

INSPECTION REPORT

FOUR LANES INFANT SCHOOL

Chineham, Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116082

Headteacher: Mrs Yvonne Thornton

Lead inspector: Mrs Ann Coughlan

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 March 2004

Inspection number: 256156

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	260
School address:	Hanmore Road Chineham Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG24 8PQ
Telephone number:	01256 324 256
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Stonock
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school, on the outskirts of Basingstoke, is average in size and caters for 260 girls and boys aged four to seven years. Almost all of the pupils are white and of British heritage but there are also a few pupils of Asian and mixed race families. Although a few pupils speak English as an additional language none are at the early stages of learning English. Overall, pupils are socially advantaged and there is a well below average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (mainly learning difficulties, communication, autism or behavioural difficulty) is just above average but the proportion with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is below average. Children's attainment levels are above average when they start school. The number of pupils on roll has reduced slightly since the last inspection, owing to demographic factors, and in all year groups there are more boys than girls. Few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21124	Ann Coughlan	Lead inspector	Science, geography, physical education, personal, social and health education and citizenship
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector	
27568	Midge Davidson	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, history, religious education, special educational needs, English as an additional language
17766	Eira Gill	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology, music, Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Four Lanes Infant School is **effective** overall. A good quality of education in Years 1 and 2 is resulting in good achievement overall and rising standards. Current staffing difficulties in the reception classes are a barrier to learning, but children in reception achieve satisfactorily. The leadership and management of the school are good and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the end of Year 2 standards in literacy, numeracy, art and design and music are high and standards are above average in most other subjects.
- The high proportion of good or better teaching in Years 1 and 2 and very good assessment lead to pupils' good achievement, but there is a lack of consistency in teaching and learning in the reception classes.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and the initiatives she has introduced are having a positive impact on raising standards.
- The school's very strong emphasis on pupils' personal development results in very good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given very good support and are looked after very well.
- Very good links with parents and the community support pupils' achievement very well.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily in science but more could be expected.

Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. Standards have risen in writing, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and several other subjects. The key issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully, for example there have been improvements in curricular organisation, assessment and management. However, the provision for children in the reception classes has declined in quality.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	A	A	A	A
Writing	B	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	B	A	B

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

The trend of improvement in the school's performance in national tests over the last five years is above the national trend. Pupils do very well in relation to similar schools, particularly in reading and writing. Inspectors found that all pupils **achieve well** overall by the end of Year 2 but satisfactorily in science and religious education. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, art and design and music and above average in all other subjects seen except religious education where they are average. Progress in the reception classes is not so consistent but most children are likely to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in all the areas of learning.

Pupils' **personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good** and as a result pupils develop very good confidence and self-esteem. Their behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they have very good attitudes to learning. Their attendance is good and punctuality is very good

though unauthorised absence is above the national average owing to a few parents taking holidays during term time. The school involves pupils well in seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good overall.**

Teachers in Years 1 and 2 organise their classes and prepare lessons very well so that pupils settle to work, get a lot done and learn quickly. Teachers work closely with effective teaching assistants to manage pupils very well and they use good quality resources imaginatively to inspire pupils. Assessment is very good and information about pupils' progress is used very well in planning lessons so that work meets the needs of pupils of all abilities and promotes good learning. In the reception classes teaching quality is satisfactory overall though some good and very good teaching was also seen. Children feel secure and quickly settle to routines and assistants work effectively with groups. Although assessment is satisfactory, children are not always challenged sufficiently in literacy and numeracy and teachers do not make the best use of time; these factors limit learning in reception.

The curriculum is good overall and pupils benefit from visitors to school but lack opportunities for extra-curricular sport or visits out of school. The very good standard of care and support helps pupils feel secure and this, together with the very constructive partnerships with parents and the community, makes a very effective contribution to their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very purposeful in raising quality and standards. The deputy headteacher and senior management support her enthusiastically and effectively. The school carefully monitors and evaluates its work and acts quickly to address any weaknesses. Governance is satisfactory: governors are knowledgeable, support the school well and work closely with the headteacher. They are keen to develop further their links with the school. All statutory requirements are now met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are very favourable. A few parents felt they were not kept well informed about how their child was getting on but inspectors found that the school makes good arrangements for formal consultations, sends out good quality written reports and most parents find that teachers are readily available to talk to parents. The responses to the school's own questionnaire to ten per cent of pupils indicated that they have positive views about their teachers and lessons and this was confirmed when inspectors spoke to pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise achievement in the reception classes by improving the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Raise teachers' expectations for pupils' achievement in science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

By the end of Year 2 achievement is good, regardless of gender, level of attainment or special educational need. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics, art and design and music. They are above average in other subjects seen during the inspection except religious education where standards are average. Standards in Year R are above average in relation to the goals that children are expected to reach by the end of reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop very good skills in literacy, numeracy and art and design and make good progress overall across the curriculum
- Pupils in all groups, including those with special educational needs and the most able, achieve equally well.
- Children in the reception year do not make such good progress as those in Years 1 and 2 but their achievement is satisfactory.

Commentary

1. Children enter the reception classes with above average attainment. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and by the end of the reception year the majority are likely to exceed the goals they are expected to in all areas of learning. Their achievement is satisfactory but progress is uneven because the teaching quality is inconsistent between classes and between teachers and day-to-day assessment is not consistently used to provide a clear focus for learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.0 (18.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.2 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Results in the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 have been consistently above the national average for the last few years, and the trend of improvement has been higher than the national trend. At the higher Level 3 the school attained results well above the national average. Average point scores for 2003 indicate that girls are attaining better than boys but no significant difference between boys and girls was seen during the inspection. The school is working well towards meeting its challenging targets for this year in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science indicated well above average attainment with pupils attaining in the highest five per cent of schools at Level 3. Although teachers' assessments and inspection evidence indicate that most pupils will attain the expected Level 2 in science, teachers consider that the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 will be lower than last year. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in science but the school recognises that the teaching and assessment of investigative and experimental science are areas for development.
3. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well in most subjects as a result of the good quality teaching and the very positive ethos for learning in the school. Improved assessment in English and mathematics is resulting in more rapid progress and rising standards in these subjects. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour contribute

well to the pace of learning. The school's focus on improving writing has been very successful and pupils feel secure and confident to try things as they are supported very well. High expectations and greater consistency in teaching also contribute to the high standards in reading, mathematics, art and design and music. Standards have risen in writing, geography, history, ICT, art and design and music since the last inspection. Although provision in religious education has improved since the last inspection standards remain average in relation to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Achievement in religious education, although satisfactory, is limited by the rather short length of lessons and lack of opportunities for extended writing in the subject.

4. Pupils of all levels of attainment, with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve equally well. This is because the work for pupils in English and mathematics is very well matched to their prior attainment as a result of very good assessment and tracking. Owing to the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs they also achieve well, as shown by the progress they make in attaining their individual targets and the high proportion of these pupils that attain average levels in national tests. Teachers are conscious of the need to provide for their higher attaining pupils and, in Year 2, they adapt aspects of the Key Stage 2 curriculum appropriately to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Test results and inspection findings show that the school caters well for its higher attaining pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. This is particularly evident throughout the school as pupils work together, creating a very productive working environment. Attendance is good and punctuality very good. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and leads to very good behaviour in lessons and at play.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes help them to develop enquiring minds, eagerness to learn and willingness to practise new-found skills.
- Very good relationships between pupils and with teachers help to promote the positive work ethic found in the school.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect, to express their feelings and thereby grow in confidence.
- The school introduces pupils to a wide range of cultures.
- Some parents continue to take family holidays in term time. This interrupts their children's learning and puts pressure on the teaching staff.

Commentary

5. Pupils are very keen to learn, listen carefully and enjoy their learning. The higher attaining pupils set a good example and a strong work ethic exists. Almost all lessons are lively and stimulating so that pupils respond with enthusiasm to their work across all areas of the curriculum. They strive to do their best and recognise the successful work of others. This was evident in an assembly, when pupils broke out in spontaneous and well-deserved applause after the whole reception year had provided a well-controlled musical accompaniment to a fairy story. In the very few lessons where attitudes were only satisfactory, this resulted from overlong instruction by the teacher and less interesting tasks.
6. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is very good and there were no exclusions in the last year. As they join the reception classes children learn how to fit into a community, how to be responsible and to be self-disciplined. For instance, children will tidy up their working area with little fuss and with little need of reminders. Children develop independence and confidence and most are likely to exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year.

7. Parents and pupils agree that behaviour in and about the school is very good. Pupils play well together, very often in mixed age groups, and there are very few instances of friction.
8. Pupils also enjoy working together; they listen carefully to each other in discussions and support each other in practical work. Every Friday in 'Golden Time', mixed age groups work together at a particular task or craft. This is very popular with all ages.
9. Pupils are very ready to undertake responsibilities in class and around the school. The school gives pupils daily opportunities for reflection and prayer. For example, in class and in assemblies, pupils are given time to think about their own feelings and the feelings of others. One boy acted out his impressions with his eyes shut as he thought what it would be like to be Goliath. In art, pupils were asked to draw how it felt to touch a smooth surface, a rough and a bumpy surface. This was an exacting task but one taken on with equal enthusiasm and with some interesting impressions. Pupils' interest in science helps them to appreciate the wide range of living things and how to care for them.
10. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong. They learn from the role models of staff as they take care of the needs of each individual pupil. There is a moral tone to much of the work covered in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and pupils have a natural concern for anyone in distress. There is a strong sense of community within the school and in the wider life with the adjacent junior school and the community centre. Pupils take part in after-school activities and enjoy the joint celebrations organised by the Friends of Four Lanes. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. The curriculum provides pupils with a good understanding of local culture. In addition there is a well-developed programme in literature, geography, history, art and music that helps pupils gain insight into a wide range of cultures. However, opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural world in which they live, while satisfactory, are more limited.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.6
National data	0.4

11. Attendance is good as pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a very efficient and prompt start to the day. Since the last inspection the school has attempted to reduce the level of unauthorised absence and closely monitors this, but the level has not reduced significantly. One key reason is the tendency for some parents to take holidays during term time. The school discusses all requests for extra holidays with parents and provides work to help those on extended leave to keep up with their studies. However, the school's policy on attendance, which is still in development, will need to make a clear statement by governors and staff to advise parents against taking their children out of school on extra holidays.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education the school provides is good. There is good teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and very good assessment in these year groups. An area needing improvement is the consistency of teaching, learning and assessment in the reception classes. The curriculum is good overall but satisfactory in reception. The care, welfare and safety of pupils are very well addressed, and the school has very good links with its parents and with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall, good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in the reception classes. Assessment is very good in Years 1 and 2 and for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment in the reception classes is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and plan and organise their lessons well.
- All teachers in Years 1 and 2 have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage this well.
- The teaching assistants effectively support teachers and pupils.
- Assessment information is used very well in Years 1 and 2 to match work very well to pupils' different abilities in English and mathematics.
- Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught very well but opportunities are missed to make use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in some subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent in the reception classes.
- Assessment information is not always used well in the reception classes to give children work that challenges and extends them.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching has improved overall since the last inspection; there were no unsatisfactory lessons seen in this inspection and the proportion of good and very good teaching has increased. Teaching was very good overall in English, art and design and music and examples of very good teaching were seen in several other subjects, though in science and religious education teaching was satisfactory. However, the quality of teaching in the reception classes is not as good as previously found.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (20%)	23 (47%)	16 (33%)	0	0	0

13. The headteacher has been keen to increase the involvement of pupils in all parts of lessons and this initiative is having a positive impact on learning in most classes. As a result, most of the teaching and learning seen in Years 1 and 2 was good or better. The teachers' good questioning skills, seen across the curriculum, and the use of discussion partners mean that everyone has a chance to contribute and the consultations at the end of lessons ensure that pupils are able to make a judgement on how well they have learned. The use of individual whiteboards, for example in mathematics, encourages all to respond and enables the teacher to quickly assess the responses. Teachers' effective planning and their preparation of interesting resources are related well to their good knowledge of the demands of different subjects. This means lessons are relevant and interesting and support this involvement of pupils well.
14. There is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons because teachers have high expectations of pupils' application to the task in hand. The teachers' very good management skills result in very good behaviour so lessons proceed at a good pace with pupils making good gains in their learning. Pupils show a mature attitude for their age in the way they respond to working individually or in different size groups. They show real enjoyment in tackling the challenges they are given. They learn from each other because they co-operate and listen carefully to the ideas of others. The good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants has a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, in a science lesson, lower attaining pupils were given further explanation and support to organise their task. The very effective support for pupils with special educational needs helps them to learn readily through well-designed tasks and meet their learning targets.

15. Although the marking of pupils' work does not often indicate how pupils can improve their work, teachers in Years 1 and 2 have improved their assessment skills and now have a much better idea of the levels their pupils are attaining. This helps them to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills very well. Lessons in English and mathematics are designed carefully to provide challenges that are suitable for all levels of prior attainment. This means that, for example, pupils progressively build their mental strategies in number and learn to present their work in an organised manner. They develop good spelling and handwriting skills. Pupils' writing benefits from experiencing a wide range of texts in literacy lessons; they learn how to describe characters and place them in a setting. They also learn that books are a valuable source of information in other subjects and develop the skills to access this information.
16. Although teachers make good use of pupils' writing skills in geography and history, this is not evident in science or religious education. Some good links are made between mathematics and ICT but there could be more use of standard measures in science. However, teachers are increasingly using ICT to support their teaching through use of CD ROMs, for example, in geography and databases in science.
17. The quality of teaching in reception varies considerably from satisfactory to very good with nearly two out of three lessons being satisfactory. Although the Foundation Stage manager provides a good role model and the teaching assistants provide effective support some lessons are uninspiring and lack pace. Nevertheless, children learn satisfactorily because of their very good attitudes and behaviour, and good capabilities. Where teaching is good or better, children respond eagerly and learn and achieve well as seen in some music, art and design, ICT and gymnastics lessons. Assessment is satisfactory but information from assessment is not always used to challenge children to achieve appropriately in their writing or mathematical development. The headteacher provides good support and challenge and is working alongside the Foundation Stage manager to improve the quality of teaching and learning by developing planning further, as well as helping to overcome the difficulties presented by the accommodation.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and well balanced for Years 1 and 2 but is not fully established in the reception year. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation meets the needs of the curriculum well for Years 1 and 2 but the accommodation for reception children is only satisfactory. The quality of resources is very good and these are used well in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The aims of the school are reflected well in the very good attention paid to meeting the needs of individual pupils.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, particularly in literacy.
- Current curriculum reviews and recent initiatives are having a positive impact upon standards attained by pupils.
- The curriculum for the reception year is in the process of being developed but is not yet fully established.
- The use of the local area and visits further afield to enrich the curriculum is limited.

Commentary

18. This is an inclusive school with good attention paid to the development of each pupil. The quality of teaching, the very good role models offered by adults and the care taken to monitor pupils' progress mean that all pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to learn and attain targets that are appropriate for them, particularly in English and mathematics. The school's ethos and variety of teaching methods ensure that pupils' opinions are respected and responses valued. The school is quick to request support, advice or training when faced with the particular needs of a pupil. Those who do not speak English as a first language are supported very well, as are

those who are identified as being very able. Recently established patterns of curriculum planning, developed by senior management, now ensure that a range of learning needs are addressed effectively through good co-operation within teams of teachers and learning support assistants. There has been good improvement in response to the key issues from the last inspection. However, at present, science is not given sufficient emphasis as a core subject and the work is not sufficiently designed for different levels of prior attainment as it is in English and mathematics.

19. A significant factor in the school's very inclusive approach is the very good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. Skilled teaching and trained support ensure that these pupils learn well and make good progress. Groups are supported very well both within and outside the classroom, involved with activities that relate directly to what is being taught in the class, usually literacy. Creative timetabling and good time keeping mean that the best use is made of all resources. Records are kept rigorously and pupils' progress monitored closely so that pupils move effectively towards meeting the targets on their individual education plans. Learning support assistants are well trained. They know how to support pupils sensitively during class discussions and share learning targets with those with whom they work so that the pupils understand what they need to do to improve. The school is very well staffed in this area and benefits greatly from the time and extensive experience of the special needs co-ordinator.
20. All pupils are now developing a clear cursive writing script as a result of a whole-school approach to the development of handwriting skills. Exciting ideas for writing and a creative use of the timetable and staff have maximised the level of support offered by adults. This has led to improved standards in writing for Year 2 pupils. A radical improvement in the provision of equipment in ICT as well as the establishment of an effective scheme of work, based on ordered steps to acquire new skills, have ensured that pupils are now attaining higher standards. Improvement in provision for religious education is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning but the short length of lessons sometimes limits achievement. The school's curriculum and timetabling of personal, social and health education support the importance it places on pupils' personal development.
21. It is only very recently that weekly planning for reception children was based appropriately on the six areas of learning and this has not been in place long enough to have an impact. Teachers' planning is satisfactory although weekly planning lacks the fine detail necessary to give children effective learning opportunities in some areas. For example, there is no planning for children to use the outdoor accommodation nor is there guidance for teachers and assistants to know how to intervene in play activities. Although there is sufficient space for children in reception, the open-plan arrangement presents organisational difficulties and noise from other groups can be a problem when a teacher or assistant wants to talk to a group quietly or read a story.
22. Pupils have good opportunities to attend after-school clubs and activities that are organised by the local community centre in close consultation with the school. The school arranges visitors to classes to support several areas of the curriculum but there are fewer occasions when the use of the local environment or visits out of school are used to support the taught curriculum and no extra-curricular sport is offered by the school.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils' views are sought well in a variety of ways.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school very carefully monitors pupils' progress and ensures they are encouraged to do their best.

- The attention given to each pupil ensures that they can work with confidence in a secure environment.
- The school involves pupils well in its daily affairs and takes good account of their points of view when planning changes.

Commentary

23. The provision for the support and guidance of pupils has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. Teachers know their pupils well and give them sound advice based on that knowledge. Teaching assistants are skilled in supporting pupils who need help or are not making the progress expected of them. Pupils say there is always an adult they can go to if they have a concern. The new performance tracking system introduced in September 2003 makes very good use of each pupil's performance to set individual and group targets in reading, writing and mathematics. This has already been beneficial in identifying weaknesses and in planning the support needed. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of what they need to do to improve in these areas and the school is currently developing similar systems in, for example, science and ICT.
24. Class teachers monitor personal development informally and noteworthy incidents are discussed in staff meetings. Where there are concerns about an individual, careful records are kept. Suitable action is taken, either for an award at the award assembly or, if there is a concern, a plan is initiated. The school always tries to involve parents in such plans, either by discussion at the end of school or, where more appropriate, by an invitation to meet in school. Parents report that they find it easy to talk to teaching and support staff. Teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils means they can write very perceptive reports to parents at the end of the year on how each child's personal development has progressed.
25. Procedures for child protection and promoting pupils' well being are very good. All staff are fully aware of child protection procedures and their responsibilities to keep a watchful eye on each child. Trained members of staff deal with accidents and injuries promptly. Records of such accidents are kept and parents informed. Health and safety procedures are thorough; staff and governors carry out routine checks of premises and equipment and defects are dealt with swiftly.
26. The planned school council has not yet been established but the procedures for discussions in class and the gathering of the pupils' opinions are already firm routines in Years 1 and 2. This has not yet been extended to gathering the views of children the reception year, though this is planned for when the council is formed. Pupils say that teachers listen to their ideas but are less sure of what action has been taken. A pupil survey conducted in January of this year gauged the views of a sample of ten per cent of pupils from all three year groups on a range of school issues, and resulted in mostly positive comments.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents and the community, and good links with other schools have a major impact on pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' views are valued and acted upon and information for parents is extensive.
- The school maintains very friendly relations with parents, encouraging them to become involved in school life and in their children's progress.
- Good links are maintained with schools in the area, particularly with the adjacent junior school.
- The school has very good, outward looking and productive ties with the community.

Commentary

27. The school's own recent parental survey indicates a high degree of satisfaction with the school and its objectives. Parents particularly appreciate the quality of the education, their children's academic achievements and the support the school gives for their social development. The school gave parents details of the findings of the survey and the actions proposed in response. Parents are very supportive of the school. They are keen to contribute to their children's education by encouraging them to achieve to the best of their ability. However, a few do not appreciate the effects of taking extended holidays during term time.
28. In both the school's survey and the pre-inspection questionnaire a minority of parents identified a need for improved communication, particularly about their children's progress. The inspection found that communications were good. The school prospectus gives full information, if a little briefly stated at times. The governors' annual report to parents is very readable and the school keeps parents well informed of successes and coming events. Even so the school has undertaken to review the present structure of communication with parents.
29. Parents are informed regularly of their children's progress through regular meetings with staff and the open door policy allows parents to meet teachers by arrangement. Annual reports to parents are perceptive and say what pupils know and can do. The suggested ways in which pupils could improve their progress help parents to support their children. There is good attendance among parents at the termly meetings to discuss their children's progress. For those parents who cannot attend at prescribed times, special arrangements are made. Parents are always invited to come and talk to staff if their child is giving cause for concern. In almost all cases parents are very co-operative, giving their full support to any plan put forward by the school. The majority of parents help with home reading programmes and writing projects and volunteer their help in school and with school events.
30. Parents' views also resulted in plans for further and better use of the adjacent Community Centre. The centre arranges courses specifically designed for parents and after-school activities are arranged for this age group. These are very popular with both parents and their children and further the work and aims of the school. The school is able to help in this way as a result of the recently increased ties with the Community Centre. Parents are also interested to find out more about how different areas of the curriculum are taught in the core subjects. For example, the events especially related to English were well attended by parents and have been successful in explaining the processes associated with learning to read. Further such information evenings are planned.
31. The good links with the junior school ensure that pupils' welfare needs are well provided for in a smooth transfer to their next school. For instance the behaviour policies of both schools are based on similar behaviour management strategies. Staff from infant and junior schools meet when the pupils move from Year 2 to Year 3 to share information about pupil progress. The school uses members of the immediate community to help in assemblies and in personal, social and health education lessons. These links are very beneficial to pupils' social development and in broadening their education generally. The strong parent teacher association works in conjunction with both the infant and junior schools to raise money for resources.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and the leadership of senior staff is good. Management is good and the governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is committed to continual improvement and has raised the subject managers' awareness of their roles in raising standards.
- The effective monitoring procedures have improved the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2.
- The governors are very supportive of the school and keen to be more involved.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides very good leadership and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. Following her appointment, just under a year ago, the headteacher led a thorough self-evaluation of the school that involved representatives of the whole school community and identified priorities for raising standards even further. This evaluation formed the basis of the new school development plan, which is a very effective document. All managers, some of whom are well qualified for their responsibilities, have action plans that are already having an effect on improvement in several aspects and subjects of the curriculum. The deputy headteacher fulfils her responsibilities effectively, working in partnership with the headteacher. The senior management team are enthusiastic and hardworking. They are aware they have an important role in the school and are valued by the headteacher and governing body.
33. The special needs co-ordinator is very effective. The opportunities for dedicated time in this post ensure that records are kept effectively, pupils are supported very well through very good teaching and identification of need is made early so that pupils make good progress. The existing grants for special educational needs are used appropriately to meet the expense linked to the current generous provision of staffing.
34. The new performance management procedures are now linked more appropriately to the improvement plan and professional development opportunities for the staff. These links are contributing effectively to the good monitoring systems now in place for teaching and learning. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when monitoring was judged to be not sufficiently rigorous. The tracking of pupils' progress, particularly in English and mathematics, is good and the school is very efficient in keeping easily accessible records of pupils' behaviour. The headteacher and all staff are successful in creating a learning environment where pupils from different backgrounds and abilities can succeed and achieve well. In order to improve this aspect of the school, the headteacher has ensured that the teachers in each year group plan together so that pupils are given the same opportunities.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	646,747
Total expenditure	657,188
Expenditure per pupil	2,480

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	66,020
Balance carried forward to the next	55,579

35. Financial management and administration of the school are good. The priorities in the school improvement plan guide the setting of the budget, which is carefully monitored throughout the year by the appropriate governing body committee. The curriculum is well resourced and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Although the balance carried forward to the next year looks high, the school is concerned about the possibility of falling rolls in the next academic year, which will reduce funding. The finance committee has evaluated spending carefully to ensure there are sufficient funds to provide for the present level of staffing.

36. The governing body is a supportive and knowledgeable group. They share their expertise effectively. Several governors are new but have already had training opportunities and are eager to become part of the team. Good links are being forged and each governor now has a link subject or aspect. However, this improvement is yet to be put into place formally. The new Chair of the Governing Body visits the school regularly and ensures that she is available to talk to parents and staff. The headteacher and governing body have ensured that all statutory requirements are now met.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Children's attainment on entry is above average. There are 85 children divided into three groups and all attend full-time. At the time of the inspection, there was one full-time teacher, two part-time teachers who were job sharing, and two supply teachers sharing responsibility for one group. The three teaching assistants have had good training opportunities and give effective support to the children and to the teachers. The design of the accommodation, which is mainly open-plan, is limiting when there is a need to create interactive displays or to encourage quiet times for story telling. One of the teaching areas is a 'walk through' to another classroom and this results in interruptions. The outside area is only used at playtime and sometimes on Fridays during 'Golden Time' when children have a free choice. The induction arrangements for the children are satisfactory and will be reviewed for the next entry in September to ensure a more parent-friendly organisation.
38. Teachers' planning is satisfactory although weekly planning lacks the fine detail necessary for supply teachers to be sufficiently prepared to give children effective learning opportunities. There is no planning for children to use the outdoor accommodation, nor is there guidance for teachers and assistants to know how to intervene in play activities. Play is sometimes repetitive and lacks purpose. Appropriate assessment is made of the children's progress and the management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. This is a decline from the previous inspection when management was judged to be of a very high order. Action by the headteacher is bringing about improvement, for example, in planning and use of the accommodation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good relationships between the adults and the children.
- Most children are happy to come into school in the mornings.
- Children are very independent and confident.
- Home/school link books are very useful for parents to note down any problems.

Commentary

39. The children are keen to learn and are able to concentrate well when their interest is engaged. When they are working in small or large groups, most children show that they can wait their turn and enjoy taking part in sessions involving questions and answers. Good relationships were evident when the children played in the pretend castle, and shared the dressing up clothes to act out a story. Their behaviour is very good and they show good self-control. Even when children were taught mathematics in a very small confined space, they remained polite and tried their best to learn how to 'count on' using a number line. They can all dress and undress themselves independently and are very confident in moving about the school and performing in assembly. Teaching and learning are good in this area of learning and by the end of reception the attainment of most children will exceed the levels expected. Achievement is satisfactory.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A lack of challenge was evident in the opening sessions of a few lessons.
- Opportunities are missed for children to be involved in whole class role-play activities using the designated drama and music room.
- The teaching of phonics is well planned and takes place each day in a short time slot.

Commentary

40. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is variable but satisfactory overall. Most children will exceed the expected levels of learning and their achievement is satisfactory. The children have developed good skills of interaction and taking turns in conversation. They enjoy listening to stories and can recall the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' very well. Their spoken language is very good; they speak clearly and with confidence. They sustain attentive listening for longer periods of time than is usual for children of this age. The very few lower attaining children can have a go at copying or overwriting the teacher's script. The higher attaining children are able to write simple words correctly, and more complex words that are recognisable using their knowledge of letter sounds. Most children are beginning to form their letters well and a few are remembering to place full stops in the right place in their writing.
41. The children are using their phonic knowledge to read simple words and more than half put up their hands to read, 'Mum was cross'. They can also guess more difficult words when reading a story because they know the first two or three letters and have a good understanding of what they are reading. Several children were able to give the teacher different well thought out predictions of what might happen to Jack when he climbed the beanstalk. When teaching was good, the children were given the opportunity to read the story with the teacher as well as reading it on their own as a group. However, role-play and drama are restricted in the classroom area and are interrupted by noise from other groups. Although teaching is never less than satisfactory, the children were not challenged sufficiently in most lessons to extend their already good vocabulary and explore the meanings and sounds of new words. Opportunities for interaction between teachers and children in direct teaching sessions were limited in some lessons.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In group work, good resources are used to develop learning.
- There is a lack of challenge in some of the work.

Commentary

42. The quality of teaching in this area of learning varies but is satisfactory overall. When teaching was good, the accommodation was used sensibly and pupils had plenty of room to use their resources in the opening session. In these lessons pupils made good progress and learned how to count by 'adding on' using number lines and frogs to point at the number. Several pupils in this lesson had the opportunity to show their teacher how they could count up to 28 accurately and with understanding, and a few could count backwards from 30 to 20. The very few children who were having difficulty recognising numbers worked with the assistant, who gave them effective support. In the lessons when teaching was less effective, space was not used sensibly, the children had little room to use their resources in order to learn and the teacher could not see how the children sitting on the floor at the back were progressing. A lack of support given to the children working on their own resulted in slower progress. Some were

given activities that did not challenge them and they lost interest. Most children are likely to exceed the expected levels in this area of learning and achievement is satisfactory.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The support given by assistants was very effective when children worked in the ICT suite.

Commentary

43. Most children will exceed the levels expected in this area of learning and achievement is satisfactory. The children have many opportunities to use the structural apparatus to make buildings or vehicles. They have made moving toys with corrugated arms and legs. During the inspection there was an emphasis on the geographical aspect of this area of learning and the children enjoyed finding out about the differences and similarities in houses. Most are capable of learning the names of different types of dwellings and, during discussion, talked about the construction of their own homes and those of their relatives. The children enjoyed their lesson in the ICT suite and were fascinated by the interactive whiteboard. Their skills in using the mouse and click and drag features are developing appropriately and will meet the expected levels. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good in most lessons.
- Teachers make insufficient use of the outdoor accommodation to promote learning.

Commentary

44. Most children are likely to exceed the expected levels in this area of learning and their achievement is satisfactory. In lessons where the quality of teaching was good, the children behaved very well and listened to the very clear instructions given by the teachers for the warm-ups and use of space in the hall. The children followed the signals given by the teachers well, and moved carefully showing a good awareness of space. Most are agile, well co-ordinated and strong. Their control of a ball just using the side of their feet was good and most children were able to walk in the 'crab' position comfortably. The children's learning was very good when the teacher used directional words when giving specific instructions, such as over, under, through and around. An excellent feature of teaching in this lesson was the use of musical phrases on the piano to signal, for example, 'Come over here and sit by me'. However, there is a lack of structured play in the outdoor area to support different areas of learning.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's achievement in the musical aspect of this area of learning is good.
- There is no planning for intervention to help children develop imaginative language in role-play activities.

Commentary

45. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good overall. By the end of the reception year, the attainment of most children will exceed the levels expected and achievement is satisfactory. The children have printed pictures using cogwheels; they have painted leaves and used fabric, card and other materials to make pictures. They enjoy playing in the pretend 'castle' and most display good use of imagination when pretending to be queens or princes, though teachers do not intervene sufficiently to develop language. The teaching of music to all the children is very good and is the responsibility of the manager who is very well qualified in this aspect of learning. In their special assembly rehearsal all 85 children played a percussion instrument and showed how competent they were in listening and playing in the right place. They gave a very good performance for visitors, governors and the rest of the school. They can play their instruments quietly or loudly and watch the teacher closely for her signals to join in. Their concentration was excellent.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain high standards in all aspects of English.
- Very good teaching ensures that pupils learn well and their achievement is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.
- Very good assessment procedures ensure that pupils' progress is monitored very carefully.
- Successful curriculum initiatives have improved standards.

Commentary

46. The well above average results in the 2003 national tests are reflected in work observed during the inspection. High standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Speaking and listening skills are very good. Teachers offer pupils considerable opportunities for class discussion and they are encouraged to use their mature vocabulary effectively when engaged with their "discussion partners" during most lessons. Concentration upon the use of specific subject vocabulary and well-planned phonics and spelling sessions also extend spelling skills. Most teachers are very good storytellers and pupils listen with rapt attention. Their well-developed social skills mean that they are polite and active listeners. Reading standards are particularly high. Regular opportunities to share books both at home and in school contribute to this. Frequent opportunities to use the library to select books are leading to good research skills. The older pupils are able to locate information texts and use indices and contents tables accurately. A good variety of texts is used in the literacy lessons and as a result all pupils enjoy reading poetry and non-fiction books as well as stories and novels.
47. Teachers have very high expectations of hard work and good behaviour from pupils. Lessons are interesting and relevant and involve many different activities. As a result pupils learn well and are interested in what they do. For example, ICT skills are learned so that pupils in Year 1 can make labels. This creates effective links between history and literacy. Further challenges allow pupils to find suitable adjectives to make their labelling more interesting. Pupils take great care with their work and are proud of their achievements. They are beginning to become acquainted with their learning targets and know what they should be aiming for with their work. They achieve well because work is designed carefully to provide challenges that are suitable for all abilities. The quality of support for those pupils with special educational needs is very high. All groups are involved with work that is similar to that of their peers. Perceptive teaching and

detailed records mean that these pupils also make very good progress. They learn readily through well-designed tasks that enable them to meet their learning targets.

48. Pupils' progress is monitored very closely. Teachers work well together to make sure that they assess accurately the standards attained by pupils. Staff have expended much effort in refining straightforward assessment guides, especially in writing. As a result rigorous statistical analyses can be made and targets set for individuals and small groups to ensure that they learn effectively. These procedures ensure that all pupils, including those who are identified as being particularly able and those whose first language is not English, are appropriately challenged and achieve well.
49. Curriculum initiatives related to the improvement of writing have been effective. Creative time-tabling involves the special needs co-ordinator as well as learning support assistants to ensure that all pupils have the best chances to improve their story writing technique each week. As a result the quality of writing is high. Pupils use story-planning grids effectively to create their own adventures based on characters in *The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch*. They understand how to describe a character as they have studied this before and they understand how to place these people in a particular setting. For higher attaining pupils ample scope is given to include their punctuation skills and to compose stories directly onto the word processor. The recent concentration on improving handwriting skills has been very effective and almost all pupils by the end of Year 2 have a well-established cursive style. Skills are taught very well through specific lessons and good modelling from the adults in school. There is good leadership and management of the subject and the innovations have been successful because of the commitment and co-operation of all the teaching staff.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Very good writing skills and opportunities for research and investigation are used well in history and geography. Pupils write exciting accounts of the great fire of London and create stories about the Island of Struay. Younger pupils use their writing skills well to create labels and catalogues for the school toy museum. The word processor is used effectively and pupils apply their skills, inserting speech marks and other punctuation accurately. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, are able to write detailed accounts of investigations carried out in mathematics. However literacy skills are not always exploited in science to report their investigations.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

51. Standards in mathematics are well above average at the end of Year 2 and the achievement of all pupils is good. Inspection findings are reflected in the results of the national tests in 2003 for the Year 2 group, when the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher Level 3 was above average. The trend in the school's performance in national tests is above that found in most schools.
52. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection. Standards are better; the quality of teaching has improved because there is much greater consistency.

Teachers have improved their skills in assessment and now have a much better idea of the levels their pupils are attaining. These improvements are partly due to the headteacher's insistence on teachers planning together, and using strategies and resources that will ensure that all the pupils are involved all the time. The amount of time given to teaching mathematics is now appropriate.

53. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers' high expectations for the quantity and quality of work contribute very well to pupils' learning, and their good achievement. Lessons are well structured and begin with an opening session developing further the pupils' mental strategies for solving problems. There is usually a good pace and most teachers have a good understanding of how to make mathematics interesting and enjoyable. For example, in a very good lesson, a teacher used a doll to help the pupils learn how to estimate and weigh objects. The pupils sat in a circle with their teacher carefully placing the single gram masses into the bucket until they achieved a balance. Their learning moved forward very well.
54. All the pupils want to learn and enjoy the challenge of the tasks they are set. Resources are good and the good use of individual small whiteboards in all classes ensures that all the pupils are involved in question and answer sessions. They enable the teachers to make instant assessments of pupils' progress. Teachers emphasise and reinforce mathematical vocabulary and develop the pupils' thinking skills well. One pupil was able to work out 6×6 using his knowledge of the 12 times table, much to the amazement of his friend.
55. Teaching assistants support the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs very effectively and provide extra reinforcement, for example, learning their number bonds to 10. The teachers also used the student teachers effectively, giving them responsibility for the progress of one or two groups. This had a good impact on the progress made by all pupils. All classes have a useful system for recording dialogue between the teaching assistants and the teachers about the progress of the pupils.
56. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils present their work well and there is a good range of coverage of all aspects of the mathematics curriculum. A variety of approaches are used to help pupils develop their mathematical thinking and pupils have used their literacy skills effectively to write at length, explaining how they solve problems. Pupils assess their own work using a traffic light system, although there was no evidence to show how the teachers used the pupils' signals to improve their work further. Marking of the pupils' work is inconsistent with only a few teachers giving pupils an indication of what they need to learn next. Not all the teachers within year groups give the pupils additional investigative challenges in a real context.
57. The subject is well managed by an experienced subject manager who brings a high level of expertise and sensitivity to her own teaching. She takes the lead in planning and by monitoring lessons and pupils' work. The assessment of mathematics is very good, pupils' progress is tracked carefully and the manager evaluates overall progress by analysing test results.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. There is sound use of mathematics in other subjects. There were links with food technology when during two numeracy lessons, groups of pupils weighed out ingredients to bake cakes. The good links with literacy (sustained writing) are described above, and in a review of one lesson, the teacher used complex sentences to teach children how to compare weight and height, for example, 'Which boy is lighter than this one but heavier than this one?' Although there is some use of data handling in science more use could be made of standard measures.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain above average standards.
- There is a good emphasis on first hand experience.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils do not make sufficient use of their very good writing and numeracy skills.

Commentary

59. Teachers' assessments over the past few years have shown standards to be well above average. The work seen in the inspection confirmed that the current pupils attain above average standards in their knowledge and understanding of science and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils understand the importance of making predictions and collecting data. In Year 2 pupils are developing an understanding of a fair test. Teachers plan lessons well and include a lot of practical work that captures pupils' interest. Teachers also make good use of the school's attractive grounds to develop pupils' knowledge of living things and habitats.
60. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers plan lessons well with good regard for health and safety. They manage practical work effectively so that pupils behave well and can concentrate and improve their knowledge. Good teamwork between teachers and assistants mean that all pupils have good opportunities to develop their practical skills, as seen in lessons in Year 2 where pupils were learning to plan a fair test on the conditions of growth for germinating seeds. Following good questioning to help develop pupils' ideas, Year 2 pupils worked in small groups to set up experiments related to the effect of, for example, different levels of light, warmth, and water on the growth of seeds. The lower attainers were well supported by teaching assistants but no extra demands were made on the highest attaining pupils.
61. Teachers encourage the recording of observations through diagrams and charts. By the end of Year 2, pupils can fill in comprehensive charts accurately that, for example, help them sort materials and their properties in relation to the way they squash, twist, stretch or bend, or record data on the length toy cars travel on different surfaces. Overall, however, pupils' recording of their work in science is disorganised and suffers from being mixed in the same topic book with work on history and geography. This makes progress in science difficult for teachers and pupils to track and there is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to explain their findings. More could be expected of these above average pupils. For example, they are given insufficient opportunities to use their very good writing skills to write accounts of their work. Also, there is not enough use of standard measures in their practical work to develop their understanding of the importance of accuracy. There is little evidence that marking is used to help pupils to improve their work and, as yet, assessment is not as well developed as in English and mathematics. Therefore, pupils do not have their own small targets to work towards to give them a better understanding of their own learning.
62. However, teachers make good use of secondary sources. Year 1 pupils thoroughly enjoyed using big books in groups to find out about the life-cycle of well known creatures and, with help, each group reported to the class about the facts their teacher had asked them to find out. Teachers are also beginning to make good use of CD ROMs and computer programs, for example, to help pupils handle data and display it in different ways.
63. Aspects of pupils' health education are addressed well in science, for example, healthy eating and the safe use of electricity. Their study of the life cycles of animals and plants introduces sex education appropriately. Collaborative work with partners and in small groups develops their social skills and understanding of teamwork. Use of digital photography develops pupils' sense of wonder when, for example, it helped their appreciation of the variety of plants they found on a recent walk in the school grounds.

64. The subject manager was absent during the inspection but scrutiny of her file and discussion with senior management indicate that she leads the subject satisfactorily and has an appropriate action plan to develop the teaching of experimental and investigative science and to arrange moderation of work in this aspect to help teachers with their assessments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are above average and achievement is good.
- Dynamic leadership in this subject has ensured that good improvement has been made since the last inspection.
- Good use is made of all information and communication technology in other subjects.

Commentary

65. Pupils learn effectively through good teaching. New skills are demonstrated well using an interactive whiteboard and pupils learn how to use new programs and to access and print their work. Eye-catching displays in each classroom draw attention to computer skills and the work in progress. Exciting adventures with the floor turtle are recorded clearly in posters and maps. Skills learned in the computer suite are reinforced well in the classroom; for example, collecting data and using a database. Pupils in Year 2 are able to generate questions and investigate results shown on graphs. Word processing is relevant and successfully employs the high levels of literacy skills. Year 2 pupils are able to compose stories at the computer utilising their knowledge of spelling and punctuation accurately. The attention given to professional development has ensured teachers plan their lessons well and great care is taken to ensure that skills are taught in a way that builds successfully on previous knowledge. Teachers are well supported by their learning support assistants, who contribute significantly to the standards attained by pupils.
66. The perceptive identification of this subject as a major focus for development within the school has ensured that the provision of resources has recently improved. All classes have regular access to the newly established computer suite and the improvement in teachers' own competency with ICT now ensures that pupils learn well. Very good use is made of all the equipment available in school. These factors have resulted in good improvement in provision since the last inspection. The ratio of computers does not yet meet recommendations although this is being addressed through the current astute and extensive action plan.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. As many opportunities as possible are created to link the skills taught in ICT to the content of studies in other areas of the curriculum so that learning has relevance for pupils. For example, learning about labelling links to work in literacy and history. Very good use is made of word processing in literacy for writing lists, as well as stories and poems. There are good links to mathematics and teachers are beginning to exploit the use of projectors and information CD ROMs to support their teaching in science and geography. Work on display is annotated by computer-generated captions and pictures designed by pupils using paint programs. Pupils' activities, from science to drama, are captured instantly by use of the digital camera and the images provide useful reference points for reinforcing learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography and religious education were inspected in full and are reported below. History was sampled as only one lesson was seen.

68. The Year 1 lesson seen in **history** was well taught. Standards are above average. Pupils are achieving well because the work is relevant to them. They are creating a catalogue for the school Toy Museum and are able to discuss the age of toys and suggest a suitable chronological order. Work recorded in history shows good coverage of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in writing sustained accounts of historical events such as the Great Fire of London. Good links are also established with ICT in making labels for museum exhibits.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain above average standards.
- Pupils develop good mapping skills.
- Geography contributes well to pupils' social and cultural development.
- The subject is effectively led and managed.

Commentary

69. Pupils' achievement is good because the well-planned curriculum and the effective teaching help them to build their knowledge and skills progressively. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The pupils' work in the school grounds in Year 1 gives them a sound knowledge of different kinds of features, routes and the role of symbols in plans and maps. This provides a good basis for developing their comparative skills in Year 2 when, for example, looking at natural and manmade features in different localities and using symbols to describe the weather. Pupils visit the village and local church and find out about routes to school. Teachers make very good use of resources linked to the story of Katie Morag and the Isle of Struay to develop effective cross-curricular work that motivates the pupils well so that they become very involved and they produce good quality work that includes extended writing.
70. Year 2 pupils recognise an outline map of the British Isles and can neatly label features such as the names of countries and capital cities. In their own drawings of the Isle of Struay, they show good understanding of the function of a key. In Year 2 lessons, the use of a CD ROM, good questioning skills and explanations of the position of main features enabled nearly all pupils to undertake a challenging task and individually draw an accurate plan of a Mexican village and label it neatly and clearly. That pupils thoroughly enjoyed this work was evident in the way they concentrated, worked quickly and were keen to show inspectors how they represented the different features.
71. Discussions and opportunities for working together support pupils' social skills. Their understanding of how the features of a place affect the way people live is developed through following the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' and studies of areas such as Lapland, a Mexican village and the Isle of Struay. Teachers make good use of ICT to make the subject come alive for pupils and use a programmable floor robot to help develop their understanding of turns and routes.
72. The enthusiasm of the co-ordinator for the subject is evident in her good leadership and management. She has a thoughtful approach based on making the subject relevant for pupils and ensuring that their recording of work is purposeful. The school has purchased some good quality resources to support geography teaching such as large playmats with aerial views of, for example, an airport and a town centre and an atlas on CD ROM. The co-ordinator has a clear view on how to further improve provision, for example, by having more visitors and fieldwork and developing more accurate assessment.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Opportunities to relate knowledge to personal experience are now well established.
- Short lesson periods do not always allow enough time for ideas to be developed fully.
- Opportunities for extended writing are limited.

Commentary

73. Good teaching ensures that all pupils participate well in lessons through good questioning and chances to share ideas with partners. Everyone is engaged with the lesson so learns effectively. Pupils and teachers alike enjoy sharing stories, and exciting tales told with dramatic use of voice capture attention. This is good improvement since the last inspection.
74. The religious education curriculum relates closely to the guidance given in the locally agreed syllabus and pupils attain average standards. Good opportunities for discussion ensure that pupils reflect upon their knowledge and relate it to their own experiences successfully. For example, having listened the parable of the 'great feast' were able to decide how they would plan a celebration of their own using a 'party planner'. Younger pupils listened to a story about David and Goliath and later in small groups reflected upon the feelings of different characters exploring the emotions of anger, fear and self-belief. This also marks good improvement since the last inspection.
75. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, social and moral development of pupils. It is supported by the high quality of assemblies where very good opportunities are given to reflect upon spiritual values and the social expectations of the school.
76. Lessons are often quite short and activities are sometimes completed later or on another day. This can occasionally diminish the impact of learning and development of ideas. There are few opportunities to write sustained accounts of feelings or to retell stories through the use of pupils' very good literacy skills so opportunities to consolidate learning are missed. These factors limit achievement, though this is satisfactory. The co-ordinator was absent during the inspection but scrutiny of her file and discussion with senior management indicate that leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design was inspected in full and is reported below. Music and physical education were sampled. Design and technology was not inspected.

77. The two lessons in **music** observed showed that standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average and all pupils' achievement is good. Pupils enjoyed using the untuned percussion instruments in a Year 2 lesson and know how to care for them. Their levels of concentration when they learned how to create a 'crescendo' were excellent, and led to very good learning of the skills of watching the conductor and timing their playing. The use of time was very effective in this short lesson and the two pupils chosen to 'conduct' the class orchestra were able to use the taught signals very effectively.
78. The quality of teaching and learning in the singing lesson taken by the visiting specialist teacher was very good. The pupils in the three Year 2 classes quickly settled down in the designated music room and began by rehearsing vocal and postural exercises. Excellent subject knowledge ensured that the teacher's very high expectations resulted in all 89 pupils looking at

her at all times, thoroughly enjoying singing rounds and achieving very well in the lesson. The teacher modelled the melody and phrasing of the songs effectively. By example, she showed the pupils how to articulate words to emphasise the beginning of a phrase and the pupils improved their singing significantly. They have learned how to 'finger click' as an accompaniment to a multicultural song, 'Tinga Layo', and had also composed new words to a catchy tune to emphasise the links with the school's 'Healthy Eating' initiative.

79. Pupils attain above average standards in **physical education**. In the lessons seen, teaching was good and pupils achieved well. Pupils are agile and well co-ordinated and make good progress because teachers make good use of national and other guidance to develop units of work and structure lessons well to build pupils' skills. Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour and give clear instructions that pupils listen to carefully and follow well. In a Year 1 games lesson pupils were given good opportunities to explore the equipment and this was followed with appropriate exercises to develop hand to eye co-ordination. The pupils showed good control when working with small balls and beanbags. The teacher used demonstration effectively to show pupils how they could evaluate and improve their own work. In a Year 2 country-dance lesson, the teacher's pleasant and encouraging manner helped pupils to learn and remember sequences of steps and movements. The pupils co-operated well with their partners and with other pairs in their sets and thoroughly enjoyed the activity.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very effective use of sketchbooks is contributing to the well above average standards.
- Very high expectations result in the pupils' excellent attitudes and good achievement.

Commentary

80. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 are well above average and achievement is good for all pupils. Standards have improved to well above average since the last inspection and the school's efforts to ensure that the subject enriches the curriculum have been maintained. The scrutiny of displays, planning and sketchbooks showed that pupils have covered a wide range of aspects of the art and design curriculum. Sketchbooks are effective as a source material for the pupils' work and are used well to show the good progress pupils are making over time.
81. A scrutiny of pupils' work showed very good links with other subjects, such as paintings of Jonah and the Whale when the pupils had improved their understanding of layering different textures onto paper. In mathematics, the pupils painted symmetrical butterflies using pattern and colour as well as using ICT programs to produce many different examples. Very good art and design skills are evident in the diaries Year 2 pupils keep when they take home the class teddy bear for the weekend. The very wide range of art and design on display included excellent clay work, and drawings showing unusually good skills of shading based on the sculpture 'Goggle Head' by Elizabeth Frink. Pastel drawings reproduced the style of Henri Rousseau and the pupils showed strong skills of representing depth of colour in their jungle pictures. This work contributes very well to the pupils' cultural development.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Excellent methods in a Year 1 lesson were used for pupils to experience feeling different textures reproduced on a clay tile. Plenty of examples of objects with different properties were available and the pupils showed maturity when they used different tools such as charcoal or soft pencil to reproduce the textures in their sketchbooks. Very high expectations of the pupils were demonstrated when they had to think of the best tool to use to reproduce the property of an object, rather than the object itself. In this lesson good strategies improved the pupils' learning when they were given time to talk to their partner about what they were going to draw.

83. In a Year 2 class, high expectations and very good methods were used in a lesson when pupils used pastels to draw spider plants. They had sketched the plants previously using soft pencils and learned about light and dark emphasis on the sides of the leaves. The teacher used very good methods to demonstrate how to blend yellow and blue pastels in different ways to produce dark and light greens with all hues in between. In addition, the pupils were given a small card photo frame to isolate a small portion of the plant to allow them to focus their concentration. Most pupils showed very good skills when blending the hues to draw the form of the plant and a few also included the pot and its features. Their work was of unusually high quality for pupils of this age.
84. Leadership and management of this subject are good. The co-ordinator, who has very good subject knowledge, is very aware of what is going on in other classes and is given the opportunity to monitor the development of the subject in lessons. She has also monitored the use of sketchbooks that were put into place at the beginning of the school year together with a useful guide for their use. Planning is good and assessment is good owing to the consistent use of sketchbooks.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

85. The school sees pupils' personal development as most important and addresses it very effectively in several subjects as well as in carefully planned specific lessons in all classes. The outcomes of the school's approach are clearly seen in the very good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development of the pupils. Examples of this were seen in several lessons during the inspection when pupils' health and safety were highlighted as well as values and other qualities. In Year 1 lessons teachers used a puppet effectively to illustrate a story that had a strong moral theme as well as raising pupils' awareness on the importance of deciding what is safe or not safe to eat. Pupils realise that telling the truth is important and that they need to check with parents before they sample items with which they are not familiar. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good and includes work on diet, health and personal safety. Sex education and education about drugs are addressed at the appropriate level for the age group of the children. Work in this area helps pupils develop awareness of a healthy lifestyle, to gain confidence and learn how to interact with others. It is supported by visits from members of the community and from outside agencies. The school's very good links with the community enable pupils to interact with it in several ways and begin to develop their knowledge of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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