

INSPECTION REPORT

Bishops Waltham Infant School

Bishops Waltham

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 115863

Headteacher: Ms C. Sabine

Lead inspector: Marianne Harris

Dates of inspection: 22nd to 24th March 2004

Inspection number: 255523

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 category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	197
School address:	Oak Road Bishops Waltham Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO32 1EP
Telephone number:	01489 892375
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. William Heaps
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bishops Waltham is an average size infant school located in a small town near Southampton. Pupils come from a predominantly white United Kingdom heritage and there are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. When they join the school, pupils are of average ability overall and are from average social circumstances. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion who have special educational needs is average. These needs vary, but are mainly for learning difficulties. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught in classes that contain both year groups.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23288	Marianne Harris	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, science, geography, history, religious education.
9646	Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector	
22170	John Viner	Team inspector	English, art and design, design technology, music.
33148	Linda Bristow	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education, physical education, special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bishops Waltham is a good school that provides good value for money. There has been recent rapid improvement that has resulted in standards rising over the last year. This is due to the exceptional leadership of the headteacher and the good support of the staff and governors. Teaching and learning are good overall and pupils really enjoy coming to school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership that has enabled rapid recent improvement
- Staff ensure that all pupils are included very well in lessons, although the most able pupils in Year 2 are not always challenged sufficiently in English, mathematics and science
- All pupils are well cared for and provision for their personal development is very good
- Teaching is good with some very good features and this results in all pupils achieving well
- Pupils are very keen to learn and really enjoy coming to school
- Parents are very confident that the school is now doing a good job
- Pupils are not involved in assessing their own work

There has been good improvement since the last inspection in 1998. The school has come through a time of significant turbulence in the last few years and is now rapidly improving. Although national test results have fallen since the last inspection, standards seen are similar to those reported last time, and are significantly better in Reception and Year 1. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and the school development plan is very well focussed on the main areas that need improving. The school is now well led and managed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	B	B	D	E
writing	B	B	D	E
mathematics	A	A	C	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; Similar schools are those with similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Inspectors judge pupils' achievement by looking at the progress they make over their time in school, as well as how they do in lessons. Children come into school with skills and knowledge that are average for their age. They make good progress during their time in the Reception class and most are likely to reach the expected goals for children's learning, and many are likely to exceed them. The table above shows that results in national tests have declined over recent years. This has been due mainly to the turbulence in the leadership of the school, where there have been four headteachers in as many years, and staff have been unsettled. The current headteacher is now well established and the standards of work seen during the inspection in reading, writing, mathematics and science are, overall, in line with those expected for pupils aged seven. **Pupils' overall achievement is good.** This is because all pupils are keen to learn and enjoy planning some of their own lessons. Standards in Year 1 and in the Reception classes are generally above average, and this is an indication that standards throughout the school are rising. However, standards in information and communication technology, music, art and design and design technology are above average throughout the school. Although no lessons were seen in history, geography and religious education, from looking at work and talking to pupils, it is clear that standards are in line with those expected nationally. Standards in physical education are also in line with what is expected. Assessment is satisfactory, although pupils are capable of being more involved in assessing what they have learnt.

Pupils' personal qualities are **very good**. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and, as a result, pupils are very positive about learning and behave very well. Attendance is average and pupils arrive at school on time because they are keen to come. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils get on well together and with all adults. **Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good because lessons are interesting and fun. This results in pupils being keen to learn and fully participating in lessons. Work is well matched to the needs of individual pupils, although there are some occasions when the most able pupils in Year 2 are left to work on their own. At these times they do not always have work that challenges them to think and reach higher standards. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and plan work that will interest all of the class. There are many opportunities provided for pupils to plan their own learning and in "Focused Pegs" time the pupils have the chance to plan what activity they will experience and then report back on to the rest of the class. This has a very significant impact on the pupils' personal development and their growing independence. The curriculum and provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. The school is a very bright and stimulating place to learn and displays are used very well to celebrate the work of the pupils. The school takes good care of the pupils and works very effectively with parents so that pupils achieve well. Links with the local community are good and many volunteers come in to help the pupils learn to read.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and has enabled the recent rapid improvements. Subject managers are now leading their subjects well so that weaknesses have been identified and tackled effectively. The governors are very knowledgeable about the school and support the staff well. There is a whole school commitment to including all pupils and making learning fun for everyone.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has developed very effective links with parents and they have very positive views of the work of the school. This has not always been the case and parents are very confident that the recent change in the leadership of the school has resulted in significant improvements. They feel very involved in the life of the school and are keen for their children to belong to the learning community. The pupils also have very positive views of the school. They feel that they are listened to and their views taken into account.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Consistently provide challenge for the most able pupils in Year 2 in English, mathematics and science
- Involve the pupils more in the assessment of their own work

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Despite recent test results, by the end of Year 2, pupils now reach standards that are in line with those expected in English, mathematics and science. In some practical subjects standards are above those expected. Achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests for reading and writing have been below those expected nationally, but recent improvements means that standards overall are in line with those expected
- Pupils in the Reception classes and Year 1 reach standards that are above those expected
- All pupils reach standards in information and communication technology, music, art and design and design technology that are above those expected
- Pupils achieve well overall

Commentary

1. Results in national tests have declined over recent years and can be attributed to the turbulence in the leadership of the school. Policy and practice changed many times and this resulted in a time where there was insufficient focus on raising and maintaining standards in the school. The recent rapid improvements in the school, brought about by the current headteacher, include improvements in standards and achievement throughout the school. When children join the school they are of average ability, although some have special educational needs and some are of higher ability. They make good progress during their time in the Reception class, so that, by the time they enter Year 1, most of the children are likely to have reached the expected goals for children's learning and a significant proportion are likely to exceed them. All children make very good progress in their personal development so that they are keen and eager to learn and settle to work quickly.

2. The table below shows the average points scores attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 in the 2003 national tests. These standards were not reflected in the work seen in the school. Much emphasis has been put on raising achievement and this has been successful. In reading and writing pupils now reach standards that are in line with those expected by the end of Year 2, whereas in Year 1 standards are above average. It is the same picture in mathematics where the weaknesses have been identified and tackled effectively. Pupils in Year 1 reach above average standards, whereas the recent improvements have yet to have a significant impact on standards at the end of Year 2. Teacher assessments in science show that pupils reach standards that are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2. These standards were reflected in the work seen during the inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (17.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.1 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, pupils achieve well. Standards are above average in information and communication technology because teachers have high expectations of pupils being confident and competent enough to access relevant programs independently and use their skills in other subjects. Standards in music, art and design and design technology are above average because work is well planned and linked to other subjects so that lessons are interesting and pupils are keen to learn. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected in Year 2, but are above average in Year 1 due to recent improvements.

4. Pupils achieve well overall. Those with special educational needs are well supported in lessons so that they can fully participate in work and activities. Pupils who are of higher ability have work that is usually well matched to their ability, and the mixed-age classes means that more able Year 1 pupils can work with Year 2 pupils and can be challenged appropriately and achieve very well. However, there are times when the most able pupils in Year 2 are left to work on their own and they do not get as much done as they are capable of.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Pupils’ personal qualities are developed **very well**. The attendance rate is **satisfactory** and the pupils arrive at school on time.

Main strengths

- Pupils behave very well as a result of the school’s high expectations of conduct and manners
- Relationships between pupils and adults and with each other are very good
- Pupils’ personal development is very good because the school gives a high priority to nurturing it
- The school’s procedures to monitor attendance are good and are having a positive impact on pupils’ attendance

Commentary

5. The school expects high standards of courtesy and conduct from the pupils who are happy to do all they can to follow the example set by all adults. Teachers and pupils discuss rewards and class rules together and as a consequence the pupils feel that they are involved in the life of the school, and they behave very well both around the school and in lessons. This was evident in a good Year 1/2 mathematics lesson when the pupils were learning to understand and use the vocabulary of subtraction. The ‘Focused Pegs’ sessions are very popular with the pupils and have helped to motivate them to work hard as they can see an immediate reward for their efforts.

6. Relationships are very good and reinforced consistently by the way pupils’ personal skills are developed in lessons. Pupils work together very well; they share resources sensibly and are very good at tidying up at the end of lessons. All the adults in the school are kind and considerate and show respect to the pupils and this helps the pupils to develop a sense of empathy with others. For example in a very good Year 2 personal, social and health education (PSHE) lesson the pupils discussed very maturely ‘what makes a good friend’ and how to mend a broken friendship. The headteacher has very successfully created an ethos in which all pupils can grow and flourish and is a major contributory factor to pupils’ very good levels of enthusiasm, confidence and good standards of achievement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

7. Last year attendance rates were low in comparison to other schools but they have improved due to the good systems that the school has put in place. Registers are marked promptly and correctly and checked daily and parents are contacted if no reason for absence has been received. Parents are reminded in newsletters of the importance of regular attendance and the school works closely with the education welfare service to support families if necessary. Pupils usually arrive at school on time and are keen to start work. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is well planned and varied so that it meets the needs of all of the pupils. Staff take good care of the pupils, and there have been very effective links made with parents so that they can support their children's learning both in school and at home.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Marking and assessment are satisfactory. Although work is marked carefully and targets set for individuals, pupils are capable of assessing for themselves how much they have learnt.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are interesting and fun for the pupils
- Staff have high expectations of learning and behaviour, although the most able pupils in Year 2 are not always sufficiently challenged
- All pupils are included very well are keen to learn and consequently achieve well
- Pupils are capable of assessing what they have learnt in lessons, but are not always allowed to do so

Commentary

8. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. There have been recent improvements in the quality of teaching due to the diligent monitoring by the headteacher and weaknesses have been identified and tackled effectively. Teachers plan interesting lessons that catch the attention of the pupils. This was very evident in an excellent literacy lesson where the pupils' past knowledge of Red Riding Hood was put to very good use, and pupils were keen to learn and complete their writing tasks. In other lessons, especially in 'Focused Peg' sessions where pupils plan their own activities, work is relevant and pupils concentrate for long periods of time.

9. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported so that they can be fully included in all activities. Teaching assistants know the pupils well and make sure that they can complete the work set for them. Staff have high expectations of behaviour and consequently pupils behave very well and get on with each other. They are keen to work in small groups and persevere at tasks. This was seen during a particularly effective art lesson when pupils worked together co-operatively to produce some very good weaving. Pupils who are of higher ability usually have work that is challenging for them. This is especially true for pupils in Year 1, who work with older, Year 2 pupils and experience work that stimulates and enthralls them. However, there are times when the most able in Year 2 are left to their own devices and do not get as much done as they are capable of. These instances are few, but in an English lesson it was obvious that the most able were left to get on with their work with little to challenge them. Nevertheless, these pupils got on with their work and finished the task.

10. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well to maintain the interest of the pupils. In an effective mathematics lesson cards were used to help pupils understand about subtraction and this helped them to understand the purpose of the lesson.

11. Work in books is generally marked well, and individual targets are set in English and mathematics so that pupils know what they have to do in order to reach higher standards. However, the whole assessment process does not involve the pupils and many are capable of assessing how well they are doing and how much they have learnt. There are too few opportunities for pupils to show how much they have understood in lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	5	17	4	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and meets the needs of all pupils. Accommodation and resources are **very good**.

Main strengths

- Provision is well planned
- Pupils' progress is monitored well
- Learning opportunities are enriched well by visits and visitors into school

Commentary

12. The curriculum is good. It is planned to meet statutory requirements and is supported by a wide range of additional activities and by very good accommodation and resources. Displays are used very well to celebrate the work of the pupils and helps to provide a stimulating learning environment. The curriculum is broad and balanced and promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. It is well matched to meet the wide range of needs although tasks are not always sufficiently challenging for the most able Year 2 pupils.

13. The school has good procedures in place for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs are closely monitored and targets are set and reviewed termly using individual education plans. Parents and pupils are involved in these but other pupils are not always sufficiently involved in assessing their work.

14. Leadership and management of subjects are good and have a positive effect on the development of the curriculum. With support from the head teacher, managers write comprehensive schemes of work that incorporate cross-curricular links. Teachers are well supported by subject leaders. Clear policies are in place and provide guidance for teachers' planning. The school has built up a comprehensive range of resources, particularly in the past eighteen months. The head teacher takes an active role in teaching, is very supportive to staff and professional development is a high priority in the school.

15. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of interest and by visitors from the local community, for example police, fire brigade, local vet and vicar. Teachers also offer a range of clubs during the school day, for example, music and chess. All these activities provide a strong contribution to the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures to ensure the care, guidance and welfare of the pupils are **effective**. Achievement and personal development are monitored **well**. The involvement of the pupils in the school's work and development is **good**.

Main strengths

- The pupils are well cared for and they are happy in school
- Pupils' feel valued because their views are actively sought and acted on
- The induction procedures for the youngest children are very good and ensure that they settle quickly and happily

Commentary

16. Parents are correct in their judgement that the school takes good care of their children. There is good provision for first aid and concerns of the previous report about health and safety and training for child protection have been dealt with. Teachers know the pupils in their classes very well, which enables them to pick up any concerns that the pupils might have very quickly. Ninety-seven per cent of the pupils who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that there are adults they would go to if they had worries. Pupils interviewed during the inspection showed that they are happy in school and are enthusiastic about all that the school has to offer.

17. The pupils feel able to express their opinions, whether positive or negative, because the headteacher is a very good listener and always responds to their comments. The school council meets each week and pupils are encouraged to bring discussion points from their class to the headteacher. For example they talk to her about the playground and how to improve it and the use of the library. All pupils have the opportunity to be a councillor and this is very good provision for their personal development.

18. The procedures for settling children into school are very good. Great care is taken to provide many opportunities for the children to visit the school and become accustomed to the staff and surroundings. This results in children who happily come to school and who settle quickly into school routines.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **very good** partnership with the parents. Links with the community are **effective** and links with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths

- The parents have very positive views of the school and are very supportive of the headteacher
- Parents are very well informed about what is happening in school and the progress their children are making
- Good community links successfully promote pupils' personal development

Commentary

19. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting were overwhelmingly positive and reflect parents' confidence in the leadership of the headteacher. Parents show their support by attending meetings in high numbers, helping in classrooms and through fund raising for the parent teacher association (BWISPTA). The headteacher canvasses the views of the parents via questionnaires and responds to their suggestions and opinions in newsletters and at the governors' annual report to parents.

20. Parents are invited to termly parent/teacher consultations and each half term are welcome to look at the topic work their children have been doing. The annual reports are very thorough; they provide very good information about how well children are achieving and the level they are working at and targets for improvement that have been agreed with the parents. The newsletters are informative and written in a friendly style and parents are sent guidance on helping their children to read at home. The support that many pupils receive from their parents is having a positive impact on standards of reading in the school.

21. The school has a partnership with St. Peter's Church, the vicar is a regular visitor, and the children visit the church. Senior citizens are entertained at Christmas, pupils contributed to the parish council's time capsule and they walked from St. Peter's Church to the Palace during the Bishop's Waltham Festival. The fire brigade and community police liaison officer visit the school and help to deliver the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme. All of these good opportunities enhance pupils' social and personal development well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** overall, with outstanding leadership by the headteacher.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent and visionary leadership of the headteacher
- Very good strategic planning, reflecting the school's aims
- Governors know the school well and contribute to its strategic direction
- The school's good self-evaluation is leading to rapid improvement
- Effective system of performance management is developing the effectiveness of all staff
- Very good financial management helps the school achieve its priorities

Commentary

22. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational and has led to recent rapid improvement. Her clear vision for the school has provided all staff with a sense of purpose and direction and is helping the development of an effective staff team. She has a full understanding of what needs to be done to move the school forward and this is communicated to staff, governors and parents so that they have raised aspirations and are proud of the school. One parent remarked that it was like taking over a team in the third division and raising it to the premier league. The key staff work well with the headteacher to ensure that strategic planning is translated into positive action, focused on the needs of the pupils and on raising standards.

23. The governors know their school well and, through effective monitoring systems and committee structures, support the headteacher and share her vision. The governing body fulfils its duties very effectively and plays an active role in shaping the school's strategic direction. Governors analyse the information provided for them by the headteacher and key staff and are not afraid to challenge decisions to ensure that they lead to the best value.

24. The school has evaluated its strengths and weaknesses very well and taken steps to ensure that areas for development are addressed through the comprehensive School Management Plan. A well-managed system for assessing the performance of staff has led to increased confidence in subject leadership, which is improving the quality of the monitoring of teaching and learning so that standards continue to be raised across the curriculum. The overall leadership of all subjects is good as coordinators, including the headteacher, work together well as a team, supporting each other, sharing resources and ideas.

25. The school has good systems for the support and mentoring of newly qualified teachers so that they are quickly able to feel a part of the team and begin to contribute to the work of the school.

26. The school's good financial management ensures that money is suitably targeted to raising standards, for example in the provision of writing tables for all classes and in the high quality resources that are available in all subjects. Finances are used creatively in the interests of value for money as, for example, when subsidising medical treatment led to a teacher's rapid return to work and saved the cost of supply cover.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	510,224
Total expenditure	504,132
Expenditure per pupil	2,572

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	10,115
Balance carried forward to the next	16,208

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Reception year is **good**. When they join the school most children have had some pre-school experience and the skills and knowledge they bring with them is wide ranging. Overall, they are of average ability, although some are very able, and some have severe special needs. All staff work well together as a team so that the needs of all of the children are met. Planning is good and ensures that all of the children experience the same opportunities, whatever class they are in. Assessments are carried out regularly and used to plan work that meets the needs of the children. The children make good progress during their time in the Reception class and all achieve well, so that, by the time they enter Year 1, most are likely to reach the expected goals for children's learning, and some are likely to exceed them. Provision for children in the Reception classes is well managed and there has been good recent improvement in provision.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths

- Plan/Do/Review sessions are very effective
- Good induction procedures ensure children settle into school quickly and happily
- Children behave very well and enjoy learning

Commentary

27. Children make very good progress in this area of learning because teachers have very high expectations of children settling quickly into school and happily following established routines. The procedures for settling children into school are very good and the happy and stimulating environment that has been created helps children to settle and be keen to learn. Children behave very well and are enthusiastic. They play and work together well and share resources appropriately. They concentrate for long periods of time on their chosen tasks, and persevere until they have finished. Children with special educational needs are identified early and effective steps taken to support them in class. Teaching assistants and other adults work very well with the children so that all children can have access to all activities. The Plan/Do/Review sessions are particularly effective. The children choose two activities from a selection organised by the teachers and they record what they plan to do using a simple sheet. At the end of the session the children report back on what they have learnt. This is very good for encouraging them to take responsibility for their work and to encourage them to talk to a large group and listen attentively.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths

- Children become confident speakers and listen attentively
- Early reading and writing skills are developed well
- Children experience a wide variety of role-play activities

Commentary

28. Children make good progress in this area of learning. Through careful planning and clear explanations teachers encourage children to learn the sounds that letters make, and then to use this knowledge in their writing. Consequently children are confident when trying to write for themselves and are willing to have a go. Most of the children write simple words and draw pictures to accompany their work. Letters are usually formed correctly and handwriting skills are taught well with teachers modelling how children should write. The children listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and speak out confidently in large group times. Early reading skills are encouraged well

and all children are confident when handling books and beginning to read. There are many role-play opportunities planned so that the children can make up their own stories and act out their experiences. This has a significant impact on their personal development as the children play together very well and share the available resources thoughtfully.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- There are many well-planned mathematical activities
- Children use a variety of mathematical language confidently
- Children enjoy learning

Commentary

29. Children enjoy the well-planned activities to develop mathematical skills. Most activities are practical so that the children can experience addition and subtraction using resources to support their learning. Children learn to move up and down a number line by physically jumping along a given number of spaces, and they make good progress. They learn a wide variety of mathematical language and use this in their play activities with sand and water. Many children know the names of simple shapes and many are beginning to understand about 3-dimensional shapes. The children sing number songs to help them with their learning and activities are fun. Consequently the children enjoy learning and achieve well.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths

- Plan/Do/Review sessions make a significant contribution to learning
- Children enjoy the activities and concentrate well

Commentary

30. Children make good progress in this area of learning and achieve well because they are very keen to learn. The Plan/Do/Review sessions make a significant contribution to this area of learning because the children choose their own activities and persevere with them. Children learn to design and make their own models, and then explain how they did it. They use the computer confidently and with increasing control, and can access a variety of relevant programs. They learn about the world around them by enjoying the adventures of Barnaby Bear, a toy bear who accompanies adults and children around this country and abroad. Through well-planned use of stories the children learn about how a seed grows and what is needed to make sure that it thrives. The children have grown their own seeds and tended them carefully.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Provision is well planned so that children can practise their skills
- Children enjoy learning

Commentary

31. There are many well-planned activities to develop children's physical skills. In one excellent lesson the teacher had assessed what the children could already do and then provided activities that would ensure they made excellent progress. Children were encouraged to use bats and balls to

develop hand/eye co-ordination and all of the class joined in enthusiastically. Children with special educational needs were very well supported so that they could make very good progress. All of the teachers plan activities that encourage children to use a variety of tools safely and with increasing skill. The outside area is well used so that children learn to ride wheeled toys and can play together in a co-operative way. Children learn to climb and balance confidently.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Children enjoy planning their own activities
- Accommodation is used well to promote this area of learning

Commentary

32. Children make good progress in this area of learning because teachers plan interesting activities. The children learn about artists such as Andrew Goldsworthy and then use some of his techniques to make their own pictures. The children themselves plan some of the activities in their Plan/Do/Review sessions. This means that they are very interested in the activities and concentrate very well. There are many opportunities for the children to experience a wide range of picture making activities, and the work is very well displayed so that all can admire the finished products. The children also have many opportunities to act out their own stories by using small equipment such as trains and farm sets. They keenly participate in role-play activities that enable them to act out their own experiences. The children sing enthusiastically and dance well during planned sessions.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Overall provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills
- Many pupils read aloud confidently and with developing fluency
- There are many good opportunities for pupils to write
- Teachers plan good lessons, which helps them to teach well
- Pupils like English and are able to work independently and cooperatively
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in the assessment of their own work
- Reading records do not show how pupils can improve

Commentary

33. At the time of the last inspection standards in English were judged to be good, with an improving trend. Contrary to expectations standards then fell significantly and, in the 2003 National Tests in reading and writing, were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Recently however, there has been rapid improvement so that standards in work seen in pupils' books indicate that Pupils in Year 1 are writing at a level higher than national expectations. Most pupils in Year 2 have not yet achieved this standard, although the work seen is better than would be indicated by last year's test results. In the Reception classes many children are already reading and writing above the nationally expected level. Standards of speaking and listening remain above national averages. Pupils achieve well in lessons and over time because of the good teaching they receive and because of the wealth of opportunities provided for them to develop their literacy skills. Pupils with special needs also achieve well because of the good help they receive. Although they do work at their level and are capable of working independently, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and therefore do not achieve as highly as they might.

34. Each day pupils in Years 1 and 2 receive a precisely targeted phonics lesson. These short sessions are a very effective way of building up their phonic skills and improving both their reading and their writing. When teachers read to their pupils they do so with great enthusiasm and pupils are encouraged to join in so that they quickly develop confidence and fluency in reading aloud. Books and stories are valued so that pupils develop a love of reading.

35. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work; they enjoy English in all its forms and, because of this and because classes are well managed, with high quality support, they learn well. The very good relationships in the school mean that pupils develop positive patterns of cooperation and independence in their work. They take pride in their learning, as with a girl who was writing –ow words, and proudly declared, "I've done shallow!"

36. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from excellent to satisfactory, and was good overall. At its best it was inspirational. Teachers plan their lessons well and the clear structures; good pace and high quality supporting materials ensure that pupils are highly motivated, enthusiastic about learning, and progressively gain new knowledge. At the time of the inspection lessons were based around well-known fairy stories. The work in literacy was linked with other subjects so that the theme of the story was woven into the work for the week and this ensured that the literacy focus was continually reinforced and learning consolidated. Teachers prepare work that meets the needs of all abilities and the skilled Teaching Assistants provide very good support for the teacher in the work that they do with the pupils. Teachers show pupils how to improve their work but they do not always give enough opportunity for pupils to assess for themselves how well they have understood the key points of a lesson.

Example of outstanding practice

An excellent lesson was based on the story of Little Red Riding Hood.

The teacher started the lesson having “forgotten” what came next; the pupils, sitting on the carpet, reminded her that it was literacy; whereupon the teacher made out that she was not sure what they should do. A teaching assistant, bringing a covered basket that had been “left in the office by a little girl who ran off”, interrupted her. The only clue to the girl’s identity was that she was dressed in red. Immediately the pupils gasped “Little Red Riding Hood” and watched, enthralled, as the teacher drew out of the basket various items and began to tell them the story. Every child was completely focused on the teacher, spellbound as she wove her magic and, when she started to say “are you ready to write...” a number interrupted with “Yes!” and all were bursting to do the work that had been set for them. The teacher had taken great care in selecting suitably challenging tasks for each ability group and had prepared excellent resources to support the work so that not a moment was lost and pupils’ enthusiasm was captured and harnessed to produce exceptional work.

37. Teachers know their pupils well and so their assessments of their pupils’ progress are thorough. Good use is made of individual targets so that pupils know which aspects of their writing need close attention. Reading is regularly assessed and a record of the books that pupils read is shared with the home so that both teacher and parents can make comments. Although a positive feature, these records are not sufficiently diagnostic to make a very effective contribution to raising reading standards.

38. The strategic management of English is good and has resulted in the good overall provision. The subject is well resourced, especially in terms of the artefacts that are used to support teaching. The school has a sizeable library, managed by volunteer parents, and this helps to maintain the high profile of reading. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection, most of it recent.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. There are many opportunities for pupils to write; not only in English lessons but also in many other subjects as, for example, in their letters to the Lord Mayor of London about the Great Fire or in their comments about Pepys’ Diary. In all lessons pupils have numerous opportunities to talk to their teacher, a teaching assistant or to each other and these occasions help them to become confident, articulate speakers.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning is good
- Planning, lesson preparation and organisation of resources is good
- All pupils are effectively included in all aspects of lessons
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged
- Pupils are not always fully involved in assessing their work

Commentary

40. Work seen in mathematics in Year 2 indicates that pupils are working at levels in line with national expectations. In the Reception classes and Year 1 evidence shows that pupils are working above national expectations. Most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are able to add and subtract numbers at least to 10, with many pupils able to work with numbers to 100 and a few to 1000. They are able work out sums in their heads and explain their answers accurately. While the majority of work seen in pupils’ books relates to the numeracy strand of the National curriculum, there is evidence around classroom of experiences in other areas, for example, measuring, time and shape.

41. Teaching is good with some examples of very good practice and evidence of good subject knowledge. Pupils achieve well in lessons because teachers plan lessons carefully and choose appropriate activities and resources in order to support and effectively motivate the pupils. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations and use effective questioning to check understanding and enable pupils to progress. They have high expectations of work and behaviour although the most able pupils in Year 2 are not always sufficiently challenged. Pupils have a positive attitude to their work and are able to work individually and collaboratively. Behaviour is well managed and good relationships effectively add to the way pupils learn. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils with special educational needs well, they plan collaboratively for these pupils and work well together to support pupils and promote independent learning.

42. The curriculum is well planned to help teachers provide experiences that are appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils. It ensures that pupils' learning effectively builds upon what they already know, understand and can do. Assessment is ongoing and the procedures allow teachers to monitor progress. However, pupils are not always fully involved in assessing their own learning, and they are capable of doing so.

43. Mathematics is well led and managed and this has resulted in good overall provision. The advice that the subject leader provides, and other training that is available, is helping teachers to improve the strategies, activities and resources used to support pupils learning and so raise achievement. Mathematics is well resourced throughout the school.

44. Despite the fall in results since 1999, evidence seen has demonstrated that there has been a marked and rapid improvement in mathematics recently. This is due, in part, to the increased stability in the school and supportive leadership from the headteacher and subject leader. Consequently, there has been good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. There are many opportunities for the pupils to use their skills in subjects other than mathematics. In science they record their finding using a variety of tables and measure accurately the length that boats travel when blown across water. In design technology they measure accurately and this impacts positively on the standards achieved.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy learning and experience a wide range of activities
- Work is linked very effectively to other subjects
- Teaching and learning are good, although the most able are occasionally left to work on their own
- The subject is well led and managed

Commentary

46. There are no national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 as teachers assess the standards that the pupils reach. These assessments show that pupils reached standards in 2003 that were in line with those expected nationally. These standards are reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Pupils become confident scientists because teachers plan very interesting work and investigations so that pupils enjoy learning. They become absorbed in their activities and record their work in a scientific way, explaining clearly what they are doing. Overall pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class so that they can participate in lessons, and pupils who are more able have work that is challenging, although sometimes the most able are left to get on with their work on their own and do not always get as much done as they could.

47. Teaching and learning are good because teachers have high expectation of what their pupils will achieve. Explanations are clear and the learning intention is shared with the pupils. This means

that pupils know what they are going to learn and they are keen to participate in the activities. Lessons are well planned and are linked very effectively with other subjects. So, for example, the science topic on healthy eating is linked with geography lessons and pupils learn where a variety of different foods come from. Work on light and dark was also linked well with other subjects and owls visited the school so that the pupils could look carefully at them and draw careful observational pictures.

48. Science is well led and managed in the school. Weaknesses have been identified and tackled effectively. This has resulted in pupils having more opportunities to investigate scientific ideas and record their findings in a variety of ways. This recent improvement in provision has meant that standards have risen over the last year.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths

- Teaching is good
- Pupils have access to and are able to use computers efficiently
- ICT is used effectively across the curriculum

Commentary

49. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and pupils reach standards that are generally above those expected nationally. All the pupils observed, including those with special educational needs, have sufficient skills to be independent users in some aspects of the subject. Pupils were able to perform a range of activities including using a mouse or keyboard appropriately, saving and printing their work, accessing programs from CDs and the hard drive, accessing the internet and sending and receiving e-mails. They are able to draw pictures and add text to these. Higher attaining pupils are able to use a search engine successfully for research.

50. The good teaching in ICT ensures pupils are well motivated; enjoy using the computers and handle equipment appropriately. Pupils are able to produce high quality work of which they are justly proud. Teachers' confident subject knowledge helps pupils use a wide vocabulary of technical terms when talking about what they are doing. They are eager to explain and demonstrate what they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported have access to programs which support and reinforce their learning across the curriculum for example in English and mathematics.

51. Leadership of ICT is good and includes effective planning and support for teachers and dissemination of information. Resources in ICT are very good and are well managed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. ICT is used effectively across the curriculum. High quality displays of word-processed work, pictures using 'Colour Magic', photographs and signs are exhibited in classrooms and around the school. Programs support phonic work, reading and mathematics as well as other curriculum areas for example history and geography.

HUMANITIES

53. There were no **history, geography or religious education** lessons seen during the inspection, and therefore no judgement has been made on provision. By looking at work and talking to pupils it is evident that pupils reach the standards that are expected, in all three subjects, by the time they are seven years old. In history, pupils learn about the gunpowder plot and are very interested in the causes of the Great Fire of London. In geography, work has been effectively linked to the science topic of healthy foods, so that pupils learn where different kinds of food come from. In religious education, pupils learn about stories from the Christian tradition, as well as how some festivals are celebrated.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

54. Only one lesson was seen in **art and design**, and none in **design technology**. As a result it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. However, pupils' work was examined and there were discussions with them about what they had learned.

55. From pupils' work, which is very well displayed around the school, standards in art are above national expectations. Pupils take pride in their work, which they produce from a wide range of materials and media, in two and three dimensions. They have a good understanding of how to select and use materials; they know about colour mixing and experience a range of techniques, such as creating texture and shadow. They study the work of a range of artists and have good opportunities to use these works as models for their own. They can use a software package to create artwork on a computer. Pupils are given responsibility for setting up their own painting station. A very good range of different brushes is provided so that they can select those that suit their purpose. Teachers have high expectations of pupils working neatly, cleaning and putting away the equipment that they have used.

56. Similarly, in design technology, pupils know how to select their materials and they use simple tools with confidence. Good use is made of construction toys, especially as part of lessons with a broader topic. Pupils make models of considerable size and complexity, as seen in the spiders made to support the story of Anansi and the simple boats with detailed figures designed to illustrate how the people of London fled to the river during the Great Fire. Pupils have many opportunities to design and make 3-dimensional models and these good opportunities play a part in developing their manipulative skills so that work of a high standard is produced.

57. The high standard of the work observed indicates that good progress has been made in art and design technology since the last inspection.

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils sing tunefully and confidently
- The school has a good range of musical instruments
- There is good extra-curricular provision
- Pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to develop their skills of music making

Commentary

58. Standards in music are above national expectations. Pupils sing in tune, with expression and often with unusual confidence. They enjoy music, performing songs enthusiastically from memory. They understand how to vary pitch and volume and are able to sustain and vary a steady beat. They are able to follow simple symbols to represent different rhythms and can play them on untuned and tuned percussion instruments or beat out the rhythm with body movements. Some pupils are confident enough to sing solo in front of others.

59. In the lessons seen teaching was good overall. Teachers planned their lessons thoroughly and took time to prepare the equipment in advance so that teaching time was not lost. Lessons were well structured so that pupils developed their skills progressively and so achieved well. Teachers sometimes lacked the musical expertise to capitalise on pupils' achievements to develop their skills of composition and performance.

60. Music is well supported by extra-curricular activities. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils attended two voluntary lunchtime clubs focussing on music making and drumming.

61. The subject is well managed and the school has a fine range of good quality musical instruments. At the time of the last inspection music was regarded as a strength of the school and these high standards have been maintained.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths

- Teaching is good and all pupils achieve well
- Lessons are well planned and there is good emphasis on health and safety
- Behaviour is good and pupils are included very well
- Facilities both in and outside school are good

Commentary

62. Improvement since the last inspection in physical education has been good. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is in line with national expectations for pupils of a similar age, while in Year 1 it is above national expectations. The curriculum covers a wide range of activities including gymnastics, developing skills for individual and team games, dance and swimming. Pupils are able to perform a sequence of three movements on the floor and transfer these movements to large apparatus successfully. They are able to control a ball when throwing and catching and work collaboratively in pairs and teams. Pupils are able to follow instructions sensibly from teachers and from a tape recording when used for a dance lesson. In the latter, they learned new dance steps, were able to combine these steps into a routine, extend this by using their own ideas and perform their routine to peers confidently. Pupils are able to get out, use and put away the large equipment efficiently with an awareness of general and personal safety.

63. Overall, teaching in physical education is good. Behaviour is good. Pupils have a positive attitude to physical education and enjoy the lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants who are vigilant and know when to allow pupils to take risks safely. Teachers and teaching assistants use praise effectively and seek the views of pupils throughout lessons, encouraging them to try out new ideas. Pupils are happy and confident to demonstrate what they have learned. Teachers use effective warm up and cool down activities to begin and end lessons.

64. There is an emphasis on health and safety during the lessons. Staff make sure long hair is tied back and earrings are removed or covered. They are vigilant when pupils are getting out, using and putting away large apparatus and ensure that mats and benches are carried correctly and that wall bars, ropes and ladders are secure. The use of photographs around the hall is effective in ensuring that pupils know procedures. Resources are good and there is adequate space both in and outside the school.

65. Physical education is well led and managed. Staff are kept informed of the latest local and national initiatives through attendance on courses and through dissemination and discussion.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

66. There was one PSHE lessons seen during the inspection and therefore no provision judgement can be made. This area of learning is taught mainly through Circle Time, when pupils discuss issues that are worrying them and talk about concerns. These are then taken to the newly developed School Council and pupils are confident that their views are listened to and acted upon. This results in pupils taking an active part in the life of the school and in them making very good relationships with adults and other pupils in the school. In the one lessons seen the teacher used effective open questions that encouraged the pupils to think about what makes a good friend and then discuss their ideas in a mature way.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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