

INSPECTION REPORT

FORCHES CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barnstaple, Devon

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113127

Headteacher: Mr Paul Wisken

Lead inspector: Mr Peter Kerr

Dates of inspection: 21st – 24th June 2004

Inspection number: 256143

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	283
School address:	Forches Avenue Barnstaple Devon
Postcode:	EX32 8EF
Telephone number:	01271 343214
Fax number:	01271 343214
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr James Harrison
Date of previous inspection:	29 th April 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Forches Cross is a larger than average community primary school in a disadvantaged housing estate on the edge of Barnstaple. There are 283 pupils on roll, aged between three and 11, and organised into ten classes in the main school building and a separate nursery. The youngest children attend the nursery on a part-time basis from the age of three, before moving into the reception class when they are five. At the time of the inspection, 45 children were attending the nursery. There are more boys than girls in the school, with a considerable imbalance in some year groups. The vast majority of the pupils are white British ethnic backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. The children have well below average attainment on entry to the nursery and particularly poor social and communication skills. The school has identified 81 pupils as having special educational needs and six of these have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have either learning or behavioural needs, or both, and four have special physical needs. Five pupils are in public care. Compared to other schools, an average number of pupils join and leave the school at times other than the normal admission time. Some local clubs use the school hall. The school is regularly subject to significant vandalism. Staff turnover has been high over the past two years with the retirement of a number of teachers and the appointment of a new headteacher. At the time of the inspection two teachers were on temporary contracts, but in September 2004 the school will be fully staffed with permanent teachers. A major building project was in progress during the inspection. The additional classrooms being created are intended for the youngest pupils in the school. A multi-user games area is also in the pipeline for shared use with community groups.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23583	Mr Peter Kerr	Lead inspector	Science Religious education
31754	Mrs Charlotte Roberson	Lay inspector	
32197	Mr Mike Dukes	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Personal, social and health education Special educational needs English as an additional language
22856	Mrs Kath Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education The Foundation Stage curriculum

The inspection contractor was:

Criterion School Inspections

*Juniper House
23 Abbots View
Abbotswood
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3EG*

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6-8
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9-12
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12-18
Teaching and learning The curriculum Care, guidance and support Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18-20
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	21-33
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 6, but this represents satisfactory achievement in relation to the children's attainment when they start school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Leadership is good and management and governance are satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are too low, especially in oral and written English.
- Provision is very good in the nursery but the Foundation Stage¹ curriculum is not yet firmly enough established through to the end of the reception year.
- The headteacher provides good leadership.
- Staff and governors work very well together as a team.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning, but need more training and support.
- Good opportunities are provided for learning outside of school hours, but there are too few opportunities for practical and creative work in the school's timetable.
- Although assessment is much improved, it is not sufficiently focused on the development of key skills across the curriculum and to challenge more able pupils.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work.
- The school's arrangements for induction to the nursery and transition to secondary school are very effective.
- The implementation of policies is not monitored closely enough and race and gender issues do not receive enough attention.

The school was judged to have serious weaknesses at the previous inspection in May 2002. Following good improvement, this is no longer the case. Very good progress has been made in improving leadership and management and the quality of the accommodation; provision for the Foundation Stage has been substantially improved and attendance is much improved. Good improvements have been made to the quality of care and welfare and satisfactory improvements to assessment procedures. Good improvements have been made to library provision. Standards in English and mathematics are rising and the school has a good capacity to continue improving.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E*	E*	E
Mathematics	E	E*	E	D
Science	D	E	E	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' achievement is satisfactory overall. Despite low results in the national tests achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science throughout the school. The E* grades indicate that the school's results in English were in the bottom five per cent nationally in 2002 and 2003. This is because of previous weaknesses in the school. Progress is now satisfactory, and the provisional results indicate that the comparisons grades are beginning to improve. The inspection found that standards in both English and mathematics are well below those expected in Year 6, especially in oral and written competence and in using and applying mathematical skills. Standards in science are below average but are beginning to improve. Achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory but pupils do not use information and communication technology enough to

¹ The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

support learning in other subjects. Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, but achievement is satisfactory. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs do better than more able pupils because their needs receive more attention. Many of the children entering the nursery have very poor personal, social and communication skills and attainment overall is well below expected levels. The children achieve very well in the nursery because of very good teaching, but progress slows in reception. Achievement is satisfactory overall in the Foundation Stage, but most children do not achieve all the early learning goals². Standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics but achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 1³ overall.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social cultural development, are satisfactory. Most pupils have good attitudes to work and to others and behave well, but a significant minority do not. The pupils do not have enough awareness of racial equality and insufficient is attention paid to preparation for life in a culturally diverse society. Attendance is satisfactory, but a minority of pupils have frequent absences. Punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is very good in the nursery, where the children become confident, independent learners, and is good in Year 6. Although satisfactory, teaching is weaker in reception, where there is not enough learning through purposeful play towards the achievement of the early learning goals. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory, but data is not used well enough to provide challenging targets in key skills for pupils of all abilities, especially the more able. The poor attitudes and behaviour of minority of pupils is usually handled well by the established teachers, but disrupts the lessons taken by temporary staff. The experienced and capable teaching assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' learning, especially for those pupils with special educational needs.

The curriculum is satisfactory, but too much time is spent on English lessons and too little time is devoted to creative subjects. Provision for activities outside lessons is good, with very good sporting opportunities. Health and safety procedures are good and the pupils are prepared well for secondary school. Links with parents are very good in the nursery, where they contribute well to the children's development, and good overall. Links with other schools and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership is good. The headteacher provides a clear sense of direction and has established effective teamwork within the staff and the governing body. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is excellent and key subject co-ordinators lead their subjects well. Management is satisfactory. Policies are in place to guide the school's work, but systems for checking that these are successfully implemented are weak. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is now well informed and its deliberations are efficiently organised. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in evaluating as well as supporting the school's work. The school complies with all statutory requirements, but some aspects of equal opportunities related to race and gender are overlooked because the governors and staff are not sufficiently aware of their importance.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally supportive of the school. They appreciate the improvements being made to the building and the ways the school is trying to involve them more in its work. Most pupils like the school and enjoy being consulted about changes.

² The early learning goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

³ Key Stage 1, sometimes referred to as the infants, caters for pupils aged between 5 and 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue working to raise standards in all subjects.
- Improve the tracking and supporting of key skills, especially for the more able pupils.
- Ensure that teaching is based on the Foundation Stage curriculum until the end of the reception year.
- Extend and improve opportunities for pupils to engage in creative and practical work.
- Check more carefully that policies are implemented effectively.
- Raise levels of awareness of race and gender equality throughout the school.
- Provide more training and support for teaching assistants.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is very good in the nursery, satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, overall, and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English and mathematics are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 but are improving. More able pupils do not achieve as well as other ability groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Children in the nursery achieve very well, but their progress slows in reception.
- Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills remain weak throughout the school.
- More able pupils do not achieve well enough.

Commentary

1. Children enter the nursery with well below average attainment and very poor social, communication and language skills. They make rapid progress initially because of excellent leadership and management and very good teaching in the nursery. Their achievement in personal and social development and in communication, language and literacy is particularly good, but they achieve very well in all the areas of learning. Children of all abilities and all levels of initial attainment achieve equally well because the staff use highly efficient methods to identify and support any individual weaknesses as well as providing a very stimulating learning environment for able children. Progress slows in the reception class because teaching is less effective in promoting development across the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. The style of teaching and the activities provided are often more appropriate for older pupils. Overall, achievement is satisfactory because of the very good start the children have in the nursery, but standards are still well below what is typical for the children's age when they begin Year 1. The exception is in personal, social and emotional development, in which achievement is good throughout the Foundation Stage. The children's literacy and numeracy skills are particularly weak.
2. Standards at the end of Year 2 are beginning to improve after a sustained period of decline. They were in to the bottom five per cent of schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics from 2001 to 2003. The reading results improved in 2003, but the writing and mathematics results remained low.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores⁴ in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	11.7 (10.4)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	8.7 (9.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	12.8 (12.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The number of pupils reaching above average levels in writing increased significantly in 2004, although it was still less than in most other schools. The reading and mathematics results showed little improvement and, overall, the results remained at a similar level. The inspection found that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are well below average across the board at the end of Key Stage 1 despite good progress in Year 2. Achievement is satisfactory

⁴ **Average Point Scores.** The average point scores table compares the school's performance with the national results. The calculations are arrived at by using the total of all test scores gained by pupils, and dividing the total by the number of pupils with a test result. This calculation is carried out for each subject tested.

overall because of the low starting points for most pupils, but relatively slow learning in Year 1, especially for more able pupils, contributes to the depressed results. The school recognises the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the transition from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 in order to raise achievement at the end of Year 2.

4. With the establishment of good leadership and management in the core subjects, good teaching in Year 6 and improving teaching throughout Key Stage 2⁵, standards are beginning to improve in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6, although they are still well below average and, therefore, not high enough. Recent improvements in provision have not had time to fill the gaps in knowledge, understanding and skills caused by previous weaknesses in leadership, management and teaching. The fact that relatively few pupils achieve the above-average Level 5, compared to the national average, holds down the overall test results. The school recognises the need to give more support to the more able pupils to enable them to achieve as well as they can and reach this level. The lower-attaining pupils generally receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants and achieve satisfactorily in English, and well in mathematics. The provisional results for 2004 show that the school met its targets in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	22.6 (22.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.8 (23.3)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.2 (25.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Pupils' attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing is well below average at the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in all these aspects of English, and use their skills well in other subjects. In mathematics, the main area of weakness is in the pupils' ability to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in a variety of problem-solving and investigative situations. In some classes an over-reliance on worksheets, containing examples of similar sums, contributes to this problem, and opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their numeracy skills in other subjects are not yet systematically incorporated into lesson plans.
6. Achievement is satisfactory in science but standards are below average. Pupils have a reasonable breadth of knowledge, but their investigative and experimental skills are under-developed. The introduction of assessment procedures, designed to track and support these skills, has led to some recent improvements in progress, but attainment in this area of science lags considerably behind that expected nationally. Standards in information and communication technology are below average, but achievement is satisfactory. Pupils use their skills to support learning on occasions, but not to the extent they should as opportunities are not systematically planned and co-ordinated. Standards are below the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education at the end of Year 6. The pupils achieve satisfactorily, but do not have a very clear understanding of differences and similarities between the world's main religions. The subject is, therefore, not making the contribution it should to preparing the pupils for life in a culturally diverse society.
7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls at the end of Year 6. The differences between the attainment of the two groups in English, mathematics and science, as measured by the national tests, are similar to the national picture.

⁵ Key Stage 2, sometimes referred to as the juniors, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school promotes good and caring attitudes among its pupils and behaviour is satisfactory overall. Attendance is much improved and is now satisfactory. The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children in the Foundation Stage behave well and their social and personal development is consistently well promoted and closely monitored.
- The pupils like school, but some have difficulties in behaving sensibly throughout the day.
- The steps taken by the school to promote racial awareness are not yet effective and boys and girls are not always given equal opportunities.
- The school promotes good attendance and punctuality for most pupils, but a few families persist in not sending their children to school often enough.

Commentary

8. The children in the nursery are benefiting enormously from the routines established there and the warm encouragement they get from all staff. Behaviour and attitudes in this calm and happy class are impressive. The children are learning to share and take turns. They are beginning to help each other and they really know when they have done well and pleased their teacher. They are becoming confident and happy learners by the time they move on to reception. Their personal development is also promoted effectively in reception, where behaviour is good, and the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development.
9. Throughout the rest of the school, the pupils are very friendly and open and talk at length to visitors when spoken to. They appreciate the extra activities provided for them and get involved readily in school life when asked. They have a good sense of belonging to the school community, which is reinforced through organised 'House' activities. They like school and many say they like their teachers and teaching assistants too. Older pupils, especially the girls like helping younger ones on the infant playground. Not enough is done to encourage boys to play a more active 'caring' role. Pupils mix together well during lunch-times when they sit in mixed-age groups. However, they know only too well that incidents of unacceptable behaviour can often disrupt playtimes and sometimes the start of the day too.
10. The school discourages bullying and any incidents that do occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. It is less assiduous in ensuring the pupils are free from racial harassment, because this has not been seen by governors as an issue in this mainly white school. The school is beginning to develop its programme to promote a better understanding of racial issues which is necessary in every school. It has recorded four incidents this school year, which have been addressed, but the spirit of the legislation, which is intended to help every pupil to gain a better understanding and appreciation of racial, religious and cultural diversity, is not being promoted sufficiently. The school is also slow to promote an understanding of the importance of giving boys and girls an equal opportunity. For example, of the 16 house captains in Year 6 only two chosen by staff to represent their house were boys. As the position is seen very much as one which encourages the care of and kindness towards the little ones, an opportunity is being missed for the school to work against the prevailing assumption that this is a female role.
11. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for reflection through assemblies. In religious education lessons, the pupils sometimes explore how abstract ideas, such as good and bad role models, affect their own lives. Occasional special events, such as the arts week, give good opportunities for pupils to explore and express their own ideas, and the school values all the pupils as individuals and sets a good moral tone. The pupils are given a good feeling of what it is like to try and live as responsible members of a community, but opportunities for them to exercise initiative are limited. For examples, few pupils use the library or computer suite independently to undertake their own research and investigations. The pupils learn about a range of cultures, through

history, geography and religious education lessons, but the school is not very imaginative in how it prepares the pupils for life in a culturally diverse society. Little effort is made to give them first-hand experiences to encourage positive attitudes towards the different religious, ethnic and cultural groups in the wider world in Britain.

12. Levels of exclusions have risen significantly this school year. Eleven boys have been temporarily excluded, many more than once, and some for 15 days. Unlike last year though, there have been no permanent exclusions. Many pupils have complicated and challenging behaviour which is usually managed well by staff in lessons. On occasions, however, discipline breaks down as issues escalate because some pupils become angry too quickly and sometimes aggressive. Temporary teachers in particular find this very difficult to cope with.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	238	5	2
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		

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

13. Pupils with special educational needs develop positive attitudes towards school. In lessons, they listen carefully, behave well and show good pride in their work. Their classmates are generally kind and respectful and willing to help.

Attendance

Rates of absence in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

14. Three years ago the school had poor levels of attendance, at below 90 per cent. The headteacher has been very active in promoting attendance through:
- consistently stressing to parents the importance of daily attendance;
 - contacting parents immediately if their children are not present;
 - rewarding classes who attend well;
 - regularly reporting to governors the progress being made.
15. The attendance rate has risen for the third successive year to just below 94 per cent, which is about average when compared with other schools nationally. However, this year the school has also recorded much greater numbers of unauthorised absences than expected. This is because of a few families who moved house, without letting the school know, and a small number of persistent poor attenders whose parents are now being prosecuted by the local authority. Attendance is, therefore, no longer a key issue for action. Punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education, with some outstanding features, but also some unsatisfactory aspects. Teaching is satisfactory overall; it is very good in the nursery and good in Year 6, but not good enough in reception and Year 1. Assessment is satisfactory, but is not used effectively enough to challenge the more able pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory with good

opportunities for enrichment. The school provides good quality care for pupils and there are very good procedures to help settle children into the nursery and to ensure a smooth transfer to the secondary school of pupils in Year 6. Partnerships with parents, other schools and the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in the nursery enables the children to become independent and confident learners.
- The teaching in reception is not securely enough rooted in the Foundation Stage.
- Teaching and learning are good in Year 6.
- Assessment is not used well enough to identify which key skills pupils should learn next.
- Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants provides good support for lower-attaining pupils.

Commentary

16. Teaching was good or better in just over half of the lessons seen, which is the target the school set for itself at the beginning of the year. A strong feature of the teaching is that it was very good or excellent in around a fifth of lessons. Overall, this represents good improvement since the last inspection, though some of the weaknesses that were identified then have not been fully addressed; teaching is still weaker in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2, and assessment is not yet used effectively enough.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (3%)	7 (19%)	10 (28%)	14 (39%)	4 (11%)	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.

17. Teaching in the nursery is of a consistently high quality, which is an excellent improvement since the last inspection. The following lesson typifies the range and effectiveness of the nursery provision.

Example of outstanding practice

This lesson illustrates how successfully the best practice in the nursery fully meets the needs of all the children and could serve as a model to replicate in reception.

Throughout this 30-minute observation, all the children in the class were purposefully engaged in continuous, enjoyable learning, thanks to the skills of the staff involved and the use of excellent procedures to track, record and support individual children's development. During the initial activities, the lower-achieving children took part in a simple game in which the teaching assistant used a spider puppet to ask them to choose bricks of a specified colour. A student recorded the children's responses so that the staff had a good record of which children knew which colours and numbers. The class teacher in the meantime recorded the responses of the rest of the children in a game in which they selected objects beginning with the 's' sound from a very interesting tray of articles that she had brought in. This introduction was followed by an extremely well-organised 'free choice' session in which the children chose from a very wide range of activities, all prepared to elicit specific skills related to the lesson input. For example, the water-play area included spaghetti to reinforce the children's awareness of the initial's sound. Excellent routines continually re-enforced the children's self-esteem and sense of responsibility and purpose.

18. Routine provision in the nursery is of very good quality. Excellent leadership and management have welded together a successful team which ensures that the children learn in a purposefully

organised, stimulating environment, with lots of choice and independence. The children move around the room freely and confidently, applying themselves very well to chosen tasks and developing a high degree of self-confidence and personal responsibility. This gives them a very good start in personal, social and emotional development. The teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is very effective in preparing the children for more formal studies in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1. Learning is also very good in knowledge and understanding of the world, including the use of computers, and in creative and physical development, so that the children leave the nursery with an excellent grounding for the reception year.

19. Some unsatisfactory lessons were observed in reception, though teaching was judged satisfactory overall. The reception environment is not conducive to learning through purposeful play, as prescribed by the Foundation Stage guidelines. The classroom is not organised to stimulate the children's imagination and facilitate choice, and the children are too often taught in a way more suitable for pupils in Key Stage 1. As a result, many of them become overtired, lose interest and concentration, and fail to make any real progress. In addition, they experience failure because they are introduced to tasks for which they are not yet ready. This slows the children's progress towards the early learning goals.
20. Good teaching was seen in Years 2 to 6, with examples of very good teaching in Years 2, 3 and 6. The quality of teaching in Year 6 is of a consistently good standard, with many very good aspects. In many of the lessons seen in this year group, pupils of all abilities, including the more able, were appropriately challenged and the work was made interesting and lively. Good opportunities and support for pupils to speak at some length and to listen to one another also characterised the best lessons. Teaching in English is satisfactory overall and good in Year 6, where teachers are now using assessment information to set challenging learning targets for pupils of all abilities. In mathematics, teaching is good overall, with particularly good teaching and learning in Year 6. Lower-attaining pupils learn more successfully than more able pupils, in both subjects, because support is available to them throughout the school.
21. In the less successful lessons, tasks are undemanding for most of the pupils. Introductions to these lessons often go on for far too long, leaving insufficient time for the pupils to work at individual or groups tasks and learn at their own rate, with support from teachers and teaching assistants if necessary. On some occasions, the poor attitudes of a minority of pupils leads to poor behaviour that is not always managed well enough to prevent it disrupting learning for the whole class.
22. The school has weighted the timetable heavily towards English in response to the key issue at the last inspection to raise standards. Some of this time is profitably spent in literacy lessons because the teaching is good and the pupils make good progress. However, some of the lessons lack imagination in how to make the work interesting and enjoyable for the pupils, so their learning lacks enthusiasm. The senior managers recognise the need to make more lessons fun for the pupils and link their learning in literacy to practical and creative activities and to other subjects so that they are more highly motivated and their learning more secure.
23. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers provide individual education plans based on small, short-term targets, but the pupils are not sufficiently involved in the review of their progress and in setting their own targets. As a consequence, they are not fully aware of their own learning and do not take optimum responsibility for it. A dedicated and experienced team of teaching assistants supports the pupils well. They sit near them during introductions to lessons to provide extra explanations and to help them to keep concentrating, and they support small groups of pupils as they work. As a result, the pupils are helped to make satisfactory gains in their learning. The teaching assistants receive little training, and this has led to inconsistencies in their work; for instance, their ability to contribute to the assessment of pupils' progress differs widely from class to class.
24. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and developing. In Year 6, they are used well in English and mathematics to set individual targets for pupils, and in science to encourage the development of investigative skills. These are recent developments, however, and are not established securely throughout the school. As a result, more able pupils are not encouraged

to work towards demanding enough targets in key skills, and this limits their ability to reach appropriately high levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. Another limitation of the current use of assessment is that the pupils are not as fully aware of and responsible for their own learning as is increasingly the case in many schools.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory, providing a broadly suitable range of learning opportunities with adequate resources and accommodation good extra opportunities for enrichment.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Good leadership of the curriculum is helping the school to focus well on priorities for improvement.
- The school does not yet give sufficient priority to subjects other than English and mathematics, and to inspiring pupils' interest and enjoyment.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.
- Enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well, but the curriculum does not always provide work which is sufficiently challenging for more able pupils.
- Extra-curricular activities provide good enrichment of the curriculum.

Commentary

25. The curriculum includes all the subjects needed to meet legal requirements. The Foundation Stage provision has been greatly improved. The curriculum in the nursery is now very good, but the provision for children in reception is geared too much towards the Key Stage 1 curriculum. The recently appointed leader of the Foundation Stage has identified the need to bring the provision for reception children up to the standard of the nursery, and has agreed plans with the headteacher to do this over a manageable time period.
26. Since the last inspection the good leadership of the headteacher and of the key teachers responsible for English and mathematics has led to positive gains in these subjects. One negative result of the measures taken has been the allocation of rather too much time for formal English lessons and too little time spent on practical and creative subjects. The new senior management team has plans in hand to begin redressing this imbalance and to encourage the learning and use of key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The school has used visitors and special events well to add a more vibrant and lively dimension to the curriculum. For example, a theatre group inspired pupils to make their own books, and artists led activities on Alice in Wonderland. The work resulting from these inputs is on display in the school and is of very good quality, reflecting the pupils' high levels of interest and engagement. The school also uses educational visits to theatres and other places of interest to enrich the curriculum for all year groups. The curriculum includes all groups of pupils and ensures broadly equal opportunities and access for all. However, more needs to be done to promote racial harmony, to find alternatives to excluding pupils with behaviour difficulties, and to ensuring that boys and girls participate equally in all areas of school life.
27. Although good improvements have been made to provision for information and communication technology overall, with the installation of a computer suite, pupils still do not use information and communication technology enough to help their learning in different lessons. This was also the case at the last inspection. There are no computers in the classrooms for children in reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2, and in other classes teachers often miss opportunities to use information and communication technology when they could.
28. Pupils with special educational needs are adequately provided for. The school spends as much as it should on these pupils and it meets legal requirements. Teachers write individual education plans which help to ensure these pupils learn at an appropriate rate. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. They know the

pupils well and form good relationships with them, but need more training to enable them to be more effective in assessing and supporting the pupils' progress. The curriculum is not as effective in meeting the needs of the higher ability pupils, who are not challenged enough and, therefore, do not achieve as well as they could.

29. The school enriches the curriculum well by providing many opportunities for pupils to learn outside of the school day. The provision for sporting activities is very good and in the arts and other areas it is good. The dynamic and highly valued caretaker runs a breakfast club and further break and lunchtime clubs are available to pupils. After-school clubs are enthusiastically attended by most of the pupils. In recent weeks these have included football, cricket, rugby, tennis, netball, art, gymnastics, athletics, cross-stitch and environmental club. The good range of after-school opportunities is a remarkable achievement is appreciated by parents, and represents a real strength of the school. Parents also praise how well the pupils are prepared for secondary school, due to the good links between the two schools.
30. The teachers and support staff are sufficiently trained and experienced to meet the demands of the curriculum. However, staff training has concentrated on English and mathematics at the expense of other areas which now need to be addressed. Resources are sufficient to support the full curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory, including a good library and computer suite, and staff work very hard at making the school bright and attractive. Furniture and furnishings in many classrooms are of poor quality, however. The school's outdoor facilities include a valuable environmental area and adequate hard play spaces, but the field is unable to be used for most of the year due to poor drainage. As a consequence, the outdoor physical education curriculum is restricted, but plans are in hand to build an all-weather playing surface which will be available to the pupils as well as to the community.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the pupils' care, welfare, and health and safety are good. Provision of support, advice and guidance is satisfactory. The school takes satisfactory account of pupils' own views and ideas when planning its development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many useful policies and procedures have been put in place in the last two years to guide care and welfare.
- Very close links with outside agencies support the many pupils who need extra care and attention.
- There are very good induction arrangements for children when they start in the nursery.
- The school is beginning to take on board the views and thoughts of pupils when planning for the future.

Commentary

31. The headteacher, together with support from senior staff, has reviewed provision and is implementing many good quality policies to consistently promote the way that all staff care for and support pupils. Some, such as the first-aid policy and the attendance policy, are closely followed and have enabled standards of care to improve. Others, such as the behaviour and race equality policy, are not so rigorously monitored, but the school knows this and is working towards even better practice across the school. Governors are appropriately involved and informed about matters of health and safety, including the security of the site.
32. The school works very closely with many agencies including social services and the educational psychologist. Links are secure also with the educational welfare worker, who visits very regularly and helps to improve attendance, which is now much better. Arrangements for child protection follow locally agreed procedures and the headteacher is often involved in supporting many families and children; he is trained and experienced. In addition, there are small numbers of pupils in care of the local authority who attend the school and who have personal plans to support their needs. Support and outside advice are usually forthcoming for the problems the school faces, except for behaviour management, where there is a shortage in

the area. Many pupils are experiencing severe problems and difficulties in behaviour control. For some of them, this leads to excessive exclusions. The headteacher is fully aware of this and is working with the local authority to try and resolve the situation. There is a common will to succeed over time among the staff, who share high levels of concern and care for all pupils. Staff are aware that pupils from ethnic minorities experience discomfort from ill-informed name-calling on occasions. They do what they can to support the pupils involved, but the school is not as active as it should be in ensuring that this kind of behaviour is eliminated as far as possible. There is sometimes a lack of awareness on the part of staff of the possible ways that the school can either reinforce or counteract negative expectations for pupils of different genders.

33. Children who start in the nursery at the age of three are very carefully introduced to school life, with the full involvement of parents, and settle well into the very secure and happy environment. Exceptionally good levels of understanding as to what is best for this age group of pupils is shown by all the staff involved. Parents themselves know that their children get a very good start in the school; some have chosen this nursery from outside of their catchment area for this reason. The challenge now presenting the school is to maintain such positive relationships and very high levels of care and support throughout the entire school.
34. Pupils are organised into team 'houses', which is proving to be a good way to promote social and personal development, and is, in some instances, encouraging better behaviour and positive attitudes. The pupils try hard to win points and recognition. The weekly house meetings are also used to seek the pupils' views, which are beginning to be taken on board. The school council has only just been organised and the school recognises that this is an area for development, especially in ensuring that girls and boys are equally represented and that the style of organisation encourages both genders to play a full part. In many lessons there are instances of teachers seeking and listening to pupils' own ideas and thoughts, but some pupils are reluctant to express themselves and lack confidence in speaking aloud to a group. This, too, is an area highlighted by staff for improvement.
35. The support and guidance provided for pupils are satisfactory. Assessment systems are much improved and are beginning to be used effectively to set targets for the pupils. However, this area is in the early stages of development. There is some way to go to fully involve pupils in monitoring their own progress and helping to set their own targets throughout the school and ensuring that these targets are equally challenging for pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs have satisfactory support and guidance. Teachers write effective individual education plans, which contain small, short-term targets to ensure that pupils are adequately supported and guided. Staff regularly review the effectiveness of these plans and modify the future support and guidance in the light of their assessments of the pupils' progress, but recognise the need for more training and support for teachers and teaching assistants to make this process fully effective.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, other schools and institutions within the community are good and effectively support the work of the school and the progress pupils make.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is working hard and with success to inform and involve ever increasing numbers of parents.
- Links with the secondary school are very effective.
- The school is outward looking and gets involved in the community and with many different organisations.

Commentary

36. Parents have generally good views of school. They are pleased with the many improvements to the buildings and the majority are very supportive and recognise the hard work being done by staff. They know that the behaviour of a minority is not always good enough and they think their children make good progress. Many speak of the welcome they receive and the ever increasing ways in which the school seeks to involve them in its work and to take account of their views. Parents get involved as governors, some help in classes and many attend functions and activities organised in school. The school's parent-teacher association is especially busy this year, organising celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the school.
37. Parents of children in the nursery attend reading workshops every week, and there is 100 per cent turn out from this group at the coffee mornings which started last year. Very good written information is given to new parents to help explain what goes on in school. The website is especially informative, user friendly and kept up to date and the very regular newsletters are good. The headteacher is constantly seen around the school and is readily available to parents. The school takes concerns and complaints seriously and does all it can to ensure that they are resolved satisfactorily. When difficulties arise, parents are immediately informed and many drop in daily to receive up to the minute news of how their children who are "on report" have behaved that day. Relationships with many parents are good, but despite continuing efforts to forge a positive partnership with all parents, a small minority chooses not to have much to do with the school. The school keeps the parents of pupils with special educational needs adequately informed. Parents are invited to the meetings to review the pupils' individual education plans but very few attend. This limits the help that they can provide at home.
38. Links with the secondary school are very well established and enable pupils in Year 6 to get to know their new school. Some of the secondary teachers visit the school and give sample lessons; pupils share some resources and visit the secondary school several times. In addition, each pupil in Year 6 has a visit, accompanied by their parent, on a one-to-one basis with a teacher from their new school. The pupils involved in this at the time of the inspection were excited about it and looking forward to their visit.
39. Pupils participate fully in sport within the community. Many organisations support the school and increasingly close relationships are being forged with, for example, the National Children's Home support base on the estate, the police service and 'Surestart'. The vicar joins the pupils for lunch once a week and the pupils visit the church from time to time. The vicar also takes assemblies every half term. Many pupils speak of the vandalism directed at school buildings and property, which it is believed is coming from within the community, but nevertheless partnerships and links which have been established are good and have a beneficial impact on pupils' experiences overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership is good and management and governance are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school.
- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are excellent.
- Procedures to check that policies are being implemented are not sufficiently rigorous.
- Governors are well organised and increasingly well informed.

Commentary

40. The current headteacher was appointed very shortly before the last inspection in 2002, at which time leadership and management were judged to be unsatisfactory, and the school was deemed to have serious weaknesses. Since then, the headteacher has provided the good

quality of leadership that was required to mould the staff and governors into an effective team and begin turning the school around. Significant improvements were required over a wide range of the school's work, and key leadership decisions ensured that these have been tackled on a manageable time scale.

41. The initiatives taken by the headteacher to establish the basis for an effective school include:
 - Identifying provision in the nursery as a significant weakness and persuading the governors to appoint a new Foundation Stage leader;
 - Pursuing channels of funding and support to refurbish the buildings and site, including the provision of a new Foundation Stage unit;
 - Laying down minimum expected standards of teaching and learning and ensuring that all staff accept and work to them;
 - Providing governors with good quality information so that they can fulfil their roles properly.
42. The improvements in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning have enabled the headteacher to strengthen performance management procedures and make them more effective in raising the quality of provision. Most teachers have welcomed the challenge, recognising that the support they need to improve their practice is also forthcoming. The headteacher has been willing to take difficult decisions when the support given has not affected the required improvements. Teaching assistants feel valued as members of the teaching team, but their involvement in performance management is at the early stages of development. In some areas, such as the use of pupils' individual education plans, and the management of the most challenging behaviour, more training is needed to enable them to fulfil all the roles expected of them more effectively.
43. The excellent leadership and management established in the Foundation Stage has secured very good nursery provision and established a programme to bring teaching and learning in reception up to the same standard. The governors are beginning to understand the importance of providing all children with their entitlement to a Foundation Stage curriculum through to the end of reception and are supporting the headteacher and Foundation Stage leader in their medium term plans to make sure this happens. A further important dimension to this strand of effective leadership is the pursuit of a stronger link with parents and carers. This has begun in the nursery and is developing through the school. A clear vision is shared of engaging parents and carers with their children at an early stage to help them to prepare their children more effectively for learning at school. The building work is giving parents greater confidence in the school and the measures taken to improve teaching have led to useful staff changes.
44. The co-ordinators of the core subjects⁶ provide good leadership and management; this is having an impact on raising standards, although progress is slow because of previous shortcomings. Residual weaknesses in management reduce the impact of some of the school's policies. The management in information and communication technology, for example, is hampered by the allocation of insufficient time to the co-ordinator to monitor, evaluate and improve provision across the school. Similar limitations reduce the impact of the highly experienced and enthusiastic special educational needs co-ordinator. She provides a clear vision and strong sense of purpose. This satisfactory leadership is an improvement from the last inspection, but the school is not able to benefit fully from her expertise because she is not released from teaching for sufficient time to perform her tasks, including the monitoring of the implementation of policies for special educational needs. Co-ordinators have not been released from classroom teaching enough, largely because they are effective in the classroom at managing the challenging behaviour of some of the pupils, which temporary staff find difficult to do.
45. Governance is much more effective than at the last inspection. It is satisfactory and improving. Governors ensure that the school fulfils all statutory duties. They are very much better informed about the performance of the school and, therefore, feel more empowered to take an active interest. This has led, for example, to one of the governors suggesting a useful improvement to the data on pupils' progress contained in the headteacher's report. Under the head's guidance,

⁶ The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

the governors have re-organised their committee meeting structure so that they now manage an increasing workload more efficiently.

46. The governors bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the school, including financial management. The budget is managed well, ensuring that the maximum amount of income is spent each year on the school's educational priorities while leaving a sensible amount in reserve for contingencies. With their improved knowledge of how the school performs in comparison with other schools, the growing channels of communication with parents, and the consultation of pupils through the school council, the governors are increasingly able to apply principles of best value to their spending decisions. All the income for specific purposes such as supporting special educational needs is spent appropriately and the headteacher and governors continually seek out sources of extra funds to improve provision.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	790,286
Total expenditure	761,119
Expenditure per pupil	2,299

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	9,777
Balance carried forward to the next	38,944

47. The school works hard to ensure all its pupils can take full advantage of the education it provides. It caters for many children from under-privileged families, many of whom have behavioural and learning needs, and for a growing number of pupils in public care. However, an increasing number of pupils, all boys, are being temporarily excluded for poor behaviour, denying them access to part of their education. The staff and governors are concerned about this issue and determined to provide the training and support that teachers need to keep such pupils in school for as much of the time as possible. The race and gender aspects of equal opportunities also need further development. There is a lack of understanding on the part of governors and some staff about gender and race equality, and the governors were late in formally adopting a race equality policy. Negative gender expectations, prevalent in the wider community, are also accepted within the school, such as assuming that girls rather than boys will naturally take care of younger pupils. Staff are not alert to the dangers of overlooking such assumptions, and do not monitor involvement in activities by gender. For example, in a useful activity designed to get the pupils organising themselves, by talking to one another, it was not noted that girls did most of the talking and organising. Opportunities are, therefore, missed for teachers to amend lessons plans to compensate for such unequal aspects of development.

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

Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage

48. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall, but is too variable in quality. Nursery provision is very good and a strength of the school. By contrast, provision for children in the reception year, although satisfactory overall, has some significant weaknesses. Provision for children in reception in the mixed reception/Year 1 class is unsatisfactory.
49. At the time of the previous inspection, provision in the Foundation Stage was unsatisfactory. A follow up visit by government inspectors in May 2003 found that not enough improvement had been made. Since then, a newly appointed Foundation Stage leader has changed nursery provision from unsatisfactory to very good in one academic year, making it one of the successes of the school. Provision for some children in reception, on the other hand, is not yet good enough to move the children on and does not build sufficiently well on the very good progress made in the nursery. The ratio of adults to children has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Children with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well throughout the Foundation Stage, because of the good level of high quality support.
50. Children enter the nursery, on a part-time basis, after their third birthday and move into reception in the spring or summer term of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 45 children attending nursery and 36 reception-age children in a reception only or a mixed reception/Year 1 class. The children's levels of development on entry to the nursery are well below average. Many have poor social skills and their early language, literacy and numeracy skills are very weak. Despite achieving very well through teaching of a consistently high quality, they move into reception with well below average basic skills.
51. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but, once again, there is wide variation in quality. Teaching is consistently very good, and sometimes excellent, in the nursery. The example set by the Foundation Stage leader is of the highest quality. Nursery support staff also have a very secure knowledge of this age group and make a significant, positive contribution to children's learning. This team works well. Planning takes careful account of the early learning goals and the impressive assessments that establish the children's levels of development in each area of learning are used very effectively to plan programmes of work. The quality of teaching and learning in the reception classes is satisfactory overall, but with some unsatisfactory aspects. More able children and those in the mixed-age class do not always make as much progress as they could because they do not receive work that matches their needs. In the unsatisfactory lessons that were seen, the activities set were not matched to the children's needs and management of children's behaviour was weak.
52. There is some way to go before both nursery and reception provision is firmly established as a separate key stage with its own identity and curriculum. In the nursery, the curriculum is very good. Children experience a wealth of rich opportunities to develop early language, literacy and numeracy skills. By contrast, the curriculum for children of reception age is not always sufficiently well linked to the Foundation Stage methods and objectives. Occasionally, there is a lack of understanding about the teaching methods advised for children this age. The structure of the literacy and numeracy lessons is sometimes inappropriate, particularly for those children who lack concentration and maturity. These factors have an adverse effect upon the quality of provision.
53. The Foundation Stage leader provides excellent leadership and management and huge steps forward have been made in the improvement of provision for the nursery. The refurbished nursery unit provides an attractive, spacious learning environment and displays are of high quality. Parents feel welcome and home-school links are very strong. Much improved outdoor play facilities also make a strong contribution to the children's learning. There are strong indicators that the leader is starting to improve provision for reception, but progress in changing some aspects of outdated and ineffective practice is slow. The staff and children in reception

have coped well with their temporary accommodation and play area. New buildings, planned to improve reception provision significantly, are nearing completion.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Personal, social and emotional development underpins all the work of the nursery.
- All nursery and reception staff provide very good role models.

COMMENTARY

54. Children enter the nursery with poorly developed social skills. They make rapid progress and achieve very well in the nursery through very good teaching. They quickly settle into routines and work with a high level of independence. All the adults working with them have clear expectations of behaviour and there is a real feeling of care and respect. A good example of this was observed when a child, who had been chosen as *'Star of the Week'* acted as the teacher and instructed children politely to go out to play. Many children spontaneously gave him a hug on their way out. By the time the children reach the reception classes, most have learned to share and take their turn. They develop a strong sense that people care about them. Relationships remain secure and most children achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time they reach Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good** overall. It ranges from very good in the nursery to satisfactory in reception.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Nursery and reception staff develop children's speaking and listening skills well.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught very well in the nursery.
- The structure of some literacy lessons is unsuitable for reception-age children, who lack maturity and concentration.

COMMENTARY

55. A significant proportion of children starts nursery with well below average literacy skills. Some do not have clearly articulated speech and many find difficulty in expressing themselves. The impact of these poor skills was illustrated during the inspection, when a child tried to explain what he was doing, but had great difficulty because he did not know the words *'fire engine'*. Through very effective teaching, the children make very good progress and achieve well. Staff question, cajole and help to extend skills. Even the most reticent children want to contribute because they feel confident and secure. The children in the nursery enjoy books. They already have favourite stories and most develop an understanding that the printed word carries the story. They receive a rich variety of activities to develop early writing skills. A few write their name with help; others make recognisable marks. However, despite high quality input, many enter the reception year with very weak skills.
56. In the reception classes, progress slows, but achievement is, nevertheless, satisfactory. Teachers use discussion time effectively to develop speaking and listening skills. Routines for reading are well established and parents support their children's reading development well. Through a well-structured programme of purposeful activities, children learn how to work out unfamiliar words. However, although the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, some aspects of provision are unsatisfactory. Children, particularly those in the mixed reception/Year 1 class, do not always achieve as well as they should because activities are inappropriate for those who lack maturity or concentration. In one lesson, children were observed attempting the same activity for the whole lesson. Most were restless and had forgotten the purpose of the task. Children enter Year 1 with very weak early language and literacy skills. Special educational needs are identified early and the children involved given very

good support to achieve very well in nursery. The support in reception is good so that these children achieve well overall.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Overall, provision in mathematical development is **good**. Provision for mathematical development ranges from very good in the nursery to satisfactory in the reception classes.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- In the nursery, activities are fun and staff and children enjoy their work.
- Worksheet-based activities in the reception classes do not develop children's mathematical understanding enough.

COMMENTARY

57. In the nursery, children achieve well from a low starting point. They show a real enthusiasm for mathematical activities because learning is fun. A good example of this occurred when children were observed *'fishing on the beach'*. Most discovered one of the fishing rods was longer than the others and there was much discussion about the number of fish they had caught. On another occasion, one child proudly announced, *'It'll be a circle'*, as he watched staff unfold a large parachute.
58. Despite very good teaching and learning, children enter reception with weak mathematical understanding. Teaching is satisfactory here, but with many more weaknesses. Group activities, such as using a number line to identifying different shapes, are purposeful, and effectively develop the children's understanding. Support staff make a good, positive contribution to children's learning. Children with special educational needs make most progress and more able children least, because tasks do not lend themselves to further extension or exploration. There is a lack of flair and imagination. The children in reception do not yet receive the richness and variety they need to achieve well and do not move on far enough from their low start. Teachers rely heavily on worksheet-based activities that neither challenge nor inspire. Many of the children find it hard to concentrate for the hour-long numeracy lessons that are taught in this class, so their pace of learning slows. Most of the children will not achieve the early learning goals in mathematical development by the end of reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**. Provision is very good in the nursery and satisfactory in reception.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enhance learning.
- Reception children do not always have enough opportunities to explore and investigate for themselves.
- Children's computer skills develop well.

COMMENTARY

59. Children enter the nursery with a poor knowledge of the world in which they live. They develop greater understanding through an exciting range of purposeful activities. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and children achieve well. During the inspection, the topic of *'Incy Wincy Spider'* fascinated children. Some knew very little about spiders, but all gained much greater knowledge through activities, ranging from puppet shows to printing and drawing. Even the programmable toy was dressed up as *'Incy'* and was used very effectively to develop children's information and communication technology skills.
60. When children move into the reception classes, they make steady progress and achieve satisfactorily. The children develop greater understanding through activities such as making 'birds' and printing forest pictures and make good use of the computer suite to develop their information and communication technology skills. However, they do not have enough

opportunity to experiment and explore for themselves. In the unsatisfactory lessons, they do not have enough activities to occupy them and work is geared more towards the Year 1 pupils in the class. Provision for teaching religious education is appropriate and gives children a basic understanding of other faiths and religions. However, most children do not acquire enough knowledge and understanding of the world to achieve the early learning goals by the time they move into Year 1.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good** overall. It is satisfactory in reception and very good in the nursery.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Nursery outdoor play makes an important contribution to children's learning.
- Reception staff make effective use of temporary play facilities.

COMMENTARY

61. Physical development is below that of others this age when children enter the nursery. Many children lack control and co-ordination and have little experience of holding or using pencils and paintbrushes. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery is very good and children of all abilities achieve well. Once again, they make swift progress because activities are purposeful and develop skills very effectively. Outdoor play is a good social occasion, where children develop balance, control and co-ordination very well. During the week of the inspection, children demonstrated good teamwork and increasing control as they played with a large parachute.
62. In reception, children achieve satisfactorily through an appropriate range of activities. However, despite making steady progress, not all will reach the early learning goals by the time they move into Year 1. In physical education lessons, children use space well and express themselves imaginatively. They demonstrate good control and co-ordination in their work. Reception staff make good use of a small outdoor play area to extend physical skills but it is too small to permit the use of large apparatus. The imminent completion of new Early Years' accommodation is intended to provide better facilities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good** overall. It is satisfactory in the reception classes and very good in the nursery.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Nursery staff teach skills very effectively and offer a very good balance of opportunities to learn through play.
- The nursery presents a very attractive learning environment with high quality displays.

COMMENTARY

63. Children's creative skills are not very well developed when they enter nursery. Through very good teaching they make rapid progress and achieve well. Nursery staff successfully create an atmosphere of fun. They focus attention on teaching skills, such as using paintbrushes and mixing paint. The whole nursery environment presents a rich, colourful display celebrating work, ranging from paintings in the style of Mondrian to good observational drawings that children recognise as their own. Children are inquisitive and wander around handling items on display and talking about their work. Children want to come to the nursery and love working in this stimulating, attractive environment.
64. In reception, although teachers continue to develop children's creative skills through satisfactory teaching, they do not always allow children easy access to paints and other resources to develop skills. Children' progress, therefore, slows, but achievement is satisfactory. The children in reception know a good range of songs. They remember words well and know all the

actions. A good example of this occurred at the end of a physical education lesson, when children finished the lesson by performing 'Look Out Here's a Train' with great enthusiasm.

65. Despite a lack of opportunities for independent exploration and investigation, most children make sufficient progress to achieve the early learning 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

- Standards in English are well below average.
- Pupils learn well in the best lessons, but the quality of teaching across the school is inconsistent.
- Too many lessons lack interest and enjoyment.
- Teachers do not use assessments effectively enough to respond to the needs of individual pupils; as a result, their lessons often contain insufficient challenge for the more able pupils.
- The subject is led and managed well.
- The school's clear focus on English is beginning to show improvements in standards.

COMMENTARY

66. Standards in English are beginning to rise because of the school's focus on improvement in this subject. Results for 2003 showed that in Years 2 and 6 standards were very low; in the bottom five per cent nationally. The inspection found that standards are improving, but are still well below average. The provisional results for 2004 show improvements in the proportions of pupils reaching expected levels and in those reaching the higher levels.
67. Pupils achieve as well as those in similar schools and make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates and there is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls. The more able pupils do not achieve as well as they could because their work does not always challenge them enough.
68. Standards in speaking and listening are well below average across the school. Pupils have a very restricted vocabulary and they lack confidence in speaking out. Inspection evidence shows that this has been an area of weakness recognised by the staff since the last inspection. As a result, the school has been focusing on improvements. Teachers now regularly find ways of encouraging children to talk to the class and to each other through discussions. Consequently, pupils are slowly beginning to become more confident and clear in their speaking, and most are able to listen carefully for sustained periods, showing respect for those speaking.
69. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in reading because teachers make the subject a priority. Standards are well below average in all year groups. Children are taught strategies for tackling new words, especially in Years 1 to 4, where the teaching of letter sounds is having a positive effect. Teachers also provide opportunities for group, paired and silent reading. In Year 6, reading diaries are used particularly well. Book areas in classrooms are well organised and the well-run school library has attractive and up-to-date books which interest the pupils. Displays in most classrooms inspire pupils to read and teachers are also successful in encouraging pupils to read to parents at home. However, a few teachers miss the opportunity to use their classroom displays to support reading well and their rooms are dull with little to read on the walls.
70. Standards in writing continue to be well below average as they were at the last inspection. However, there are clear signs that standards are beginning to improve. In Year 6, the teachers give pupils many opportunities to write for a purpose and this has led to some good progress.

For example, pupils recounted past events and reported them as articles in a class magazine for parents and other pupils. This good practice is not yet mirrored in other classes, where there are not yet enough opportunities to write freely and independently. Few pupils use paragraphs and most do not use full stops and capitals consistently. They make many grammatical errors and need support in using interesting or technical vocabulary. Pupils take pride in presenting their work carefully but they lack knowledge of spelling rules and handwriting is weak. Pupils learn the skills of joined handwriting too late in the school, limiting the development of fluent individual writing styles.

71. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall as it was at the last inspection. In lessons seen, teaching ranged from barely satisfactory to very good. Teachers assess the pupils' progress in English thoroughly and, in Year 6, teachers have begun to use the information to set individual targets and plan future lessons. However, this practice is at an early stage and has not yet become widespread in the school and, as a result, the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to reach higher levels of attainment in key skills. In the best lessons, the teaching is lively and interesting and teachers modify their work to match the abilities in their class. As a result, the lessons capture the interest of the pupils who behave well and work hard on challenging tasks. In the less successful lessons, teachers fail to plan their work sufficiently to ensure that pupils of all abilities achieve well. They talk to the pupils for too long and give them too few opportunities to succeed in working independently. Lessons are normally successful for the pupils of middle ability in the class and those with special educational needs, who are supported well by teaching assistants. The most able pupils are often set work which is well within their capabilities and, consequently, fails to challenge and extend them as it should. Some teachers use information and communication technology well to support learning but this is not a consistent enough aspect of provision in English.
72. The subject leaders provide good leadership and management of the subject. They are experienced and knowledgeable, with a clear view of what needs to be improved. They monitor their subject well and they have begun observing lessons and guiding staff towards improvement. They do not yet use information from pupil data as well as they could to improve the subject, nor do they yet use other teachers sufficiently to assist in moderating standards in the school. Following the last inspection, improvement in English has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

73. Pupils use language and literacy in other subjects, but they are held back by their low levels of skills. They have many opportunities to practise and consolidate their use of information books when undertaking research in history and geography. Teachers help pupils to use the correct technical terms in subjects such as science. Pupils' writing skills are developed well through history, geography and religious education. However, the school does not yet have a system to ensure consistency in planning and teaching these skills across other subjects and this is a weakness.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards, though improving, are not high enough.
- Leadership and management of mathematics are good.
- Effective monitoring has improved the overall quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- More able pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1, do not receive enough challenge to achieve standards in line with their ability.
- Problem-solving skills are not developed systematically and pupils find it difficult to think for themselves.

Commentary

74. Results of the 2003 national tests indicated that standards in Year 2 were very low. Standards in Year 6 were well below average when compared to schools nationally and below average when compared to similar schools. Too few pupils throughout the school achieved higher levels. Inspection findings indicate that, although current standards are slightly improved, they are still well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, and there are still not enough pupils reaching higher levels. There is a pattern of persistent low standards, with boys and girls displaying equally weak skills.
75. Achievement is satisfactory at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. On the surface, it would appear that the school has not made enough progress since the previous inspection. However, further investigation reveals that the school has made sound and sometimes good progress on areas in most need. The improved provision for lower-attaining pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, has been very effective. Pupils enter the school with well below average mathematical understanding. A significant proportion of each class has special educational needs. These pupils achieve well, because they have a good level of high quality support. Ability groupings in Year 3 have also gone some way towards providing well for individual needs. However, the success of lower-attaining pupils is often at the expense of the more able. This group underachieves and the seeds of underachievement are sown in Key Stage 1. The teaching in Key Stage 1, although satisfactory overall, does not move the pupils on quickly enough from such a low starting point. Evidence taken from previous work reveals that pupils in Key Stage 1 do not practise applying and using their knowledge often enough. The continuing use of worksheets, criticised during the previous inspection, does little to motivate or challenge the pupils. This weakness in the development of skills is the root cause of older pupils' lack of understanding.
76. By Year 2, pupils' numeracy skills remain weak and understanding of mathematical language is insecure. Although more able pupils demonstrate increasing confidence with larger numbers, they do not develop strategies for working out problems and move into Key Stage 2 attempting work appropriate to their age, without the necessary skills. Older pupils, despite being taught well, lack maturity and struggle with work that requires straying from the method they know. A good example of this occurred when pupils in Year 6 were working out percentages. Some knew that they had to divide by two to find 50 per cent, but could only find 25 per cent by dividing by two twice. They had little understanding of what they were doing.
77. Overall, teaching and learning are good, but with considerable variation between the two key stages. In Key Stage 1, the quality is satisfactory overall, with some unsatisfactory teaching observed. By contrast, in Key Stage 2, the overall quality is good, with some strengths in the lower ability Year 3 group and teaching of a consistently high standard in Year 6.
78. Planning throughout the school is far more consistent than in the past. All teachers develop pupils' speaking and listening skills well, through paired work and discussion. In Key Stage 2, when very good teaching occurs, teamwork is a strong feature of lessons. A very good example of this occurred when pupils in Year 3 were working on fractions. There was a high level of

support for each group, because many pupils had special educational needs. Through a combination of good quality discussion and work pitched at exactly the right level, these pupils achieved well. Everyone had high expectations and, despite finding the work very challenging, pupils persevered and succeeded.

79. In the lessons that were judged satisfactory rather than good, teachers' expectations of the more able pupils were not high enough and they were not encouraged to think for themselves. This limits their progress towards higher levels of key skills. In the unsatisfactory lessons, the pupils did not make enough progress because behaviour management was poor and the work was undemanding.
80. Leadership and management are good. Both leaders have successfully moved the subject forward since the previous inspection and there is good capacity for further improvement. They have a very accurate view of strengths and weaknesses and have made improvements to the overall quality of teaching and learning. They rightly identify improvement in provision for more able pupils, more effective use of assessment, the development of information and communication technology and the use of mathematics across the curriculum as key areas. Although there are good individual examples of information and communication technology being used effectively to support learning in subjects such as science, it does not currently make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Although assessment procedures for tracking progress are developing well, target setting is not yet firmly established and the school is behind the times in recognising the importance of assessment in raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

The school has focused much of its attention on improving basic numeracy skills and has yet to move on to developing skills further through other subjects. There are good examples of measuring skills being used well, such as in Year 6 when pupils were making moving vehicles. However, opportunities tend to occur incidentally, rather than as part of systematic planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in experimental and investigative skills are still too low, and the pupils' poor literacy skills limit their progress.
- Expectations are not high enough for the more able pupils.
- Good assessment procedures have been introduced.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

81. Standards in science are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 but achievement is satisfactory at both key stages. The results of the school's internal assessments in 2003 showed that standards were very low at the end of Year 2, especially in experimental and investigative science. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average in 2003, although they were in line with the results obtained by similar schools.
82. The inspection found that the pupils' experimental and investigative skills are weak. This was a weakness identified in the previous inspection that has only been partially addressed. Pupils in Year 6 have a reasonably sound knowledge and understanding of life processes, materials and forces. They know what the heart and lungs do in the human body for example, explain how forces such as gravity, friction and up-thrust act on moving objects and give examples of reversible and irreversible reactions. Their ability to communicate their knowledge to others is severely limited by their poor literacy skills. Their vocabulary is poor - they cannot recall many of the key words that are needed to explain how things work - and they struggle to talk in complete sentences. They have carried out a number of experiments under close teacher

direction, but have a limited insight into how to carry out investigations for themselves. This has limited the progress that more able pupils make towards developing more complex skills. Following the previous report and recommendations by government inspectors in 2003, the co-ordinator has included this aspect of science in assessment procedures, which, in turn, has led to teachers including more appropriate experimental activities into their planning. There is still some way to go to ensure that pupils develop levels of skill commensurate with their ability, but the evidence from their work is that standards are beginning to rise.

83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen in which poor behaviour disrupted learning, in this instance, the pupils were not managed well enough to establish control of the lesson. As a result, inattentiveness and restlessness spread and the behaviour of the most challenging boys descended into rudeness. This was an exception, however, as the rest of the teaching seen was satisfactory, with some good features. The work in the pupils' books shows that lessons cover the full National Curriculum programmes of study in science, except that experimental skills do not receive enough attention. Teachers expect and get a reasonable amount of work from pupils of all abilities, most of which is presented neatly enough, with labelled graphs and diagrams, and there are examples of pupils explaining their work very clearly using correct scientific words. Teachers do not set high enough expectations for pupils to undertake more independent work as they get older. This is beginning to happen in Year 6, with pleasing results, as pupils respond to the challenge of thinking up their own questions to investigate and setting up their own experiments to test their ideas. Marking is used to show that the pupils' work has been checked, and it occasionally recognises specific successes, but areas for improvement are seldom noted. Lower-attaining pupils are given good support in lessons, and work simplified to enable them to achieve success, for example by drawing a picture chart in Year 2 instead of the block graph the more able pupils were expected to produce. By contrast, insufficient thought is generally given to the level of challenge for pupils at the top end of the ability spectrum. In some of the lessons seen, the teachers talked for too much of the time to all the class instead of giving a short introduction and setting the pupils tasks more suited to the wide range of ability and prior attainment in the class. This resulted in some inattention and a reduced pace of learning for some pupils.
84. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. She provides good support for other staff and ensures that sufficient resources are available for lessons across the school. She is not a science specialist, but has worked hard to become better informed about the subject and shown a very good capacity to seek and act upon expert advice. This has enabled her to put in place the measures needed to raise standards in experimental and investigative skills, though she is aware that more staff training is needed to ensure that these measures are implemented effectively. She is rightly determined to improve the extent to which literacy and numeracy skills are developed in science lessons, and to extend the use of information and communication technology. This fits in well with current whole-school thinking on linking the elements of the curriculum more closely together and contributes to the school's good capacity to continue improving.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not yet high enough and information and communication technology is not used enough in classroom lessons.
- The very good practice seen in some lessons needs to be spread more widely across the school.
- A knowledgeable technician supports the subject well and teaching assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' progress.
- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the subject across the school.

Commentary

85. Standards are below average at the end of both Years 2 and 6, with more ground to be made up in Year 6. The low standards stem from the restricted opportunities provided by the school over successive years. However, achievement is satisfactory because of the pupils' low starting points. Standards have not yet improved since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make as good progress as their classmates and there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
86. National initiatives have helped the school to begin to raise standards. For example, the school has begun to use national guidance as the basis for planning to ensure that all pupils will cover all the strands of the subject. However, the teachers' planning is not checked to ensure that this is happening in practice. National funding has meant that the resources for the subject have been improved and staff confidence and expertise developed through training. These positive initiatives have led to the school now being in a position where significant improvements in standards can begin. Improvements in Years 1 and 2 are hampered by a shortage of computers in the classrooms.
87. Teaching in information and communication technology is satisfactory. The computer suite is used well for teaching classes and small groups, where the knowledgeable technician is a great asset. In the classrooms however, there is limited use of computers to support learning in other subjects, which was a weakness at the last inspection. This is because teachers do not routinely plan for information and communication technology in their lessons and the school does not check that this is done. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well. In some lessons they also work well on developing information and communication technology skills with small groups. Some examples were seen of the good use of information and communication technology by teachers to support learning. For example, in a geography lesson in Year 6, the teacher used a data projector very well to illustrate coastal erosion through animation. As a result, the pupils were interested and enthusiastic and they made substantial gains in their understanding of a difficult subject. A group of pupils in Years 2 and 3 achieved well in a good lesson, led by a teaching assistant, in using CD-ROMs to gather information about animals. Such good practice is not currently being spread more widely to other classes, because it is not identified by monitoring. There are still insufficient opportunities to use information and communication technology sensing and monitoring tools, as was also the case at the time of the last inspection. The school plans to introduce the use of such resources soon.
88. The leadership and management of information and communication technology are satisfactory but contain significant weaknesses. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator for information and communication technology has led some positive developments in the subject and she has ensured that pupils are adequately protected from unsuitable Internet use. However, she does not monitor her subject with sufficient rigour. As a consequence, she does not have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in her subject, nor can she be sure of the quality of information and communication technology provided for pupils in each class. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been limited.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

89. The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is satisfactory but is not as effective as it could be because it is not planned and co-ordinated in a systematic way. It is used regularly as part of literacy work and less regularly with other subjects across the school.

HUMANITIES

No judgements are made on the quality of provision in **history, and geography** as only one complete lesson was seen in both history and geography. From the evidence available, the indications are that standards are below average in history and geography, as they were at the last inspection.

90. In **history and geography**, teachers try to make learning interesting and enjoyable. Visits and visitors play an important part in making lessons lively and relevant. For example, pupils pay study visits to Woolacombe, Landkey Village, local churches, Pinkery Residential Centre, the theatre and to Umberleigh by train. Visitors include an African dance and drum group, a travelling theatre and a group of artists. These activities enrich the subjects and inspire the pupils. However, history and geography are partly neglected because the school has been concentrating on English and mathematics. The pupils' work shows that they are covering a broadly suitable range of topics in both subjects. The topics are successfully planned to form links with literacy to make the work relevant for pupils. For example, the Years 4 and 5 history topic on 'The Ancient Greeks' includes tasks that require the pupils to write in many styles and to undertake Internet research. As a result, the pupils see the purpose of their learning, which helps to maintain their interest. Those pupils who were spoken to clearly enjoyed these subjects and showed pride in their work, which was presented neatly. There are adequate resources for both subjects. In Year 6, pupils use their knowledge of information and communication technology to present their research findings in history by multi-media presentation. For example, a presentation on 'The Victorians' included voice, music, text, colour and imported images.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of how the main religions of the world are related.

Commentary

91. Standards in religious education are now below average at the end of Year 6, compared with a judgement of above average at the time of the last inspection. The work in the pupils' books shows that the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus are covered in lessons over the course of a year. The pupils have some knowledge of the main world religions, but are less sure about how they are related. For example, they are not aware that Christians, Muslims and Jews worship the same God, and that their holy books have common roots. This lack of understanding restricts the contribution the subject is making to preparing the pupils for life in a multi-faith society. The work in the pupils' books indicates that standards are also below the expectations of the agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2, but that the pupils cover the required ground.
92. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The pupils undertake some tasks that require them to relate themes from religions to their own lives. A good example was seen in a lesson in Year 6 in which the pupils reflected on how Mohammed serves as a role model for Muslims. The teacher then provided a secure environment in which the pupils felt able to discuss both good and bad role models that affected their own lives. This contributed positively to their personal development. In another part-lesson observed, pupils in lower Key Stage 2 were working on a theme to do with Christianity. The drawings and illustrations being used bore little resemblance to the reality of Christian worship and practices within their own community, and the pupils had little idea about how the lesson related to their own lives.
93. There is currently a hiatus in leadership and management of the subject as the co-ordinator has left the school and will not be replaced until September. This means that no-one has a current overview of how well pupils are learning throughout the school. Gaps in the pupils' knowledge have been picked up by previous monitoring so the school is aware to the main issues to be addressed.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Too few lessons were observed **in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education** to make firm judgements about provision. Inspectors spoke to pupils about what they had learnt and examined displays, subject leaders' documentation, planning and examples of previous work.

94. In **art and design**, evidence taken from teachers' planning and work on display indicates that pupils have access to an appropriate range of media. Despite the school having to focus much of its attention on raising standards in English, mathematics and science in recent years, pupils still receive a worthwhile experience in art and acquire sufficient breadth and depth of curriculum coverage. Attractive fabric collages, created in association with an artist in residence, demonstrate the school's commitment towards making effective use of visits and visitors. Documentation is thorough and the subject leader has a sound grasp of the quality of provision. The school plans to increase the amount of time spent on art and design as part of its plans to enrich the pupils' daily learning experiences.
95. In **design and technology**, pupils also gain experience of an adequate range of materials and develop appropriate skills in designing, making and evaluating. In Year 6, pupils were observed constructing a frame for their wheeled vehicles, using saws and demonstrating reasonable competence. Levels of collaboration are high during these activities and the subject makes a good contribution towards pupils' personal and social development. Pupils talked articulately about previous projects they had designed, made and evaluated. A display of cross-stitch samplers highlighted good design and technology links to a history topic on Queen Victoria. Older pupils used information and communication technology very effectively to design '*Healthy Eating*' leaflets.
96. In **music**, no lessons were observed. The whole school was heard singing in assemblies. This singing was tuneful and enthusiastic. Pupils of all ages, both boys and girls, enjoyed the sense of occasion. All pupils have some opportunity to participate in concerts and performances. Outside visitors, such as the *Brekele African Drumming Group*, are used well to enhance provision. However, music is not a strong subject and the school has recognised the need to improve provision. Two musicians have been recruited to the school for the start of the next academic year, in order to ensure the subject is sufficiently well led and managed. Currently, no one has responsibility for overseeing the quality of provision or the standards achieved.
97. In **physical education**, the school provides a good range of activities to develop pupils' skills. Extra-curricular opportunities, ranging from tag rugby to netball, offer further good enrichment. The subject is led and managed well. From looking at documentation and observing a small sample of activities, the emphasis on promoting active lifestyles and involving everyone, including the caretaker, comes across very strongly. During the week of the inspection, the '*Badger*' house team was observed practising a skipping routine for the Summer Fayre. The high level of co-operation between older and younger pupils made the whole occasion a very rewarding and enjoyable learning session. Involvement in the School Sports' Co-ordinator Programme is also developing staff expertise and increasing the school's good links with outside agencies.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. Only one lesson could be seen in this subject so no judgements are made about overall provision. Until recently, these areas were taught inconsistently on a largely informal basis. However, from this year the school has introduced a new policy which aims to co-ordinate this work through assemblies, subject areas, house group meetings and regular lessons in personal, social and health education. It also includes a discussion period called 'Circle Time' which provides opportunities for pupils to talk over issues that face them as part of everyday life. A good-quality scheme of work is used to guide the school's provision in health education, which deals appropriately with drugs and alcohol awareness. The school expects to be accredited with the 'Healthy Schools' Award very soon as a result of these developments. Sex

and relationships education is planned and taught, with contributions from a nurse about growing up. However, this comes at a time when some pupils will have already reached puberty, limiting its effectiveness. House group meetings are well established and they have the potential for enabling pupils to have a say in the running of the school. This is intended to provide pupils with the opportunity to understand the workings of democracy and to develop the skills of citizenship. However, this opportunity is not made the most of because representatives are not elected, there is no effective forum for pupils' views and staff tend to play too dominant a role in meetings.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' 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	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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