

INSPECTION REPORT

CHARLESTOWN PRIMARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Blackley, Manchester

LEA area: Manchester

Unique reference number: 105405

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Starkey

Lead inspector: Mr John Atkinson

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 255758

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	340
School address:	Pilkington Road Blackley Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M9 7BX
Telephone number:	0161 7403529
Fax number:	0161 7956151
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Power
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Charlestown Primary is a county primary school situated on the edge of a large council estate in the Blackley district of North Manchester. There are 340 pupils in the school, including 49 full time and two part time children in the nursery. The school is a designated 'barrier free' school and admits pupils with physical disabilities. The school serves a socially and economically deprived area of Manchester. 53 per cent of pupils are in receipt of free school meals and clothing grants and this is well above the national average. There is a high incidence of pupil mobility that has an adverse effect on the standards of attainment that pupils achieve. Attainment on entry is well below the expected level. There are 66 pupils on the special educational needs register and a higher percentage of pupils than the national average have statements of special educational needs. Consequently there is a number of staff additional to the teaching staff to support the pupils' learning, particularly those pupils with physical disabilities and those with special educational needs. Recently five pupils for whom English is not their first language have joined the school.

The school is part of an Education Action Zone, the Excellence in Cities programme and the Behaviour Improvement programme. In 2003 the school received the silver award for Healthy Schools.

Over the past three years there have been significant staffing difficulties resulting in the school working with an acting headteacher. This situation was further compounded with the long-term absence of a number of staff. The acting headteacher was appointed as permanent headteacher in January 2004 but there is no permanent deputy headteacher. However the current staffing situation is stable.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18819	Mr John Atkinson	Lead inspector	English
			Religious education
			Special educational needs
			English as an additional language
1234	Mrs Tina Bradley	Lay inspector	
22881	Mr George Halliday	Team inspector	Mathematics
			History
			Geography
			Physical education
24031	Mrs Iris Idle	Team inspector	Design and technology
			Art and design
			Music
			Foundation Stage
30834	Mrs Ann Lowson	Team Inspector	Science
			Information and communication technology

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse Education (UK) Limited
 14 Enterprise House
 Kingsway
 Team Valley
 Gateshead
 Tyne & Wear
 NE11 0SR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	15
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Charlestown Primary School is a good school and gives good value for money. After a period of very difficult staffing problems, the very good leadership of the headteacher has established a climate where pupils are well cared for, behaviour is very good and pupils' achievements are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the headteacher.
- The quality of teaching is good and the use of teaching assistants is very good.
- The school fosters very positive attitudes amongst pupils whose behaviour is very good.
- Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The successful implementation of a 'barrier free' school resulting in the very good inclusion of all pupils with physical disabilities.
- The very good provision for and achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- The lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- The unsatisfactory attendance.
- The inconsistent presentation of work and handwriting, in particular.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now judged to be good. Assessment procedures are now good and the information is being used well by most teachers. The provision in information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and standards are above the national expectation in junior classes. The provision for religious education has much improved as a result of the overall better procedures for planning. The achievements of pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with physical disabilities, are very good. The governance of the school is now good and all statutory requirements are met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Children in the reception reach standards that match those expected for children of their age in their mathematical development, physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in their language, creative development and personal, social and emotional development are below those expected. However this indicates that children make good progress and achieve well.

In the 2003 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2, pupils achieved well above average standards in writing and above average standards in reading when compared to schools in similar circumstances. In the 2003 tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, results were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science when compared to similar schools. Current pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well in reading and writing and reach standards that are in line with the national expectation even though there are a large number of pupils with special educational needs. In mathematics pupils are attaining standards in Year 2 that are below the national average but in Year 6 are attaining standards that are in line with the national average and this represents good achievement.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they have very positive attitudes and work hard in lessons. Attendance is unsatisfactory and affects the achievement of a group of pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. Planning is good and procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are good. This enables teachers to plan work that matches most pupils' needs closely. In some classes though, and particularly in Years 1 and 2, this is not done well enough to give higher attaining pupils a good challenge. Consequently they do not achieve as well as they could. A strength of teaching which pervades the school is the consideration and support given by teachers and support staff to pupils who have special educational needs. Support staff play a very significant role, keeping them well focused and boosting their confidence.

The curriculum is good. A good range of creative, sporting and other activities enriches it. The guidance and support for pupils is very good, the care is good and the ethos of the school is very inclusive, ensuring that every child is valued and included in the life of the school. The additional provision before and after school is very effective in motivating and supporting pupils in their attitudes to learning. The school has good links with parents and very good links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school is good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is establishing a stable and highly committed staff team. Her vision is clear and she has the respect, support and trust of the pupils' parents and staff. She has a commitment to raising the standards of achievement and under her leadership the morale of the staff has improved. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provide a good level of support and challenge to the school. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The governors and headteacher are successful in attracting additional resources to the school and this has helped to improve the overall accommodation and resources.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very mixed views of the school. They have concerns about the disrupted education that some children have received due to staff absences, change of teachers, extensive use of supply teachers and the quality of some teaching. They appreciate the extra opportunities that their children are given and are very pleased with the high expectations of behaviour and the support given to children with special educational needs. Pupils like going to school and speak enthusiastically and positively about what they learn and the help they are given by their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide more challenge for higher attaining pupils to raise their standards of attainment.
- Ensure that handwriting and the presentation of work is of a consistently high standard.
- Tackle the unsatisfactory levels of attendance.
- Appoint a permanent senior management team.
- Improve the leadership of the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national average, and for the past four years pupils' achievements have been above average. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make good progress. When compared to similar schools standards are above what is expected and the achievement of pupils is good. Considering the well low level of skills that children have when they start school, the achievement of the pupils is one of the school's strengths.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of reception pupils achieve well, although the standards they reach are below those expected.
- By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve well, particularly in reading and writing.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Junior pupils attain above average standards in ICT and art and design.

Commentary

1 Overall standards are improving in the school. Standards in infant classes show consistent improvement over the past four years whilst in junior classes standards have been variable. This is because of the staffing problems in junior classes and a high degree of pupil mobility. Currently the staffing in junior classes is very stable and therefore pupils are achieving what they are capable of. The headteacher is leading the drive for higher standards and this is a priority for the school.

2 Children start school with skills and knowledge that are well below what is expected for their age. They make good progress in the nursery and reception classes. As a result, standards at the end of the reception match those expected for children of their age in mathematical development, physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in their language and literacy, creative development and personal, social and emotional development are below those expected.

3 Year 2 tests show that standards in writing are rising and the trend in the school's national curriculum points was above the national trend. There has been particularly good improvement in reading and writing over the past four years and as pupils start school well below expectations then this represents good achievement.

4 Results in the Year 6 national tests have been variable in the past four years, particularly in mathematics and the absence of the mathematics co-ordinator for an extended period of time was partly responsible for the decline, as standards were not being monitored closely enough. However there was a considerable improvement in 2003 in English and science results. As a result, the trend in the school's national curriculum points for all core subjects was below the national trend. However a large number of pupils joined the school in the juniors and in 2003 twenty five per cent of Year 6 pupils were new to the school and a number of them had special educational needs. The high percentage of pupil mobility and pupils with special educational needs explains why in 2003 pupils did not do as well as their Year 2 tests suggested that they might.

5 Currently English standards are improving because of the emphasis that the school gives to literacy and the very structured approach it takes to the teaching of writing. Teachers encourage pupils to express their opinions and discuss different views and this leads to pupils being more confident speakers and listeners. Reading is a high priority. Pupils are listened to on a regular basis and there are good links between home and school. This has a very good impact on achievement in infant classes. They are assessed carefully and given appropriate books that

enable them to improve their standard of reading. Pupils are attaining standards that are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and this represents good achievement.

6 Teachers follow the National Numeracy Strategy closely so pupils get a good balance of learning in the different aspects of mathematics. Good assessment and tracking procedures give teachers a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. As a result, teachers place a strong emphasis in lessons on developing pupils' skills in the identified areas of weakness such as subtraction, fractions and solving problems and this helps to raise standards. Pupils are attaining standards in Year 2 that are below the national average but in Year 6 are attaining standards that in line with the national average and this represents good achievement.

7 In science, teachers have good subject knowledge and as a result of this, lessons are well planned and are made interesting to all pupils. Pupils' enjoy their science lessons and because they are taught basic science skills well, they reach standards in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Most, even the youngest, have a good grasp of how to plan an investigation and older pupils are able to make sound conclusions based upon their investigations.

8 In ICT, teachers have a good range of skills to teach the subject well and as a result, pupils of all abilities achieve well and have attained standards in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and above those expected by the end of Year 6. The work of the Education Action Zone has made a good contribution to this level of achievement. In art and design pupils achieve particularly well in junior classes because of the very effective teaching and use of resources.

9 In religious education, music, physical education and history, pupils' standards are satisfactory and in art and design they are good. It was not possible to make judgements on standards or achievement in other subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.8 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.2 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 37 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (25.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	26.1 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.9 (26.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour and their relationships with others are very good. There have been no exclusions. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour have a positive effect on their learning. Pupils work hard and respond enthusiastically to the high expectations set by staff.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils have very positive views about their school and have very trusting relationships with all adults.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is embedded in the day-to-day life of the school.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and remains stubbornly below the national average and the strategies being used are not having an impact.

Commentary

10 Children develop good attitudes to learning in the nursery and reception and these are very good in the rest of the school. Pupils behave very well in lessons and are enthusiastic and keen learners. In discussion with pupils, it was evident that they like their school very much. They respect their teachers and are appreciative of their teacher's efforts to provide interesting lessons for them. Pupils make good use of their time in school and work hard during the day and as a result, they achieve well.

11 Pupils' personal development is very good. Most children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. Older pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility for their own actions and most pupils respond very positively to this. The School Council is very pro-active and pupils' views are acted upon. Through the School Council and the school's Eco-Council, pupils are taught about the responsibilities of living in a community. The school's barrier free status means that pupils are taught alongside pupils with significant special educational needs. In discussion with pupils, it was very evident that relationships between all groups of pupils in the school are very positive, with many children actively seeking ways of helping others in both academic and social situations. Incidents of bullying are rare and when those occasions do arise, matters are dealt with swiftly. The school's involvement with the Excellence in Cities programme has supported the school's learning mentors. They are making a significant impact on the social behaviour of some pupils by helping them to be think before they act and practise self-control and as a consequence, there have been no exclusions.

12 Provision for pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, which reflects a similar picture to that found at the previous inspection. Opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness are embedded in the day-to-day life of the school. The quality of pupils' art -work on display is very impressive and this in itself gives even very young children the opportunity to reflect on the beauty that surrounds them. Pupils' moral and social skills develop through the consistent high expectations of all adults. Pupils know and understand what is expected of them and they respond very well to this. They are given opportunities to negotiate and discuss class rules and playground rules, so they feel that they are fair. Sanctions are few, but understood by all the pupils. The provision for cultural development is now better than found at the previous inspection, as the school actively promotes opportunities to raise pupils' awareness about the wide diversity of religious and cultural differences in society today.

Attendance

13 Attendance is unsatisfactory, although most pupils are punctual. The target set by the school for attendance at 92 per cent is too low, and will not do enough to raise attendance to the national average of at least 95 per cent. The current strategies that are in place to tackle low attendance are not having the necessary impact and are therefore failing to address this issue. This means that a minority of pupils are not benefiting from the good quality of education available and achieving what they are capable of.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3	School data	0.6
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.

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the last school year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll
White – British	304
White – any other White background	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8
Mixed – White and Black African	3
Mixed – White and Asian	1
Mixed – any other mixed background	4
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4
Black or Black British – African	4

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good, assessment procedures are good and pupils' learning is good. The curriculum is good and pupils benefit from a good range of additional activities, particularly in the arts.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in junior classes is consistently good.
- There is some unsatisfactory teaching.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- The school's use of support assistants is very good.
- An overall weakness is the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Teachers' marking and pupils' presentation of work are not good enough in some classes.

Commentary

14 Inspection findings support parents' views that teaching is good and pupils' views that teachers expect them to work hard. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and as a result pupils achieve well. Planning is effective and procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are good. This enables teachers to plan work that matches most pupils' needs closely. In some classes, though, and particularly in Years 1 and 2, this is not done well enough to give higher

attaining pupils a good challenge. Consequently they do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics in infant classes.

15 A strength of teaching which pervades the school is the consideration and support given by teachers and support staff to pupils who have special educational needs. They are fully included in all class activities whatever their difficulties, physical, behavioural or academic. Teachers' planning reflects the targets set out in their individual education plans. Support staff play a significant role, keeping them well focused and boosting their confidence. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and regularly adjusted as necessary. As a result of this support, pupils achieve very highly.

16 Teachers make very good use of support assistants to help pupils of all abilities learn well. For instance, the contribution of the technical support assistant has a clear and positive effect on pupils' achievement in ICT.

17 A hallmark of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is the insistence on very high standards of behaviour. As a result, pupils are very receptive to learning and achieve well. Good teaching methods maintain a very high level of interest and discussions move at a brisk pace and keep pupils well involved and attentive. As a result, pupils produce good amounts of written work. However, teachers do not consistently insist on pupils maintaining a high quality of presentation so their handwriting becomes untidy and their use of dates and titles is inconsistent. Teaching in infant classes is satisfactory overall, with a significant proportion of good teaching. However, in one class, teaching is sometimes unsatisfactory. This occurs when the teacher's expectations of pupils' performance are not high enough and consequently pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

18 Assessment is good because pupils' work is regularly assessed against national levels, targets are set and the progress that pupils make towards these targets is carefully monitored. Where teaching is very good teachers use these assessments to plan specific work for groups of pupils to enable them to achieve the targets set. Teachers' marking and pupils' presentation of work varies in quality between classes. There are good examples, for instance, in Years 3 and 4. However, in some classes teachers do not encourage neat presentation and do not make constructive comments which show pupils how to improve.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (15%)	32 (53%)	16 (26%)	4 (6%)	0	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum provided is good and is further enriched by a good range of out-of-school activities. The accommodation and resources are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with physical difficulties and special educational needs is very good and they are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum.
- Very good links, using ICT, are made between Year 6 and other schools and these offer extra challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- The high quality of the teaching assistants and learning mentors enables all pupils to access the curriculum very well.
- The improved accommodation and resources has had a significant impact on the quality of education provided by the school.

Commentary

19 There has been a significant improvement in the accommodation and resources for ICT since the last inspection. These are now very good and make a good impact on pupils' attainment and achievement. Links between ICT and other curriculum areas are developing well. Very good links with the local High school and Technology College have been established. These opportunities offer additional challenge for higher attaining pupils in Year 6 through a project to make their own electric powered car. Pupils have created their own school web site, as a result of the good technical support provided for the ICT curriculum. The school has benefited significantly from its work with the Education Action Zone in offering an exciting and challenging ICT curriculum.

20 The school's policy to invest funding in people rather than other resources is very successful and means that pupils have plenty of opportunities to interact with adults. This impacts well on the quality of their learning, particularly pupils with special educational needs. All teaching assistants have a very good impact on pupils' learning. Pupils with both physical and special educational needs have very good support that helps them have full access to all the curriculum opportunities that the school offers. They are skilled in adapting both the work and the language of worksheets to suit individual pupils' needs. Autistic pupils are supported well to enable them to adapt from a small group situation to be able to work in a large class. The special quiet areas around the school are used well by skilled learning mentors to help pupils with problems to take time out to reflect and calm down. Very good use is made of a very talented teaching assistant to develop pupils' art and design skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6. This results in art and design being a strength of the school, adding considerably to a very stimulating learning environment. Pupils speak very positively about art and design being one of their favourite subjects because it gives them confidence, a sense of achievement and a sense of pride.

21 Since the last inspection changes made to the internal structure of the school have also had a good impact on the curriculum. Additional walls have been built and most classrooms now have doors to close off the shared learning areas. This means that classrooms are quieter and pupils are not easily distracted, though they can still use the extended space for more practical activities.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for and receive very good guidance and support throughout the school. Very effective strategies are used to promote pupils' personal development, raise their self worth and take account of their views. Assessments are used well to improve and inform learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good arrangements to provide a healthy and safe environment for pupils.
- Teachers, support staff and learning mentors build very good relationships with pupils in their care.
- The School Council and Eco Council take full account of pupils' views.
- Pupils have very good access to well-informed support and guidance to help them improve their learning skills.

Commentary

22 There are good arrangements to promote pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has opened a very successful Breakfast Club, which is well attended by pupils, parents and younger siblings. This provides a healthy breakfast and pleasant start to the day. There are good opportunities for pupils to exercise through the different clubs and activities that are available on most days. Parents value these opportunities and believe that it helps to promote positive attitudes in their children towards school. There is a high standard of daily maintenance, resulting in the very good up-keep of the attractive and stimulating learning environment that all the staff create. The school has very good procedures for safe use of the Internet and good child protection procedures are in place.

23 Support, advice and guidance are very good because there are very good procedures in place to identify and support pupils' needs. Pastoral support is particularly good; pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with physical disabilities, are very well supported and those who speak English as an additional language have effective help. This contributes well to pupils' learning opportunities. The school has access to a wide range of support agencies and uses them well resulting in the school's undoubted success in maintaining its 'barrier free' approach to education. Teachers and adults enjoy very good relationships with all pupils, who generally feel confident to approach them with any anxieties.

24 The school councils are very effective in giving pupils opportunities to make clear their views about what they believe needs to be done about issues that affect them in their day-to-day life in school, and issues related to the school environment and how it can be best protected. Pupils have sensible views and develop mature ways of handling problems, seeking the opinions of others and ensuring that agreed decisions are kept.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the local community and very good links with other schools. Parents are satisfied with the work of the school and many are responding to the facilities available to them.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Contribution of links with parents to pupils' learning at school are very good.
- Reports to parents do not clarify whether their children's progress is good enough.

Commentary

25 The school is working hard to involve parents in their children's learning and this is proving particularly effective with parents of pupils with special educational needs and those who have access to the school's web-site. Parents are able to contribute to their children's learning with support from the school's curriculum workshops and the homework club. The school's parent-teachers' association, the breakfast club and achievement assemblies provide opportunities for parents to build friendships in school.

26 Good communications from class teachers keep parents well informed about work covered in lessons. However, reports do not tell parents about how much progress pupils are making nor do they consistently advise parents on how they might help their children to improve their learning.

27 There are very good links with the community who are well involved in the school. Links with other schools are very effective because of the work of learning mentors and the commitment of teachers. As a result there is a very smooth transfer when junior pupils make the move to secondary school which they complete with confidence.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher has provided very good leadership during a period of staffing instability and has a very clear vision for the future of the school. The governing body is good because it is very involved in the life of the school and supports it effectively. The staff work very effectively as a team to ensure that the school is inclusive for all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's effective partnerships with the Education Action Zone.
- The good procedures for evaluating the quality of its work and identifying its future developments.

- The high commitment to ensuring that the school's commitment to a 'barrier free' learning environment is achieved.
- There is no permanent senior management team.

Commentary

28 The headteacher provides very good leadership in the school. She has led the school very effectively during a period where there have been significant staffing difficulties and has currently established a stable and effective school. She has a very clear vision for the school, the drive to achieve that vision and the ability to inspire and unite the staff team in taking the school forward. As a result, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection and standards of achievement are improving. She is very influential in setting the ethos of the school and this leads to a calm, purposeful and stimulating learning environment, where pupils are expected to work hard and behave well yet feel secure and confident about the challenges that they face. This ethos is a very significant aid to raising achievement and ensuring that everyone is valued and fully included in all aspects of the work of the school.

29 The headteacher has forged very good links with the Education Action Zone (EAZ) and the Excellence in Cities (EIC) programme. This has brought many benefits to the school in developing its curriculum, in being innovative in its use of ICT and in promoting the health education of the pupils. Opportunities to work positively and successfully with parents and pupils on a wide range of initiatives have enabled the school to achieve its ambitions and create a stronger sense of direction for the school than that which existed when the headteacher took charge.

30 The governing body has improved since the last inspection and takes its monitoring role seriously by working effectively in groups and ensuring that the leadership and management of the school is accountable for its actions and strategies. Governors are very actively involved in the day-to-day work to the school by working with teachers and supporting pupils and school activities. This gives them a good insight into the views of pupils, the quality of education and how the school works effectively with parents. They are very supportive of the staff and have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and the priorities for development. This enables them to challenge the headteacher and the staff in positive and constructive ways on the progress being made on the priorities that are featured in the school development plan. Governors are vigilant in ensuring that the school is inclusive by meeting all its statutory requirements. Governors have drawn up a race equality policy and keep it under constant review.

31 The school is good in monitoring its achievements. The headteacher has established effective procedures for evaluating the work of the school. She gives staff the support to monitor specific subjects and has clear expectations of the outcomes of this role. As a result, staff manage their subjects well and undertake further professional development to ensure that the priorities of the school are successfully achieved. The headteacher has implemented performance management successfully. The targets that teachers have been set, as well as the programme of professional development, are beginning to make an impact on pupils' achievements. Governors and the headteacher are very effective in managing and monitoring the school's budget. This has led to good improvements in the school's accommodation and the resources for learning, particularly in ICT.

32 The school is very effective in implementing its commitment to a 'barrier free' learning environment. The headteacher is very effective in promoting a united team of teachers and support staff who work tirelessly and collaboratively to ensure that pupils with physical disabilities are fully included in every aspect of school life. The impact is that all pupils in the school understand the differences and similarities that exist between them but recognise that the most important thing is that they respect each other, treat each other as individuals and support each other in all that they do. The outcome is a school where pupils and staff provide excellent role models of how to establish an inclusive school where there is genuine equality of opportunity.

33 The management of the school is satisfactory because there is no permanent senior management team and this places a very heavy burden on the headteacher. There have been

staffing difficulties for a period of three years and the headteacher has had no deputy head in the current year and temporary key stage leaders. This has hampered the level of monitoring of the curriculum, teaching and curriculum initiatives at a strategic level. The management of English, mathematics and ICT is good and now that the staffing is stable they will be able to develop their roles to help raise attainment further. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is not leading the development of the curriculum and the good start in the nursery is not being built on.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	920,802.81	Balance from previous year	136,112.20
Total expenditure	954,802.88	Balance carried forward to the next	102,112.13
Expenditure per pupil	3110		

34 The high balance carried forward is being used to invest in the school's buildings, particularly the Foundation Stage, and to protect the high adult-pupil ratio that ensures that the school continues to offer a high quality of provision for pupils with physical disabilities and special educational needs.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

35 Children achieve well but overall, standards are below those expected when children enter Year 1.

36 Children enter nursery with standards that are well below those expected for their age in all the areas of learning. They are taught in two separate groups in both the nursery and in reception according to the term they enter school. The youngest children, taught by the nursery teacher, do not have the support and role models of older nursery children to help them to settle into routines and a number of the youngest children are still very hesitant and lack basic independent skills. The Foundation Stage is not yet working as a unit with a team approach to planning and provision. Support for children with physical difficulties and special educational needs including those with English as an additional language is very good and they are fully included in all activities.

37 In the nursery areas, provision is good. An exciting and stimulating learning environment is in place and the older nursery children are very settled, have mature attitudes and know the routines well. The very enthusiastic teaching they receive from a very capable teaching assistant enables them to make good and often very good progress.

38 This does not feed through to the reception classes. Many changes in the provision have taken place this year and this unsettles young children and they feel insecure. Clear routines are not in place, particularly in one of the areas, and this is not helping children to build on the good progress they make in nursery. Overall the quality of teaching is good in the nursery class and satisfactory in the reception classes.

39 Although planning covers all the areas of learning, there is not a consistent approach. Plans are over complex and not easy for a new supply-teaching assistant to understand. Good assessment is in place and on-going assessment has improved since the last inspection. However, this is not being used to match tasks to ensure that higher attaining children are being fully challenged. Good relationships are developed with parents who spend time working with their children in classrooms at the start of each day.

40 The leadership of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinators own teaching experience is limited and she does not have the expertise required to manage a team. The co-ordinator does not inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils and is not leading the development of the curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The caring, sensitive interactions between staff and children that quickly establish good relationships and enable children to feel secure.
- The high expectations by most Foundation Stage staff of good behaviour to which children respond well.
- Many children are immature for their age.

Commentary

41 Children enter the nursery with personal and social skills that are very weak. By the end of their time in nursery they are confident, show good independent skills and stay on task for an appropriate amount of time. They achieve this because they feel secure and build good relationships with adults. The learning environment is exciting and they develop positive learning

attitudes. To some extent, this continues in the reception classes but the different organisation does not help them to extend the development of these skills. Positive behaviour strategies are not always used and children feel less secure. Activities are not as clearly structured and the routines established in the nursery do not feed through into reception.

42 Children are very immature when they enter the nursery and do not have the older nursery children to support them as these children are taught in another area. They find it more difficult to adapt to classroom routines. Although many put on their own coats, they have more difficulty removing shoes when they work in the hall. The majority achieved this with support. The nursery staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and expect them to be polite. They respond well and use "please" and "thank you" regularly, for which they are rewarded with stickers. Children begin to understand the need to take turns and learn simple rules related to playing games. However, as the team as a unit does not undertake planning, some of these skills are not developed further when children move to reception. Children's achievement is good but standards are below those expected on entry to Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sound opportunities are planned for children to develop their letter sounds and early reading skills.
- Planned opportunities for children to improve their poor speaking and listening skills by working in smaller groups.
- Children are not taught handwriting skills and do not know letter names.
- Children need to be challenged further to develop their writing skills.

Commentary

43 Adults constantly talk to children and this has a positive impact on speaking and listening skills. During a writing activity with older nursery children, the interactions of a very talented teaching assistant extended children's vocabulary very well.

44 Children have good opportunities to explain their work to others and use loud voices so that all can hear. In one reception class, children have good opportunities to discuss, in small groups, how the baby owls feel when Mummy owl has gone. They use sentences well to explain "they would be sad if they were on their own" and "the babies were happy when Mummy owl returned." The older reception children find it hard to share their ideas about feelings, and very few contribute when working in a large group. This improves when they work in pairs with puppets but time is not used effectively and the teaching has limited impact on children's learning.

45 Children have sound opportunities to develop early reading skills through the teaching of letter sounds. Many recognise the initial sound of simple words but do not know the letter names. A small group of higher achieving children in the older reception class make a good attempt to sound out simple words when reading. In nursery, the majority of the older children write their first name with a good degree of accuracy. They identify the first letter of their name and have regular opportunities to practice their letter shapes. There is limited progress in writing in the reception classes. Analysis of work shows that too much time is spent underwriting and that higher attaining children are not encouraged to develop their emergent writing. A small number write simple sentences and make attempts to spell phonetically but do not have regular opportunities to further extend these skills. Handwriting skills are not taught. Children's achievement is good but standards are below those expected on entry to Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good development of mathematical language.
- Teachers' good knowledge of how young children develop mathematical concepts.
- Limited opportunities for recording in reception classes.

Commentary

46 All adults ensure that wherever possible children extend their mathematical vocabulary. The youngest children understand 'how many', 'take away' and 'what is left.' When drawing circles, they know the difference between large and small, fast and slow drawings. Most children recognise circle shapes using a mixture of 2D and 3D shapes. They successfully compare and sort objects by height, length and size. Older pupils understand positional language when they correctly place Fireman Sam in front of, behind, under and at the side of a chair. This is reinforced very well when linked to the movements children make in their physical development lesson in the hall.

47 The activities planned for children match their needs and time is given for them to consolidate their understanding. Children with physical difficulties and other special educational needs are supported very well by able teaching assistants and are fully included in all activities linked to their mathematical development. The youngest children count to five well and have good opportunities to recognise, write and order numbers to five and enjoy number songs. In reception classes, they count to ten with a good degree of accuracy and count in tens to a hundred as a group well. Although children have a good understanding of mathematical skills and language, the older children do not have sufficient opportunities to record their work in preparation for their work in the Year 1 class. The teaching of mathematics has been the focus this year. This has proved successful and children have achieved very well. They are in line with the standards expected on entry to Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Sound opportunities to develop early science investigative skills.
- Inconsistent recording of children's findings.

Commentary

48 On the limited evidence available, the youngest children in nursery develop a sound understanding of different animals, the sounds they make and how they move through their big book, 'The Lazy Ladybird.' Children in reception develop sound early investigative skills when they explore materials to find out if they are magnetic. They have sound opportunities to select their own materials from around the room as well as a focus table for sorting magnetic and non-magnetic materials. They use magnets well and use the words 'attract' and 'magnetic' correctly. The teacher uses language carefully to help children with English as an additional language to understand that some materials stick and hold on to a magnet. Children show much interest in this activity and share their findings well with others but are not guided sufficiently to make simple written recordings of their findings. This means that opportunities to develop their writing skills are missed.

49 A range of construction kits are used on a regular basis and the activity of making a home links well with their big book about 'Owl Babies.' However, children in reception do not always understand the task they have to do and this limits their achievement. Their standards are in line with those expected on entry to Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in one reception class.
- Lack of challenge and opportunities for the youngest nursery children.

Commentary

50 The youngest children in nursery have only used the hall on two occasions. They struggle to remove their shoes and socks as they have had little opportunity to practice this in school. They do not understand how to 'follow the person in front' when moving from the nursery to the hall. They form a circle with support and the majority stretch, stamp their feet and wriggle to music appropriately though some still stand and watch. They are unaccustomed to being in a large space and are easily distracted. Many of the children are very immature but made a satisfactory attempt to move like different animals they remembered in their story.

51 These children use the outdoor space well. They share large toys well with others and some are quite skilful in riding round a circular track. Good opportunities are provided for them to rock, balance, climb and ride. Many children use the climbing frame with confidence, being closely observed whilst doing this.

52 The very good teaching observed in the younger reception class extends children's physical skills well. They move well when warming up their bodies and the good demonstrations by the class teacher helps them to be 'trees blowing in the wind.'

53 The teaching assistant supports children very well and extends their understanding of different parts of the body being the trunk and the branches. The pace of this lesson is good, additional resources are displayed to stimulate the children and they quickly work in groups, some being trees while others are owls. Children clearly understand the different movements and have good opportunities to take both roles. Very good facial expressions are used as Mummy owl looks for the babies and some children are totally absorbed in their role. The pace of the lesson and the exciting presentation by the teacher holds children's attention well and impacts well on learning. Standards are in line with those expected on entry to Year 1 and achieve well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good range of materials available.
- The stimulus of the creative environment in nursery.
- The limited display of children's work in reception.

Commentary

54 Children in the nursery have plenty of opportunities to work with a wide range of materials. Their art activities link closely with their theme for the week of mini-beasts and enable children to develop their painting, cutting and sticking skills well. In a collage activity, children understand how to use materials well and work with good attention to detail in independent groups. The high expectations of the teacher and teaching assistant encourage the younger children to produce work of a good quality and their work is displayed very well. Singing is an integrated part of teaching and learning. Songs are used well as signals to move to different activities and children enjoy these, responding well. A mini-beast parade helps children to develop their creative movement as they move like a fly or a butterfly.

55 In the reception classes, children are less confident and need support to help them with their ideas and practical skills as they create collages of an owl. During the inspection, limited opportunities were seen for children to choose a painting activity as part of daily provision. Musical instruments are available but were not used appropriately and often disturb quieter activities. The environment created in the reception area does not stimulate children to explore materials and extend their own skills. There are displays of self-portraits and larger collage figures for their clothes shop but celebration of children's achievement is limited. Although children make good progress, they are still below the standards expected on entry to Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and leads to good achievement.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Writing skills are well taught.
- Leadership is good.
- Handwriting is very inconsistent and the presentation of work is not good enough.
- Marking is very good in the junior classes.
- ICT is used very well in Year 6.

Commentary

56 Teaching is good overall and by the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils are achieving standards that are broadly in line with national expectations and this represents good achievement for the pupils. Teaching in the junior classes is consistently good because there is an insistence that pupils behave well and concentrate on their work so that they can achieve their very best. Pupils are questioned skilfully, resulting in them being fully engaged and improving their speaking and listening skills. Significant strengths lie in the briskness of the lessons and the constant setting of targets so that pupils work hard, complete tasks and organise their writing effectively. In infant classes teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and pupils achieve well in groups that are well supported. However, higher attaining pupils who are working on their own could achieve better if they were expected to produce more by concentrating on the work that has been set.

57 The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teaching assistants are used very effectively, work closely with teachers and make a real difference to the quality of learning for pupils. Pupils with physical disabilities receive specific support and this results in the undoubted success of the 'barrier free' approach that the school implements whereby pupils are fully included in lessons. Teaching assistants and teachers plan individual programmes of learning for pupils and there are high expectations that pupils will achieve their very best. Because of the very high level of inclusion, pupils work in groups and therefore many pupils are benefiting from the high quality of support.

58 Pupils' writing skills are taught well. Pupils are shown how to structure their writing and write for different purposes. Pupils know how to introduce a story, develop a plot, introduce different characters and conclude it with interest. Pupils can write letters properly and know how to write persuasively to make a convincing argument. This helps pupils to have strong opinions although they have to justify them and this makes a good contribution to their personal development. This was evident when Year 6 pupils presented their views on whether 'Smoking should be banned in public'.

59 However, pupils' handwriting is not good enough and all too often the presentation of work is inconsistent and detracts from the quality of the writing. In junior classes, pupils practise their

handwriting but the standards achieved in their work does not represent what they are capable of. For example, some pupils change their handwriting styles on a number of occasions within a term and teachers do not insist that they stick to one style and practise it regularly. This was a problem in the last inspection and insufficient improvement has been made in this aspect of the subject.

60 The leadership is good because there is a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and a clear plan to tackle the issues. The system to track the progress of pupils has been well established and support has been given where there were known weaknesses.

61 The marking of pupils' written work in junior classes is very good. Teachers are very thorough in identifying errors, giving constructive advice and setting targets for pupils to improve. As a result pupils are clear about how well they are doing, what level they are reaching and what they have to do to reach the next level. This has a very positive effect in motivating pupils and encouraging them to work hard and concentrate on their weaknesses and has led to improvements in the standards that pupils achieve.

62 ICT is used very well in Year 6. Pupils have very good ICT skills and frequently use the computer to word process their draft writing and then edit and improve it. They use graphics and images to add to the good quality of presentation of their work. There is a strong sense of pride amongst the pupils in their work and the very good opportunities for pupils to work independently on the computers is making a very good contribution to the development of an independent and mature approach to writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63 Links with other subjects are good and pupils practise their writing skills in many areas of the curriculum. The regular opportunities for pupils to discuss topics and express opinions is having a significant impact in developing pupils' confidence to speak with conviction and appreciate the views of others.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Some teachers do not give higher attaining pupils a good enough challenge, especially in infant classes.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- Leadership of the subject is good.
- Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' progress and needs.

Commentary

64 Satisfactory teaching overall in infant classes enables pupils to make steady progress, though standards remain below average by the end of Year 2. Consistently good teaching in junior classes lifts pupils' attainment to average standards by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement.

65 Teachers follow the National Numeracy Strategy closely so pupils get a good balance of learning in the different aspects of mathematics. Good assessment and tracking procedures give teachers a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment. As a result, teachers place emphasis on areas of weakness such as subtraction, fractions and solving problems and this helps to raise standards. Pupils have a secure grasp of most aspects of number work, and of shape and space but their understanding of subtraction, fractions, problem solving and measures is less secure.

66 A strength in provision for mathematics is the very good support given to pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers and teaching assistants give them dedicated support with work matched closely to their needs. As a result, they achieve very highly and make very good progress. A weakness in a significant number of classes, however, is in the challenge given to higher attainers. Too often they work well within their capacity and at the same level of challenge as average pupils. Consequently they do not achieve as well as they could. This is particularly the case in Years 1 and 2, but this is also a factor elsewhere.

67 A strength in teaching is the insistence on high standards of behaviour. Very good relationships contribute to the high level of pupils' application and productivity. Most teachers have good knowledge of the subject and consequently lessons are brisk and interesting. Teachers are skilful at questioning and prompting pupils and encourage them to adopt and explain different strategies. This promotes pupils' mathematical thinking and maintains a very high level of attention and interest. The best lessons seen were in the junior classes and this reflects the quality of work seen in pupils' books. A feature that stood out in these lessons was the teachers' enthusiastic and knowledgeable approach that enabled pupils to achieve well.

68 The quality of teachers' marking and the presentation of pupils' work are variable. In some classes the quality is good, for instance, in Year 3 and Year 4. In some classes, however, teachers do not show pupils how to improve and do not consistently promote good presentation.

69 The subject leader has a good grasp of the strengths in mathematics and of areas in need of development. This is illustrated by the current emphasis on solving problems. There has been an impressive analysis of standards in recent years and this helps set priorities for development as well as to highlight the areas of success.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70 Links with other subjects are satisfactory and continue to improve, especially in ICT. This plays a significant part in raising standards.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and because of this, pupils achieve well.
- The school provides a broad and interesting science curriculum.
- While most teachers mark pupils' work well, this is inconsistent and some marking of work is perfunctory.
- Many pupils do not present their work well enough because of weak handwriting skills. This was an issue for the school to address at the previous inspection and has not yet been successfully tackled.
- The subject leader has been unable to check the quality of teaching throughout the school, which means that she has little opportunity to tackle weaknesses quickly.

Commentary

71 Teachers have good subject knowledge and as a result of this, lessons are well planned and are made interesting to all pupils. This represents an improvement on the previous inspection, when planning was a particular issue for the school to address. Pupils' enjoy their science lessons and because they are taught basic science skills well, they reach standards in line with national expectations by end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Most, even the youngest, have a good grasp of how to plan an investigation and older pupils are able to make sound conclusions based upon their investigations. Some lessons have very good features; for example, when teachers use ICT to generate and captivate pupils' attention, which leads to the pupils' producing focused and well-structured work. Those pupils who have special educational

needs are given very good support, which enables them to achieve well against the targets set for them.

72 Scrutiny of work in pupils' books and on display throughout the school gives clear evidence that the school provides a science curriculum that gives all pupils a good range of knowledge, skills and understanding. In discussion, older children are able to talk knowledgeably about animal habitats and they are well aware of wider social and political issues, which are currently endangering many species of animals. The impact of the pupils' involvement in ecological education is apparent, for example, even the youngest children are aware that leaving litter around the school environment may harm smaller animals and insects. A good feature of the science curriculum is how well teachers plan to use numeracy skills to support learning. Scrutiny of work indicates that most pupils are able to use a good range of skills to draw charts, graphs and to calculate averages. ICT resources are very good and they are used well to enliven lessons and extend knowledge and understanding.

73 The marking of work is usually good and is a good feature of teaching. Many teachers' use marking well to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and this is a clear improvement from the previous inspection. However, this good quality is not consistent throughout the school and consequently, some pupils are not given enough guidance about what their next steps to learning are.

74 A weaknesses identified in the previous inspection was that pupils did not always present their work well enough. This is still a weakness and is still an issue for the school to address. Many pupils have weak handwriting skills, which often spoils what is otherwise carefully structured work.

75 The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The subject leader has a clear view of standards throughout the school and has begun a portfolio of work, which is a useful indicator of good quality work. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection on the quality of curriculum planning and on the consistent use of assessment procedures. A weaknesses in the role is that no monitoring of teaching, through direct classroom observation, has taken place and consequently, the subject leader is not able to check for strengths and tackle weaknesses quickly enough.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and often very good and as a result, pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 with skills above national expectations.
- The subject is led and managed very well.
- There are very effective links with a local High School and this enables the school to offer extra challenges to higher attaining pupils.
- The school's accommodation and resources for the subject are very good and are having a positive effect on the achievement of all pupils.

Commentary

76 Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good range of skills to teach the subject well. The overall quality of teaching is good. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieve well and have attained standards in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and above national expectations by the end of year 6. This represents an improvement to the standards found at the previous inspection. In classrooms, smartboards are used effectively to teach new skills, or to present pupils with interesting visual resources to help them learn. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 and 6 science lesson on habitats. The teacher was able to use the smartboard to show pupils a variety of animal habitats, frequently stopping the presentation to make clear teaching points. This increased the learning opportunities for all pupils during the lesson.

77 The subject is led and managed very well. The subject leader provides dynamic and purposeful leadership and has a clear desire to improve the quality of teaching. Both teaching and learning are monitored rigorously and as a result of this, the subject leader has a very clear view of any weaknesses that need to be addressed through further training. The curriculum is constantly monitored to ensure new technology innovations are included, so pupils receive up to date learning, which prepares them very well for life in a technological society.

78 There are very effective links with the local High School, which enables the school to provide more interesting lessons for all pupils. For example, in one lesson during the inspection, a video conferencing link enabled Year 6 pupils to undertake a Lego Challenge lesson, linked to their topic in science and design and technology. The specialist skills of members of staff from the local High School and the teaching support provided by the Technical Support assistant meant that pupils were challenged and quickly learnt new control and programming skills. Through links similar to this, higher attaining pupils receive a more challenging curriculum and this has a positive effect on their overall achievement.

79 The school's accommodation and resources for ICT are very good and set to improve further. The school has its own website, that provides curriculum up-dates and study aids for both pupils and their parents. This website is frequently used by pupils who have access to the Internet at home to help with their homework. Pupils have also designed their own website, which enables them to send emails to their teachers requesting further information to complete tasks, or to keep them updated with future curriculum topics.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80 The very good range of resources available to both teaching staff and pupils ensures that ICT skills are used well to support learning in other subjects. Some lessons in mathematics, or science, are taken in the very well equipped computer suite, which enables teachers to make best use of the resources available to teach new skills. This has a positive effect on learning; for example, pupils in Year 2 are competent in constructing a graph to show their favourite fruits. Very good use is made of digital cameras in art and design lessons. Staff are skilful in their own computer use and a recent task, linked to art and design, was to make a short animated film sequence to reflect the pupils' enjoyment of the story "Goodnight Mr Tom" in literacy lessons.

HUMANITIES

81 Provision in **geography** was sampled, but not enough evidence was seen to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching or standards.

82 No lessons were seen. However work in pupils' books indicates that by the end of Year 6 standards are as expected. Good features are the opportunities pupils get to study the local environment and to use computers to help them learn. The new subject leader has made a good start to develop geography and to give it due priority inline with other subjects.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall.
- Teachers give pupils good opportunities to interpret historical evidence.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- In some classes, teachers do not mark pupils' work well enough, or insist on a satisfactory standard of presentation.

Commentary

83 A good feature of teaching is the provision of a wide range of sources for pupils to gain information and interpret evidence. As a result, pupils' skills of historical enquiry develop quickly. Pupils visit museums, role-play as archaeologists and study documents such as census returns from Victorian times. Links with other subjects give added breadth to the curriculum, for instance in art and design and technology. Teachers make good use of computers for research and recording.

84 Teaching is satisfactory on the whole in Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, though standards remain below those expected by the end of Year 2. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is good overall. Pupils achieve well and reach expected standards by the end of Year 6. In the best lesson seen, in Year 4, the teacher's knowledge and enthusiasm were infectious and inspired pupils to learn at a very fast rate. One lesson, however, in an infant class, was unsatisfactory. This was because the task was mundane and failed to spark pupils' interest. Consequently, the teacher spent greater effort on managing behaviour than ensuring that pupils were learning.

85 Weaknesses in some classes, particularly in the Years 1 and 2, are the qualities of teachers' marking, which does not show pupils how to improve, and the quality of pupils' presentation.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is good and results in a broad curriculum being taught.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of a range of different religions.
- Pupils make good links between religious beliefs and their own behaviour.
- Teaching is good and imaginative in its use of resources.

Commentary

86 The curriculum is well planned so that pupils cover a broad curriculum in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. All pupils study six major religions and because of mixed age classes there is a plan to ensure that work is different in each year. There have been considerable improvements since the last inspection when planning was judged to be totally inadequate. The coordinators monitor the planning to ensure that the syllabus is followed and pupils are now attaining satisfactory standards.

87 Pupils have a secure knowledge of different religions. Junior pupils have a good understanding of Hinduism and Buddhism. Pupils' writing shows how they are able to link religious beliefs to their own life; for example, when investigating how events influenced the life of Buddha, they wrote eloquently about a significant event that changed their own life. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 considered how the story of the Good Samaritan conveyed a clear message of how to treat others. This is reflected in their consideration of bullying and how the Christian beliefs of respect and kindness can influence their decisions.

88 Teaching is good because lessons are well planned and discussions are skilfully led. This leads to pupils talking openly about issues that affect their life and expressing opinions how to behave and treat others. The use of interesting resources develops an appreciation of different religions by the pupils. For example, in the infants, teachers pretended to have found a lost bag and asked the pupils to decide who it belonged to by looking at its contents. Inside the bag were artefacts linked to the Hindu faith and pupils were highly interested and captivated by these and this led to a deeper appreciation, respect and understanding of the religion.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

89 Provision for **physical education** was sampled, but not enough evidence was seen to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching or overall standards.

90 Four lessons were seen. Teaching in two lessons in the lower juniors was good. Pupils attained expected standards in dance and gymnastics. They achieved well because teachers had high expectations of their performance and behaviour and gave them good opportunities to improve through evaluation and controlled practice of performance. Two lessons were seen in infant classes. In one, teaching was satisfactory and pupils made satisfactory progress in developing dance skills. In another dance lesson, teaching was unsatisfactory because the teacher's expectations for pupils' performance and behaviour were too low. As a result, pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory. Standards in dance in infant classes are below those typical for pupils' ages.

91 Standards in swimming are high. Pupils have swimming lessons in Years 3 and 4 and many can already swim at least 25 metres. This represents good achievement.

92 There was too little evidence to make overall judgements about the provision for **design and technology**. During the inspection, no lessons could be seen and pupils' sketchbooks gave limited evidence of progression of skills.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision in art and design is **very good** and a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of the art and design co-ordinator is very good.
- The very good contribution of art and design to pupils' spiritual, personal and cultural development.
- Very good links with humanities and ICT.
- Opportunities for pupils to work in three dimensions and on a large scale.
- Limited opportunities for pupils to develop their art and design skills in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

93 A very talented teaching assistant is responsible for art and design. She is a very good role model as she works alongside the class teacher in lessons. This input is extending their art and design skills very well. Her talents inspire junior pupils to achieve very high quality work and a very wide range of skills. Her approach to art and design through humanities creates challenge for pupils, as they have to solve problems and think for themselves. Pupils have opportunities to use a wide range of interesting techniques and materials. They appreciate working for a sustained period of time on any piece and feel that the art and design co-ordinator 'brings the best out of them.' They feel very proud when they achieve good results and also understand very clearly the life of the Egyptians, Aztecs and living in Africa through their work in art and design. Much of their work is three-dimensional and includes large-scale Tutankamun death masks and a sarcophagus including the mummy. Visits to local museums support this work well and, using this stimulus and the Internet, they create their own artefacts and display these to create their own school museum display. Their work is also closely linked to ICT. For example Year 6 pupils create clay models in the style of Wallace and Grommet characters and designed the scenery for their animation project. A total of thirty-six frames were made and linked together, using the computer, to create their own film show.

94 The teaching assistant uses the work of other artists very well to stimulate their pupils' own work. In Years 3 and 4, pupils look at the patterns of William Morris to develop their own ideas for patterns linked to their work on the Aztecs in Years 5 and 6. They use string, stencils and batik to create wallpaper designs and repeating patterns. Older pupils look at how material is produced and weave their own after studying the work of the fifteenth century artist Arcimboldo.

95 The work achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 is of a satisfactory standard but they have limited support from the art and design co-ordinator. She is fully aware of this and this issue is being addressed. However, her work with pupils in Year 2 demonstrates clearly the quality of work that can be achieved with specialist support. A visit to a local gallery gave pupils the opportunity to look at the work of Joseph Turner. Pupils worked at the gallery to explore the techniques used in his work using paint, inks, pastels and collage. The use of sea salt on wet paint really enhances the tones and colours achieved on a large -scale sea picture on butter muslin. All the Year 2 pupils were involved and the finished picture is of exceptional quality.

MUSIC

The provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The instrumental tuition by the visiting music teacher is good.
- Few teachers have personal expertise in music.

Commentary

96 A peripatetic instrumental teacher visits the school for one day each week. All pupils from Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and many play stringed instruments. They read notation and rhythm with a good degree of accuracy. Pupils have very good attitudes to their lessons and clearly enjoy making music. Their relationships with the teacher are good and he is very supportive. The school has a good range of instruments and pupils have lessons free of charge as the school covers the cost of this good tuition.

97 Teachers use a Local Education Authority scheme to support their teaching of music. Many of them have limited expertise and find the teaching of this subject difficult. However, where the teacher has good subject knowledge, pupils understand that their diaphragm is the muscle used to sustain breath for singing and the lower junior pupils achieve this well when singing songs in the hall. These children show expression in their singing and are able to keep a steady pulse when being led by another pupil. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, in a class lesson, understand how to identify and represent a rest when clapping a given rhythm pattern. They know the names and different sounds produced by a range of percussion instruments and their behaviour when playing these is very good. They have sound opportunities to perform to others.

98 Year 5 pupils extend their understanding of rhythms when they clap bars containing six quavers. They successfully emphasis different beats within the bar and know that there is a steady pulse of two beats in each bar. The non-function of a tape recorder in another lesson did not deter the teacher from gallantly singing a song for the pupils in order to develop singing with enthusiasm and expression. The lack of accompaniment to their singing meant that pitch was not sustained but they certainly showed their enthusiasm and added expression where needed. In the lessons seen, pupils do not develop their skills in composition or in part singing.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good involvement in promoting a healthy school through the Excellence in Cities programme.
- Planning for PSHE is very thorough.
- The good leadership of the subject.

Commentary

99 The school works very closely with the Education Action Zone and this has been very influential in achieving the silver award as a Healthy School. The school is very active in promoting a healthy lifestyle. It is always offering opportunities for pupils to eat healthily and exercise regularly. The impact is that pupils are very conscious of the importance of eating a balanced diet and are keen to participate in the wide range of sporting activities that is on offer in the school. Pupils are aware of the dangers of drugs and the responsibility that they have to resist the temptation of taking them. Overall a healthy lifestyle has a high profile in the school and they work closely with parents to continue this outside of the school. The sex and relationships is covered in the science curriculum as well as in PSHE where pupils are made fully aware of how relationships are developed and sustained.

100 Teachers plan for PSHE on a weekly basis and every opportunity is taken to tackle issues in specific lessons for PSHE as well as those planned for in other lessons. Pupils use 'circle time' to discuss issues that are important to how they should behave and treat others. As a result pupils are very conscious of their responsibilities to others and fully understand what is expected of them both as pupils of the school and as citizens outside of the school. The outcome is that pupils are polite, sensitive and mature and very well prepared to challenge incidents of racism and bullying with conviction that this is not the way to behave.

101 The leadership is good and therefore the subject is carefully monitored and teachers are well supported in developing the subject in interesting and innovative ways. This results in the school and the pupils being involved in many new initiatives and having good opportunities to take part in activities in and outside of the school. The outcome is that pupils grow in their maturity and recognise the importance of being involved in the life of the community and how they can make a difference to not only their own life, but also that of others.

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	5
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	3
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	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).