

INSPECTION REPORT

CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kinson, Bournemouth

LEA area: Bournemouth

Unique reference number: 113846

Headteacher: Mrs Kathy North

Lead inspector: Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 22nd-24th March 2004

Inspection number: 255808

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	212
School address:	Durdells Avenue Kinson Bournemouth Dorset
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body, Christ the King Catholic Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Fr Bill Muir
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Christ the King Catholic Primary School is similar in size to other schools of the same type. There are 230 pupils on roll, including 37 children who attend the Nursery part-time. This is approximately 30 pupils fewer than at the time of the last inspection. The school has 49 pupils on its register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls on roll. Nine pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and two speak English as an additional language. Neither of these is at an early stage of learning English. The turnover of pupils is fairly high. For example, 35 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 and 28 per cent of those in Year 5 have not attended the school throughout their primary education. The turnover of staff has also been high: the headteacher and six of the eight class teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. This is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The school is situated in an area which has significantly high levels of social deprivation, according to national statistics. The school achieved both the Healthy Schools and Investors in People Awards in 2003.

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16760	Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	English, geography, music, the foundation stage curriculum.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a good school which has a number of very good features. Overall, pupils' achievement is good because of consistently good teaching. Standards in Year 2 are above average while those in Year 6 are average. The leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make good progress in the Nursery and Reception because of good teaching in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
- Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good, and pupils attain high standards.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are improving in Years 3 to 6 as a result of good teaching, but opportunities for writing across the curriculum are not fully exploited.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher has enabled the school to improve many aspects of its work in the past two years.
- There is very good teamwork amongst staff and the school makes a strong commitment to their professional development.
- Very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps to create a very good ethos.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, behave well and form constructive relationships with each other and with adults.
- The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities. Music is a strength of the school but there are weaknesses in geography and history.
- Attendance is below average.

The school has made a good improvement since it was inspected in 1999. When the headteacher took over in 2001 the school was identified as requiring priority support from the Local Education Authority to address underachievement, particularly in English and mathematics. There has been good progress in raising pupils' achievement, especially in Years 1 and 2. The school now has a permanent leadership team with very high aspirations for its future development. The quality of teaching and learning is very much better than it was in 1999 and teachers now provide more challenging work for more able pupils. The provision for information and communication technology and swimming has also improved.

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	C	C	C
mathematics	D	D	D	E
science	E	D	E	E*

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

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

*E*Standards are in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country.*

Achievement is good. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. In the Nursery and Year R, children achieve well. They are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning except in some aspects of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, where standards are a little below average. In Year 2, achievement is good: standards are above average in reading, mathematics, ICT and science and average in writing. In Year 6, achievement is good because pupils have progressed from well below average standards when they were in Year 2. Standards are average, overall, in English, mathematics and ICT but below average in science, where pupils have not been taught well in the past, and in writing. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are making up ground well now that they are receiving

good teaching. Pupils throughout the school achieve high standards in music because it is taught by a specialist teacher with very good levels of expertise.

Pupils' personal qualities are good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in lessons. They show initiative, take responsibility willingly and form good relationships. Attendance is unsatisfactory. The attendance rate is below the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' have high expectations of the pupils, who apply themselves well to their work. Lessons are well planned and interesting and engage the pupils' attention. Teachers are supported very well by competent and well trained teaching assistants. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but are not yet used consistently throughout the school to track pupils' progress. There are weaknesses in the provision for geography and history. Music is a strength of the school. Literacy skills are not used and developed well enough across the curriculum. The school works well in partnership with parents and provides very good levels of care for all pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Very good leadership by the headteacher has created a thriving community with high aspirations and a very strong team spirit. All staff make an effective contribution to the management of the school and ensure equality of opportunity for all pupils. There is very good provision for the continuing professional development of all staff. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and contribute well to strategic planning. The information provided for parents does not fully meet statutory requirements. Financial management and administration are very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are generally positive about the school. A few parents would like to be better informed about the curriculum. Pupils value their school highly and appreciate the opportunity to be involved in making decisions.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the high standards now being achieved in Years 1 and 2 are built upon effectively in Years 3 to 6 so that all pupils reach their potential, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to develop and use literacy skills more effectively across the curriculum.
- Improve the provision for geography and history.
- Continue to monitor and improve pupils' attendance.

and to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the prospectus includes information about parents' right to withdraw pupils from religious education lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, achievement is good. Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and standards are, overall, average. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2. Standards are average in English and mathematics and below average in science in Year 6. However, pupils have achieved well since Year 2, where they achieved well below average standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 because of consistently good teaching.
- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 is helping to raise standards in English and mathematics, but standards in science are still too low.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as in speaking, listening and reading.
- All groups of pupils achieve equally well by Year 6.
- Pupils achieve high standards in music throughout the school because of high quality teaching
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and achieve well.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good. This reflects the good teaching and learning the children receive in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning judged by the inspection except in communication, language and literacy and mathematics, where standards are a little below average. Assessments show that attainment is below average for age in most aspects of the six areas of learning on entry to school. Children make good progress during their time in the Nursery, and again during the Reception year in all areas of learning. In communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development, very careful matching of challenges to children's needs is an important part of the good teaching.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.0 (17.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.4 (16.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.9 (18.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2003, standards were well above the national average in reading compared with all schools and with similar schools based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Compared with all schools, and with similar schools, standards in writing were in the top five per cent of schools, while in mathematics they were well above average. This represents very good achievement. From 1999 to 2001, the school's results were well below average. The marked upward trend in 2002 and 2003 was brought about by significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning following the appointment of the new headteacher in 2001.

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are above average in English, mathematics, science, ICT and music. They are average in history and DT, which were the only other subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make reliable judgements. These standards are the same as they were when the school was last inspected in DT, history and music. Standards have risen in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The judgements of the inspection are not as high as the school's results in the 2003 national tests. This is because a different group of pupils is involved and there are fewer pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment. Pupils achieve well because the teaching of basic skills is consistently good. As a result, by Year 2, they have good levels of competency in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (27.4)	26.8 (27)
Mathematics	25.8 (25.9)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.9 (27.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In the Year 6 national tests in 2003, standards were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, based on pupils who performed similarly in Year 2, standards were average in English and well below average in mathematics. In science, they were in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country. Standards have fluctuated from year to year over the past five years but have been mostly below average. In the past, there has been significant underachievement amongst pupils, even allowing for their below average attainment on entry to the school. Since the appointment of the new head and many new staff, standards have begun to rise as the root causes of underachievement are tackled.

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are average, overall, in English and mathematics. They are improving in science, but are still below average because pupils in Year 6 have not received good quality teaching throughout their time in school. Consequently, they do not have the skills they need to plan and carry out scientific investigations. Overall, however, this represents good achievement for this group of pupils because in the Year 2 national tests four years ago they achieved well below average standards in English and mathematics. Also, their education has been disrupted by a number of staff changes. Overall, standards are lower since the last inspection in English and science, and similar in mathematics. Standards are also average in ICT, history, DT and PE. They are above average in music. These are similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

6. In Year 6, standards in speaking, listening and reading are average, while those in writing are below average. In Year 2, standards are above average in speaking and listening and reading and average in writing. Writing skills are not developed sufficiently well in other subjects of the curriculum, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The use of mathematics in other subjects is good. ICT is used satisfactorily to support the pupils' learning in other subjects.

7. All groups of pupils in this school achieve well by the time that they leave Year 6. Discussions with pupils showed that they felt they were required to work hard at all times and were doing as well as they could. Pupils with SEN receive good support and make good progress towards their targets. The targets in their individual education plans are appropriate to their needs and are formulated in small steps to ensure they are achievable. Targets related to literacy, numeracy and social behaviour are contained in pupils' plans to enable them to achieve well. The care and support

offered by the adults that work with pupils who have SEN ensure good achievement. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and make good progress in acquiring vocabulary and developing their speaking skills. This enables them to have good access to all aspects of the curriculum.

8. The school's results in the national tests over a three year period indicate that girls do better than boys in Years 3 to 6, while the reverse is the case in Years 1 and 2. However, the findings of the inspection are that boys and girls achieve equally well in all year groups. Teachers pay particular attention to boys' needs when planning lessons to ensure that they are well motivated and interested. The high standards reached in Year 2 show how well the school caters for more able pupils. This has not always been the case, especially in Years 3 to 6. Now teachers prepare work that matches individual pupils' needs. In Years 5 and 6, the legacy of previous years means that teachers are continually striving to make up for deficiencies in the pupils' learning. The school also identifies gifted and talented pupils and ensures that their needs are met. It has, for example, recognised the abilities of pupils in art and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**, and contributes substantially to the ethos of the school. Pupils' attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance is below the national median but is improving this year.
- Punctuality is good.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of right and wrong and show respect for others' feelings and beliefs.
- Pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is very good.
- The school's sets very high expectations for pupils' conduct and relationships
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good and there is a good degree of racial harmony.
- Pupils show good interest in learning and generally behave well in lessons and around the school, but some older pupils easily lose concentration if the lesson lacks challenge or pace

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.1	School data	0.2
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.

9. Attendance is unsatisfactory as it was below the national median in 2002/03 and has declined since the previous inspection. Unauthorised absence was in line with the national average. School records show that attendance is improving this year. Members of staff monitor attendance very well. The school uses incentives to encourage good attendance and follows up absences promptly. Parents do not always ensure that their children attend school or obtain authority for their absences. The majority of authorised absences are for medical reasons or for additional family holidays. Most children arrive at school punctually, although a few families are persistently late. There was a short-term exclusion in the previous year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	160	1	0

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

10. Pupils' attitudes to school have improved since the last inspection. They show interest and curiosity in lessons, work hard and mostly concentrate well. However, during the inspection, some pupils in Years 5 and 6 were prone to lose concentration when the pace in lessons slowed. Behaviour is good in most lessons, around the school, in assemblies and at play. Parents confirmed that behaviour is good in and out of school and that there is little bullying.

11. Most pupils feel very happy and secure and well cared for. They have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils have a high level of respect for the feelings and values of others and are given opportunities to reflect on these feelings. They are encouraged to raise money for charities associated with the church, and with local and international organisations. Relationships between pupils and with the staff are good, pupils get on with their peers well and are able to work and play together collaboratively.

12. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils have very good opportunities to reflect on beliefs through RE, collective worship and informal opportunities in the classrooms for private prayer and for writing their own prayers. Elements of spirituality also come through literary studies, and sometimes in other subjects when wonder is aroused, such as the excitement in a science lesson when a puppet clown's eyes and bow tie suddenly lit up, surprising the pupils. Pupils know right from wrong very well. Each class creates its own rules in addition to those of the school and the arrangements for positive behaviour reinforcement work well. The peer mediation system and the school council provide very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and enhance their social and moral development. Their social development is extended further through school initiatives that include "carpet partners", collaborative learning, "family" lunch tables, where older pupils supervise younger ones and the "nurture group".

13. Provision for cultural development is very good and includes opportunities for pupils to learn about their own heritage as well as those of other cultures. Multi-faith studies are part of RE; pupils have visited places of worship of other denominations and attended events about Jewish and Asian ways of life. They have studied and performed Chinese and African music. In art, different traditions are studied, for example a quilt was designed and made by Year 6 pupils in DT using the art of Monet as a stimulus. Geography, as in the work on an Indian village, and history add to this wide spectrum.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The most significant strength is the quality of teaching and learning, which is good throughout the school. There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage which promotes good progress in learning. Good provision for pupils with SEN helps them to achieve well. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Provision for music is a strength of the school. There are very good arrangements to ensure pupils' care and welfare. The school's relationships with parents are good. Its ethos is very good. There are comparative weaknesses in the provision for geography and history which have not been a focus for development in recent years.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Assessment is good in the Nursery and Reception and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers capture pupils' interest and engage them well in learning.
- A strong focus on how pupils learn ensures that teachers use an effective range of methods and resources.
- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make meaningful connections between subjects to enhance pupils' understanding.
- Teaching assistants have high levels of expertise and make a significant contribution in lessons.
- The quality of teaching in the Nursery, Reception and Years 1 and 2 is particularly strong and helps children to make a good start to their education.
- Good teaching in literacy, numeracy and ICT is helping to raise standards across the school.
- Although teaching is good in science in Years 1 and 2, it is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 with some weaknesses.
- Very good specialist teaching in music enables all pupils to achieve very well.
- Teachers in Nursery and Reception make effective use of assessment to plan appropriate experiences for children.
- Assessment procedures in Years 1 to 6 are satisfactory, overall, with some good features.

Commentary

14. The previous inspection judged teaching to be satisfactory. Overall 11% of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, 20% of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. Approximately half of the lessons seen were good. Since that time, there has been an almost complete change of staff in Years R to 6. As the table beneath illustrates, this has led to a very good improvement in the quality of teaching. It is now good, overall, with more than a fifth of lessons very good or better. Some outstanding practice was seen in Year 1.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(3%)	7(19%)	23(64%)	5(14%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

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

15. A key factor in the successful teaching is the way teachers make learning interesting and fun for the pupils. They structure lessons well to hold pupils' interest and attention and move learning along at a good pace. This helps to ensure that pupils concentrate and work productively without being distracted. The most successful lessons are those where teachers achieve an effective balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise skills or learn through investigation. In a few lessons, the pace of learning slows because pupils spend too long on one activity.

16. The deputy head is successfully leading a whole school initiative that seeks to make teachers more aware of how pupils learn in different ways. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on adapting teaching methods to suit these differing styles of learning, so that each lesson uses a good variety of teaching methods and resources. A very good Year 2 science lesson began with a song about electricity, which helped to reinforce earlier learning. This was followed by opportunities for listening, discussion, investigation and observation, all of which contributed effectively to extending pupils' understanding of electricity. A good Year 3 science lesson made imaginative use of music and visual images to introduce a lesson about the permeability of soils, and went on to involve pupils in designing and carrying out their own investigations. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 make good use of interactive whiteboards to stimulate pupils' interest and to help those pupils who learn more effectively through visual presentations.

17. This approach is combined with a drive to make more meaningful links between different aspects of the curriculum in order to make learning more effective. Although many teachers are relatively new to the school and this approach is in the early stages of development, there are some examples

of good practice in Years 1 and 2. For example, the Year 2 teacher effectively combined art, ICT and science when pupils created clown faces on the computer which were later used to make electrical circuits.

18. One of the significant strengths of the leadership and management of the school is a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff. This is reflected in the high levels of expertise among the teaching assistants and the quality of support they provide in lessons. All are receiving training to improve their skills and feel valued and appreciated by the school. Teachers and assistants work very well together as a team to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants have a good understanding of how children learn and are well informed about the teaching strategies and methods being used. The ICT teaching assistant uses her expertise very well to work with small groups of pupils in the ICT suite, as well as supporting whole class lessons.

19. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with SEN is good. All are included well in all aspects of class lessons and extra-curricular activities and receive good support from teaching assistants. Work is planned by ability in English and mathematics throughout the school to ensure that pupils receive appropriate work.

20. The quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It ranges from good to very good, in both year groups. Planning is clear and detailed, and is based on ongoing assessment of children's progress. In play, directed activities and lessons, children are involved well, and skilled questioning promotes speaking and listening, as well as mathematical development. The learning assistants and other helpers are well deployed in both year groups. Children in the Foundation Stage learn well from the good teaching and make good progress.

21. In Years 1 and 2, nine out of ten lessons seen were good and four out of ten were very good. Teachers build effectively on the good foundations that are laid in Nursery and Reception and help pupils to make good, and often very good, progress in their learning. This is reflected in the very high national test results of the past two years. The key factor is the teachers' high expectations of what pupils can achieve. These were particularly evident in literacy, numeracy, science and ICT lessons. Teachers provide challenging work for the more able pupils which extends their learning to high levels, as when Year 1 pupils worked with numbers to 100 and added together two amounts of money in a mathematics lesson. High expectations in a Year 2 science lesson led some pupils to draw accurate conclusions about what happens when more than one bulb or battery is used in the same circuit.

Example of outstanding practice

An inspirational literacy lesson in Year 1, based on *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, which illustrates excellent teaching of reading and writing skills, based on expert knowledge of how children learn.

This lesson had many effective ingredients. Expert teaching of reading skills inspired pupils to read aloud with superb expression in response to the teacher's hand signals, voice modulation and 'sighs' to signify a pause after a full stop. Very good teaching of how to turn speech bubbles into written speech using inverted commas enabled more able pupils to use these independently in their writing. Cries of "Boring!" in response to the word "said" in the text prompted pupils to suggest more interesting alternatives such as "shouted" and "growled", which they also later used in their writing. Exciting teaching of descriptive words involved pupils in acting them out through the characters of the Troll and the Billy Goats. Large display sheets with pictures and appropriate descriptive words were placed around the room and pupils were encouraged to refer to these when writing. Excellent teamwork between the teacher and assistant showed pupils how to construct interesting sentences, use their knowledge of sounds to spell difficult words and use punctuation correctly. Carefully planned activities gave all pupils the opportunity to write independently at an appropriate level.

All pupils were engrossed in the lesson and thoroughly enjoyed learning. Their achievement was very good.

22. Observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and analysis of their work throughout the year shows the most consistently good teaching takes place in English and mathematics. This is because the school has placed a strong emphasis on these subjects in order to eradicate the underachievement that was evident when the headteacher took up her post. The current emphasis on science and ICT is helping to improve teaching in those subjects, although there are still some weaknesses in science in Years 3 to 6, as explained later in this report. There are some good features in teaching in other subjects, but these are not yet consistent across the school. This is because there have been many changes of teacher and some subjects have not been a focus for

development in recent years. The school employs a music specialist to teach the subject to all classes. Pupils learn very well as a result of very good teaching in music, and they also have the opportunity to learn to play instruments and to take part in a wide variety of extracurricular activities.

23. Good assessment procedures are used effectively in the Nursery and Reception to track children's progress and to inform teachers' planning. This means that teachers have a clear idea of how well children are progressing in the six areas of learning. In Years 1 to 6, assessment procedures are under review. The best practice is in English, where half-termly assessments in writing track pupils' progress against the levels of the National Curriculum and show pupils what they need to do to improve. However, this is not done consistently well by all teachers. Assessments in mathematics are also carried out regularly but are not recorded in a format that shows clearly the levels pupils have attained. In science, there is some good practice, but again it is inconsistent between classes. Teachers are currently trying out a new system, which is due to be reviewed at the end of the year. Assessment in other subjects is based on national guidelines and is used at the end of a unit of study. Overall, although some good practice is developing, it is not yet consistent. The quality of teachers' marking is also variable. The best examples are constructive and helpful to pupils, give praise for good work and effort, and also show pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Some marking is less effective and does not explain how pupils can improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the Nursery and Reception classes. It is adequately planned and provides good opportunities for pupils' learning to be enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. The accommodation is satisfactory. Staffing is satisfactory and resources for learning are good. The match of support staff to the curriculum is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Allocation of time for some foundation subjects is limited.
- Teachers generally make good links between different subjects but the use and development of writing skills across the curriculum are underdeveloped.
- Opportunities for enriching the curriculum are good and it is considerably enhanced by participation in the arts.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes follow a broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to their age.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

24. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory, overall, but is enriched by a good variety of extracurricular activities. All pupils have good access and opportunity to the curriculum. However, the time allocation for some foundation subjects, like history and geography, is lower than average, as the amount of time that is required for RE is higher than average. There has not been a focus on developing provision in history and geography since the last inspection. As a result, there is insufficient monitoring of standards and the quality of provision, particularly in ensuring progression in learning from year to year. In addition, there is insufficient recorded work in pupils' books. All issues from the previous inspection, including provision for PE and swimming, the use of ICT, investigation in mathematics and other aspects of the curriculum have been addressed well.

25. Teachers make effective links between different subjects, especially through numeracy, as these skills are taught in other subjects such as DT, science and geography. However, the use of literacy, especially writing, is relatively underdeveloped across the curriculum. In some subjects, there is an over-reliance on commercial worksheets which limits opportunities for pupils to write freely. The school has a large range of extracurricular activities which enable pupils to widen their learning. There are a number of sporting activities, particularly for junior pupils, including football and netball, when pupils compete against neighbouring schools. Older pupils also participate in a skills

development programme organised by the local professional soccer club. Support for learning outside the school day includes a residential visit by Year 6 pupils at the beginning of their last year at the school. The curriculum is also enhanced by participation in the arts, including regular choir and orchestra meetings and visits and participation in drama and dance sessions.

26. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes follow a broad and balanced curriculum that meets all their needs and ensures a good start to their education. It is appropriately based on the national guidelines and early learning goals for five year olds, and is socially inclusive. In lessons and play activities, the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Activities are planned imaginatively so that they motivate children, and the balance between free play and directed activities is appropriate for the ages of both groups. The outdoor play area is too small, and is not able to be comprehensively equipped with a good range of apparatus and wheeled toys, but the school has made the best use possible of this area, and its use has improved since the last inspection. In addition, the Reception room is not as large as the Nursery room, so that in Reception the range of activities set up, while good, is still not as wide as that in the Nursery. The school is soon to benefit from a new purpose-built Foundation Stage block, together with appropriate outdoor spaces.

27. Curricular provision for pupils with SEN supports their achievement well. Pupils' targets are well matched to their needs and include elements of literacy, numeracy and social development in their individual education plans. Pupils are given work that is pitched at appropriate levels for their academic achievement and they are fully included in all aspects of the school day.

28. The school has an appropriate combination of experienced and newly qualified teachers and there is a good number of experienced, well qualified support staff. Music is taught by a specialist teacher and the school takes advantage of the expertise of staff from the local secondary school, especially in creative subjects such as art and DT. This indicates good preparation for the next stage of pupils' education.

29. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. The outside accommodation is at present unsatisfactory for the Foundation Stage but work is due to start on a new area in the autumn. The main building is clean, bright and well maintained and all staff work hard to create and maintain a warm, welcoming environment. However, although the hall is of adequate size, it has to be used as a thoroughfare and pupils' concentration in PE lessons is sometimes interrupted. The school has a computer suite, music room and special educational needs room, all of which serve to enhance the provision for pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety and their involvement through seeking and acting on their views, are all **very good**, an improvement on the previous inspection. The provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils based on monitoring is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for pupils into the Foundation Stage and arrangements for their transfer to secondary school are very good.
- Pupils have access to well informed support, advice and guidance, but monitoring of their academic progress is not fully effective.
- There are very good procedures for health and safety, child protection and pupils' welfare and first aid.
- Adults know pupils very well and provide very good care for them.
- Pupils are given responsibilities that enable them to contribute to the life of the school.

Commentary

30. There are very good induction arrangements for pupils when they start at the school. Procedures include opportunities for parents and children to visit the school in the term before they start. Home visits are undertaken by members of staff and the Nursery children are involved in events and activities within school. Parents confirm that the transition from this school to their chosen secondary school is handled well.

31. Members of staff have very good knowledge of the pupils and this is reflected in the detailed and helpful annual reports for parents. Pupils' behaviour, their attitudes to learning and progress are monitored by staff and discussed regularly. Concerns may be taken up with parents and if warranted, the school will set up individual education plans. At present there is no formalized monitoring or reference system to record pupils' pastoral needs. The school is developing effective tracking systems in order to monitor pupils' progress from year to year. These are beginning to work well, but are less effective for older pupils because accurate records of their progress were not kept in the past. Monitoring of children's academic and personal progress and development in both the Nursery and the Reception Class is good, and is used well to influence future planning for groups and individuals.

32. The school's health and safety procedures are very good. Governors and staff have high levels of knowledge and commitment in this area. All health and safety checks and risk assessments fully comply with statutory requirements and provide a safe and caring environment for the children. The headteacher is the nominated co-ordinator for child protection. The school's policy is in line with the local committee requirements and members of staff have been trained in protection awareness and procedures. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for the care of children who are unwell are very good despite the lack of a dedicated area for treatment. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and secure at school.

33. All adults who work in the school, form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them very well and provide good role models for behaviour. Discussions with pupils show that they can turn to an adult if they feel they need help or comfort. The pupils are able to contribute in a number of ways to school life through membership of the school council, peer mediation and other school initiatives. The curriculum in RE and personal, social and health education provides the pupils with advice on a range of issues including sex education, healthy eating, safety and health matters.

34. Pupils with SEN receive good levels of care, support and guidance and this is sometimes linked to the school's very good, personal, social and health provision. They are given focused support by teachers and teaching assistants. The school has good links with outside agencies who visit the school as required. The progress of pupils with SEN is carefully monitored by the co-ordinator as they move through the school. Children who are likely to need extra help are identified in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are **good**. There are also **good** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides parents with good information about the curriculum and how to help their children at home.
- Good links with the pre-school, secondary school and other local schools provide benefits for pupils.
- Good links with the community enrich the pupils' learning.
- Some parents are concerned that they are not well informed about school activities and aspects of the curriculum.

Commentary

35. The links with parents and carers have improved since the last inspection and are good. Parents are encouraged to support the school through the parents' association and to support their children's learning at home. Although the school provides a termly information sheet for all parents about what their child will be learning, some parents claim that they are not given enough information. All parents are also supplied with a monthly newsletter detailing significant dates and other school arrangements. This material is carefully presented. There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff formally, with three meetings every year, and the opportunity to meet informally to discuss their children's progress. The school operates an open door policy and members of staff are often in the playground at the start and end of the school day. The Nursery and Reception classes are open one morning a week to enable parents to observe the class in action.

36. Written annual reports for pupils are good and are supplemented with additional information on pupils' targets and their progress during the school year. Reports inform parents what their children know, understand and can do, and give areas for improvement and development. The prospectus does not inform parents of their right to withdraw their children from RE. As well as curriculum events, progress meetings and open days, parents and families are invited to attend mass, assemblies and other school events and performances. These events are greatly appreciated and successful.

37. There are good links with the local pre-school groups as well as the receiving secondary school. The links with the secondary school provide curriculum enrichment and support, and members of staff from the school have also taught in the school. Arrangements for transferring pupils are effective and appreciated by pupils and parents. Links with other schools are also good. The headteacher and staff meet the staff of other schools regularly and this has led to the exchange of skills and information.

38. Links with the community are good. Pupils make visits to the local church, into the community and beyond, enjoying residential visits, adventure activities and other enriching experiences. Pupils have been involved in fund raising for local and national charities, they have links with the headquarters of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution and places of worship, and numerous visitors have attended the school. Pupils have been encouraged to deepen their understanding of life in multi-cultural Britain through visits and visitors to school.

39. The school has very strong links with the Local Education Authority, local services, emergency services, health professionals, caring agencies and support providers. Most parents of pupils with SEN have good links with the school. They are usually involved in the planning and reviewing of their child's targets and education plans are acknowledged and agreed. There is also good contact with staff responsible for SEN in the local secondary schools. Good induction procedures are organised for these children on their entry to the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good as is that of other curriculum areas. The management of the school is good. The school's governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's high aspirations and vision for the school inspire and motivate staff and pupils.
- Very good teamwork helps to create a vibrant atmosphere for learning, where teachers and pupils enjoy experimenting with new ideas and approaches.
- The leadership and management for the provision of SEN are very good.
- A very strong commitment to the professional development of all staff is helping to create a coherent strategy for teaching and learning.

- The governing body is actively and productively involved in strategic planning and in evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors and staff are committed to rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring of the school's performance.
- This informs the school improvement plan, which focuses clearly on the most important priorities for the school to address.
- Very good financial management ensures that the school achieves its educational priorities.

Commentary

40. A key issue from the previous inspection in 1999 was, as a matter of urgency, to resolve the lack of permanency in the leadership of the school. This was not achieved until two years later with the appointment of the present headteacher and deputy headteacher in September 2001. The school was identified as requiring priority support from the Local Education Authority in order to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. This support continued until July 2003. Since 2001, there has been an almost complete turnover of teachers, three of whom have joined the school in the current academic year.

41. The headteacher has very high aspirations for the school, which are reflected in all aspects of its daily life. She expects nothing but the best from both pupils and staff, and has a strong vision for the school as a place of learning where teachers welcome change and development and pupils believe in themselves. She is supported very well by the deputy head, who leads teachers very capably in implementing agreed strategies and evaluating their effectiveness. Teachers, support staff, governors, parents and pupils speak highly of the headteacher and what she has achieved since she came to the school. The key to her success has been an ability to focus on the most important issues and to introduce change and improvement at a suitable pace while equipping staff, through training, to deal with the challenges facing them.

42. As a result, there is very effective teamwork throughout the school. Teachers, support staff, governors and pupils are open to new ideas and ways of working, and there is a positive vibrant atmosphere in the school which is conducive to learning. For example, the whole school focus on different ways of learning is helping teachers to provide activities that meet pupils' needs and preferences. The use of music as an aid to learning in other subjects, visual timetables, 'brain gym' and an increased emphasis on learning through practical investigation, as well as through listening and observing are all proving to be successful in raising pupils' achievement. Subject leaders have a clear idea of what their role entails and are being trained well to carry it out. Effective leadership in English, mathematics and ICT is already having a good impact on the quality of provision and pupils' achievement.

43. The leadership and management for the provision of SEN are very good. The co-ordinator, who is experienced and well qualified, is responsible for the day to day support of pupils with SEN and also the administration. She leads a very strong team of well qualified teaching assistants who provide very good support for pupils. There is no co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, but the two teachers from the Nursery and Reception Class run it together, and work very well in partnership with one another, creating a good Foundation Stage team together with their assistants.

44. The school was awarded 'Investors in People' status in 2003 in recognition of its strong commitment to providing high levels of support and training for all of its staff. There are very good procedures for supporting staff who are new to the school and ensuring that they know the school's routines and procedures well. The warm and friendly relationships between all staff do much to support and encourage new colleagues. The school's performance management procedures are effective in setting professional objectives for teachers that are directly linked to the priorities of the school improvement plan. This ensures a coherent approach to bringing about school improvement. The arrangements for the continuing professional development of all staff are very good. They take into account both the needs of the school and those of individual teachers and support staff, and make a significant contribution to improving the quality of pupils' experiences.

45. The governing body makes a good contribution to determining the future direction of the school. Governors share the headteacher's vision for the school and have worked hard to increase their own skills and knowledge. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they are involved in monitoring its performance. They regularly review the progress made towards the objectives identified in the school improvement plan and analyse the school's performance in national tests through discussion with the headteacher and senior staff. Their involvement in strategic planning has involved them in a long-term project, now close to fruition, to address the weaknesses in the provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes through a new purpose-built Foundation Stage unit. Governors also review their own performance and identify areas for development. They willingly question the headteacher and staff and check on the impact of initiatives in order to move the school forward. Governors meet almost all of their statutory requirements but there is one omission from the prospectus.

46. The headteacher, staff and governors are self-critical and evaluative in their approach to managing the school. They analyse and interpret the school's results in national tests, using the information to determine the most important priorities for improvement. The headteacher and leadership team monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school and the provision for pupils with SEN. However, there is insufficient emphasis on checking samples of pupils' work in order to make judgements about the effectiveness of the teaching and curricular planning. Governors visit the school to support lessons, talk to subject leaders and discuss issues with the headteacher. The three-year programme for curricular development ensures that all subjects are reviewed regularly and that subject leaders know what is expected of them each year.

47. The outcomes of self-evaluation by staff and governors form the basis of the school improvement plan, which clearly shows the main objectives, the strategies that will be implemented to bring about improvement and the ways in which the school will measure the impact of these. The plan includes timescales and costings and shows who will oversee and monitor the process. The plan places equal emphasis on pupils' academic and personal development, and includes such initiatives as peer mediation, nurture groups and other ways of promoting self-esteem and reducing anxiety. A significant factor in the school's success is the emphasis on creating a sense of belonging among pupils and reassuring them that there is always someone they can turn to if they are worried or unhappy.

48. The school makes very effective use of its financial resources to improve the quality of education for its pupils. Spending decisions are linked closely to the priorities in the school improvement plan, and careful consideration is given to long-term financial planning in order to safeguard staffing levels and prepare for a projected falling roll. Recently, the school has invested heavily in books and equipment to support the development of a more practical, investigational approach in mathematics and science. In ICT, investment in the well-equipped computer suite and in interactive whiteboards in the junior classes has proved to be very beneficial in improving pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.

49. The very knowledgeable and competent Bursar keeps governors well informed about the budget and liaises closely with the headteacher when preparing budget plans and alternative scenarios. Financial administration is very efficient. The principles of best value are central to the management of the schools' resources. For example, governors compare the school's performance and costs with those of other similar schools, they consult parents about different initiatives and challenge themselves and the headteacher to ensure that the school is giving good value for money. The high budget surplus is planned to meet the costs of the building programme and to compensate for a reduction in income due to a falling roll.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	580656	Balance from previous year	81104
Total expenditure	568228	Balance carried forward to the next	93532

Expenditure per pupil	2368
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

50. The school has both a Nursery and a Reception Class, and children start in the Nursery when they are three years old and attend part time. Children enter the Reception Class in the September of the year in which they become five. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below average. There are good arrangements for introducing the children to school. This means that most are happy to leave their parents and quickly get used to school routines. About half of the children are on course to achieve the expected standard in each area of learning by the end of the Reception year. Good leadership and management, effective planning for an interesting curriculum, and good teaching combine to provide the children with interesting and varied experiences. This results in good achievement. The two teachers provide good leadership for all adults in the department, who work very closely together to form an effective team.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children feel safe, confident and happy in school
- Relationships between adults and children are very good
- Teaching is good, and sometimes very good
- Children learn and achieve well through interaction and play
- The broad curriculum allows plenty of opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves and to initiate their own ideas through play

Commentary

51. By the end of the Reception Year, children are on course to reach average standards in this area of learning. Achievement is good because teachers plan many opportunities for children to develop independence and confidence. In the Nursery, many children still prefer to play by themselves, although some enjoy working and playing alongside each other, and begin to show interest in and to converse with each other. In the Reception Year, most children already enjoy working alongside each other and interacting to some degree, while many are already engaging in cooperative play enthusiastically. Children are encouraged in both year groups to develop their independence as far as possible, and to feel confident by sharing their successes with their class or group. Children show respect for each other's needs and views, and this is promoted well through encouraging children to think about sharing. The planned curriculum allows plenty of scope and frequency for free play, in a good balance with short periods of direct teaching or adult-led activities. Children in both year groups behave very well for their age, and are good at responding to their teachers; they like to help tidy up their own activities in the classrooms.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good

- Children are given plenty of opportunities to talk
- Children are interested in books and often choose to look at them

Commentary

52. In both the Nursery and the Reception classes children make good progress in developing their language and communication skills. They start from a low base of below average attainment, however, which means that, despite the good teaching and learning which brings good achievement, their standards of attainment are still below average by the end of the Reception Year. More than half the children in Reception are on track to reach these goals, by the age of five, but a substantial minority are not. All children achieve well. The teaching and curriculum for speaking, listening, reading and writing are good. Most children are confident speakers, and the children are encouraged in both year groups to extend their vocabulary by explaining their ideas about work, play, and books they have looked at. They often opt to look at books in free choice periods, and enjoy listening to stories and joining in familiar songs, poems and rhymes. Teachers provide well planned activities that allow children to practise language and literacy skills, such as role play and sound games. Most of the children in the Reception Class can write their own names, and most know nearly all the letters of the alphabet and their basic single sounds. Writing is promoted well in both year groups through opportunities in the context of play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- Teaching provides plenty of first-hand experience to aid learning and understanding
- There is a good focus on the use of mathematical language
- Adults question children well to support their learning

Commentary

53. Children are on course to reach standards that are just below average by the end of the Reception Year. Achievement is good in both the Nursery and Reception classes due to good teaching, and progress accelerates. More able and older children are already achieving the designated goals. Teaching in both year groups promotes mathematical development well, ensuring it is grounded in first-hand practical experience, and providing good language learning alongside this. Frequent opportunities are given for children to practise and reinforce their learning. Teaching is also imaginative and incorporates aspects of play and stories to motivate children, such as in the frogs jumping over lily pads game in Reception, following the story of the Frog Prince, and weighing experiences using toys. Skilled questioning from adults is used to draw out and encourage mathematical understanding while children are engaged in such activities. Most children in Reception can count to ten easily, and many can count very much further; however, a substantial minority are still working on counting to five.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good
- A good range of relevant experiences is provided for active learning
- Children become competent with the computer and the mouse very quickly and engage in suitable computer programs with enjoyment

Commentary

54. Children in Reception are on course to reach average standards by the end of the year in this area of learning, and many are already reaching this stage. Achievement is good in both year groups. Teachers provide a good range of practical activities for first-hand and active learning, accompanied by good levels of language. Work and play in both year groups are often linked to topics, such as Easter and spring. Children in the Nursery are learning about new life by observing eggs hatching and seeds growing, while in Reception they are watching frogspawn change to tadpoles, and then into tiny frogs. On walks around the school grounds to look for signs of spring, children examine and describe buds and flowers, while the Reception Class have done a 'streetwise walk', comparing town and country features. They have also looked at atlases and a globe, in connection with their role-play corner, which is currently a check-in desk at an airport. Making Mothers' Day cards featured in their technology learning, while in both year groups cooking is an exciting part of the agenda: in the Nursery, they make chocolate nests for their little eggs, while Reception children explore recipes for pancakes and make little fairy cakes they enjoy eating. Children confidently use the computer in both year groups, using appropriate programs for their age, are able to control the mouse, and to use a cassette recorder. Children's awareness of religious and cultural traditions is appropriately enhanced through stories and through opportunities for worship and simple prayers. A strong sense of their own religious customs is very well promoted.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insistence on good, quiet behaviour and safety in physical education lessons
- Children show good developing awareness of space and control
- Lack of space in outdoor areas for full range of equipment, and in particular, insufficient space for appropriate use of wheeled toys

Commentary

55. Children are on course to reach average standards by the end of the Reception Year. Teaching and learning are good in both year groups and help children to achieve well. Children are taught about the necessity for good behaviour and quiet working to ensure safety for all, and they are shown how to use a variety of equipment and apparatus, from large items such as the slide, to small toys such as bats and balls, to develop skills. The outdoor area is not large enough to provide enough space for tricycles and other wheeled toys, but the school has done what is possible to make the best use of the area and to equip it with a small range of appropriate equipment. The use of this area, especially for the Reception Year, has improved since the last inspection. Despite these restrictions, children in both year groups develop their larger movements with average levels of coordination and control for their age by the Reception Year, and are confident and enjoy moving and exercising. Finer movements and manual dexterity are also average in Reception, developed well through a variety of play activities and games, writing and drawing, cutting and sticking, construction toys and jigsaws, threading and lacing.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for art and music are well-planned and often link with topics
- Well-planned opportunities for role-play are set up and frequently changed to provide stimulus for imaginative play

Commentary

56. Most children in Reception are on track to reach the designated goals by the end of the year. Achievement is good in both year groups. Teaching and learning are good. Plenty of well-planned opportunities for art and music are incorporated into the day-to-day activities and within the context of the chosen topics. Role-play is stimulated effectively in both year groups by frequently changed pretend areas, such as the airport departure lounge and check-in area in Reception. In both the Nursery and Reception, children are introduced to a variety of percussion instruments as well as body percussion, and can use these to accompany songs and tunes with a simple beat. In Reception, they begin to put together sounds, to make the basis for very simple compositions. They join in familiar songs, and like to dance to songs or recorded music. In art and design, children in both year groups are introduced to a variety of media, including painting, drawing, print-making, and collage. In the Nursery, children make observational drawings of daffodils, using pastels, chalk or crayon, play a colour matching game, and create egg-patterns for Easter cards. In Reception, children learn how to mix colours using powder paints, make models using waste materials, and create pastel flower drawings after studying a print of Van Gogh's sunflowers composition.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in both key stages
- Pupils achieve well in the subject
- Handwriting has improved
- In-service training for teachers is updating practice well
- Regular sampling of pupils' work and of assessment is not yet in place
- Literacy opportunities are not yet fully exploited across the curriculum

57. Standards in Year 2 are above average. This is not as high as the results in the 2003 national tests because the current year group contains a greater proportion of lower attaining pupils than the previous year. Standards have shown a good improvement since the last inspection. The achievement of pupils is good: the majority of pupils make good progress, including those with SEN. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

58. Standards in Year 6 are average. This is similar to the results of the 2003 national tests. Standards have varied considerably since the previous inspection, first falling and then rising to the present level. Results in the national tests in English for the current Year 6 when they were in Year 2 show attainment to have been well below the national average for age. Thus to have risen from standards of well below average then to average standards now represents good progress, and is good achievement. While most pupils, including those with SEN, achieve well, boys do less well than girls, particularly in writing. The school is aware of this difference, and has introduced initiatives to aim at redressing the balance. The more able are well challenged.

59. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2, and average in Year 6, and achievement is good. Pupils speak confidently and clearly, and are generally keen to enter

discussions and to ask and answer questions. They readily talk about the books they read and show a suitable understanding of the characters and plots of their stories. In Year 6 they can discuss different genres, the work of different authors, and express their reading preferences with enthusiasm. Teachers and assistants extend speaking and listening by the skilled use of questioning and opportunities for paired and small group discussions.

60. In reading, standards are above average Year 2, and average in Year 6. Achievement is good. Pupils generally read accurately the texts they are given. Older pupils enjoy reading books of their own choice, as well as being introduced to new authors for class and group reading activities. They have good library skills and most regularly borrow books from the school library. Pupils are encouraged to read at home. Guided reading activities focus on reading for meaning, both in Year 2 and in subsequent years.

61. Standards of attainment in writing are average in Year 2, and below average in Year 6. Despite being below average in Year 6, however, standards have still risen from the well below average standards achieved by this year group in Year 2. Achievement is good. Progress in writing has also suffered from the problems in overcoming the poor handwriting reported in the last inspection, but this has shown considerable improvement across the school since the introduction of the new policy for beginning cursive handwriting early on. A wide range of purposes for writing is introduced to pupils, and good attention is paid to writing organisation and structure, which are weaker areas of pupils' work, as well as to grammar, spelling and punctuation. Pupils' writing at all stages shows good imagination and the use of good ideas; it also reveals efforts to employ effective vocabulary.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, throughout the school, and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. There has been substantial in-service training for teachers in the subject, and the classroom assistants also have a high level of training. Skilled questioning, and the use of focused discussions are strengths of the teaching. Tasks are generally well matched to pupils' capabilities, and informal ongoing assessment is generally well used to achieve this. The good teaching is also imaginative and enthusiastic, aimed at capturing the interest of pupils. The school has started to introduce more activities and texts of types that are of interest to boys, as part of the initiative to improve boys' performance in the subject.

63. The coordinator has very good subject knowledge, and has introduced a number of initiatives to improve provision in the subject, including undergoing considerable training herself and also leading and organising in-service training for staff. Recent initiatives include a policy for raising boys' attainment, and policies for handwriting, marking, assessment procedures, thinking skills and learning styles. She surveys planning, and has monitored lessons, but has not yet begun to sample systematically pupils' work across the school, nor to scrutinise marking, assessment and the use of data analysis by staff for consistency within the intended whole school approach. However, data are analysed to create individual and group targets, and to set realistic school targets in the subject, which were achieved last year.

64. Resources in the subject are generally good, and the school has a wide range of book resources for reading and for use in the literacy hours. The library, while it has space for some study facilities, is rather small for the size of the school, and lacks space for extending the stock of books. The current stock includes representations of most, if not all, relevant categories, but for some of these, the range is not very large. The stock is appropriately classified, and a computerised system is in use for borrowing and returning, which pupils operate with ease. Enrichment opportunities in the subject are good, and include book fairs, theatre and cinema visits, and drama events.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Opportunities to extend literacy skills in other subjects are not fully exploited. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length in geography, history, science and DT, for example. An over-reliance on commercial worksheets in some subjects limits opportunities for pupils to write freely and in a wide range of appropriate styles.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement at the end of both key stages is good.
- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 are above average.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils with SEN are given good levels of support in mathematics lessons.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Some teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to explain their methods of working.
- Over long introductory exposition by teachers leads to some loss of pupils' attention.

Commentary

65. Standards of achievement are average, overall, in the current Year 6. This is similar to the judgement of the previous inspection and shows an improvement on the 2003 national test results. Pupils' achievement is good. In the current Year 2, standards are above average. This judgement is higher than the previous inspection's findings but slightly below last year's national test results. Pupils' achievement is also good. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls.

66. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. The strongest teaching and learning observed were in Years 1 and 2. There was very good pace and challenge in the Year 1 lesson, which led to well above average standards and very good achievement by the majority of pupils, who counted in 2s, 5s and 10s to 100 and added two amounts of money together accurately. Year 2 pupils read the time accurately on digital and analogue clocks and more able pupils did this to the nearest five minutes. Most teachers use resources well to give pupils 'hands on' experience of mathematics, as in a Year 5 lesson on converting kilograms to grams followed by decimal and fraction conversion. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils explained accurately the rules for dividing by a given number.

67. Most teachers make effective use of ICT to demonstrate ideas and teach pupils new concepts. However, only in one observed lesson were pupils encouraged to use computers to support learning. Year 4 pupils developed their data handling skills when they constructed a bar graph using data collected from a recent traffic survey. A good emphasis on the investigation and problem solving aspects of mathematics was observed during the inspection but there are missed opportunities to encourage pupils to explain their choice of mental strategies. Not all teachers mark pupils' work effectively to show them how to improve their understanding and move to the next stage of learning.

68. In all the lessons seen, pupils who have SEN were given good levels of support by teachers and support staff, both in and out of the classroom. Teachers plan tasks which are appropriate to pupils' abilities and this is apparent for both pupils with SEN and those of higher ability.

69. Most teachers have established good classroom routines. As a result, pupils behave well, remain on task and are generally keen and interested in mathematics leading to good progress in most lessons. However, in some lessons the teacher's introductory exposition continues for too long, resulting in a subsequent loss of attention by some pupils.

70. Leadership and management are good and have brought about good improvement since the last inspection. The well qualified and enthusiastic co-ordinator, the deputy headteacher, has been in post for just over two years and has been instrumental in raising standards in Key Stage 1 and improving teaching and assessment in Key Stage 2 to raise standards of achievement. The problem solving and investigational aspects of mathematics were identified by the previous inspection as a priority for development and evidence from lesson observations indicates that this

has been addressed. Tracking documents have been introduced for all year groups to identify pupils of high ability and those who need extra support.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Mathematics is used well in other subjects. Several examples were seen during the inspection. These included pupils' work in science and DT when they used measuring and data handling skills to construct models, formulate graphs and measure weights and distances.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to achieve well and reach above average standards.
- Standards are below average in Year 6 because of weak teaching in past years, which has resulted in inconsistent progress.
- Careful monitoring of the curriculum and teaching has resulted in a clear focus on improving pupils' investigative and problem solving skills.
- There is an over-reliance on commercial worksheets in Years 3 to 6, which limit the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills.
- There is insufficient emphasis in Years 3 to 6 on teaching pupils to analyse the results of investigations and draw conclusions from them.
- There is insufficient use of ICT to support learning in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

71. Standards in Year 2 are above average and achievement is good. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, overall, and sometimes very good. This is because teachers have a good understanding of the need for pupils to learn through enquiry and plan interesting activities for them. A very good example was the Year 2 lesson on electricity which began by reinforcing pupils' understanding of the uses of electricity through a song. Pupils went on to be 'science detectives' as they were asked to use their scientific knowledge to explain how they thought the teacher had made a clown with flashing eyes and a spinning bow tie. The pupils correctly identified the component parts of the required circuit and knew that it had to be complete for the electricity to flow. They also knew that all of the connecting parts must be made of metal and could draw a diagram of a simple circuit using symbols correctly to represent the bulb, battery, motor and wires. This lesson was particularly effective because pupils were expected to apply the knowledge they had acquired over previous weeks to creating their own clown with flashing or moving parts. Pupils' work shows that they also have a good understanding of the importance of good food and exercise for health and can explain the life cycle of a frog. Teachers' high expectations of the pupils are reflected in the levels of challenge in the work and lead to good achievement.

72. Standards in Year 6 are below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6, although now satisfactory, overall, and sometimes good, is not as strong as in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have not made enough progress in the past because of low expectations and weaknesses in the teaching of investigative skills, stemming from shortcomings in teachers' own knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are achieving soundly and reaching average standards for their age. Evidence shows that an increasing emphasis on learning through enquiry is helping to raise standards in Year 6. For example, pupils designed their own investigation to test how far toy cars would travel down a ramp and across the floor. They decided which factors to change, and which to keep the same, such as the height and surface of the ramp, the size of the wheels and the weight of the car.

73. In Years 3 to 6, teachers rely too heavily on commercial worksheets, which limit the scope of pupils' independent writing. This is particularly notable for the more able pupils. As a result, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills by writing about the investigations they have carried out in an appropriate scientific format. There is also too little emphasis on teaching older and more able pupils to analyse the results of their investigations in order to draw conclusions from them and make predictions about what might happen in other situations.

74. In Years 1 and 2, ICT is used effectively to support learning. For example, Year 2 pupils designed and made clown faces using a computer program, to which they later added bulbs, batteries and motors to create light and movement. In Years 3 to 6, there are too few planned opportunities for using ICT to support learning in science.

75. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory but improving. Discussions with the headteacher and governors confirm that science has, until recently, not had enough attention. Consequently, there has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection, when there were weaknesses in investigative work and lack of challenge for more able pupils. However, a new co-ordinator was appointed in September 2003 to lead development in the subject, which is one of the main priorities in the school improvement plan. This gives clear guidance about what needs to be done, based on careful evaluation of the standards being achieved and the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The school is providing appropriate training for staff to enable them to address the weaknesses in the subject and has set challenging measurable targets for improvement. The increased emphasis on investigations and problem solving throughout the school, together with an increasing awareness of how pupils learn, is already beginning to show positive results.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are making good progress in Years 3 to 6.
- Teachers make effective use of the ICT suite and interactive whiteboards.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the development of the subject.
- There are good links with other subjects to enhance pupils' learning.
- The knowledgeable ICT assistant provides effective support for teachers and pupils.

Commentary

76. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils were not making enough progress in ICT because they did not have enough opportunities to practise and consolidate skills. The installation of the ICT suite has contributed significantly to improving this situation. Pupils are now making good progress, because they have well planned opportunities to learn and practise new skills, as well as applying them across the curriculum. As a result, standards in Year 2 are above average. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good in Years 1 and 2, where teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils in Year 2 use a word processing program to write invitations and a 'painting' program to create pictures of a big type. They select and use a wide range of tools, such as the spray tool and flood fill facility and are able to save or print their work independently.

77. Standards are average in Year 6, where pupils have had more ground to make up. Progress is good throughout Years 3 to 6 due to good teaching and pupils are now achieving well. Teachers plan work well to cover all aspects of the national guidelines for the subject. Pupils in Year 6 use the Internet for research, and have created multimedia presentations which combine text and graphics.

They create spreadsheets to make mathematical calculations, and use a digital camera to take pictures for inclusion in written reports.

78. In a good Year 5 lesson, the teacher made effective use of an interactive whiteboard to teach pupils how to use complex searches when analysing a database. Clear explanations and demonstrations which involved the pupils ensured that all understood the steps required to carry out a search. A good discussion about the relative merits of computer databases and manual filing systems made the learning more meaningful for the pupils, who were able to evaluate the effectiveness of the process.

79. Lessons in the spacious ICT suite are well planned and provide pupils with ample opportunities to practise and consolidate skills. Teacher and pupils also benefit from the expertise of the ICT assistant who provides effective support by working alongside individual pupils or taking groups.

80. The ICT co-ordinator has only held the post since the beginning of the school year but is already providing good leadership in the subject. She has produced a comprehensive action plan and has a clear vision for the subject's development. The ICT link governor is also taking an active role in monitoring the subject's development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. The school has identified this aspect of ICT as a priority for improvement. As a result, teachers are now making effective links with other subjects in their planning. In a Year 6 lesson about micro-organisms, the teacher used a microscope that was connected to the computer to show pupils a magnified picture of mould on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils create graphs and use spreadsheets to make calculations in mathematics. They use a program to compose music and other programs to create pictures in the style of famous artists, such as Matisse and Kandinsky in Year 5. Year 3 pupils typed instructions for making chocolate crispy cakes and Year 2 pupils created a 'spidergram' to illustrate the uses of electricity.

HUMANITIES

No judgements are made about religious education as it is inspected separately. Inspectors did not see any lessons in geography during the inspection and there was not enough previous work available in order to make a reliable judgement about standards. Work and planning seen indicated appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum programmes for the subject, but due to the timetabling of the subject through the year, insufficient work was available to look at in Years 2 and 6. Inspectors talked to a group of Year 6 pupils about their work in geography, and they were all able to recall many details from their studies of coastal structures and the contributing factors of erosion and extension during their residential three-day trip to Corfe and the surrounding area. Their discussion revealed a thorough level of learning. However, there has been insufficient emphasis on improving provision in geography in recent years and it is not given enough time to ensure that all aspects are covered in enough depth.

HISTORY

Provision in history is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching time for history is lower than average.
- The use and development of writing skills in history are under-developed.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning.
- There are good links to pupils' speaking and listening skills and cultural development.
- There is no permanent co-ordinator for the subject.

Commentary

82. Although only one lesson in Year 5 was observed during the inspection an analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and classroom displays, and discussions with pupils indicate that standards are broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory. This judgement is similar to that made by the previous inspection. However, the amount of time allocated to teaching history is lower than average due to greater emphasis on RE.

83. In the satisfactory Year 5 lesson observed, pupils had been learning about the Ancient Greeks and, as it was the final lesson of the topic, the teacher began by questioning pupils about their previous work to ascertain their knowledge and understanding of the topic. The main area for discussion was the legacy that the Greeks had left to our civilisation and this linked well to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills and their cultural development. The teacher made effective use of an interactive whiteboard to enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of Ancient Greek mathematicians, philosophers and scientists. Pupils with SEN were supported well, working in the activity area with a support assistant. Although pupils moved around the room in order to study different Greeks, there was only one writing group and the lesson was rather rushed because of the time limitation. A scrutiny of pupils' work indicates a sound progression of learning through the various age groups from 'heroes' and 'the history of the circus' in Years 1 and 2, to a study of the Romans, Victorians and Ancient Greeks in Years 3 to 6.

84. Good links were apparent with pupils' social, moral and cultural development in workbooks, but the use of writing in history is under-developed. Year 6 pupils visited Studland for a residential visit in September and discussions with pupils indicate that this had historical features. The headteacher is temporarily co-ordinating the subject and planning is based on national guidelines to provide continuity of learning for all pupils. The history curriculum is enhanced by visits to historical museums in Poole and Portsmouth.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. No lessons were observed in DT and only one in art during the inspection. Evidence from pupils' workbooks, displays and teachers' planning indicates that standards are broadly in line with those expected in Years 2 and 6 in DT. There is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards in art, or about the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement in both subjects. Year 6 pupils designed and made a large quilted panel to be entered into the National Quilt Championship in June. The panel was inspired by the water lily paintings of Monet, and its design and making show that both art and DT feature strongly. Various experimental design ideas were tried by pupils prior to quilting, such as tie dying, silk screen and sponge painting. Pupils were also encouraged to evaluate various fabric samples before starting the final quilting. The class took advantage of the advice and support of a well qualified teacher from the local secondary school in the project. Year 2 pupils have designed and made a clown's car as part of their work on the history of the circus. Their written work shows sound design techniques and evaluation at each stage of their work. Pupils were encouraged to work co-operatively on the design and making elements and the final products were displayed in a corridor area.

86. There was insufficient evidence to judge provision in PE. Teaching and learning in the two lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 were good. Evidence in these two lessons indicates that standards in Years 5 and 6, in dance and gymnastics, are in line with those expected nationally. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards in Year 2 and in games activities throughout the school. The key issue in the last inspection concerning the teaching of swimming has been rectified. Pupils receive regular swimming lessons every week and the percentage of pupils likely to be able to swim for 25 metres by the end of Year 6 is approximately 85 per cent. In the Year 6 dance lesson, pupils worked co-operatively in groups to explore, improvise and combine dance movement. Music was used well in the aerobic warm-up to develop pupils' rhythmic abilities. The warm-up also indicated a sound knowledge of the effect of exercise on pupils' bodies. During the main activity pupils worked hard to improve their group dancing and were encouraged to

comment on other groups' performance. The teacher used the music and dance from "West Side Story" to stimulate pupils' imagination before starting their own dance routines.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain above average standards in music
- Pupils' attitudes to music are very good
- Teaching is very good
- Curricular and extra-curricular opportunities are very good

91. Music is a strength of the school, as at the time of the previous inspection. The programme presented to pupils throughout the school is very good and encompasses a wide range of activities and experiences involving a variety of music from different sources and genres. Standards attained by pupils are above average both in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve well, including those with SEN. There are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls.

92. Pupils enjoy music very much, and show enthusiasm when learning about it and taking part in singing, playing and composing activities. They sing well, with good awareness of pitch, melody, phrasing, and dynamics. By Years 5 and 6, pupils are able to sing in rounds and parts. Until recently, learning the recorder was optional, and a substantial number opted for this, but now all pupils learn to play the recorder from Year 2 onwards. This, of course, includes learning conventional notation. For their group compositions, pupils use both graphic or conventional notation, and refer to these notes to reproduce what they have created. By Year 6, they are able to play in parts, creating a multi-layered effect, using tuned instruments. Pupils listen to recordings of their compositions and evaluate them, suggesting modifications for improvement. They have ample opportunities to listen to music and to learn to appreciate it in an informed way, coming to an understanding of how the musical elements can play a part in expressing meanings and mood.

93. The quality of teaching in the subject is very good, across the school. A music specialist, who has excellent knowledge and understanding of the subject, takes all music lessons. She maintains a good pace in lessons, and makes them lively and interesting, motivating all her pupils well. She liaises well with class teachers in order to provide cross-curricular links in music lessons, and also gives any advice and help needed if teachers wish to include some music of their own in other lessons. The music programme is broad and balanced, and includes music from many genres, including those of non-Western traditions. Teaching methods are very effective, and assessment is good. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are integrated well into the music programme, including the use of some computer programs for composition.

94. The music teacher provides very good leadership in the subject. There is a dedicated music room, which, though small, is adequate and enhances the opportunities for teaching music. Resources are very good, and include a range of ethnic instruments, and also keyboards. There is a school choir and an orchestra, which perform for school events, as well as for local festivals and events. Other enrichment events include performances from visiting orchestras and musicians, and attendance at concerts. Pupils can take fee-paying tuition in flute, guitar or keyboard if parents wish, and these lessons are also taught by the same music teacher.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good provision for the personal, social and health education of the pupils is reflected in the good attitudes and relationships found in the school.
- Good leadership and management of the subject benefit all pupils
- The school has won a 'Healthy Schools Award' for its work in the health field of education.

Commentary

95. There has been effective development of the subject since the last inspection which reflects good leadership and management. The school has a good policy and planning for the subject, which is taught in its own right and linked to other subjects such as PE and science. The issue from the previous inspection concerning sex education and drugs awareness has been addressed and the school now makes good provision for these aspects. The school has invited several visitors to talk about aspects of the subject including the nurse for a 'growing up' talk to the older pupils. Peer mediation and nurture groups are provided by the school and pupils have a named adult to talk to about any personal problems. The school has also won a 'Healthy Schools Award' from the local borough and participated in the 'Streetwise' project. In the Year 3 lesson observed, pupils were encouraged to participate in a decision making process regarding the improvement of the school playground. Their findings were recorded to present to the School Council. Pupils' social and discussion skills were well developed by working in small groups. The provision for the personal, social and health development of pupils is a strength, and is reflected in the good attitudes and relationships evident throughout the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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