

INSPECTION REPORT

FOXES PIECE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marlow

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number:131523

Headteacher: Mrs C A Taylor

Lead inspector: Mrs Patricia Davies

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th February 2004

Inspection number: 256164

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:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	151
School address:	Newfield Road Marlow Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	SL7 1JW
Telephone number:	01628 483455
Fax number:	01628 477005
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr F G Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	29 th June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- Foxes Piece is smaller than many other primary schools, with 149 pupils on roll. Numbers have fallen over recent years, to the extent that some year groups are particularly small; for example, the present Years 4 and 6 have 17 and 18 pupils respectively. The school attributes this fall, in part, to a general drop in the town's birth rate. Because year groups are now smaller, all the factors noted below have a greater impact on the school's performance and on the overall attainment of children entering the Reception class, which is lower than was found at the time of the last inspection.
- Marlow is socially and financially prosperous, but the school draws its pupils from an area that is much less advantaged than other parts of the town. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, for example, is a little above the national average of 17.9 per cent.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is also above the national average. Most do not have high levels of need, but where these do occur they include physical disabilities and specific and medium learning difficulties, and some pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. A few pupils have statements of need.
- A significant proportion of pupils leave and join the school at times other than the first point of entry in the Reception Year, and after Year 2. School data indicates that pupils coming in to the school tend to be of lower attainment than those who leave.
- The majority of pupils are of White UK heritage, but there is also a significant minority from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds. The school receives extra funding for about half of this small group. Most speak English well, but a few pupils are identified as being at the early stages of learning English.
- When children first enter the Reception class their overall attainment is below that expected of children of a similar age. The attainment of a significant proportion is well below that level in relation to speaking, writing, personal and social skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22460	Patricia Davies	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English; Art and Design; Design and Technology; English as an additional language.
9388	Anthony Mundy	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
22178	Kate Robertson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Geography; History; Information and communication technology; Religious Education Special educational needs.
26292	Helen Mundy	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Physical Education; Music; Foundation Stage.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education Ltd
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection 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	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	4
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	7
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	14
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Foxes Piece gives its pupils a sound education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but with strengths in particular year groups and areas of the school's work. Achievement is satisfactory, and pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress. By the end of the school year, standards in the current Year 6 group are likely to meet national expectations in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), but are likely to be below national expectations in English. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, and the school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, which are below national expectations, and too few opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English.
- Rising trends in the results in national tests, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Good teaching in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2, and of mathematics across the school.
- Good provision for pupils with SEN, including very effective use of learning support staff, which leads to these pupils making good progress.
- Unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils' good attitudes to school life, and very good relationships throughout the school.
- Good extra-curricular provision and opportunities to enrich pupils' experience.
- Good links with parents and the community.

There has been a satisfactory level of improvement to the school's work since it was last inspected in June 1998. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection, when they were found to be below national expectations. However, improvement to the subject is satisfactory because there remain some weaknesses in provision. In the case of ICT, which was previously well below expectations, there has been good improvement both to standards and to provision. Whole school assessment systems have been introduced, and these are used consistently. Good attention has been given to monitoring at all levels, though it has yet to have a full impact on the quality of teaching and learning right across the school. The school's resources have been improved, especially for ICT, and they are now good. Systems to promote good attendance have been strengthened, but pupils' attendance and punctuality remain unsatisfactory.

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	D	E	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	C
Science	E	E	D	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.

Some caution is necessary when these test results are considered, because year groups are relatively small. The results are therefore much affected by significant factors such as the proportion of pupils with SEN, the few pupils with higher attainment, and the movement of pupils in and out of the school. Although the school's results are largely well below those for all schools nationally, they have nevertheless risen over recent years, and at a pace faster than the national trend. This is true of the tests both for Year 2 and for Year 6 pupils. The school's success has been acknowledged in

national achievement awards in 2002 and 2003. Improvements have been most marked in mathematics (Years 2 and 6) and science (Year 6), and targets for the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics were exceeded in the most recent tests for Year 6 pupils. Comparisons with similar schools indicate that last year's Year 6 pupils had made sound progress over time. Although the school has been tackling standards in English, it has not been as successful in raising test results in this subject. This is partly because of the low levels of attainment in communication, language and literature of a significant proportion of children when they first enter the school in the Reception class. Additionally, the overall attainment of last year's Year 6 group was lower than is usually found in the school. Inspection evidence largely reflects the picture painted by national test results.

Achievement is satisfactory, including for those pupils with English as an additional language. Those with SEN make good progress. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are likely to be in line with national expectations by the end of the school year in mathematics, science and ICT, and below them in English. However, the pace of achievement is increasing in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching in these year groups. Not enough evidence was gathered to enable judgements to be made about standards and achievement in all other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and relationships are very good, but attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Although almost all pupils come to school regularly, there is a small number of families that take protracted holidays during term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, with good provision for social development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school's overall **quality of education is satisfactory**, with good provision made for pupils with SEN. **Teaching and learning are satisfactory.** The quality of both, however, is not consistent across the school, and teaching and learning are stronger in some year groups, subjects, and areas of provision than in others. Assessment practices are satisfactory but need more focused attention on the trends in performance of different groups of pupils.

The curriculum is sufficiently broad, with good extra-curricular opportunities. There are, however, some issues concerning the use and allocation of time, particularly in respect of that given to writing in some subjects. Resources and accommodation are good, and good links are made with parents and the community. Pastoral care is satisfactory, as are the opportunities for seeking and acting on pupils' views.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership, management and governance are sound, with strengths in the leadership and management of mathematics, ICT and SEN. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is also well managed. Development planning has been improved but is not yet finely focused on achievement and standards. Statutory duties are satisfactorily met overall.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils alike have positive views about the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, and use the potential of other subjects for giving pupils more opportunities to write at length.
- Increase attendance levels and ensure that all pupils arrive punctually to lessons at the start of the school day.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

In mathematics, science and ICT, standards are likely to meet national expectations by the end of the academic year for those pupils currently in Years 2 and 6. Standards in English are likely to be below national expectations. Pupils **achieve satisfactorily**, including those with English as an additional language. Pupils with SEN make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in English, which are below national expectations.
- Rising trends in the results in national tests, particularly in mathematics and science.
- The good achievement of pupils with SEN, and of children in the Reception class.

Commentary

1. Children in the Reception class achieve well, primarily because good attention is given to the key areas of personal, social, language and literacy skills, and to mathematical development.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (25.9)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.9 (24.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.5 (26.8)	28.6 (28.3)

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

2. When the school's results in national tests are being considered there is a need for some caution, because year groups are relatively small. Over recent years, results in the national tests for pupils in Years 2 and 6 have tended to be well below national averages. Trends in results, however, have been rising for both year groups, and at a rate faster than the national trend. In the 2003 tests the school's targets for the higher Level 5 for pupils in Year 6 were exceeded in English and mathematics. This measure of success has been acknowledged twice (2002 and 2003) by national achievement awards. Improvements are most marked in test results in mathematics, in science tests at Year 6, and in the comparison made with the results of tests taken by the Year 6 group when they were in Year 2. In the last round of Year 6 tests, for example, this comparison showed that the results rose from below the national average to being broadly in line with national averages for all three subjects. The comparison indicates that these pupils had made sound progress over that time.

3. Although test results show some variation in the relative performance of boys and girls, no differences were seen in pupils' work in the course of the inspection.

4. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are likely to meet national expectations by the end of the year in mathematics, science and ICT in both the current Year 2 and Year 6 groups. Attainment in English is likely to be below national expectations. **Pupils' achievement is satisfactory**, including that of those pupils with English as an additional language. Pupils with SEN achieve well because work is planned effectively to meet their needs, and they are well taught by all the adults working with them.

5. There has been improvement in both standards and achievement in science at Year 6, and much improvement in ICT at Year 2 and Year 6. A greater emphasis on investigative work has brought about the improvement in science, where standards were previously found to be below national expectations in Year 6. The good improvement in ICT is largely due to increased and improved resources; at the time of the last inspection standards were found to be well below national expectations in this subject. Standards in mathematics are the same as at the time of the last inspection, but since then there has developed a greater consistency in the planning of mathematics and in the assessment of pupils' progress in the subject. Achievement in this subject is currently no greater than satisfactory, however, because assessment does not yet focus closely enough on what pupils need to learn and activities are not always sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils.

6. In English, the school has not been as successful in raising test results over time as it has in mathematics and science. The English results for Year 6 pupils fell in the 2003 tests, although the fall was due, in part, to this group's overall attainment being below that usually found in the school. To a certain extent, the lower attainment in national tests for English reflects the poor communication, language and literacy of a significant proportion of children when they first enter the school in the Reception class. In addition, inspection evidence found there to be few higher attainers in any year group, a factor which also tends to depress results. For example, no Year 2 pupil last year gained the higher Level 3 in writing, or was placed at the higher end of the expected Level 2. The movement of pupils in and out of the school has also significantly affected standards in these groups, particularly as pupils joining them have tended to be of lower attainment.

7. Particular attention is being given to extending pupils' spoken language, in addition to the focus on the teaching of other basic literacy skills, such as the sounds of letters. There are signs that achievement is increasing in Years 1 and 2, where these initiatives are consistently well supported and teaching is lively and imaginative. Achievement in Years 3 to 6, however, is satisfactory, because these pupils are not benefiting from the same degree of good teaching. Attainment in English is also inhibited because the school does not yet make full use of science, religious education and some foundation subjects for pupils to complete pieces of sustained writing.

8. Not enough evidence was gathered to enable overall judgements to be made about standards and achievement in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**, with good provision for social development. Attendance and punctuality are **unsatisfactory**, although there are sound procedures for promoting good attendance.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Unsatisfactory attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils' enjoyment of lessons and after-school activities.
- Good behaviour in lessons and during play times.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff.
- Good opportunities for social development.

Commentary

9. Attendance is unsatisfactory, as the percentage is below the national average for primary schools. This finding reflects that of the last inspection. However, in this small school, where each pupil represents almost seven per cent, a few frequent absentees markedly weaken the overall percentage figure. The school's attendance data indicate that almost all pupils come regularly to

school but that a small number of families take extended holidays during the school year. Other absence is for appropriate reasons, so unauthorised absences are a very low proportion of total absences. Punctuality, too, is unsatisfactory. Class registers show that many pupils in all year groups are often a few minutes late for morning school.

10. The school's strategies for ensuring good attendance are satisfactory. Procedures have been much tightened since the last inspection. Calls to home are made on the first day of absence, as necessary. There are now formal systems for parents to request that their children might be taken away on holiday during term time, and these are overseen by the chair of governors. Parents at the meeting were well aware of these procedures. The school is planning to open a Breakfast Club later in the term to encourage better punctuality. Good attendance is also celebrated through awards, but the full potential of this approach has not been exploited on a frequent enough basis, or by extending the range of awards, for example to class groups.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	0.03
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.

11. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good, sometimes very good, and occasionally excellent. Children in the Foundation Stage listen very carefully to adults, and confidently respond to questions and instructions. Their behaviour is very good.

12. During the inspection, excellent attitudes were evident in a very good science lesson in Year 2. In this lesson, pupils of all abilities very successfully applied their scientific knowledge to practical activities, working in a variety of individual and partnered activities. They responded with good humour and produced a lot of work. Pupils of all attainments enjoy answering questions, although limited language skills sometimes curtail their responses and their own follow-up questions. However, some higher attaining pupils are poised and articulate. In particular, pupils value the school's wide curriculum, are enthusiastic about homework assignments and appreciate how the quality of teachers' marking improves their work. Many pupils attend after-school activities, including home and away fixtures for the successful football and tag rugby teams.

13. Behaviour is usually good in classrooms, and most lessons move ahead at a good pace, without interruptions or distractions. Pre-inspection questionnaires completed by parents and pupils indicated some concerns about playground bullying or rough behaviour. No incidents were seen during the inspection. In extended discussion during the inspection, pupils in all year groups confirmed that they are unaffected by the occasional misbehaviour of a small number of boys, and have no concerns about bullying. One pupil, new to the school, was excluded on several occasions last year before being allocated a place in a special unit. One pupil has been excluded this year for a fixed term period.

14. The school successfully develops pupils' personal qualities and social achievements. They are reverential in daily acts of worship and enjoy weekly presentation assemblies, where they show examples of good work and receive a variety of certificates and commendations. They respond generously to appeals by local and national charities, and are developing environmental awareness through gardening and recycling projects.

15. Staff are good role models. They value pupils' comments and opinions, and pupils are confident that staff listen to their ideas. New initiatives, which encourage paired conversation during lessons, are gaining ground throughout the school, particularly in mathematics. Other valuable occasions to share ideas occur during weekly discussion times. A greater emphasis on investigative work in science allows pupils to work together, and the school's good extra-curricular opportunities play a similar part. Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils in all year

groups, and these promote strong moral values. Most pupils are thoughtful and respectful, and they understand concepts of right and wrong in the school rules and in the rules agreed for their own classrooms. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have specific responsibilities for the care of younger pupils. Boys and girls, and the few pupils from minority ethnic groups, work and play amicably together. Nevertheless, during the inspection teachers sometimes did not ensure that pairs and groupings contained a mix of boys and girls or, occasionally, that pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds worked with pupils from other backgrounds.

16. The school values and celebrates cultural diversity. Pupils have satisfactory understanding of western culture. They have recently enjoyed visits from a storyteller, and from theatre and music groups; a Caribbean Day, for example, proved to be an enjoyable and valuable experience. The pupils have some knowledge of eastern faiths and cultures; for instance, they closely followed the preparations for the marriage of a Hindu teacher. Pupils taking holidays in their countries of origin are encouraged to bring back and show cultural and religious artefacts.

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	121	0	0
White – any other White background	7	5	1
Mixed – White and Black African	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education given by the school is **satisfactory**, with strengths in certain areas. These are the provision for pupils with SEN, activities to enrich the curriculum, some aspects of pastoral care, links with parents and the community, and accommodation and resources.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning and of assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching in the Reception class, and for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- Effective teaching of mathematics across the school.
- Pupils' good attention to their work.
- The very good contribution of learning support staff.
- Some unsatisfactory teaching of science.
- Not enough attention given to the relative performance of different groups of pupils.

Commentary

17. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality of both is not consistent across the school, notably in Years 3 to 6, where teaching ranges from very good to occasionally unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning also varies across subjects. For example, English, science and ICT are satisfactorily taught, while mathematics is well taught.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	12	6	1	0	0

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

18. Children in the Reception class are well taught because of strengths in the teaching of the key areas of personal, social and emotional skills, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development; in these areas children's needs are well met. Routines are well established in this class, and children are given many opportunities to talk about their activities. Knowledge of letter sounds is particularly well taught, and mathematical development is promoted effectively because mathematics is threaded through all activities. Planning is satisfactory, but with relative weaknesses in identifying the learning outcomes of some less structured activities and in extending writing opportunities for higher attaining children. The lack of a designated outdoor play area currently inhibits the teaching of physical development, but this weakness will soon be resolved once building work is completed.

19. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good as a whole, and sometimes very good. Where teaching is most successful, teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject, and they teach in a lively encouraging style. Resources are used imaginatively and there is a very good focus on developing basic skills. Pupils show by their ready answers that their knowledge and understanding in these areas are gaining pace. The teachers take every opportunity to extend pupils' speaking skills, and the tasks they set are consistently well matched to pupils' abilities, including good challenge for higher attaining pupils. All these attributes keep pupils well focused on their tasks. Mathematics is also well taught, with examples of very good teaching in this subject in Years 5 and 6. As in the very effective teaching described above, these teachers have particularly strong knowledge of the subject and present pupils with challenging work. A significant strength of this very good teaching is an open style of questioning which generates a high level of enquiry and investigative work among the pupils.

20. There are also particular strengths in teaching and learning to be found in all lessons, and these help to foster at least satisfactory learning. One such strength is pupils' generally good level of attention and application, whether they are working independently or with others. Other good features include:

- * the very effective work of learning support assistants with small groups of pupils, particularly pupils with SEN;
- * detailed planning for English and mathematics;
- * the confident use of interactive whiteboards as a teaching tool;
- * the management of behaviour;
- * the use of resources, for example in history and religious education.

21. In the one lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory (in science), this was because of the teacher's comparative lack of experience, the unchallenging nature of the work, and too few practical activities. Relative weaknesses of otherwise satisfactory teaching include:

- * missed opportunities to extend speaking skills;
- * less confidence with subject knowledge on the part of the teacher.

22. Assessment practices are satisfactory and so ensure that work is mostly well matched to pupils' different abilities and needs. Learning support assistants are particularly effective in this context because they use whole class sessions to monitor the responses of individual pupils. This approach is most useful when the support assistant then gives feedback to those pupils. New marking strategies are particularly good. They are designed to ensure that there is a good balance between encouraging comment about the strengths of pupils' work and focused pointers to how it might be improved. This approach is strong in English and mathematics. There is a good focus on individual pupils; for example, assessment information and the results of national and other tests are well used to set National Curriculum target levels, and pupils' progress is tracked on this basis.

There is less emphasis, however, on looking at the relative performance of different pupil groups. The recent introduction of a computerised assessment program is intended to help the school take this next step in the development of its assessment systems. The school has not yet drawn up a list of pupils with likely talents and gifts.

THE CURRICULUM

A **satisfactory** curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. Accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A good range of enrichment activities.
- Good provision in all year groups for pupils with SEN.
- Not enough opportunities for writing in science, religious education, history and geography.

Commentary

23. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, and all subjects are satisfactorily supported by longer term planning. Full use has been made of National Strategies for English and mathematics. This practice has helped to improve standards and achievement in both subjects, particularly in mathematics. The curriculum for the youngest children is sound, and there is good attention to personal and social skills and to skills in literacy and numeracy. Extra-curricular provision is good. Sport is particularly well represented, and so too are environmental activities. These projects are promoted by a school-based project run by enthusiastic adults who give much of their time. Other activities include art and music. There are visits both locally and further afield to support topics in subjects such as history and geography, and there are also whole school events, such as the Caribbean Day. Such activities enrich and expand pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. The good teaching in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 prepares the children well for the next stage of their education. There are also some close links with secondary schools. For example, during the inspection Year 10 students visited the school to perform some of their drama work in an assembly. This experience gave pupils in Years 3 to 6 an encouraging glimpse of life in one secondary school.

24. In keeping with the findings of the previous report, the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' needs are identified quickly, either in the Reception class or very soon after joining other year groups. Teachers ensure that work for these pupils is as exciting and stimulating as that given to other pupils, and this factor, together with the good support from adults, helps to ensure their good progress. Pupils with a statement of need are well integrated, and careful thought is given to ensuring that these pupils have the greatest possible support and that any difficulties are kept to a minimum. The school makes good use of outside support agencies and takes all opportunities to use their expertise to the full. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory, largely because it is now well managed. The co-ordinators regularly make contact with staff about planning and the setting of targets for these pupils. Provision for pupils' personal and social development is good, and their understanding is advanced quickly through linking their learning with experiences out of school. All these positive features of the school's curriculum help to ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to enjoy what the school has to offer.

25. However, while the curriculum is sufficiently broad there are some shortcomings in respect of time. These have not been spotted or resolved because no responsibility has been assigned for checking the overall balance of the curriculum. Firstly, there is some variation in the amount of time allocated to religious education from class to class. Sometimes, lessons do not start on time. Sessions devoted exclusively to the teaching of reading are not always well focused or sufficiently structured for pupils to gain the maximum benefit. Most significantly, the full potential of subjects such as science, religious education, geography and history is not used to give pupils enough opportunities to write at length, and this shortcoming inhibits attainment in English.

26. Accommodation and resources are good, but both are no more than satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, where development of the outside area is not yet finished. Other accommodation is extensive and the school continues to benefit from renting out unused sections to local groups and organisations. Particular strengths in resources are in those for ICT, and in the work of learning support and non-teaching staff. Outside resources are well used for scientific work; several specialist areas are under cultivation, including a meadow area and a kitchen garden. Teachers have good knowledge of ICT, which they use effectively as a teaching strategy, although computers in classrooms are not used consistently by pupils and to the same extent as those in the ICT suite.

Care, guidance and support

The school has **satisfactory** procedures for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Those for seeking pupils' views are also **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The skilful response of teachers and learning support assistants to pupils' needs.
- The lack of recent training for staff in child protection.
- Good systems for recording and monitoring incidents.

Commentary

27. The school's health and safety policy satisfactorily ensures the safety of pupils on site and during off-site visits. The site and buildings are in good condition and present no apparent risks to health and safety. There are appropriate arrangements in place for first aid; a small number of minor accidents occur and are treated efficiently by midday supervisors. Attention to children's welfare and safety is good in the Reception class because staff constantly alert them to environmental and activity hazards. Adults in the school understand child protection issues, but they have not had any formal training since July 2002.

28. A good induction system settles children into the Reception class. Pupils joining other year groups are also settled quickly and happily into the school's routines, and are supported by 'buddies' for as long as necessary. In Year 6, pupils are confident about transfer to secondary school, and they participate fully in events organised by local secondary schools.

29. The school's happy and relaxed atmosphere successfully integrates the small number of pupils with identified behaviour difficulties. Class teachers consistently apply the behaviour management policy, and sincerely praise pupils' individual work and effort. Learning support assistants are very skilled in curricular and personal support. They significantly improve the achievements of pupils with SEN and are always attentive to the needs of others. A learning support assistant appropriately supervises pupils who have been withdrawn by their parents from daily collective worship.

30. Class teachers have satisfactory knowledge of pupils' academic development. Teachers set targets with pupils and save examples of good work, but assessment procedures do not adequately identify strengths and weaknesses in attainment within or across year groups and other groups of pupils. The school's programme for personal, social and health education encourages self-care, and care for others. The good relationships between adults and pupils enable staff to respond effectively should pupils have any issues or concerns. In weekly discussion sessions, and in casual conversation, all staff listen carefully to pupils and are sensitive to their educational, personal and social needs. A school council also gives pupils a forum for contributing their ideas, although the

school has temporarily suspended meetings while building work is taking place. Pastoral development is monitored through a good system for recording incidents, where the headteacher analyses and responds to a daily file of written observations with contributions from teachers, learning support assistants and midday supervisors.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and the local community, and **satisfactory** links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The availability of staff to meet parents, which is very good.
- A good programme of outings and of visitors to the school.
- The lack of response from some parents to the school's attempts to engage them fully in their children's education.
- Inconsistencies in how information is given about targets, and on how pupils can improve their work, in annual reports about children's progress.

Commentary

31. A relatively large number of parents, carers and friends, and some governors, are voluntary helpers in classrooms and give valuable and valued support. The parent-teacher association is being reconstituted, following the loss of several key members when their children left the school at the end of the last school year. The association's social and fund raising events have raised significant amounts of money. Recent purchases include furniture for the computer suite, and some cash is set aside to develop the new play area for the children in the Reception class. Most parents try to support their children's education, but some do not respond to the school's attempts to involve them, and a few do not ensure their children's regular attendance.

32. Parents are well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter the Reception class, or when they join other year groups. Parents are pleased that they have very good access to staff, and communication is always good. Each term, class teachers give parents useful details about the curriculum, helping them to monitor and support their children's learning. With three consultation evenings each year, parents have adequate time to review progress and to discuss targets. Parents failing to attend consultation evenings are offered a choice of alternative dates. Parents of pupils in Year 6 receive individual guidance on preparation for local exams to gain entry into secondary schools, and on the procedure for transferring pupils across county boundaries. Teachers' annual written reports are of satisfactory quality, showing in some detail what pupils have learned. However, systems for giving targets and recording next steps for learning in Years 1 and 2 are different from those in Years 3 to 6. Newsletters are informative about events and important dates, and a monthly newsletter from governors is circulated to parents and the wider community.

33. The school makes good use of community resources to broaden the curriculum and improve pupils' learning. Recent visitors from the community have described to the pupils their work in traffic control and animal protection. Pupils in all year groups explore many local places of interest, including the nearby allotments, where they exchange information with gardening enthusiasts. Local groups also use the school for meetings, and there is a weekly ICT club for adults. The school organises regular visits to Hampton Court and Kew Gardens, and to national museums in London, although opportunities to develop further multicultural, multi-ethnic and international links are not fully exploited.

34. The school has satisfactory links with other educational providers, including two on-site pre-school groups. A secondary school offers curriculum support in ICT, and secondary school students are welcomed into the school for work experience in childcare or to take part in assemblies. Student teachers are carefully inducted and mentored, and they make a valuable contribution to school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management and of the work of the governing body is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good leadership and management of mathematics and ICT, and of SEN.
- Good commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in the school's work.
- Not enough detailed use of school information and performance data.

Commentary

35. The school's leadership has a clear focus on raising standards and on giving all pupils a valuable and rounded experience of school life. It actively seeks out support and guidance from the local education authority to aid its work, and the efforts of staff have been rewarded in the rising trends in national test results, although this improvement is more marked in mathematics and science than in English. All the key issues of the last inspection report have been consistently targeted over time, with the result that the overall level of improvement is at least satisfactory. In some areas, such as ICT and resources, the level of improvement is good. Procedures for promoting good attendance and punctuality have also been extended but have not yet managed to improve both to a satisfactory level.

36. The senior team is well established and represents a good range of responsibilities. This is particularly true of the deputy headteacher, who leads and manages mathematics and ICT well and has taken a key role in developing recent improvements to assessment. Provision for SEN is also well led and managed by the two co-ordinators. One of these co-ordinators is the headteacher, who has put considerable effort into creating an effective team of learning support staff. Improvement planning is well organised and suitably prioritised. Plans for the development of individual subjects have a longer-term view, but this approach is not yet replicated in the school's overall strategic plan. In addition, criteria for judging the success of initiatives, although focused on raising standards, tend to be broad and general rather than finely focused.

37. The headteacher is much committed to promoting professional development. Performance management is firmly embedded, and for learning support and office staff as well as for teachers. Professional development is promoted well through training, and there is good support for the teacher currently training under the national Graduate scheme. In response to the key issue of the last inspection, the school has given good attention to extending monitoring at all levels, although some weaknesses still remain. Leaders of subjects, both core and foundation, have been given opportunities to observe teaching, and a current priority is to expand this facility. The intention of this initiative is to extend subject leaders' skills in evaluation and to give the governing body a greater chance to monitor the impact of such activities more closely. However, those teachers singled out as being particularly skilful in the teaching of English and mathematics, and the new subject leader for English, are not yet consistently well used to monitor or influence teaching right across the school. Weaknesses in the use of time have not been identified, because the school has not assigned a responsibility for monitoring the curriculum as a whole.

38. Governors, too, have been keen to address the issue of monitoring. For example, there is now a rota of visits, formal reports back to governors, and discussion with subject leaders. Governors are led by an active and committed chair who dedicates much time to the school; his introduction of a monthly newsletter has sought to give the school a higher profile within the community. Governors are involved well in drawing up the school's priorities and in looking at academic performance data. All statutory requirements are met.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	472,705.00
Total expenditure	485,376.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,900.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,644.00
Balance carried forward to the next	22,973.00

39. Financial management is sound, and the day-to-day administration is of a good standard and efficient. Governors also satisfactorily monitor expenditure, but they do not focus as closely on the impact of their spending decisions. Best value procedures are soundly fulfilled in the school's overall monitoring of its work and in the considering of information about performance. However, all the school's data could be put greater use in tracking trends and the performance of different groups of pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. At the time of the inspection there were 24 children in the school's Reception group. Teaching and learning in the Reception class are good and the children achieve well. This is because the key areas of personal, social, language, literacy and mathematical development are effectively taught. Provision is good for children with SEN because their needs are identified early, and teachers and learning support assistants then give them good support. As a result, these children also make good progress. Help and guidance of a similar quality and effectiveness are also given to the very small number of children with English as an additional language. The overall quality of provision, however, is satisfactory, and this reflects the findings of the previous report. This is because the school does not yet have a designated area for outdoor education and play. However, this facility is currently being created and will soon be finished.

41. When children enter the Reception class their overall attainment is below that of children of a similar age. In the case of a significant proportion, attainment is well below in communication, language and literacy skills, and in some aspects of physical development, particularly finer physical skills.

42. Although a few children are likely to reach all the expected learning goals by the end of their Reception Year, the result of these factors is that attainment overall remains below these expectations when children enter Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good relationships with adults.
- No exclusive use of an outdoor area.

Commentary

43. Staff have very good relationships with the children, who are given a good level of individual care and support from all adults. Routines are well established and there is good attention to health and safety. In response, children settle quickly each day and take part keenly in all activities. Their behaviour is very good, and often exemplary. Relationships between children are very good, because they learn from staff the importance of speaking calmly and quietly, for example. Children are very good in sharing books and resources, and often wait patiently to take their turn at activities. They work well independently, but the extent to which they work collaboratively is limited by their poor communications skills. The lack of an outdoor area, and of resources specifically designated for the children's exclusive use, also reduces the extent to which they can practise the social skills they learn in the classroom. All children have some understanding of Christianity and other faiths.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good teaching of early reading and listening skills.
- Too few opportunities for higher-attaining children to extend their writing skills.

Commentary

44. Children benefit from skilled teaching in this area. Their listening skills develop quickly through their close attention to adults' instructions and to stories, and they remember much detail about what they have heard. However, many children do not speak in full sentences, often giving one-word answers to questions, or pronouncing only parts of words. Teachers encourage children's speaking skills by giving them many opportunities to talk about their work, and all staff are very good at teaching letter sounds. As a result, many children recognise the initial sounds of words, and middle-attaining children recognise a few familiar words. There are also good opportunities for the children to develop early writing skills, such as 'pretend-writing' and mark making. For example, they write shopping lists for their grocer's shop. A few middle-attaining children use phonics to help with their writing, and some write their name. However, there are not enough chances for children to write in their books, and higher attaining pupils, who can write a few simple words, are therefore not given enough scope to extend their writing further.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Well integrated practical activities.
- Too few opportunities for children to record the outcomes of their mathematical work.

Commentary

45. Adults skilfully include a mathematical element in most activities, and as a result children are learning about mathematics throughout the day. For example, children counted aloud as they put candles on a birthday cake. Higher-attaining children count accurately to twenty and recognise numbers on a calculator, while middle-attaining children count objects accurately to ten. All children know that money is required to purchase goods in their grocery shop, but most do not identify the value of individual coins. Although all know that simple two-dimensional shapes have names, children sometimes do not recognise circles, squares and triangles correctly. Higher attaining children write their house numbers and telephone numbers, but in most activities the children are not encouraged to record their findings by, for example, tallying or mark making.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Inconsistent supervision of computer activities.

Commentary

46. Children use a variety of computer programs to develop numeracy and literacy skills, and manipulate them with good control of the mouse. However, because computer activities are not always supervised, many children complete exercises by trial and error, without fully understanding their mistakes. Middle-attaining children program forward and backward movements into a floor robot but cannot explain the sequence of their actions. During the inspection, children made small bags by joining pre-cut junk materials with sticky tape, string and staples. They used apples as weights to test their bags and found that most were strong enough. In subsequent discussion, good questions from the teacher developed ideas for improving how the materials were joined together. Children currently in the Reception class have little experience of their local environment, but those now in Year 1 have vivid recall of last year's exciting visits to a travel agent and a café.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is currently **unsatisfactory** because the outdoor play area is not yet completed.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Limited provision for outdoor play.

Commentary

47. In physical development sessions, children show good co-ordination. They follow instructions for running and jumping and have very good spatial awareness. Most can undress and dress themselves. However, many have difficulty in controlling small tools, such as pencils, and this weakness impedes their writing and letter formation. At the moment, outdoor play areas and resources are shared with pupils in Years 1 and 2. The result is that children in the Reception class do not have outdoor facilities permanently available to them, where they can use, for example, large wheeled toys or climbing apparatus. Children will have access to such facilities, however, when current building work is finished.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good opportunities for imaginative play.
- Inconsistencies in the identification of learning objectives.

Commentary

48. Opportunities for imaginative play are good, for example when children wrote invitations to Cinderella's ball, and then 'attended' the event. Adults join in these activities to model behaviour and stimulate children's interest. For example, a learning support assistant pretended to take telephone orders in the grocer's shop. Teachers' interventions during art activities help children to make good progress, and the outcomes are celebrated in attractive displays. However, the educational purpose of some creative activities is not always clearly defined, with the result that, for example, children select materials and resources without enough guidance.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**, but with a weakness in the use of language and literacy across the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching in Years 1 and 2.
- Too few opportunities to write descriptively or imaginatively in English, or at length in other subjects.
- The effective work of learning support staff, particularly with pupils with SEN.
- Good feedback to pupils about the quality of their work.
- Too little monitoring of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6, and of trends in the performance of different groups of pupils.
- Not enough structured guidance in some reading sessions.

Commentary

49. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are likely to be below national expectations in all aspects of this subject by the end of the year for those pupils currently in Years 2 and 6. This current level of attainment is lower than was found at the time of the previous inspection. A significant factor influencing attainment is the low level of language and literacy skills of many children when they first come to school. For example, pupils' limited vocabulary affects their capacity for explaining ideas, not just in English but in other subjects too. Such difficulties also influence the extent and quality of their response to stories and text, and in turn limit the quality of their writing and inhibit attainment at the higher Levels 3 and 5. The school continues to tackle these weaknesses, but with a mixed level of success. Achievement in this subject is satisfactory, with a more positive picture emerging in Years 1 and 2.

50. The quality of English teaching is satisfactory, but it varies across the school. In Years 1 and 2 it is good. New strategies to strengthen the teaching of speaking skills and phonic knowledge have deliberately been targeted at creating competence in these areas from when children first start school. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 are building effectively on the skilful teaching of language in the Reception class. Pupils in Year 2 make very good progress in learning because there is particularly successful support for extending vocabulary, gaining a deeper understanding of the text, and explaining ideas in greater detail. Success is further assured because the teaching is lively, imaginative and encouraging, and wins pupils' full attention and effort. As a result of such consistently effective teaching, there are clear signs that achievement is increasing in pace in Years 1 and 2. For instance, different strategies for tackling unfamiliar words were fully explored and reinforced during a very effective Year 2 lesson, to give pupils a wider repertoire of skills on which to draw. As a result, these pupils readily identified each strategy and were increasingly applying all of them in practice.

51. Another successful aspect of teaching is the work of learning support staff, who know exactly what they have to do and are well deployed. Pupils with SEN in particular, throughout the school, gain from this targeted support and are making good progress. Other characteristics of effective teaching include:

- * detailed planning;
- * improvements to resources, so that pupils now meet a wider range of new and attractive books;
- * the quality of feedback to pupils about their work.

Marking clearly identifies what has worked well, while at the same time routinely pointing out how further improvement can be made. This strategy is well established across the school, with only the occasional exception in Years 3 to 6.

52. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, but with examples of good teaching too. At its most effective, teaching in these classes is confident and knowledgeable, with good emphasis on different uses of language and helpful links with other subjects. Frameworks to guide writing are also useful because they help pupils to structure their work. However, there are several reasons why teaching is not as effective in these year groups as it is in the younger class groups. One reason is that opportunities are too often missed for pupils to play an active part in discussion, particularly where there is too much direct teaching during whole group sessions. When this happens, pupils have little more to do than listen. Another contributory factor is related to the use of time and the organisation of activities. For example, if Year 4 pupils return late from their weekly swimming lesson the English lesson for that day is affected. There are also occasions when pupils are removed from literacy lessons to read to adult helpers. These are valuable experiences, but they do sometimes disrupt group work and opportunities for paired discussion with other pupils. The new subject leader is a very good role model of effective teaching. Her influence has had the greatest impact in the youngest year groups, where she has monitored the teaching of new strategies. On the other hand, she has not yet had the chance to extend her monitoring to English lessons in Years 3 to 6 to enable her to identify and address these shortcomings.

53. The English curriculum is satisfactory. Good and consistent attention is given to improving grammar, punctuation and spelling. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to write independently and for a range of purposes, but too few of these give pupils the chance to write descriptively or imaginatively. When pupils do have such opportunities, higher attaining Year 2 pupils, for example, produce some lively writing, and Year 6 pupils make use of techniques such as *simile* and *personification*. Neither is the school making best use of lesson time dedicated to the teaching of reading. While one group receives close support from the teacher during each session, activities for other pupils are not always adequately structured or guided to make sure that these pupils are gaining all they can. Lastly, there are relative weaknesses in the school's otherwise satisfactory assessment systems. These procedures have not yet been fully refined to give the school more specific and detailed information about trends in performance within and across particular groups of pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The development of subject-specific vocabulary is generally well targeted across all subjects, and speaking skills are well promoted in mathematics and in Years 1 and 2. Valuable links are also made with work in other subjects, such as ICT, design and technology and geography. However, the promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory because full use is not made of science, religious education, history and geography for pupils to write at length, with the exception of Year 6 pupils in science. This factor also limits attainment in writing and helps to account for achievement in English being satisfactory rather than good.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers' secure understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Good lesson planning.
- Good use of interactive technology as an aid to teaching.
- Activities for higher attaining pupils, which do not consistently meet their needs.
- Good support for pupils with SEN.
- Good leadership and management of the subject.

Commentary

55. The school's test results in mathematics show a steady rise in recent years, particularly those for Year 6 pupils. Inspection findings show achievement to be satisfactory, and the current group of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils to be on course to achieve standards in line with national expectations. Although these findings reflect those of the school's last inspection, a more consistent approach to planning and assessment has played a significant part in improving standards.

56. Teaching and learning are good and, significantly, very good in Years 5 and 6. One reason for this success is that all teachers consistently follow the format recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy. Lessons begin with an 'oral starter', followed by group activities and a summing up for the whole class at the end. Teachers are helped to focus their teaching clearly on what they want pupils to have learned by the end of the lesson, because these expectations are clearly defined. A particularly effective feature of teaching is the use of interactive whiteboards, which are used well to explain and clarify ideas and concepts. During a Year 6 lesson this resource was used very effectively to demonstrate how to calculate angles in a triangle or around a point. In Year 1, pupils were invited to complete a number sequence on the whiteboard, and did so with confidence. In the most effective lessons the pace is brisk, explanations are clear and all pupils are involved. Teachers introduce concepts and new vocabulary clearly, and sometimes give pupils the opportunity in short, paired discussions to talk about what they have done. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils worked constructively with their *talking partners*, discussing how to solve problems and using notes and jottings to record their thoughts and ideas. This approach enabled higher attaining pupils to explain how they might solve problems, and allowed other less confident pupils to share ideas in a less challenging context. Teachers manage pupils well and, as a result, most respond positively to adults.

57. Pupils with SEN are well supported and make good progress towards their targets. Teaching assistants make sure the pupils understand what to do and give them clear explanations. For instance, Year 6 pupils were very well supported in their understanding of angles, and demonstrated this understanding by successfully responding to the teachers' open questioning.

58. The enthusiastic subject leader gives good leadership and direction; these strengths have helped to bring about improvements in standards and to create the good overall provision. Assessment practices are sound and have improved satisfactorily since the last inspection. The school is now beginning to analyse test results in order to pinpoint more accurately what pupils need to learn, and so increase achievement further. However, activities are not always well matched to pupils' needs or challenging enough for higher attaining pupils. This relative inconsistency contributes to pupils' current satisfactory, rather than good, overall achievement. Day-to-day marking helps pupils to understand how they can improve, but there are also some inconsistencies between teachers in the use of this approach. The effect is to reduce the impact of this valuable strategy across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well, and adapted in such a way as to support effective learning. The range of work that pupils are given in each successive year covers the National Curriculum, and teachers forge links between different areas of the curriculum. For instance, graphs are used to support work in science and measurements are made in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Greater emphasis on investigative activities.
- Not enough opportunities to record scientific work in Years 1 to 5.

Commentary

60. In science, the school's test results for Year 6 pupils have risen steadily over time since 1999. In 2003, for the first time, this improvement shifted results from well below the national average for all schools to below average. Inspection findings reflect this improvement, as they show standards to be rising in most year groups, mainly because of increased attention to developing investigative work. By the end of the school year, attainment is likely to be similar to national expectations for those pupils currently in Years 2 and 6. Achievement overall is satisfactory. In the case of pupils in Year 2 these findings are the same as those of the last inspection. There has, however, been an improvement in respect of Year 6, where standards were previously found to be below national expectations and progress to be unsatisfactory.

61. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but are inconsistent in quality, ranging from very good to, occasionally, unsatisfactory. Additionally, although individual lessons are often effectively taught, there are too many occasions when pupils are required to record little of what they are studying beyond brief pieces of writing or the labelling of diagrams. In some year groups, pupils' work showed evidence of worksheet exercises, or copied information, but too little in the way of independent writing. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching persist because teachers' subject knowledge is variable, and good practice is not shared. These factors are tending to limit pupils' achievement to satisfactory, rather than good. However, the recently appointed co-ordinator is conscientious and knowledgeable, and her influence is beginning to improve teaching and learning in all aspects of the subject.

62. Overall, pupils generally recall scientific information well. Pupils in Year 2, for example, have very good understanding of electrical circuits. This is because investigative approaches had been well used to establish and consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding. In a very good lesson seen in this year group, pupils examined circuit diagrams and identified those that were incomplete. They found all the necessary components and, using the diagrams as templates, built the circuits without faults. Higher attaining pupils developed their circuits by installing a variety of 'buzzer' units.

63. In Year 6, pupils have good understanding of gravity, although they do not always use scientific language confidently when talking about their work. When investigating the effects of friction, they designed experiments to show the forces required to move a known weight across increasingly resistant surfaces. In contrast to other year groups, pupils in this year group benefit from good opportunities to record their work, and in a variety of forms. They measured the different forces during this investigation and recorded them on computer-graphs, for example. Their written work in books includes tables, grids, diagrams and written explanations, and they also complete

pieces of personal research. Work is carefully marked, and with good expectations of presentation; as a result, work is neat and tidy. Pupils' attainment in this year group is further boosted by small group sessions in the school's environmental garden, taken by adult specialists. These sessions are intended to reinforce in a 'real' context the work that has taken place in the classroom.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good resources.
- Clear explanations and demonstrations by teachers to help pupils gain skills.
- The use of interactive whiteboards by teachers as a teaching tool.
- Not enough use of ICT by pupils in the course of lessons.

Commentary

64. Resources for ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good. All pupils have access to a well-equipped computer suite, and this facility plays a valuable part in ensuring that pupils are taught a comprehensive ICT curriculum. The internet is readily available to pupils and they make good use of it, for example to download images to add to their word processing, and to illustrate information they have collected. Most significantly, pupils benefit from the interactive whiteboards which have been installed in all classrooms. This equipment is used confidently by teachers as a natural teaching tool in all lessons. The approach has the advantage of improving pupils' understanding of how computers can be used across a wide range of activities and demonstrates key skills.

65. In this subject, the achievement of pupils throughout the school is satisfactory, and standards are likely to be generally in line with those typically expected of pupils of their age. These findings represent much improvement on those of the previous inspection, when standards were found to be well below national expectations and progress unsatisfactory. This improvement has also been brought about because pupils follow a scheme of planned activities that helps to ensure the systematic development of their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. By Year 6 many pupils are confident and competent users of computers. They know the usefulness of ICT in their work and in the outside world. For example, pupils readily collect information and present information on spreadsheets and graphs. They use secure search engines to access websites on the internet and use their word processing skills to write stories and poems. However, while good use is made of the ICT suite, computers in classrooms are not always put to good use during lessons.

66. Leadership and management are good. This is because the subject leader has a clear vision for the development of the subject, and as a result there has been the good level of improvement described above. Assessment procedures include those developed by the local authority, and they are developing well.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. This is satisfactory. Pupils produce bar charts in mathematics, use paint programs in art, and word-process text in literacy. Some classes make good use of word processing to produce poetry and to research topics. For instance, pupils in Year 5 looked for bread recipes as part of their design and technology work.

HUMANITIES

68. Not enough evidence was collected to allow overall judgements to be made about standards, achievement or provision in each of the subjects of history, geography and religious education.

Commentary

69. Teachers' planning and pupils' work show that the **geography** curriculum is enriched by opportunities for first-hand learning. For instance, Year 4 pupils benefited from walks along the river and a trip to the local rowing club to increase their knowledge of rivers. Teachers also make good use of the local environment to help pupils learn about direction, and physical and human landmarks. In Year 5, for example, pupils have devised their own questionnaires and survey sheets to find out whether the town's High Street should be closed to traffic. Useful links with literacy work allowed Year 4 pupils to use non-fiction texts about rivers to develop research skills and to prepare for writing explanations of how and why a river travels from its source to the sea. The pupils' ready recall of geographical terms, such as *meander* and *tributary*, indicated that technical vocabulary had been well taught. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of work in geography.

70. The school has appropriately adapted national guidelines for **history** to its own planning for the subject, with the result that pupils are generally making sound gains in their knowledge and understanding of history as they move through the school. For example, through their study of the Tudors, Year 5 pupils are developing a satisfactory awareness of the chronology of the period, and are beginning to understand wider aspects of this time, such as the contribution made by Tudor explorers. Resources are used well to stimulate interest. For instance, in a Year 3 lesson, a variety of materials was used well to demonstrate how houses were built in Tudor times. Visitors make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding. On one such occasion a visitor spoke very effectively to Year 2 pupils of her experiences of a seaside holiday in the past, using a variety of photographs to illustrate her talk. In a useful link with the development of language and literacy skills, pupils had prepared questions in advance to ask during her presentation. However, as with geography, pupils do not have enough chance to write at length about their work in this subject.

Religious education

Commentary

71. The school has a good collection of artefacts to support learning about different faiths. These resources were used to particularly good effect in a well-taught lesson in Year 1, where the teacher had added to the school collection with artefacts of her own. Pupils were thrilled to look through her box of wedding items, and this gave them a stimulus to work hard. The result was that they made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of special occasions in the Christian and other world faiths. Classrooms also have attractive displays on topics covered in religious education, to capture pupils' interest. For example, a comprehensive display on Islam in the Year 4 classroom gave pupils first-hand experience of a range of relevant artefacts.

72. The subject leader has developed the subject satisfactorily since the last inspection. Time allocated to the subject through the year is generally appropriate to meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus, although lessons sometimes vary in length from class to class. Progress in pupils' knowledge of different faiths and their traditions is generally sound. Younger pupils, for example, have a satisfactory understanding of important festivals, such as *Diwali*, and of aspects of celebration in the Christian faith. Pupils in Year 5 have studied the New Testament and can recount parables such as *The Prodigal Son*. However, pupils do not have enough chance to write at length or in depth about beliefs and ideas, and the subject leader has not yet had the opportunity to monitor pupils' work to identify this need and to make improvements. Close links with a local church help

pupils to understand the significance of Christianity, but there are no opportunities to visit other places of worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. Not enough evidence was gathered to enable overall judgements to be made about standards, achievement or provision in each of the subjects of art and design, design and technology, music and physical education.

Commentary

74. Three small parts of lessons were seen of **art and design**, and other evidence was collected from pupils' work. A satisfactory range of topics and activities is studied in this subject, and links with work in other subjects add greater interest and relevance for pupils. For example, a geographical study of rivers in Year 4 was used as the basis for creating riverside scenes. Pupils had been well prepared for this activity by, for example, trying out different techniques, such as *pointillism*. As a result, pupils were rapidly getting on with their final piece, making thoughtful choices about which technique to adopt and the best materials to use, and working together well. The use of photographs had been a helpful stimulus for this project. Paintings by other artists also support art and design work in other classes; for example, Year 3 pupils discussed the work of Mondrian and Kandinsky as an introduction to abstract art. In some cases, art and design work overlaps with that of design and technology, as was the case when models of Tudor houses were completed by pupils in the same year group, following upon a study of the building techniques of that historical period. Other teaching of specific skills took place in Year 6, where pupils were studying drawing techniques for creating the illusion of perspective.

75. Suitable arrangements are now made for the provision of **design and technology**, and are promoted further by the good subject expertise of the subject leader and by good resources. During one of two small parts of lessons seen during this inspection, Year 6 pupils were working in a spacious area specifically equipped for design and technology work. The whole design process was being given good attention, the pupils having first designed a fairground ride and then made a prototype of it. Teaching was well supported by detailed planning, and learning was furthered through good quality questioning about how designs were to be improved. There was also good attention to safety issues, so that pupils were handling tools sensibly and wearing protective masks where necessary. In a food technology lesson in Year 5, a good variety of different breads was available for tasting, clearly extending the experience of many pupils. However, the quality of pupils' subsequent written evaluations were not extended by any earlier discussion of possible word choices.

76. Some teaching of **music** was sampled in Years 1, 3 and 4. Pupils are given opportunities to listen to and discuss different sounds and music, which help to develop their listening skills and allow them to use their imagination to make comparisons with other sounds. For example, a higher attaining pupil in Year 1 suggested that the sound of fireworks might be that of a volcano, and a middle attaining pupil felt the castanets to be the perfect instrument for imitating the king's horses in the Nursery rhyme of *Humpty Dumpty*. Good attention is given to the use and understanding of musical terms. As a result, most Year 3 pupils understand the difference between rhyme and rhythm, and a Year 4 pupil described and demonstrated a *glissando*. Photographs show all classes enjoying a recent Caribbean day, where pupils played steel pans and took part in traditional dancing. Music is generally used to welcome pupils into assemblies and to create an appropriate atmosphere.

77. Three lessons were sampled in **physical education**, and a skipping club and netball practice were briefly visited. Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed taking part in country dancing, although they were sometimes confused by which was right and left and were therefore not always able to keep up with the fast-paced music. However, they followed instructions carefully, and boys and girls worked amicably together during paired activities. In a Year 4 indoor games session, pupils developed their fielding and striking skills, skilfully supported by the teacher's knowledgeable coaching. In another lesson, with Year 5 pupils, the teacher's good questions held their attention well, and helped to develop their capacity to work as a team. Learning support staff are used effectively to make

assessments of pupils with SEN, in order to help plan future activities. The school makes good use of other opportunities to widen pupils' experiences of the subject. Year 4 pupils go swimming each week to the local pool, for example, although they are sometimes late arriving back and this places pressure on the time allocated to other subjects which follow the session. School teams take part in many inter-school events, including tag rugby and football. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities, which include netball, gymnastics and skipping. These activities are very popular with all pupils, including those with SEN.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good emphasis on personal health and safety.
- There are no significant weaknesses in this area.

Commentary

78. The school is very keen to promote this aspect of its work, and is successfully engaged in a number of initiatives that involve pupils throughout the school. Most significantly, the school is working towards gaining a national award that involves developing personal, social and health education right across the whole school community. One such project within this wide-ranging programme is making a marked impact on pupils' eating habits at lunch and break times. Another initiative is the Healthy Heart programme, in which Year 4 pupils are taking part, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from being involved in a drug awareness programme run by the local police force. Other strands of the award link with pupils' behavior and the development of self-esteem. There are regular weekly sessions when pupils can discuss feelings, or explore such topics as personal safety, and these sessions are particularly effective because issues are often linked with pupils' own experiences. Such themes are also picked up in other lessons, like science and physical education, and awareness is raised from the moment children start school in the Reception class. As a result, pupils have a particularly good knowledge of health and safety issues.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
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	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).