

INSPECTION REPORT

Cobden Primary School

Leeds

LEA area: Leeds

Unique reference number: 107963

Headteacher: Pauline Potter

Lead inspector: Rob Crompton

Dates of inspection: January 12th – 14th 2004

Inspection number: 255843

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of Children:	3 – 11 years
Gender of Children:	Mixed
Number on roll:	201
School address:	Cobden Road Farnley Leeds West Yorkshire LS12 5LA
Telephone number:	0113 2143567
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Milner
Date of previous inspection:	26 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves an urban community about three miles from the centre of Leeds. There are 201 children altogether, including 26 who attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Very few children are from ethnic minorities and one has English as an additional language. A small number of children are in public care and a few are from travelling families. As they enter the nursery, children's social skills and levels of language and mathematical development are much lower than those of most three-year-olds and they have little understanding of the world outside their homes. A quarter of the children have special educational needs, which is above average. Three children have a statement of special educational need, two of whom have physical difficulties. This is above average. About a third of the children are eligible for free school meals, which is an above average proportion and indicates an area of low social and economic conditions. The school has achieved the Investors in People standard, the Schools Achievement Award¹ and the Activemark². It is part of the Excellence in Cities³ and the Leadership Development Strategy⁴ initiatives. The headteacher took up her appointment in September 2003.

¹ Awarded to schools where there is a substantial rise in results in national tests taken by seven and eleven-year-olds.

² Awarded to schools which successfully promote participation in sports and games.

³ A government scheme to support urban schools in raising standards.

⁴ A national initiative for the professional development of headteachers and other key staff.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7230	Rob Crompton	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
2771	Chris Green	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design History Religious education
16971	Roger Hardaker	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Design and technology Geography Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** school where every effort is made to help all children to succeed. Good teaching means that most children achieve **well**. Children respond well to the strong support for personal development; they have positive attitudes and try hard. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the deputy head, senior staff and governors in moving the school forward. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good provision in the nursery and reception classes provides children with a very good foundation for future learning.
- The headteacher provides a strong sense of direction and inspires the school community.
- Effective teaching leads to good achievement.
- Very good support for children with special educational needs enables them to progress well.
- Children develop responsible and caring attitudes because their personal development is supported well.
- Standards in writing and speaking are below average.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected by Year 6.
- Attendance levels are well below average.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Teaching is now good. There has been a steady rise in standards and the rate of children's progress has improved significantly. Planning, assessment and the provision for special educational needs are much more effective.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

As a result of very good teaching in the nursery and reception classes, children are achieving very well from a low start. However, few are on course to reach the expected standards in all areas of learning⁵ by the end of the reception year because of their low attainment on entry. In years 1 and 2, children progress well and are reaching average standards by year 2 in reading, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education. Standards in writing and speaking are below average.

Standards achieved by year 6 children in mathematics and science have risen steadily over the last three years. Reading has improved but children's writing skills have reduced their performance in national tests and overall standards in English are below average. The difference between the school's results and those achieved nationally has significantly narrowed over the last three years, particularly in mathematics and science. The inspection found that standards continue to improve, particularly in reading, mathematics and science, where most children are on course to reach average levels by the end of year 6. Children are making steady progress in speaking, listening, writing and ICT but are not yet reaching the expected standards. There have been wide differences in the results of boys and girls in recent years but no pattern has emerged, indicating that these differences are due to the characteristics of each year group. Attainment in religious education matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. It was not possible to judge the standards attained in other subjects.

The school successfully meets the needs of all children, so that those with the potential to do well achieve good standards and those with special educational needs make good progress.

⁵ There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development and physical development.

YEAR 6 RESULTS

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

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.

A good emphasis on the use of literacy across the curriculum contributes significantly to the progress children make in this key skill. The use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory but opportunities to use ICT across the curriculum are too limited and this hinders progress.

Provision for children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Children have very good attitudes and behave well because of the effective provision for their personal development. Attendance is well below average and the school could do more to encourage better attendance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching is **good** and much is very good, which means children enjoy lessons and achieve well. Most teachers are good at motivating children to try hard. Good relationships between teachers, support staff and children contribute to the purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes and in year 1, which provides children with a solid foundation for learning. Children rise to the level of challenge in lessons and most take pride in their work. The curriculum is planned well and stimulates children’s interest. Children benefit from a good level of care and support. The school seeks the views of parents and sustains a good partnership between home and school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides very good leadership and governors support the school well. The deputy headteacher and subject leaders carry out their roles effectively. The school meets all its statutory responsibilities.

PARENTS’ AND CHILDREN’S VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. They value the care their children receive and are happy with the quality of teaching and the progress children make. Parents support the school’s inclusive approach, which enables all children to do well. A few expressed concerns about bullying and harassment but the inspection found that on the rare occasions that such incidents occur, the school deals with them very well. Children’s views are very positive. They particularly like the teachers and feel cared for by all adults in the school. They enjoy the wide range of extra activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in speaking and writing
- Improve standards in ICT
- Continue efforts to ensure higher levels of attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY CHILDREN

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement through the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the nursery and reception classes, which provides a good foundation for subsequent work; an improvement since the last inspection
- Children make good progress in mathematics and science
- Standards in writing, speaking and ICT are below the levels expected by year 6.

Commentary

1. The overall picture is one of good progress through the school. Although most children enter the school with low levels of attainment, they achieve well due to the good teaching supported by very strong leadership and management. This reflects the school's determination to ensure all children have equal opportunities to do as well as they can.
2. Children achieve very well in the nursery and reception classes due to the very good provision but the proportion reaching or exceeding the expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of reception is below that expected.
3. Results in reading in national tests at the end of year 2 were well below those of other schools in 2003 and below average in writing. Progress in reading has accelerated recently due to a successful drive for improvement, although standards are still a little below average. Standards in speaking and writing are improving more slowly. Children are making satisfactory progress from a low base but their achievement needs to be more rapid to enable standards to match more closely those in reading. Performance in mathematics and science matched that of schools nationally, indicating very good progress through years 1 and 2. Overall results were better than those of similar schools, with a larger proportion of children achieving good standards.

Standards in national tests at the end of year 2 – average point scores in 2003⁶

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (13.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.8 (12.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (14.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 24 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In 2003, results at the end of year 6 in English were well below the national average and below average in mathematics and science. When compared to similar schools, results were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. When compared to their results when they were in year 2, children's progress in English was average but above average in mathematics and science. The inspection found that children continue to make good progress overall in years 3 to 6 because the quality of teaching is good, particularly in year 6. Children are achieving well in mathematics and science. Teachers are working hard to improve standards in English. Attainment in reading is now reaching average levels but

⁶ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by all of their children with an average for all schools nationally.

weaknesses in writing mean that, although progress is good overall, standards in English are still below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.3 (24.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.8 (24.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.0 (27.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 31 children in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. In religious education, children are making steady progress and reaching the standards expected. They are working hard in ICT lessons, making satisfactory progress and reaching the expected levels in years 1 and 2. In years 3 to 6, children have good general computer skills and are achieving reasonably well in lessons but older children have too much ground to make up to reach the standards expected by the end of year 6. There was not enough evidence to fully evaluate standards in other subjects. Children with special educational needs make good progress towards their individual targets, particularly in the nursery and reception classes. Boys and girls do equally well.

Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Children's attitudes and behaviour are **good**, and their personal qualities are well developed. Attendance is well below average but punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teachers are skilled at establishing positive attitudes and good behaviour
 - Support for personal development is very good
 - The learning mentor provides good support for personal development
 - Some children are frequently absent
6. In almost all the lessons observed, children's behaviour was good and sometimes excellent. Although there are some children in most classes who find it difficult to remain attentive, teachers anticipate problems and can nip them in the bud. They remain positive and calm but assertive and this means that all children can focus on their learning without being distracted. Outside the classroom, children play boisterously in the playground but, with the support of adult supervisors, they behave well and look after one another. Children are open and welcoming to visitors. The inspection team found them delightfully honest and very positive about the school, as they talked enthusiastically about how much they enjoy school life.
 7. The very positive approach by all adults has a strong impact on children's attitudes and self-esteem. In assemblies, the headteacher and senior staff captivate children as they discuss moral issues through stories. Behaviour in assemblies is excellent; children offer their own ideas in the knowledge that other children will listen attentively. The oldest children provide very good role models for younger children and many take responsibility for ushering them to and from assemblies and supporting them at lunchtimes. The headteacher makes every effort to ensure children comply with the code of conduct and deals with severe breaches of the code assertively and sensitively.
 8. Children are successfully encouraged to reflect on moral and social behaviour as they negotiate and agree class rules with their teachers. The impact of a recent performance by the Yorkshire Playhouse was evident in the children's writing. The play had clearly raised issues and had stimulated children to express their personal feelings and address moral dilemmas. Children's spiritual development and awareness of cultural diversity is successfully promoted, particularly through art and drama. Children talked enthusiastically

and knowledgably about their recent participation in a multicultural festival and the school's 'World Day'.

9. The school's success in raising self-esteem and developing positive attitudes owes much to the learning mentor⁷, or the 'hug lady' as she is know by many children. Her approach reflects the school's commitment to helping children, whatever their individual circumstances, to take advantage of all the school offers, to broaden their horizons and raise aspirations. As one child put it, "The school does everything it can to keep you happy".
10. Children enjoy school and do not want to miss it. Most children are very punctual, which means that the school day gets off to a brisk start. The school monitors absence well, but could do more to promote good attendance to parents and children.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	6.3
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	0.4
National data:	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of children

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Any other ethnic group

Exclusions in the last school year

No of children on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
184	6	0
4	1	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Most subjects are well planned. Children are well cared for, guided and supported and respond well to the extra opportunities for them to learn. Good links with parents contribute significantly to children's progress.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. Teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes and in year 1 and year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Highly effective teaching in the nursery and reception classes means that children achieve very well
- Teachers establish very good relationships with children and are skilled at motivating them to learn
- Strong teaching in year 6 and year 1 inspires children to do their best

⁷ The Excellence in Cities initiative has enabled the school to appoint a learning mentor to provide individual support for children and their families.

- Lessons are very well planned to enable children of different abilities to make progress
- Teaching assistants provide very good support, although their time could be used more effectively during some lessons.

Commentary

11. Staff work together very effectively as a team in the nursery and reception classes. The teacher has excellent support from the nursery nurse who plays a full part in all lessons. Teaching assistants provide very good support. All have a very good understanding of how young children learn and this means that all the teaching is well thought through and based mostly on practical experience. Although many children are a little apprehensive when they first start, staff establish warm relationships and provide stimulating activities and children soon settle in. The indoor and outdoor areas provide a good range of activities that appeal to children's sense of fun. As a result, children enjoy learning and achieve very well.
12. Children respond well to the good teaching in years 1 to 6. They rise to the good level of challenge in lessons. Most concentrate on learning but in some classes, teachers have to work very hard to sustain attention as a few children are easily distracted. They are successful because of their considerable skills in motivating children to work hard and because they make lessons interesting. Teachers set a good level of challenge and respond to children's questions well, successfully extending their thinking. The practical approach taken in subjects such as mathematics and science works well. Teachers gain a good understanding of how children are progressing through informal assessments, marking work and structured tests. They are increasingly using this information to set individual targets and beginning to involve children in deciding priorities. This is helping children to understand clearly what they need to do to improve.
13. Teaching in year 6 is consistently strong, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Lessons are taken at a lively pace; children know what is expected of them and are keen to improve. Similarly effective teaching in year 1 draws a very positive response. The excellent provision for different groups in this class enables all children to achieve well.
14. Across the school, support for children of different abilities is very good. This is due to very careful planning together with the very good support provided by teaching assistants. They instil confidence and reassurance and understand how particular children are most effectively supported. Where their support is most successful, as well as helping small groups, teaching assistants observe and make notes during introductions to lessons and provide feedback for the teacher. Occasionally, teachers do not take full advantage of the skills of support assistants in this way.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	13	6	8	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **good**. **Good** opportunities are provided to extend learning outside of lessons. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision made for children with special educational needs is very good
- Previous omissions from the ICT curriculum has hindered achievement

- Accommodation in nursery and reception provides children with an exciting place to learn
- Opportunities for children to develop learning outside the classroom are good, especially in the arts

Commentary

15. Children with special educational needs are fully included in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers ensure that the work set takes account of children's individual needs. Together with the skilled contribution of learning support assistants, this enables children to take a full part in lessons.
16. There are weaknesses in the provision for ICT and this has a significant impact on standards, which are not at the level expected by year 6. Key aspects of the subject have been included in planning but the school has not had the resources to teach them until recently. Children currently in year 6 have gaps in their skills, knowledge and understanding
17. The school provides a good and varied programme of activities outside normal school time. Most of these are available to children from year 3 upwards but there is some provision made for younger children - for example, they can attend a computer club. There are good opportunities for children to participate in arts activities, including Asian dance and creative arts. They attend these and other activities enthusiastically. A programme of visits out of school and visitors to school makes a good contribution to children's learning and to their personal, social and cultural development. For example, class groups visit the medical museum in Leeds and theatre groups, such as a group from the West Yorkshire Playhouse, visit school to perform for the children.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for, guides and supports the children well. Its systems for listening to and taking account of their views are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pastoral care for nursery and reception children is particularly strong
- Adults are very attentive to the needs of children at all times
- There is a good level of supervision at breaktimes and lunchtimes

Commentary

18. Children get a very good start in the nursery and reception classes, with a very carefully planned induction programme and lots of adult attention. This means that they settle quickly into their new environment and feel safe and ready to learn.
19. Throughout the school, the quality of relationships between adults and children is the outstanding feature of pastoral care. Children say they are happy and secure at school, and feel able to turn to the teachers and support staff if they have a problem. This is evident from watching them in class, at the breakfast club, or in the playground. Formal structures for taking account of children's views, via the school council, are progressing well but are too new to have had an impact.
20. The employment of support staff as midday supervisors adds to the quality of care for children at lunchtime. The staff know the children well and provide continuity and consistency for them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are **good**. Those with other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All the staff are very accessible to parents
- Written information is good
- Exciting community initiatives open new horizons for children

Commentary

21. The school has good relationships with its parent community because the headteacher and all staff are very ready to talk to parents and sort out any concerns they have. Class teachers are available before and after school, while the headteacher and the learning mentor do their best to see parents who drop in during the day. As a result, any potential problems can quickly be nipped in the bud.
22. The school's open door policy is backed up by some good quality written information. The prospectus is very helpful and easy to use, and newsletters are welcoming. Reports to parents on their children's progress focus well on how well children are achieving and what they need to do to improve. However, the language used is not always clear for a parent audience.
23. The headteacher and the school have enthusiastically pursued initiatives available locally such as the 'Sparks' scheme and the West Yorkshire Playhouse outreach programme. Through these ventures, children from the school have the chance to take part in activities in sport, the arts and drama which they might otherwise never experience.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** and the governing body fulfils its role **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of purpose
- The school has a high commitment to including and meeting the needs of all children
- The governors and headteacher create highly effective teams
- Mathematics, science and the Foundation Stage are very well led
- Key staff are very good at evaluating past performance and taking action to improve

Commentary

24. Since her appointment in September 2003, the headteacher has built well on the school's previous achievements. She provides a strong sense of direction. Her very good leadership, coupled with the support of the deputy head and governors, inspires the school community.
25. A high level of commitment to inclusion by school leaders has created a very good ethos. This has been successful in raising awareness and establishing a proper concern for the needs of individuals. Leadership of the programme for children with special educational needs is very good. Senior staff provide fine role models for the children; the principle of leading by example is an effective feature of the school's success.
26. The governors and headteacher fulfil their statutory duties well and have created highly effective teams who raise standards in the school and help all children to strive to achieve the best that they can. They have promoted a climate of equality and fairness conducive to learning and progress.

27. The governors know the strengths of the school and those areas which are in need of development. The leadership team evaluates the past performance of the school accurately and lead action for improvement very well. The governors and senior staff face up to and take difficult decisions. They are realistic in finding appropriate actions where performance needs to be improved. As a result, since the last inspection, there is now more effective teaching and learning, and standards of achievement have risen significantly.
28. Financial management is linked well to achieving the school's priorities and only a small carry forward is maintained year on year. Resources are well used for the benefit of the children's education and the school provides good value.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	611,618
Total expenditure	593,533
Expenditure per pupil	2,938

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21,880
Balance carried forward to the next year	39,965

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

29. As a result of consistently very good teaching and very good adult support, children in the nursery and in the reception class make very good progress in all areas of learning. However, due to their low starting point, standards in all areas are below those expected by the end of the reception year. The provision is very well led and managed by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who enthuses other staff. She has helped to create a very good team of equally committed colleagues. An exciting and relevant curriculum is planned and great care is taken to ensure that all children get equal access to the activities and teaching on offer. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now very good. Very good use is now made of assessment information to plan future work. Planning now caters for the use of computers to enable children to improve their mathematical skills and understanding.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are made to feel very secure
- A wide range of opportunities help children to become responsible and mature
- The sensitive approach of adults supports children's self-esteem

Commentary

30. Children respond very well to the exciting, vibrant, yet calm environment. All adults are caring and supportive so children feel able to try things out for themselves. There are very good opportunities for children to learn to work together and to take responsibilities. Adults expect them to be responsible, taking every opportunity to encourage this. For example, children are always encouraged to tidy away after activities. When needed, adults correct the children firmly but gently.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for role-play help develop speaking and listening skills and opportunities for writing
- The environment stimulates language and discussion through interesting displays

Commentary

31. Most start school with poorly developed language skills. Although they make very good progress, many children have yet to develop sufficient language to express themselves clearly. They enjoy very well planned activities which are rich in language development opportunities. Role-play and imaginative play are used very effectively to help children develop their speaking and listening skills and to provide opportunities and stimulus for writing. For example, children enjoy and fully participate in a range of language based activities involving

singing, reciting, writing and drama based on the story 'We're going on a bear hunt'. In both nursery and reception, there is direct teaching of specific knowledge and skills and children gradually learn to share books and recognise simple words. They make marks and are beginning to form letters but many do not have sufficient control of writing materials. Children are surrounded in the classrooms with stimulating and well-planned displays that reflect the importance of language through signs, notices and books.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of practical tasks support the direct teaching

Commentary

32. Children respond well to the highly effective teaching and achieve very well from a low start. They are given many opportunities to learn through practical tasks during mathematics sessions and incidentally throughout the day. For example, nursery children count out loud when entering instructions into a programmable moving toy. Reception children are very well prepared for more formal and direct teaching. The reception teacher adapts the national numeracy strategy to meet the particular needs of the children. In one such lesson, children made very good progress as they were taught how to record simple number sentences using numbers and mathematical signs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside environment provides a valuable resource
- Children's development is enhanced through stimulation in art and design, music, dance and imaginative role-play
- Visits and visitors are used well
- There are good opportunities for children to work with computers

Commentary

33. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes plan very effectively through topics and themes linking these to a wide range of exciting activities. In these, they incorporate music, dance, art and role-play. They ensure that through these experiences children broaden their understanding of the world around them, begin to understand about the past and develop computer skills. As a result of this stimulating planning, children are very well motivated and achieve very well. Teachers motivate and enthuse children by their skilful demonstrations using computers and programmable toys. The reception children use computers with confidence and often without the need for adult support. The expertise of people in the community, such as the school nurse and members of the local fire brigade and visits out of school, greatly enrich the curriculum.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective use is made of the outdoor play area
- A good range of large toys and play equipment is available
- There are good opportunities for children to choose activities both indoors and outside throughout the day
- Children's manipulative skills are not as well developed as their larger physical skills

Commentary

34. Teachers provide very good opportunities for children to choose from a broad range of activities indoors. Very effective use is made of the outdoor play area which is well resourced with a good range of large toys and play equipment. This makes a significant contribution to children's progress.

35. By the end of the reception year, children have appropriate control over their large body movements and run and climb as well as most other children of their age. Their ability to control a pencil or paintbrush and manipulate small objects is less well developed. Overall, their development is slightly below that expected at the end of the reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of different experiences is planned and resources are good.
- Role-play promotes effective learning.

Commentary

36. Children enjoy the experiences that the very good teaching provides. They are encouraged to develop their imaginations through role-play. They enjoy creating colourful two and three-dimensional pictures and artefacts. They often work independently and select materials of their own choosing, for example, when creating portraits of themselves.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and in writing are below average
- The quality of teaching and learning is effective in helping children make good progress
- Support for children with special educational needs is good
- Good leadership and management are successful in bringing about improvements

Commentary

37. Standards in English are rising significantly, especially in reading. Whilst attainment is below average overall when children leave the school, the progress made through years 1 to 6 is good, particularly so in reading where standards reach the national average. Teachers plan well. Time is used appropriately to ensure that children maintain high levels of interest and make good progress. More able children fulfil their potential and achieve above average results.

38. By the end of year 2, most children read with understanding and can talk about the ideas contained in their reading. Children make good progress in speaking, listening and writing but standards do not match those in reading. Children are helped to read in a range of creative ways. They enjoy books and the pictures, stories and information they contain. Children of all abilities read regularly and are given many interesting opportunities to practise their reading skills and to develop them further. The teaching of speaking, listening and writing is satisfactory and the school is working hard to help children make more rapid progress. More extended writing is being introduced in years 1 and 2, and in years 3 and 4, writing includes fewer isolated exercises.
39. Good progress continues in reading and by eleven, many children achieve standards which compare favourably with children in similar schools. Standards however remain below the national average and although writing improves, it is still below the standard of reading. Children have too few strategies to help them write independently and at length. They are reliant on help from adults, except when completing short exercises.
40. Where children make the best progress, it is because the planning is based upon careful assessments of individual learning needs. Teachers also read along with children and use questions skilfully to draw out the meaning of words and sentences and encourage them to make properly articulated responses. Teachers are supportive of the children's efforts whilst maintaining appropriately challenging expectations.
41. The co-ordinator carefully analyses performance and monitors and evaluates the teaching and learning across the school. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the children's work and in their learning. She has devised a good action plan in order to raise attainment, notably in writing. Careful assessment drives the teachers' planning so that it effectively builds upon what children have already learned. The school is well placed to improve further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42. The school is committed to developing literacy skills through other subjects and is successful in doing this in a number of ways. Examples of literacy skills being developed are found in most subjects. Planning makes regular reference to literacy opportunities and these are taken well. In years 5 and 6, children are beginning to extend and improve their writing more appropriately in subjects such as history, science, geography and religious education. Displays of children's work and materials on classroom walls prepared by teachers often have a strong literacy emphasis which support children's endeavours to improve their literacy in all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children achieve well because the teaching is consistently good
- The subject is very well led and managed
- Very good improvement has taken place since the school was last inspected
- Children enjoy mathematics and have good attitudes to learning

Commentary

43. Starting from a low base, children are achieving well. They are reaching average standards, because of good teaching. By year 2, children have a sound grasp of basic number facts and

this provides a solid foundation for later work. For example, children in year 6 multiply and divide large numbers with reasonable confidence.

44. Strengths of teaching include:

- Lessons are interesting and motivating
- Work is carefully planned to provide the right level of challenge for different children
- Teachers help children to explain things using the correct mathematical vocabulary
- Good questioning helps teachers to assess how well children understand
- Support for children with special educational needs enables them to make at least as much progress as the other children
- Resources are used well

45. Teaching is lively and interesting so children enjoy mathematics and are well motivated. There is a good pace to lessons with all children, including the high attainers, being set appropriately challenging tasks. Children respond enthusiastically, co-operating well when working together in small groups.

46. Very good improvement has been made since the last inspection. Standards have improved steadily since 1999. Children with special educational needs now make at least good progress whereas at the last inspection they made satisfactory progress. Teachers' very good subject knowledge significantly contributes to the consistently good teaching and learning seen across the school. Leadership and management of the subject have improved considerably and are now very good. Monitoring of teaching is effective and impacting on raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. Children sometimes use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and this helps them to develop an appreciation of the practical uses of mathematical skills. For example, children measure when designing and drawing plans in design and technology, they take measurements in science, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science. Opportunities for using mathematics across the curriculum are satisfactory overall but they tend to occur incidentally and not as a result of systematic planning. This means some children may miss out on consolidating their mathematical skills outside numeracy lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching means children achieve well
- Practical work helps children to understand new ideas
- Good leadership and management has helped to improve standards
- Literacy and numeracy are developed well in science but opportunities for children to use ICT are limited

Commentary

48. Children make good progress and achieve average standards by year 2 and year 6. Their investigative skills are developed well through the school. Children enjoy lessons because teachers make them interesting. Most work is practical, so children learn by seeing and doing. During a lesson in the year 2/3 class, children were fully absorbed when investigating how the consistency of paint determined how quickly it flowed down a slope. They offered good suggestions about how to make their tests fair, with the more able suggesting that the

amount of paint should be measured accurately. The general level of understanding was at the expected level for their age, reflecting good progress through years 1 and 2. A high degree of interest and enthusiasm was also evident in a very good year 6 lesson. This was taken at a very brisk pace and the level of challenge was high. The teacher used her good grasp of the subject well in framing questions and extending children's thinking. As they explored the chemical reaction between bicarbonate of soda and vinegar, children demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of solids, liquids and gases. All children worked carefully, showing good skills of observation and recording. The standards evident in both these lessons and in children's books reflect recent results in national tests, when children scored more highly than those in similar schools.

49. Very good leadership and management have led to a dramatic rise in standards over the last three years. Guidelines for teachers have drawn on a number of sources to provide a programme of work which suits the children, many of whom have below average literacy skills. A manageable yet effective assessment system helps teachers to set work at the right level of challenge to take children's learning forward in small steps. As a result, standards are now at average levels. Careful thought has been given to providing resources, such as the set of revision cards used very successfully in year 6 to reinforce children's knowledge. All the children were thrilled as they answered a sequence of questions round the class in under three minutes and were motivated to shorten the time.
50. Teachers frequently ask children to explain their ideas to the rest of the class and promote the use of appropriate scientific terms. This contributes to children's skills in speaking and listening and extends their vocabulary. They are encouraged to present their work clearly, using bullet points and labels, and this supports writing. Practical investigations often include measuring, giving children a chance to use their mathematical skills for a specific purpose. There is a little use of ICT to produce tables of results and accounts but opportunities are missed to harness the power of computers in investigations – for example by the use of sensors instead of thermometers to record changes in temperature.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although the provision for ICT is now satisfactory, children in year 6 have too much ground to make up in order to achieve the expected standards
- Children are currently achieving well in lessons but they have not made sufficient progress over time
- The recently appointed co-ordinator has made a good start on the road to raising standards

Commentary

51. Children in years 1 and 2 are making satisfactory progress and reaching standards that are broadly as expected. Although no lessons were observed in these year groups, evidence from children's work indicates that they are developing appropriate computer skills, such as word-processing and using graphics programs.
52. In years 3 to 6, children use computers confidently and are making good progress in lessons because the teaching is effective. However, not all the required aspects of ICT have been taught consistently enough to enable children to reach the standards expected by year 6. Some good work was seen in word-processing, where year 6 children had produced newspaper articles, setting text out in columns and inserting pictures. Children demonstrate satisfactory standards as they use the Internet for research and create patterns on screen by programming a sequence of commands. They have a limited knowledge of databases, however, and have not developed skills in using sensors to record changes in temperature,

light or sound. Plans show that teachers intend to introduce these activities before the end of the year, but there is too much ground to make up for children to achieve the expected levels.

53. The recently appointed co-ordinator is aware of the weaknesses in provision and has ensured that all aspects of the subject are now included in curriculum guidelines. The appropriate resources have been acquired to teach the missing elements and further training for teachers has been arranged. Samples of work, indicating the levels expected in each year group provides teachers with a benchmark and a straightforward assessment procedure is being introduced. These initiatives have brought the provision to a satisfactory level.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

54. Children make some use of ICT in English, mathematics and art. They word-process stories occasionally and use a computer program when learning about angles. Children's understanding of pointillism in the year 3/4 class was enhanced as they used the computer to create images using tiny dots on the screen. There is little evidence of computers being used in other subjects, such as science. The links made with ICT are incidental rather than planned systematically and this limits the occasions when children can consolidate their skills. This lack of opportunity hinders the rate of progress through the school.

HUMANITIES

55. No lessons were seen in **history** and **geography** during the inspection. Analysis of a small sample of children's work and an examination of teachers' planning indicates that children have a satisfactory range of learning opportunities in both subjects
56. In **geography**, opportunities are made to extend children's mathematical skills, for example year 6 children apply their knowledge of grids when using maps and they use graphs when presenting their findings. Good use is made of the local environment when children undertake a local study. For example, they considered environmental issues in some depth when discussing the pros and cons of the possible locations of a new supermarket in the locality.
57. Interesting themes are followed in **history** in years 1 and 2 where children learn about the past from a range of sources of information. For example, year 1 children examine the purpose and design of an electric toaster and consider how toast was made in the past. Year 2 children use music of the Lindesfarne monks and the Viking invaders to get a feeling of how life must have been like in those early days. Simple time lines give children an understanding of how events and objects can be placed in chronological order. In years 3 and 4, children are helped to understand the relationship between invasion and settlement in British history. In years 5 and 6 the themes covered are rather more challenging and demand an appropriately higher level of language to express the ideas being studied. Work in history is often recorded in writing and the accounts of life in Tudor England and in Ancient Greece show that children have gained a good understanding of events following independent enquiry.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good knowledge of major religious festivals
- Weak skills in speaking and listening, and writing limit achievement

Commentary

58. Children achieve satisfactorily and reach the expected levels by the time they are seven and eleven. Children's recorded work is hampered by the difficulties many younger children have

in expressing ideas and writing them down. However, through satisfactory teaching, sufficient progress is made by children for them to have collected a range of ideas and opinions about the main religious traditions and the impact these have had on people's lives in the past and in contemporary living. Most children in year 6 are aware of major festivals in the Christian, Muslim and Jewish calendar notably Christmas, Id-al-Fitr and Hanukkah. Others are less confident and know that such occasions are special for members of those faith groups. Children talk with reasonable confidence about stories in the Bible and know that Jesus is central to the book of the New Testament. They are aware that the Qur'an is very special and that it is tradition to wash before touching it. Appropriate links are made to personal and social education. The temporary subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

59. No lessons were observed in **art and design** although a wide range of children's work was seen, along with teacher's planning. This evidence indicates that tasks are varied and interesting. The art portfolio contains photographs of previous work. The children's commentary on these photographs shows that there is breadth of study in line with the requirements of the national curriculum and that they are gaining experience of a range of materials and techniques. Displays include examples of painting and pictures and patterns in pastels and collage. There are particularly good collections of self-portraits and work emerging from the creative arts club on the theme of cats. This has inspired some well-finished masks from an integrated art, music and dance stimulus.
60. In **design and technology**, it was possible to observe only one lesson. This was a year 4 and 5 class investigating techniques for strengthening and reinforcing structures. Children were given opportunities to choose materials and to pursue their own ideas. These children were working at the expected levels in marking out, cutting and fixing. They used their mathematics skills when measuring and were aware of the need to devise a fair test when evaluating different structures.
61. Two **music** lessons were seen. Children sang in assemblies and were observed learning the recorder and brass instruments. Discussions were held with the co-ordinator and with children, and a recording of the Christmas performances was viewed. It was not possible to judge overall provision or standards but it is evident that children have a good range of musical experiences. Annual workshops run by professional musicians over several days extend children's understanding of different types of music and composition and they conclude with a performance to the whole school. The school funds instrumental tuition for those who show an interest and the eight children learning brass instruments are keen and enthusiastic. Staff willingly teach music but none has a high level of expertise. A teacher from the local authority's music service teaches all classes in rotation. Her teaching is very good. She adopts a lively pace and dynamic approach which sustains children's interest and concentration. Children in the year 3/4 class achieved very well in a lesson observed, making good progress in singing, rhythm work and in learning standard musical notation.
62. In **physical education**, it was possible to observe only one lesson in dance. This was of good quality. Children in year 6 responded well to music that excited them. They co-operated well working in small groups exploiting different ways to interpret the music through movement and creating a dance sequence. The quality of their dance and movement were good. Children in year 4 and 5 go swimming weekly and school records show that by the time they enter year 6 about 90 per cent of children can swim 25 metres unaided.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

63. It was not possible to judge overall provision. Scrutiny of planning and discussion with teachers and children indicate that the school works hard to provide a comprehensive programme. Time is set aside each week for children to discuss issues that concern them

and teachers regularly include aspects of personal, social and health education in day-to-day lessons. The recently established school council provides a good opportunity for children to learn about democracy and how they can contribute by sitting on the council or by electing their class representatives.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Children's achievement	3
Children's attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well children learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets children's needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Children's care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for Children	3
How well the school seeks and acts on children's views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	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).

