

INSPECTION REPORT

CROW ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Lane, Skelmersdale

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119334

Headteacher: Mr G Cooke

Lead inspector: Peter Sandall
25771

Dates of inspection: 15th-17th September 2003

Inspection number: 255932

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 pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	161
School address:	School Lane Skelmersdale Lancashire
Postcode:	WN8 8QG
Telephone number:	01695 724046
Fax number:	01695 723805
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Audrey Bridson
Date of previous inspection:	16 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Crow Orchard is a one form entry primary school serving a suburban locality in Skelmersdale. Although it draws some pupils from a wider area, parents and governors regard it as being at the heart of the local community. There is a balance of boys and girls in its 161 pupils, all of whom are of white British descent. The school serves areas of both private and local government housing, and pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry to the reception class is improving, due in part to the school's decision to provide part-time pre-school education, and is now close to the average expected for their age. However the majority of pupils entered school with below average attainment. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is broadly average, as is the number entitled to a free school meal. There are no pupils for whom English is a second language. The school has increased in size in recent years, and there has been some new building to accommodate this. Pupils coming to the school almost always remain in it for their primary education.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25771	Peter Sandall	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Information and Communication Technology, Physical Education
9189	John Horwood	Lay inspector	
30439	Malcolm Heyes	Team inspector	English, Geography, History, Religious Education, Special Educational Needs
27369	Carolyn Sandall	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Science, Art and Design, Design and Technology, Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Crow Orchard is an effective school which gives good value for money. At its heart lies an ethos which values every member of the school community, with implicit expectations that all will contribute. The headteacher is a good role model and has good support from his governors and staff. High expectations of behaviour provide a supportive climate for learning. Teaching is good overall. Pupils show a good grasp of basic skills, but there are too few opportunities for them to make choices and take decisions in lessons. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are in line with the national average by the end of Year 6, although girls do better than boys in general.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher and governors provide good leadership, setting high expectations for continued improvement.
- The very good ethos ensures all pupils play a full part in the life of the school regardless of their differences or backgrounds.
- Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work.
- There are very strong links with both parents and the community.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Pupils throughout the school have too few opportunities for independent learning.
- Staff roles and responsibilities lack clarity, affecting the quality of leadership in some areas.

The school's previous report in 1998 was very positive, and the school has worked hard to maintain high standards in all aspects of pupils' development. The key issue relating to greater governor involvement has been met effectively, and governors now play a full part in the leadership and management of the school. The second key issue asked that pupils be given more opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. This has been achieved in their contribution to the life of the school, but needs further development in their own learning. The school has made satisfactory improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	C	B	B
mathematics	D	C	A	A
science	D	C	C	C

*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.*

Pupils achieve well overall. In the Foundation Stage children achieve satisfactorily and meet the goals they are expected to reach in all areas of learning by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2, pupils reach expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics and achievement is again satisfactory. In science, pupils do not attain expected standards by the end of Year 2, as they lack some basic knowledge and have too few opportunities to investigate. In Years 3 to 6, in English, mathematics and science pupils attain nationally expected standards, and in some years and subjects exceed these. They also attain at least as well as pupils in similar schools. Given that these pupils entered school with below average attainment, this represents good achievement. The relatively small numbers of pupils in each year group means some fluctuation is likely. Standards in physical education are above average, partly due to the use of specialist teachers; this has a positive

effect in other subjects too. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school, due to the quality and level of support they receive. Inspection evidence indicates that in many lessons pupils are passive learners, which has some bearing on the better achievement of girls in national tests. Where boys are involved in active discovery their attention and concentration improve considerably.

Pupils display very good personal qualities, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their attitudes to each other and relationships with their teachers are very good. This and their very good behaviour contribute strongly to the ethos of the school. The school's high expectations are central to pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Pupils are well educated. The **good teaching** has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The very good behaviour of pupils means they are ready and keen to learn. Teachers give positive encouragement, particularly in the Foundation Stage, and generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Learning support staff make an effective contribution, as does regular homework. Pupils work hard to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. However, they need more chance to apply these independently to embed their learning through relevant experiences and to write at length.

The school successfully enriches the curriculum through a programme of visits and visitors, offering pupils a range of opportunities outside the school day to participate in sport and the arts. Provision for health and safety is good, and very good relationships mean that pupils have ready access to support and guidance. Partnerships with parents and the local community are very good, and there are good links with other schools. All this has a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has built a supportive and enthusiastic team, all of whom provide very good role models for the pupils. Management in all aspects is smooth and efficient. The governing body have a good understanding of where the school is and the direction it needs to take. While individual subject leaders work hard, some roles and responsibilities lack clarity.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school, demonstrated both by the 78 per cent response to the questionnaire and the 16 parents who attended the parents' meeting. There was a positive response of over 90 per cent to every question, and a high level of praise for everything the school does.

Pupils too are very happy with their school. They believe they are well taught, helped to improve and expected to work hard. They find their teachers fair and prepared to listen. While there were no negative responses, 25 per cent of pupils in Years 3 to 6 were less positive about being trusted to do things on their own.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide planned, regular opportunities throughout the school for pupils to learn independently.
- Raise standards in science by the end of Year 2.
- Plan opportunities for writing for various purposes in all subjects of the curriculum.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of teachers to make best use of their strengths.

And, to meet statutory requirements for the Foundation Stage:

- Provide a secure outdoor area which children can access freely.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

By the time children leave the Foundation Stage the majority achieve satisfactorily and meet most aspects of the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning. Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average, which represents sound achievement by these pupils overall. Standards in science are not as good, being well below those expected nationally, and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and particularly in mathematics. While standards fluctuate over time due to the relatively small number of pupils in each year group, they are often above national expectations. The standards for pupils currently in Year 6 are judged to be broadly in line. This represents good achievement over time as they came into school with below average attainment. Girls perform better than boys throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good overall and in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is limited because independent learning skills are insufficiently fostered.
- Standards in science should be better by the end of Year 2, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (15.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.8 (13.2)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	16.7 (14.1)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (27.2)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	28.8 (27.0)	26.7 (26.6)
science	28.5 (28.4)	28.3 (28.3)

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

1. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school with broadly average levels of attainment. They generally reach appropriate standards in relation to the early learning goals in the six areas of learning; both higher attaining and lower attaining children achieve soundly. However their personal development is restricted by a lack of opportunity to make independent choices in their activities, and this has an impact on their attainment overall.
2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average in Years 1 and 2, showing satisfactory achievement. Trends over time in the tests at Year 2 are similar to those found

nationally in reading and writing, given the school's lower starting point in 1998. Mathematics shows greater levels of improvement, although the results of tests fell back in 2003, partly because fewer pupils attained the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence supports the judgement of sound achievement, but suggests that last year pupils' achievement was better in Year 1 than in Year 2. The relatively small number of pupils in each year group makes it likely that there will be fluctuations in attainment from year to year. Standards in science for Year 2 pupils are well below national expectations, as indicated by both teacher assessment and inspection evidence. Different aspects of the science curriculum are not covered in sufficient depth, and there is too much reliance on pupils filling in worksheets, rather than pursuing investigations. The achievement of pupils is not carefully monitored to ensure the school knows why and where attainment is low.

3. By the end of Year 6 standards in the core subjects are broadly in line with national averages, although again there are differences from year to year attributable to the differences in groups of pupils. Current Year 6 pupils are achieving well in relation to their attainment on entering school. Pupils performed well in national tests in 2002, particularly when judged against their prior attainment; their achievement in 2002 varied from sound in science to good in English and very good in mathematics. This reflects the efforts the school has made to improve the quality of education in mathematics and, more recently, in pupils' writing and suggests that the programmes put in place have correctly identified some of the key issues involved. However, there is little evidence of extended pieces of writing in subjects other than English, or a focus on writing in a particular style or for a specific purpose. Although results in the 2003 national tests are weaker overall, there was an improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in both English and science, indicating that higher attaining pupils achieved well.
4. Standards in all other subjects are average, with the exception of physical education (PE), where they are above expectation by the end of Year 6. The use of specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6 makes a positive contribution, for example in PE and information and communication technology (ICT), notably in the acquisition of skills. The emphasis in many other subjects on the learning and practising of specific skills, often by completing quantities of worksheets, does not help pupils to understand how these skills may be used to make other learning more effective. Work seen indicates that pupils are rarely challenged to think independently: making choices, taking decisions or working out their own ways to reach an answer. This emphasis on the teaching and recording of knowledge suggests one reason for the difference in performance between boys and girls, given that boys generally are better motivated by the challenge of practical activity. This was borne out by boys' response in some lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development and their relationships with each other and with adults are very good. Behaviour and attitudes are very good. Attendance, which fell slightly in 2001/2, has now improved and is satisfactory with good punctuality. There have been no exclusions of pupils. Moral and social development are very good and both spiritual and cultural development are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils result in a good learning environment.
- Pupils take full advantage of the activities provided for them by the school.
- The school has high expectations for pupils' conduct which results in total freedom from any form of harassment.
- Pupils have very good relationships and this increases their confidence and self-esteem.
- Excellent and comprehensive personal records are kept on all pupils, which inform teachers and other staff.
- Children's personal, social and emotional development in the Foundation Stage is limited by too few opportunities to make their own decisions.

Commentary

5. Pupils are well behaved in lessons throughout the school and are keen to contribute by answering questions and helping the teacher with tasks. Pupils all work well during lessons, particularly where activities are suitably challenging for all the groups. Their attitudes allow the teacher to concentrate on helping them learn without being distracted by any behaviour issues.
6. The school offers a wide range of activities for pupils and they join in with these with enthusiasm. As well as daily activities, such as very good provision of wall mounted board games to promote social skills during the lunch-time break, there are a range of clubs both during the day and after school. An example seen during the inspection was where a large proportion of the boys were joining in the after school football club, a similar opportunity being available for girls later in the week.
7. The school takes pride in providing a family environment with a natural ethos which expects good conduct and relationships as a matter of course. The staff promote the high standards they expect very effectively, making good use of the school's procedures, including rewards systems. Relationships are a clear strength of the school, consistently demonstrated by staff and pupils. For example, in the playground some of the older pupils support the younger ones with their play and help develop their self-esteem. In lessons too, pupils, teachers and support staff relate very positively to each other, and pupils often work productively with little direct supervision. Older pupils say, *'We're expected to solve problems for ourselves on the playground if we can'*. The level of maturity displayed by most pupils is a tribute to the school's expectations, and forms a very sound basis for providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to work with greater independence.
8. The school has good systems to ensure that pupils are aware of and respect other faiths; parents say that pupils talk about this at home. They engage in a wide variety of charity fund raising and through this have a good appreciation of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Both art and music are used effectively to broaden pupils' experience. The school promotes spiritual development effectively through assemblies and religious education. Some lessons, however, do not give pupils the space to develop their own thoughts and ideas, or make connections between different aspects of their learning.
9. Pupils, both in conversation and in response to the questionnaire, are very positive about their school, as are parents. They are happy to be here, proud of the school and would recommend it to others. While still mostly satisfied, pupils show some concern about being trusted to do things on their own, more so as they get older. They are certainly trusted around school, so this presumably refers to expectations in lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
161	0	0

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are well supported by the school's ethos, its shared commitment to improvement and the overall good quality of leadership and management. Assessment procedures are sound and satisfactory use is made of them.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Most teaching in the reception class is either good or very good, and the majority of teaching is good throughout the school. Pupils know that school is for learning, and show good levels of concentration and perseverance, particularly when given a task to complete. Because there is a good ethos for learning, pupils are capable of responding to further challenges which would enhance both their understanding and their personal development. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teaching is effective in Years 3 to 6, ensuring good learning experiences for the pupils.
- Teachers encourage pupils to learn.
- Planning is thorough and targets both skills and knowledge.
- Teachers expect and obtain high standards of behaviour.
- Teaching assistants are fully involved and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- Homework is used effectively to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils show good understanding of the skills and knowledge they acquire.
- Teaching is at times too prescriptive and this limits the potential for learning.
- In some subjects and classes too much reliance is placed on pupils completing worksheets; there are missed opportunities to encourage pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (3%)	18 (56%)	13 (41%)	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.

10. The school is a purposeful and well-ordered learning community in which both teachers and pupils play a positive part. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning. Non-teaching staff have a clear understanding of their role in general and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for lower attaining pupils. New and expensive resources such as the whiteboards, which enable teachers to use computer technology as an aid to teaching the whole class, are integrated into teachers' planning so that they add to the effectiveness of the lesson.
11. There is an appropriate focus on the skills of literacy and numeracy, particularly in the lessons devoted specifically to these subjects. There is evidence of these skills being used and applied in other subjects, but too few opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length. ICT skills are well taught by a specialist teacher and thought is given to using these in other subjects, for example constructing graphs or designing art work.

12. Teachers generally have high expectations of their pupils, in terms of both work and behaviour, and these are well met. The school recognises through its development planning the need to extend higher attaining pupils. It also sees the need to focus on pupils' independent learning skills in subjects such as ICT, using and applying mathematical skills, and enquiry skills in science. Tasks which are provided as part of a lesson rarely ask pupils to think or consider their response, or to discuss their learning with others, either as a pair or in groups, but almost always practise or consolidate a specific skill. There is some evidence of pupils setting up their own investigations in science, but generally pupils follow teachers' instructions.
13. Assessment is used satisfactorily. Work is regularly marked, although only a minority of teachers include helpful comments to move pupils' understanding forward. Pupils' achievement in the core subjects of English and mathematics is carefully tracked, and as a result the level of work expected is matched closely to their individual needs. However, this is not happening in science in Year 2. The school has begun to analyse pupils' response to formal tests so that teaching is focused on areas where there is less understanding.
14. Subject leaders generally have a sound understanding of their subject across the school, although they tend to be more confident with the age range they are teaching in.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and balanced, ensures all pupils are included and is responsive to their individual needs. Enrichment activities in the school are interesting, relevant to all pupils and are well supported and attended. They include visits to places of interest, and visitors into school, which give pupils different experiences of life and are incorporated into learning activities. The school is well staffed and resourced, which helps to provide a full curriculum. The accommodation is safe and adequate for the delivery of the curriculum, although there is no designated area to develop the outdoor curriculum for Foundation Stage children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures they make good progress.
- All pupils, regardless of ability or gender, have access to a full curriculum.
- Enrichment through extra curricular activities is a strong feature of school life, with a range of opportunities in both sport and the arts.
- There is a good number of visits out and visitors into school which broadens pupils' experience.
- The school is well staffed with teachers, leading to smaller teaching groups.
- Learning support assistants are used effectively to sustain pupils' learning.
- Good resources contribute to the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

15. The school's policy for equality of opportunity is reflected in its practice. It is clearly illustrated in the school's policies, the quality of teaching and learning, the broad and balanced curriculum, the commitment of staff and governors and the way in which they care for their school community. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Their learning is well structured and the deployment of support staff ensures that pupils are fully involved throughout lessons. In addition, the use of a 'floating' teacher offers extra support in the mornings, both within and outside lessons.
16. There is a good range of educational visits to support the curriculum and enhance the learning opportunities offered to pupils. A strength of the provision is the number of experiences which cannot be offered within the classrooms, such as visits to working museums, art galleries, historic houses and sites and visitors, all of which enrich the general curriculum. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils went to Preston Museum to further their studies on 'Britain at War', and a

visitor came into school to present an Asian Music Day. The general curriculum is well supported by a range of after-school clubs, including chess, French, guitar, recorders, soccer and netball. These involve most of the pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils take part in inter-school matches and sporting tournaments. Older pupils have the opportunity of a residential visit, studying both outdoor pursuits and ICT.

17. The school has a good match of well qualified teachers to the demands of the curriculum and the learning needs of all pupils. The school is successful in attracting staff and retaining them after initial recruitment. The large number of knowledgeable learning support assistants are well deployed during lessons. Curriculum areas are well resourced and resources are used effectively in lessons. This was seen in a Year 1 English lesson, when the teacher used the whiteboard in the ICT suite so that pupils could read from the big book 'Frog Olympics'. Classrooms in the school are small but are adequate for the safe delivery of the curriculum given the relatively low numbers in classes.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides good care for its pupils in both the main school and the Foundation Stage. There is good provision of support, advice and guidance, based on monitoring of pupils and their work. Whilst there is no school council there are good opportunities for pupils to express their views through 'circle time' and informal contact with staff during the day. The valuing of pupils views is a natural part of the very good relationships between staff and pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good provision for health and safety.
- All pupils have very good relationships with staff and are happy to confide in them.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to get advice and guidance.
- The school does not contact parents on the first day of absence to ensure that parents know where their child is.

Commentary

18. The school liaises with the local education authority over health and safety provision and has received very good support and advice. Risk assessment is well addressed and is clearly understood by the school, as are the requirements of other regulations. All the necessary checks are completed and there is also good medical provision. Although a few pupils indicated on the questionnaires that they did not know an adult to go to if they had a problem this was not confirmed during the inspection, as very good and open relationships were evident throughout the school.
19. The pupils have plenty of chances to talk to their teacher during the day, and teachers respond well with sympathy or advice as required. This has a positive effect on pupils' achievement through the building of confidence. There are regular opportunities for pupils to update their record of achievement files. These contain some very good information, such as a record of 19 personal development characteristics kept over several years, which enables teachers to give secure advice.
20. Registration procedures in school do not require school staff to contact parents over absence. Most parents telephone the school to let them know if a child is not coming to school but a few do not. Whilst attendance is satisfactory, and children are normally brought to school by an adult, current procedures mean there is a risk that a child who leaves home but does not arrive at school may not be identified quickly.
21. Recent staff changes resulted in there not being a nominated child protection officer who had been fully trained. The headteacher, who has received training and is experienced in child protection matters, has been responsible for child protection whilst other staff have received

training. Trained staff are now ready to be nominated, and these procedures are due to be completed shortly.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents who are very supportive of the school. The school has also developed very good links with the community, which support the pupils' learning. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good information is available to parents, both about the school in general and the progress of their child in particular.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education.
- There are many community links, including good links with local schools.

Commentary

22. The school sends a newsletter home to parents at least once every two weeks and the format, although variable, is always accessible and easy to read. The content is informative about events and educational issues. Information on progress is very good, with a comprehensive annual report which meets requirements and is clearly personal to each pupil. Parents are encouraged to comment on the report and also to identify to the school their child's outside interests. Whilst there is no pupil involvement with the annual report the pupils maintain a record of achievement file which contains their thoughts on their progress. This is available for parents to inspect at parents' evenings, when they can also see the ongoing monitoring sheets maintained by the school.
23. In addition to discussing the annual reports, parents are able to monitor work through the home/school reading diary. The school has an 'open door' policy for parents, who feel welcome in school and able to discuss concerns with the class teacher. The headteacher makes himself readily available to parents both before and after school. Several parents are regular helpers in school and others participate in activities and support events. The school does not charge for non-residential trips and explains this to parents when they join the school. In return they are asked as part of the partnership to support the main fund raising events the school holds during the year, and the success of these events demonstrates parents' commitment.
24. The school has numerous links to the community, including the church and local employers. Local organisations are able to use the school playing field. Pupils benefit from going into the local community for project work and often take an active part, for example by singing carols in the town centre. Other community groups come into school to support the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher understands clearly the school's strengths and weaknesses and the priorities for further improvement. He manages the school well and is supported by an increasingly effective governing body. Other staff work hard, but roles and responsibilities require further clarification in order to make the best use of staff expertise and develop individual subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is focused on improvement.
- Governors are fully involved and informed, with good awareness of strengths and weaknesses.
- Staff and governors form an effective team.
- The school responds very well to the needs of individuals.

- Staff provide very good role models, both for each other and for pupils.
- Newly qualified teachers are very well supported, and the school contributes effectively to the training of new teachers.
- Finances are very well managed and used very effectively to support pupils' education.
- Roles and responsibilities do not currently make the best use of expertise to ensure that there is effective leadership in all aspects and areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

25. The headteacher, governors and all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, work hard and are committed to the success of the school. The result is a sturdy, corporate ethos in which both parents and pupils are valued partners. There is a determination to provide high academic standards, but there is also a proper and laudable focus on providing the broader aspects of schooling, some less tangible, which deliver an effective education.
26. The governing body has addressed the key issue relating to its own work from the previous inspection effectively. Governors, through their committee structure and individual responsibilities, have a clear picture of the school's performance and are effective in their role as critical friend. Their view of the school as being at the centre of the local community involves them in all aspects of the school's life. They are well informed by the headteacher, with whom they have good relationships.
27. The headteacher provides strong personal leadership which motivates both staff and pupils. He has great influence, not least in creating a school in which all individuals matter and which is inclusive in the widest sense. He is well supported by an experienced assistant headteacher and a committed staff. The recent influx of newly qualified teachers has led to some gaps in curriculum leadership, and some more experienced staff are unsure of their precise role and the best way to carry it out. The number of responsibilities borne by some teachers also limits their effectiveness.
28. The school is well managed. The organisation of the inspection itself was very smooth, despite the headteacher's unavoidable absence until shortly before the inspection started. The decision to use teachers' specialist skills in Years 3 to 6 is having a positive effect on standards. Behaviour policies are well established and consistently applied. Performance management is thoughtfully linked to training and school priorities and is an effective tool for staff development. The induction of newly qualified teachers, and the school's commitment to initial teacher training, are both very good.
29. Financial management procedures are clear and are used to support the school's intentions. Governors are well aware of the budget position and the needs of the pupils. The decision to spend a higher percentage of the budget on teachers has been carefully thought through and its effectiveness monitored. The relatively high carry forward figure is in response to a temporary decline in pupil numbers, the intention being to retain the good staffing levels and small class numbers.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	425,358	Balance from previous year	23,610
Total expenditure	389,130	Balance carried forward to the next	36,228
Expenditure per pupil	2,344		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

30. The children enter Reception with attainment that is average. This is an improvement in the levels of attainment on entry to school over the last two years. At the time of the previous inspection in 1998 the level of attainment was below the expected level for children as they enter school. This improvement is partly attributable to the work of the pre-school group, which is now in its third year. By the end of the reception year children achieve most of the early learning goals and some higher attaining children achieve beyond this level. Teachers and support staff concentrate on the development of language and as a result children, particularly those with a special need, make a good start in the Reception class and generally make good progress in lessons. Over time, however, the way in which children are directed by the teacher inhibits the development of children's independence, and provides fewer opportunities for children to explore, think for themselves and make choices in their learning.
31. Teaching is good overall. Relationships are very good and every opportunity is seized to extend children's learning. Expectations are high and ideas and enthusiasm are plentiful but when too many learning objectives are planned in a session, the purpose becomes unclear and the outcomes confusing. The length of some sessions is not always appropriate, sometimes being too long or too short to enable children to achieve as well as they could. Children always behave well but some, frequently the boys, lose attention and do not remain focused. Although skills are well taught and vocabulary imaginatively extended, the learning environment lacks a library and writing areas where children can develop a love of books and practise their writing skills. There is no designated outdoor area for Foundation Stage children although plans are being discussed for future development.
32. The management of the provision is satisfactory. The Foundation Stage is managed by the Reception teacher, although the responsibility for it is part of the Early Years/Years 1 and 2 co-ordinator's role. This role requires definition so that the Foundation Stage provision can be monitored more effectively. Resources are accessible and manageable but unsatisfactory to meet the needs of an outdoor curriculum.
33. Support staff, including the special educational needs support, are well informed and are effective in their role. All adults manage the children very well and the very good ratio of adults to children ensures that the needs of all are well met. All children's progress is monitored and targets for improvement are written in their books. There was no reference to children in the Foundation Stage in the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children display a good level of confidence although it is early in the school year.
- Relationships are very good with both adults and peers.
- Behaviour is very good all the time.
- Good emphasis is placed on raising the self-esteem of children, especially those with special educational needs.
- Because the teaching is over directed there are missed opportunities for children to be independent and make choices in their learning.

Commentary

34. Children are keen, interested and enjoy coming to school. They behave very well and are clear about what is expected of them. Children stop and listen in lessons when asked and work very well together. Teachers and support staff welcome the children into school and chat to parents when necessary. Children know their routines and sit together on the carpet at the beginning of each day to 'pass the teddy' as they share their thoughts in response to questions such as, *"How do you feel?"* Because relationships are good this session is successful in encouraging children to develop a good sense of belonging to a community, as some children are more confident than others. This session is led sensitively by the class teacher and well supported by the special educational needs assistant. Children with a special educational need are given time to make a contribution in the 'circle'. Children show a good deal of excitement when feeding their goldfish called 'Liquorice' (and so does the fish!).
35. Within this area of learning there are many strengths which result in good teaching and learning in lessons. However, it is limited by there being too few opportunities throughout the day for children to make choices and operate independently in their learning. This was highlighted when the teacher told the children, *'I will decide what you are choosing!'* This has an effect on aspects of all other areas of learning, where there is an expectation that the children in the Foundation Stage should think for themselves and enjoy self-chosen challenges within a structured environment. As a result, achievement over time is satisfactory. Children are on course to meet the expected goals with the exception of independent learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff develop children's vocabulary by making good use of opportunities throughout the day.
- Very good use is made of songs and rhymes.
- Writing and learning letter sounds are well taught.
- Opportunities to practise these skills independently are insufficiently provided for within the classroom organisation.
- There is no area for children to sit and enjoy a wide range of books, shared with their friends or with a member of staff.

Commentary

36. The enthusiastic whole class teaching and the way in which opportunities are recognised and used is a strength of the reception provision, resulting in good teaching and learning. For example, when a child brought a red car to school this was used to initiate a discussion about both children's own cars and their favourite colours. Songs and rhymes are a regular feature of the provision in the Foundation Stage. These include, 'If you are happy and you know it', adapting it to the needs of the lesson, and a rhyme called 'Here is a Beehive', which is repeated frequently and enjoyed by the children.
37. Children are learning the days of the week in circle time and good emphasis is placed on the initial sound and on new words, which are clapped to show the syllables. Good emphasis is placed on looking at books when returning to the carpet at the end of a session or before dinner time. However, there is no book corner or library area where children can go independently in order to foster a love of books and to share them with their friends or with members of staff.
38. Writing skills are taught well in small groups led by members of staff, but there are insufficient opportunities to practise these skills. Some writing materials are available in the 'home corner'

but there is no 'writing area' for these activities to develop independently, such as list making, telephone messages, stories and writing simple instructions. Children are on course to reach most of the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year, and achievement is satisfactory.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults use a good range of questions to support children's learning.
- Good emphasis is placed on number and higher attaining children achieve well.
- Learning about numbers as a class is made fun.
- Not enough time is given to the practical aspects of mathematics, or to opportunities for children to solve their own problems.

Commentary

39. Children are beginning to learn the values of numbers to 5 and count to 10 as a class group. The good teaching is active and fun, involving a variety of resources such as hoops and beanbags. Adults ask well-focused questions to extend the children's thinking in mathematical terms, for example, '*Can you find a hat for each bear?*' and '*Shall we dress the bears, how many will we need?*' Children enjoy games outside the classroom which supports their understanding of number values including games such as, 'What's the time Mr. Wolf?' This results in good learning in lessons.
40. There is greater emphasis placed on the learning of numbers as labels for counting and less on the practical aspect of calculating or extending ideas of shape, space or measure in an independent way. Evidence from photographs and examples of the previous year's work presents a picture of teacher led activities rather than methods used to help children solve practical problems. Insufficient emphasis is placed on selecting and managing resources independently. Achievement over time therefore is satisfactory and children are in line to achieve most of the expected goals by the end of the Reception year, particularly in 'number'.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

41. It was not possible to make a judgement on provision in terms of standards, teaching and learning in this wide area of learning but from photographic evidence, displays, and planning it is evident that children are provided with a good range of planned experiences, both in school and through the local environment. Opportunities to take the children out into the locality are used wherever possible, visitors are welcomed into school and weekly baking activities look at changes in the ingredients, as well as tasting delicious!
42. 'Two computers are used with support but were not observed being used independently. Photographic evidence shows children celebrating various festivals such as Christmas, although there were no photographs to represent the celebration of other cultures or beliefs. Once settled, children attend the school assembly and have a planned programme of stories in their religious education.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the hall, children move in a variety of ways, responding well to their teacher.
- Good attention is paid to health and safety but less to the contribution of exercise to good health.
- Children understand that tools have to be used safely.
- There is no designated outside area in which to develop an outdoor curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage, where children can use wheeled toys, climb, swing and balance in a safe and adventurous way.

Commentary

43. Children use the hall confidently, moving in various ways in response to their teacher as they complete the tasks asked of them. Teaching and learning are good. Children can hop, jump and run and demonstrate their expertise to others during the lesson, moving freely and confidently. Outside, children play circle games with their teacher but opportunities to climb, balance and swing are confined to the hall apparatus, as these facilities are not yet available outside for the reception children. This results in satisfactory achievement over time. Children are on course to achieve most of the expected goals by the end of the Reception year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are learning a good range of songs to sing from memory.
- There are insufficient opportunities to explore a range of media in terms of time, opportunity and resources.
- Children have too little opportunity to develop their own ideas in art as they are too directed in the process.

Commentary

44. Overall, teaching is good resulting in good learning in aspects of this area of learning. Children learn to sing songs from memory because this is a regular feature of the curriculum. They use instruments to accompany songs such as, 'The wheels on the bus' and enjoy passing the 'shaker' around the circle as they sing, accompanied by a member of staff playing a guitar. They learn to identify instruments by their sound and know the names of the lollipop drum and tambourine. They distinguish different types of bells by the sounds they make. Music is used thoughtfully in the classroom, both as background music and to support dance lessons in physical development.
45. Through planned experiences children learn skills such as creating shades of blue by adding white paint, but opportunities to experiment and be creative by themselves are too few. In some cases there is insufficient time in a session for children to develop creatively in terms of imagination in play or to capture experiences in paint, materials, music or words. Resources are planned in lessons but not chosen by the children for a particular purpose in order to develop their imaginative and creative ideas. For example, there is little evidence of children's own independent and imaginative art work in displays. Achievement over time is satisfactory and children are on course to meet most of the expected goals by the end of the Reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching staff have good subject knowledge and use time and resources well.
- Non-teaching staff support pupils' learning effectively.
- Good use is made of questions and intervention, particularly when the learning is being summarised towards the end of lessons.
- Good relationships between staff and pupils underpin teaching and learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in lessons.
- There are too few planned opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills through other curriculum areas.
- In some lessons the use of photo-copied sheets and an over prescriptive style of teaching inhibit independent learning and writing.
- Marking which develops pupils' understanding is not consistently applied across the school.
- Subject leadership is not sufficiently focused on monitoring and evaluating the standards achieved.

Commentary

46. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and speaking and listening is as expected nationally at Year 2 and Year 6. This judgment is supported by the recent national test results. Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school. The priorities identified in the school improvement plan for improving pupils' independent writing, improved comprehension skills and better use of grammar are all taking place, as shown by pupils' previously completed work and current teaching. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection.
47. Teaching overall is good because teachers have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. They plan lessons which use time and resources effectively to take pupils' learning forward. This was seen in a Year 2 lesson, when the teacher ensured that all pupils had tasks that were well suited to their specific needs, and used all the resources in the class effectively. This enabled all pupils to complete their work using capital letters and full stops, including those with special educational needs. Support assistants are also used effectively in lessons, and combine well with teaching staff to make learning effective for all pupils. In a Year 1 lesson, the class teacher led a group of pupils in a guided reading session, while the support assistant taught other groups of pupils how to identify a capital letter and full stop by putting a circle around them. Marking throughout the school needs to be more consistent. Better examples of marking seen help take pupils' learning forward, while other examples just consist of a tick or one word comment.
48. Teachers use questioning and intervention techniques well in lessons. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson, in which pupils were taught how to identify verbs and adverbs through a series of challenging activities. The teacher also used the plenary session well to recap and reinforce what the pupils had learnt in the lesson. His good relationships with the pupils and understanding of their abilities allowed activities to be undertaken in groups, encouraging pupils to work independently, including the use of ICT to support learning. In previously completed work from all year groups, there are examples of teachers using photocopied sheets. This, sometimes coupled with overly prescriptive teaching, restricts pupils from working independently and developing their writing skills. Although ICT is used to support pupils' learning, for example in a Year 2 lesson, there are some missed opportunities for it to extend and challenge pupils.

49. Development is needed in the way the subject is co-ordinated and monitored. There is not enough focus on evaluating the effect of teaching and learning in order to assess the impact this has on the standards achieved by the pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Pupils generally express themselves confidently and are able to respond to questions and offer opinions in different areas of the curriculum. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, which encourage the latter to speak out readily.
51. The school has targeted both reading and writing in the most recent school improvement plan. There is a clear focus on the use of guided reading and writing sessions, with a new guided reading scheme in Year 2 and a guided writing scheme to give more structure to the teaching of writing. The school is monitoring the effectiveness of these initiatives. Scrutiny of pupils' work in other subjects, however, suggests that there are missed opportunities to encourage pupils to write at length for a variety of purposes and audiences in a realistic context.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a commendable emphasis on careful presentation, leading to fewer errors.
- Pupils have good knowledge of important facts, such as number bonds and tables.
- The work given to higher attaining pupils does not always make sufficient demands on their abilities.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to investigate and discover for themselves.
- There is too much reliance in some classes on published schemes and worksheets.

Commentary

52. Standards are average in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The work of current pupils suggests that these standards will be at least maintained and achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are taught the basics of mathematics effectively and have a sound understanding, for example of place value and methods of calculation. The National Numeracy Strategy is well used to ensure pupils are confident in handling numbers and understand the principles involved. Teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully and ensure that skills are built in a logical progression. There is less evidence of pupils being encouraged to apply these skills to solve problems, especially where investigations are open-ended so that pupils have to think and discover for themselves.
53. The work in pupils' books is often exemplary in terms of accuracy, and this is encouraged by the emphasis all teachers place on neatness and careful presentation. Mistakes are rarely caused by poorly written numbers or untidy setting out. It is clear that most pupils take pride in their work. They also work hard, settling quickly to tasks in lessons and producing a good quantity. Their books tell the same story, with many pupils filling five, six or seven exercise books in the course of a year.
54. When pupils work from the text book, they often tackle the same calculations or problems. As the tasks are progressively more challenging, lower and average attaining pupils generally cope well. Higher attaining pupils, however, also start with the reinforcement exercises, which in many cases offer little challenge and limit the opportunity for them to make progress. In some year groups pupils also complete large quantities of photo-copied worksheets. While these

sometimes reinforce knowledge and concepts, they rarely encourage pupils to use these creatively, and therefore limit achievement.

55. There has been sound improvement since the previous inspection. The school gives pupils a good foundation in mathematical understanding and computational skills in all aspects of mathematics. The groundwork having been laid, pupils are in a good position to make further progress. Subject leadership is sound, and there is developing analysis of areas needing greater focus.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Mathematical skills are satisfactorily transferred into other subjects. In ICT, for example, pupils working on spreadsheets learn to apply a formula to produce appropriate results. In science, tables and graphs are used to make conclusions clear and accessible. Consistent planning of these opportunities would ensure that pupils are encouraged to apply their skills in a realistic and meaningful context.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average and improving by the time pupils reach Year 6.
- Behaviour and relationships in lessons are very good.
- The science curriculum has been reviewed and a new scheme of work purchased for Years 3 to 6: this needs extending to younger pupils.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average.
- Expectations of pupils' achievements are too low in Year 2, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Assessment procedures do not reliably measure attainment at the end of Year 2, nor do they identify areas that require more focused attention.
- An over prescriptive style of teaching reduces pupils' opportunities to investigate and find things out for themselves.

Commentary

57. Standards at Year 2 are well below average. By Year 6 they are in line with national averages, which is borne out by the result of statutory tests. In Years 3 to 6 a new scheme of work has been implemented and teachers are now more confident, resulting in improved standards. The curriculum review and assessment of the scheme of work in Years 1 and 2 has yet to be done. Evidence of previous work in Year 1 represents a good breadth of coverage both in terms of quality and quantity. However this is not maintained in Year 2 and progress dips. While a good lesson was seen in Year 2 during the inspection, looking at work over time and talking to Year 2 pupils indicates less effective teaching. Work sheets are used extensively and there is insufficient emphasis on investigation and experimentation to a good depth. Pupils in Year 3 had no knowledge of a 'fair test', and thought that materials such as rubber and plastic were the best conductors of electricity.
58. Teachers' day-to-day assessment fails to identify areas requiring particular attention, nor does it provide the necessary information for accurate assessment at the end of Year 2. For example, teacher assessment rated pupils' attainment identical in all aspects of science in 2002. Expectations of Year 2 pupils are too low. There were no higher Level 3 grades awarded in teacher assessment in 2003 and the subject leader felt that no children were capable of achieving this, although several pupils attained Level 3 in both English and mathematics.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2, and is good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils do not achieve as well as they could by Year 2, while achievement by Year 6 is good.

59. The directed, teacher led style of lesson organisation adopted by many teachers limits the opportunities for pupils to investigate and experiment in their scientific enquiry. Opportunities for pupils to discuss together, work in groups or pairs and be involved in personal research are too few. Where science teaching is at its best pupils are given booklets to research a given subject within a set time. Year 5 pupils enjoy the challenge and work industriously to achieve the set target in the time specified. However, some science lessons are too long for pupils to maintain concentration without practical investigation or personal research taking place. Boys particularly find it difficult to remain focused when teacher led lessons last for the whole afternoon, or two lessons run into each other in the same session. Throughout, relationships are very good, as is the behaviour of all the pupils.
60. The whiteboards, used to share pre-prepared computer based information with the pupils, are a good teaching aid in the planning and recording of an investigation. The development of the use of ICT is part of the future plan for science, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The leadership of science is unsatisfactory overall. The initiatives taken to improve science in Years 3 to 6 have been effective and it is intended to extend these to Years 1 and 2. Currently there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning or analysis of results. Despite the poor standards found by teacher assessment in Year 2, science is not part of the current school improvement plan. Standards have been maintained in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection, but have fallen by the end of Year 2.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are sound and improving over time.
- Specialist teaching throughout the school is having a positive effect on pupils' skills.
- The quality of specialist teaching is good.
- The school is well resourced and makes good use of the equipment.
- Interactive whiteboards are used imaginatively and effectively in other subjects as well as ICT.
- Knowledgeable support assistants make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Commentary

61. Two lessons were seen in which pupils were taught skills and learned to apply them, both taken by the specialist teacher. Teaching is good; lessons are well planned and prepared and good subject knowledge is used to challenge and extend pupils' learning. It is noticeable that when pupils are given a task involving some choice and independence, as when Year 3 pupils invent their own 'aliens' with specific characteristics to add to a database, there is a marked improvement in their attention and involvement, particularly those of the boys. The use of specialist teaching is instrumental in pupils of all ages achieving well in their acquisition of skills and understanding.
62. The computer suite is well equipped. While pupils usually share a computer, they do this sensibly, taking turns and working well together. Their discussion often adds to their understanding as they debate what they should do next, or what its effect will be. There is evidence of developing skills, as pupils in Year 5 'drag' and 'drop' with the mouse, or work their way through different menus.
63. Pupils receive good support, particularly when working in the suite. The school is fortunate to have learning support assistants with some expertise in ICT, and they play a full and planned part in helping pupils of all abilities to make progress in lessons. The subject is well led with

enthusiasm and expertise. Standards are similar to those found by the previous inspection, which indicates good progress due to the greatly increased demands now made by the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. ICT is used appropriately in most areas of the curriculum. The school has two interactive whiteboards, which enable teachers to use pre-prepared information technology with the whole class. These are fairly new resources, but are already being used effectively by different teachers in a range of subjects, thereby enhancing pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson the teacher used prepared data to revise the concepts of rounding numbers and using inverse operations to check answers. Pupils worked in pairs, adding to their understanding as they checked each other's methods and answers.
65. Computer programs are used in other subjects, such as in science to produce graphs of results, or in history to investigate Greek mythology. The school is investing in a range of software to support learning, matching what is available to the programmes of study. In some lessons this was used effectively to extend pupils' learning, but in others planned opportunities were missed. There is as yet no overall planning to ensure that the skills pupils acquire are consolidated through appropriate and meaningful tasks across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

There was not enough evidence to report on all these subjects individually, but work was sampled and some lessons seen in history and geography. Religious education is reported in full below.

66. During the week of the inspection one history lesson was seen in Years 3 to 6, and two geography lessons in Years 1 and 2. Judgements about pupils' standards of attainment were obtained from a scrutiny of pupils' work in these subjects in all classes. This evidence reveals that standards attained in both subjects match national expectations at both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, developing the skills and ideas associated with the humanities as they move through the school. Standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection.
67. In the lessons seen the overall quality of teaching was good, although there was insufficient evidence to make a distinct judgement for each subject. Teaching is characterised by effective planning which ensures pupils make progress in their knowledge and understanding. In a Year 6 history lesson on the 'Twelve labours of Hercules' effective use was made of ICT and independent writing skills to develop all pupils' learning about Greek mythology. Although teachers use ICT to support learning in the humanities, there is not yet a consistent approach to this across the school. In some examples of previously completed work there are examples of an over-reliance on photo-copied sheets, which limits opportunities for pupils to work in small investigative groups. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, both by being presented with appropriate tasks and through the help of teachers and classroom assistants.
68. Pupils are encouraged to develop their literacy skills, for example using language such as 'physical', 'human', 'qualities' and 'mythology' appropriately. This, and encouragement to use speaking and listening skills, makes a positive contribution to the development of literacy in school. Teachers use questioning and intervention well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in the humanities. This was seen in a Year 2 geography lesson when pupils used books and large maps to learn about life on the imaginary 'Isle of Struay, supposedly situated in the Western Highlands of Scotland. The class teacher used the resources effectively to help develop pupils' understanding of human and physical features in such an environment.

Religious Education

The provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have secure subject knowledge, plan well and have good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussion and debate.
- Recorded work does not contribute to pupils' independent writing skills.

Commentary

69. Although it was only possible to see one religious education lesson during the inspection, evidence from this, from assemblies, from talking to pupils and looking at their work indicates that standards are average overall and teaching is satisfactory. Achievement is satisfactory, and is similar to that reported in the last inspection.
70. In the one lesson seen, effective use was made of specialist teaching to explore the concept of friendship and to look at the qualities which make a good friend. The focus on group discussion created a real 'buzz' as pupils exchanged and defended their ideas. Detailed planning ensured that pupils with special educational needs were well supported when recording their thoughts as a 'flow chart' in their books. The expectation that each group would feed back to the whole class made a positive contribution to pupils' skills in both speaking and listening. While higher attaining pupils spoke well, they could have been challenged further, for example by producing a dramatic sketch to demonstrate their conclusions.
71. This lesson was effectively linked to an assembly for Years 3 to 6, in which the bible story of the 'Good Samaritan' was used to illustrate the meaning of being a good neighbour. The messages of doing as you would be done by, and that friends sometimes appear when least expected, were well understood by the pupils, who were attentive throughout. Similarly, in a whole school assembly taken by the headteacher, a well-told story about 'Brother John', based on the Christian ethos, kept the pupils engaged. In discussion, pupils talked with interest and understanding about the practice of other faiths, something which some parents too found impressive when their children discussed their religious education at home.
72. The quality of pupils' written work is satisfactory, although there are limited opportunities to develop their literacy skills through extended or imaginative pieces of writing. While work is always marked, there are few comments by teachers to make pupils think more deeply about their learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

73. In art and design, insufficient lessons were seen to judge teaching and learning; judgements are thus based on work seen in displays, photographs and in pupils' books. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards by the end of Year 2. Judging by the available evidence, standards in art are not as high as they were at the time of the previous inspection.
74. Standards are average in Year 6. There is a specialist teacher who leads the teaching of art in Years 3 to 6 and who is improving standards both in terms of cultural awareness in art, and in painting and drawing using a variety of artist's styles. Sketchbooks do not reflect the quality of work seen on display although a variety of techniques are practised. The range of skills and work in various styles could be used to enhance the pupils' own individual ideas and allow a more independent and creative approach to the subject.

75. The leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has many areas of responsibility, including Years 1 and 2, the Foundation Stage and the co-ordination of special educational needs. Other members of staff with an interest in art and design share aspects of the provision, including display. Visiting artists add a further dimension to the art curriculum and to the cultural development of the pupils.

Music

76. Pupils' singing in assembly is good, being both tuneful and enthusiastic. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the guitar and there is a guitar club, both of which are very popular, and the pupils seen were making good progress. Pupils also attend a recorder club at mid-day. Visiting musicians include an Asian music day and an Aboriginal art and music day.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations by Year 6.
- Specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6 is effective.
- There is a good focus on skills in games lessons.
- Standards in dance are very high in Year 4.
- Learning support staff make an effective contribution.

Commentary

77. Although observation of younger pupils was limited to one lesson in Year 1, on this evidence standards in gymnastics are broadly in line with national expectations. Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 leads to standards in games which are above expectation. Pupils demonstrate confident passing and catching skills related to netball and basketball, and most are able to transfer this to a competitive game. In the game they also show a developing awareness of positioning in attack and defence. Standards at this level so early in the year indicate good potential for achievement.
78. While it was not possible to observe dance lessons in full, part of a Year 4 lesson was seen. Pupils were performing a robotic dance in pairs to well chosen music. The quality of movement was striking, with pupils in time with the music and each other. Actions were very well chosen and original, with each pair producing a different effect. Pupils commented on each other's dance, making sensible suggestions. To attain these standards after only a couple of lessons indicates very good achievement.
79. Leadership of PE is sound, and the curriculum is carefully planned to offer a range of experience and the building of skills. As standards at the last inspection were judged to be in line with expectations at both Year 2 and Year 6, the subject has shown good improvement by Year 6.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

80. There was not enough evidence to report on this area individually, but sensitive teaching and good relationships in reception ensure children gain in confidence and self-esteem, although some lack of opportunity to make independent choices limits their personal development. Personal, social and health education is taught in specific lessons through the remainder of the school, and its positive effect can be measured by the mature and responsible attitudes of the great majority of pupils. The assemblies seen during the inspection also made a good

contribution to this curriculum area. The school has an appropriate policy dealing with sex and relationships education.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
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	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).