. This caring school supports pupils' personal development well. Personal, social and health education is a regular feature in both classes. Pupils have appropriate opportunities in 'circle time' to share feelings and consider issues such as fairness, rights and responsibilities. Religious education lessons and assemblies make a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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