

INSPECTION REPORT

FRIETH CE COMBINED SCHOOL

Henley-on-Thames

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110461

Headteacher: Miss Sue Smithin

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 4th-6th May 2004

Inspection number: 256178

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	121
School address:	Frieth Henley-on-Thames Oxfordshire
Postcode:	RG9 6PR
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Frieth CE Combined School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tom Nixey
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Frieth CE Combined School is smaller than the average for primary schools. There are 121 pupils on roll. This is similar to the roll at the time of the last inspection. However, that included Year 7 pupils, which the school no longer caters for. The roll is still increasing, and the school is oversubscribed with a waiting list for places. There are 19 pupils on the register of special educational needs (SEN), which is below the national average. Most of these pupils have minor to moderate learning difficulties. Three pupils have statements of SEN. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls on roll. Five pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The turnover of pupils is fairly high. For example, 39 per cent of the pupils in Year 6 and 50 per cent of those in Year 5 have not attended the school throughout their primary education. Attainment on entry to the school is above average. The school achieved the Investors in People Award in 2002. At the time of this inspection the headteacher had been in post for two weeks.

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14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, design and technology (DT), special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Frieth CE Combined School provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Overall, pupils' achievement is good and they reach above average standards by the time they leave the school. The leadership and management of the school are good and it gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2; achievement is good in Years 3 to 6.
- Reception children achieve well in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development but there are insufficient opportunities for them to select activities and resources, make choices and develop independence.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and meets pupils' needs well.
- The good leadership and management and very good governance of the school maintain a clear focus on achieving high standards, but the role of some subject leaders is underdeveloped.
- Assessment procedures are effective and used well to track pupils' progress.
- Curricular provision is good overall, but subjects such as history, geography and DT are not covered in enough depth.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, show interest in their work and enjoy taking responsibility.
- The school's links with parents and the community contribute well to pupils' learning.

The school has made a good improvement since it was inspected in 1998. Standards have risen in English, mathematics, science and ICT as a result of improvements in teaching, assessment and the curriculum. The leadership, management and governance of the school have improved significantly. The school improvement plan is more comprehensive and has a clear focus on raising attainment. Curricular planning and the role of subject leaders in English, mathematics, science and ICT have developed well, but other subjects have not benefited from the same degree of improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

These statistics should be treated with caution owing to the small number of pupils involved.

Achievement is good. In Year R, achievement is good in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and satisfactory in other areas of learning. Children are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in all areas of learning judged by the inspection, except in communication, language and literacy and mathematics where standards exceed expectations. In Year 2, achievement is very good and standards are well above average in reading, mathematics and science, and above average in writing. Standards are above average in ICT and well above average in music, but only average in history. In Year 6, achievement is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers. Standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English, science and ICT. Standards in history are average.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good; moral and social development is very good.

Pupils show interest in learning and apply themselves well. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They enjoy taking responsibility and show initiative in undertaking tasks.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, in Reception, with good teaching in some aspects. Sometimes, lessons are too formal with insufficient opportunities for children to make choices and develop independence. Teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 to 6, with some very good teaching. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are generally high and, as a result, pupils work hard. However, teachers' management of the pupils was not consistent enough to ensure that all were concentrating well. Assessment information is used well to plan suitable work for all pupils. The curriculum is well planned and enriched by a wide range of additional activities. However, the recent focus on English, mathematics, science and ICT has detracted from developing other subjects, some of which are not covered in sufficient depth. The school's links with other schools and the community contribute well to the pupils' learning. There are shortcomings in some aspects of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage which the school is currently addressing by teaching children as a separate class. The school works well in partnership with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. Very good leadership by the new headteacher has helped to achieve a smooth and efficient handover, as well as providing very good support for staff prior to the inspection. All staff make effective contributions to curricular leadership and management, but these are stronger in some subjects than others. Equality of opportunity and fairness are strong features. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and meet all statutory requirements. Their very good financial management has enabled them to make considerable improvements to the school's staffing, accommodation and resources.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally positive about the school. A few parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress but inspection findings show that the school provides parents with regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. Pupils are keen to grasp opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility. They enjoy the wide range of additional activities that the school offers, but a recent questionnaire shows that a significant number of pupils do not find lessons enjoyable.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to review and improve curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage and ensure that they receive consistently good teaching in all areas of learning;
- Review time allocations and curricular planning to ensure that subjects such as history, geography and DT are covered in sufficient depth.
- Continue to improve the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators, especially in those subjects which have not been a recent focus for development.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects and courses

Overall, achievement is good. Achievement is satisfactory in Year R, very good in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, mathematics, science and music, and above average in writing and ICT.
- Standards in Year 6 are above average in English, science and ICT and well above average in mathematics.
- Children in Reception achieve well in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- Pupils do not achieve high enough standards in history.
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are used and developed well across the curriculum.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well.

Commentary

1. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, overall, but good in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Children's attainment when they start school is above average overall. By the end of the Reception year, children reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development. In communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, attainment is above the expected level. The children achieve well in communication, language and literacy, and in their mathematical development because the quality of teaching is strongest in these areas of learning. Their achievement in other areas of learning is satisfactory because the curriculum is not yet fully developed. Also, two thirds of the class had only been attending school full-time for two weeks at the time of this inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	19.5 (18.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	18.8 (17.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.5 (18.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the Year 2 national tests in 2003, standards were in the top five per cent of schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, and also in the top five per cent of similar schools. The school has achieved very high standards in the national tests for four consecutive years and its rate of improvement has been significantly higher than the national trend. In science, teachers' assessments were also in the top five per cent of schools. Standards were high because all of the pupils reached Level 2 (the national average), while well over half of the pupils reached Level 3 (above average).

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, mathematics and science and above average in writing. Standards are well above average in music, above average in ICT, and average in history, which were the only subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make valid judgements. Where the evidence allows comparisons to be

made, these standards are higher than they were when the school was last inspected, except in history, where they are similar. The judgements of the inspection are similar to the school's results in the 2003 national tests in mathematics but slightly lower in writing where there are fewer pupils reaching the higher level. Allowing for variations between year groups, pupils' achievement overall in Years 1 and 2 is very good. This is because teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve and provide work that is challenging.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (28.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.1 (28.3)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.5 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In the Year 6 national tests in 2003, standards were average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Compared with those schools whose pupils achieved similarly in Year 2, standards were average in English, well above average in mathematics and above average in science. Standards were lower in English because fewer pupils reached above average standards (Level 5) in writing. Standards fluctuate from year to year because of the small numbers of pupils involved and the proportion of pupils with SEN in different year groups, but the overall trend in improvement in the annual test results over five years is not as good as that seen in most schools. There is also a relatively high turnover of pupils in Years 3 to 6 which also partly accounts for the differences in national test results from year to year.

5. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 6 are above average in English, science and ICT and well above average in mathematics. Pupils achieve well due to the high quality of their teaching and learning. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Standards are average in history but few pupils reach higher than average standards. Weaknesses in curricular planning and organisation mean that pupils do not study aspects in sufficient depth. There was insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements about standards in any other subject.

6. The use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum is good and teachers plan well to develop these skills through a wide range of work. In Year 6, standards in reading are well above average, while those in writing, which is a continuing focus for development, are above average. ICT is also used well to support the pupils' learning across the curriculum, such as carrying out research in history and art and developing number skills.

7. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress towards their targets and they are very well integrated into classes. Teachers and assistants understand the pupils' needs, and how to address them. Work is planned to meet their needs and this enables the majority to reach average standards in English, mathematics and science. Boys and girls achieve equally well, overall, and higher attaining pupils achieve well because they are given suitably challenging work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their attendance is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall

Strengths and weaknesses

- School successfully promotes good attendance levels and parents ensure the attendance of their children.
- Pupils' willingness to be enterprising and take responsibility is good.

- Pupils' confidence and self esteem are very good.
- Pupils understand the responsibilities of living in a community very well.
- The school promotes good relationships between pupils and adults with its 'family' atmosphere.
- Pupils' moral and social development are very good.
- Opportunities to experience multi-cultural Britain are less well developed than other cultural aspects.

Commentary

8. Attendance is satisfactory although it fell below the national average in the last academic year. This shortfall was mainly due to a heavy snowfall last winter when many pupils were unable to attend school for some days. The agricultural work patterns of a small number of families commit them to take holidays during term time and the school is aware of this problem. The school ensures that parents and carers appreciate the importance of prompt and regular attendance of their children at school and as a result there has been no unauthorised absence. An attendance check taken during the inspection confirmed that current levels of attendance are now very good. There have been no exclusions during the past school year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.3	School data	0.0
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.

9. The family atmosphere promoted by the whole school staff has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Pupils understand the school rules and do their best to keep them and, as a result, standards of behaviour are good. Adults lead by example and older pupils also set good examples for younger. The culture promoted by the school is one of a large and happy family where everyone is valued and respected. Both parents and pupils confirm that they enjoy and benefit from this caring environment.

10. Pupils have many opportunities for taking on additional responsibility and they respond very well to them. The school council has two representatives from each year group who meet regularly to discuss and debate the various suggestions they receive. The council members present the findings of their meetings at whole school assemblies so that appropriate action can be taken by their peers. The council representatives are chosen by their classmates and hold office for one term. The council has greatly assisted the personal development of all the pupils involved. There is a head boy and head girl with deputies, monitors with specific duties and four Reception 'buddies'. The school ensures that every pupil has the opportunity to enjoy responsibility for the many routine duties that occur in school.

11. Older pupils are quick to help their younger schoolmates should the need arise. Pupils of differing ages interviewed during the inspection displayed mature, articulate, confident and responsible attitudes. The school encourages the personal and social development of pupils and as a result their confidence and self esteem are very good. They are confident, courteous and polite when talking to visitors and have good relationships with adults and one another. There is a good degree of racial harmony. The family culture promoted by the school is effective in discouraging any form of harassment and no inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection period.

12. Pupils have a good understanding about what is right and what is wrong. Staff set good examples. Their expectations for mutual respect are high, developing pupils' moral education very well. For example, all pupils are fully included in lessons and teachers make sure that everyone is

valued and respected. Values are promoted well through the school's general ethos and teaching. Sometimes awards are given to pupils for trying extra hard, such as one certificate for helping to clear up others' untidiness without being asked. There are very clear rules for classrooms and the playground as well as the school's general rules. Social development is generally very good. A first class example of this was seen in a Year 6 assembly about safety. Pupils took full responsibility for the assembly and had worked and researched very well before showing slides and pictures of various aspects of day-to-day safety for children. Social development is further enhanced by residential visits, providing good opportunities for pupils to develop maturity.

13. Assemblies and religious education provide a variety of opportunities for spiritual development, and overall, this aspect is good. Acts of worship include Bible teachings, hymns and prayers. Pupils are made aware of the natural world and are developing an appreciation of it. For example, Year 6 pupils used hedgerow plants and flowers in science, and were being taught how to value and appreciate their natural environment.

14. Pupils have many opportunities that promote a good understanding of western culture in music, art, dance, and English. The opportunities to promote their understanding of different cultures have improved well since the last inspection. Among other things, they have heard a speaker talking about Ethiopia, experienced African music, and visited a mosque and a synagogue. The opportunities to understand more about multi-cultural Britain are less well developed, although pupils have experienced some Indian music. In general, their awareness of other cultures is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Assessment procedures are good. Curricular provision is good, but there are some shortcomings in curricular provision for the Foundation Stage and in the provision for history, geography and design and technology. The school provides good support and guidance for pupils and works well in partnership with parents. Links with the community and with other local schools are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Reception with some good features. They are good in Years 1 to 6. Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information are good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Reception, the quality of teaching and learning is good in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development.
- There are insufficient opportunities for Reception children to make choices and develop independence.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 is consistently good in English, mathematics, science and ICT. It is also of a high standard in music, but less consistently good in other subjects.
- In some classes and subjects teachers rely too heavily on commercial worksheets.
- Pupils apply themselves well to their work and are productive, but older pupils show little enjoyment in lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and give them plenty of praise and encouragement, but they do not always ensure that pupils present their work neatly.
- There are some inconsistencies between teachers in the expectations and effective management of pupils' behaviour.
- The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is good.
- Assessment procedures are good, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and assessment information is used well to inform teachers' planning.

Commentary

15. The table below shows the judgements made of a sample of lessons during the inspection. In addition, inspectors examined teachers' planning and pupils' work and held discussions with pupils and teachers. Taking all of this evidence into account, as well as the standards pupils achieve, the inspection findings show that the quality of teaching and learning is good, overall and helps pupils to achieve well, particularly in English, mathematics, science and ICT.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	12	8	0	0	0

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

16. At the time of this inspection, the Reception class was being taught by a new partnership of two teachers on different days. Overall, there is good teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, which helps children make good progress and achieve above average standards in these areas of learning. Shortcomings in the teaching in Reception stem partly from the fact that the Foundation Stage curriculum is still evolving, as Reception children have previously been taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. The planning for the different areas of learning does not yet make sufficient allowance for children to make choices and take responsibility for their own learning. Some of the teaching is quite formal and directed for such young children, some of whom had only been attending full-time for two weeks. There are also some differences in approach between the two teachers, particularly in their expectations of children's behaviour and how these are communicated and reinforced.

17. In recent years, the strong emphasis on raising standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT has helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. Teachers generally have good levels of subject knowledge and plan activities well so that they meet the needs of different groups of pupils within each class. The quality of teaching in music has improved under the auspices of a specialist teacher with high levels of expertise. However, teaching and learning in other subjects are not always consistently good because the rest of the curriculum has not had such a clear focus. For example, there are weaknesses in teaching mapping skills in geography and drawing skills in art, and aspects of history are not covered in sufficient depth. In addition, English and mathematics are taught to individual year groups in the morning in Years 3 to 6, whereas other subjects are taught to much larger classes and combined year groups in the afternoon.

18. There is also an over-reliance in some classes and subjects, which are referred to in subsequent sections of this report, on commercial schemes and worksheets. These tend to restrict the teachers' creativity in approaching some lessons and do not always provide the most effective means of teaching a particular skill or concept.

19. Throughout the school, pupils are willing to work and show good levels of concentration and application. This helps them to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good pace. Pupils' workbooks show that they are, on the whole, productive in lessons. However, few showed much enjoyment in learning. A recent questionnaire for pupils in Years 2 to 6 revealed that almost 40 per cent of the pupils did not find lessons interesting or fun. They do, however, speak with enthusiasm about the many other activities that are arranged, such as the Arts week, visitors and trips.

20. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' achievement are evident in the way they plan work that is challenging and demands the use of higher order thinking skills. Teachers build pupils' self-esteem through praise and encouragement, which is given both verbally and through marking. They also make clear what pupils need to do to improve. However, there are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of the standards of neatness and presentation of pupils' work, which vary considerably.

21. Some teachers also have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and ensure that pupils understand what is unacceptable. However, this is not consistent throughout the school, and sometimes results in pupils not listening to the teacher sufficiently well during whole class introductions to lessons.

22. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs is good. Teachers provide suitable work so that these pupils are able to join in lessons fully. Teaching assistants provide good support and work well with class teachers to provide the extra help that is needed.

23. At the time of the last inspection, there were weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures and in the use of assessment information to inform planning and teaching. The school has made good progress in addressing these issues. Assessment procedures are now thorough and constructive and help teachers to set meaningful targets for pupils and to plan work for them which will help them to move on to the next level of attainment. This is working well in English, mathematics and science, where termly targets are set for individual children and end-of-term assessments show whether these have been met. Assessment procedures in other subjects are developing well although they are not as detailed as those in the core subjects.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is good overall, but there are shortcomings in the provision for the Foundation Stage. Provision for pupils' learning outside of the school day and the development of their interests are good. The accommodation and resources of the school provide satisfactory support to meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall breadth of curricular opportunities is good.
- The organisation of the curriculum for some subjects does not ensure that they are taught in sufficient breadth and depth.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children in Reception to select activities, make choices and develop independence.
- There is good provision for pupils with SEN.
- There has been insufficient review of the effectiveness of some aspects of the curriculum.
- There is too much reliance on commercial material and non-statutory guidance in some subjects.
- A good range of additional activities and clubs provide curricular enrichment
- Accommodation and resources have been improved since the previous inspection and more is planned.

Commentary

24. The school has established a curriculum that ensures pupils have access to a good range of interesting and worthwhile activities. It is effective because it helps them to achieve independence in learning and reach high standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Literacy and numeracy are used and developed well through other subjects. For example, pupils used their literacy skills to write a report from the point of view of a Victorian concerned about the employment of children. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn French, which is taught by a specialist teacher.

25. The curriculum for some subjects, particularly history, geography and DT, is not effective enough. This is because time allocated to these subjects and the way in which they are organized do not ensure that pupils cover the required curriculum content in sufficient breadth and depth. In English, mathematics and science, there is a strong emphasis on planning work to challenge and

extend the more able pupils into Level 5 of the National Curriculum. In other subjects, this is a relatively weak feature of curricular planning.

26. Curricular provision for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but has some weaknesses. This is because until the current term, Reception children were taught in a class alongside Year 1 pupils. The school is now developing a separate curriculum for these children. At present it covers all six areas of learning adequately, but it does not yet offer children enough opportunities to make choices and develop independence. In addition, there are insufficient links between areas of learning within a lesson.

27. Pupils who have special educational needs is effective in enabling them to join in everything that the school offers. Individual education plans focus well on the needs of the pupils, and their targets are appropriate and achievable.

28. The ethos of the school is good. Personal, social and health education is well established and pupils are valued and respected. The newly appointed headteacher has begun to review how this aspect of pupils' education should be taught because, at present, there is too much reliance upon a commercial scheme. The school seeks to ensure that all pupils have equality of access and of opportunity to all that it offers.

29. There has been insufficient analysis and monitoring of the effectiveness of the curriculum in some subjects. This means that curriculum development is not properly based on a combination of identified weaknesses in pupils' learning and official guidance. There is also too much reliance on commercial curriculum materials and national guidelines that are unadapted to the circumstances of the school. This stifles teachers' creativity and the development of innovative approaches to curricular planning.

30. The school provides pupils with a good range of activities that enhance their learning. For example, there have been musical productions with other schools, a Viking day and visits by pupils from other schools to talk about their different faith traditions. There has been an Arts Week and pupils have opportunities to take part in music activities such as the choir or learning instruments. A range of clubs provides pupils with opportunities to do gardening, football, country dancing or work on computers.

31. The school library has been improved with more resources including those for teaching pupils about different cultures. ICT resources are good and include a computer suite and computer projection equipment for teaching. Good use is made of additional teachers for music and French and to provide small teaching groups each morning. The school building has some areas that are rather cramped, but plans are in hand for further improvement.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Provision for the support, advice and guidance of pupils is good. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good overall.
- Induction arrangements are good.
- Relationships with adults in school are good.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good.

Commentary

32. The school has good health and safety procedures in place with both formal and informal risk assessments carried out regularly. A school governor has specific responsibility for health and safety issues. There are full child protection procedures in place and all school staff are aware of the appropriate procedures. The head teacher is the designated child protection officer and has recently undergone the required training. The family culture that permeates the school ensures pupils' well being. This, coupled with the fact that the staff know their pupils very well ensures a caring environment which encourages learning. In addition, most pupils know and care for one another, regardless of age or gender.

33. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them well and provide good role models for behaviour. Discussions with pupils show that they feel very safe and secure and would be happy to turn to any adult in school should they need help, comfort or advice. The views of pupils about different aspects of school life are welcomed and valued both on an informal basis, through the school council and annual questionnaires.

34. Induction arrangements for children starting school are good. The school has strong links with the local pre-school groups and the 'reception buddies' ensure that children starting school feel confident and comfortable in their new surroundings. Parents appreciate these good arrangements. The school also makes effective arrangements for pupils who enter the school at different times throughout the school year, having moved from other schools. Pupils are helped to settle in quickly and their needs are assessed promptly in order to provide appropriate support.

35. There are effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and setting challenging targets for them to achieve. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to reach their targets. Adults know the pupils and their needs well and provide good levels of support and guidance to help pupils reach their potential.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are good. There are good links with other schools and pre-school units.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information to parents about school and pupils' standards and progress is good.
- Parents' views are valued and acted upon.
- Parental involvement with learning at school and home is good.
- Procedures for dealing with complaints and concerns are good.
- Good links with other schools and educational establishments enhance learning.

Commentary

36. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and the school works well with them, encouraging them to support the school through the parent teacher association and to help their children with their learning. Parental help with their children's learning is good in school and they assist with practical support in lessons. They also help supervise pupils on school trips. Help with learning at home is also good. The parent teacher association is very active and organises many fund raising events. The association works closely with the school to realise a variety of pre-agreed projects.

37. The school provides a good range of information for parents in various ways. Fortnightly school newsletters, combined with the 'Frieth School News', published and compiled by the governors, ensure parents are kept up to date. An informative summary of what each class will be

studying is sent out at the beginning of each term. Parents can take advantage of three interview opportunities a year with class teachers when their children's targets and progress are discussed. Procedures for dealing with complaints and ensuring satisfaction are good. Communication with parents is constant, and enables them to give the correct help to their children with learning at home. The standard of information to parents has improved significantly since the last inspection when many parents felt excluded from school life.

38. The school operates a genuine open door policy and, as a result, parents now have no qualms about approaching any member of the school staff. Teachers make themselves available at the end of the school day and parents take advantage of this to meet staff informally.

39. There are good links with local pre-school groups and parents say their children settle in school well. There is similarly good liaison with local secondary schools and the school makes every effort to ensure a smooth transition into secondary education. Links with other schools and colleges are strong. The very close liaison with neighbouring primary schools is exemplified by the shared social, creative and joint training activities they undertake. More able mathematicians enjoy special days at a local grammar school.

40. The school has good relationships with the local community. The 'Frieth School News' from the governors is also distributed to local residents. The school has close links with the neighbouring church and members of the local community are invited to school events. Pupils also make visits outside their local environment in connection with their project work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The school's governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher is providing very good leadership during a time of transition and change.
- Governors are very well informed about the school and are very effective in all aspects of their role
- Leadership of the curriculum varies between subjects and ranges from very good to satisfactory.
- There is a strong commitment to self-evaluation among staff and governors which informs strategic planning.
- Performance management and professional development are closely linked to the school improvement plan.
- Efficient financial management has enabled governors to make significant improvements to the accommodation.

Commentary

41. The previous inspection identified a number of weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school. The previous headteacher was appointed after that inspection, and made significant improvements during the past three years. The current headteacher had been in post for two weeks at the time of this inspection, and had effected a smooth and efficient handover, as well as providing very good support for staff prior to the inspection. The newly qualified teacher felt particularly well supported and appreciated the head's input. The headteacher is already working very closely with governors to develop a clear picture of the school and to formulate a vision for the future. She is continuing to promote the strong teamwork between staff and to involve all staff in discussing forthcoming changes in organisation due to an increasing roll.

42. Governors have played an increasingly important role in the development of the school since the previous inspection, working closely with the previous headteacher to improve the school. They have been kept very well informed through detailed termly reports from the headteacher and have been fully involved in identifying priorities for improvement through monitoring performance data.

Governors visit the school regularly and some have written perceptive reports about their more formal monitoring visits. All governors are deeply committed to the school and play their part in managing aspects of its development. For example, the public relations committee produces an informative newsletter for parents and members of the local community which is greatly appreciated.

43. The role of subject co-ordinators was identified as a priority for improvement by the previous inspection. Overall, this has developed well, especially in English and ICT, where it is good, and mathematics, where it is very good. This is because these subjects have been the main focus for the school over the past few years. The science co-ordinator left the school in 2003 and is due to be replaced by the newly qualified teacher once she has completed training. Leadership in music is also developing well since the appointment of a music specialist. A whole school focus on developing the arts has helped to raise the profile of art and design throughout the school, and the co-ordinator has already identified the need to improve the teaching of drawing skills. However, the leadership of other subjects has not been developed to the same level of effectiveness because those subjects have not had the same intense focus. As a result, there is insufficient monitoring of the standards of pupils' work in some subjects, such as geography, history and design and technology, and of the quality of teaching and curricular provision in these areas.

44. The school improvement plan identifies clearly the main priorities for development for the current year and also outlines proposed objectives over a three-year period. Staff and governors all contribute to the plan through detailed evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This, for example, led to a major focus on improving standards in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6, which is having a good impact on pupils' achievement. Governors evaluate their own effectiveness each year and identify areas for improvement. Staff and governors are committed to ongoing self-evaluation in order to improve the quality of education they provide for the pupils.

45. The performance management of the headteacher and staff is closely linked to the school improvement plan, and, in turn, determines the professional development opportunities for each individual. The school's Staff Development and Training Plan clearly shows how courses and staff meetings are planned to address the issues identified for improvement. The School Improvement Plan also reports on the training undertaken in order to meet the previous year's priorities. In this way, strong links are formed which make for effective management.

46. Efficient financial management has been a key factor in improving the school since the last inspection. The previous headteacher inherited a large budget surplus, which has gradually been used to improve staffing ratios, resources and the accommodation and has now been reduced to within acceptable limits. Creative thinking by the governors' premises committee has led to significant improvements to the premises, including an ICT suite. Money has been allocated to employ additional teachers in the morning, so that Years 3 to 6 are taught as separate year groups each morning for literacy and numeracy. This has clearly had a beneficial effect on standards in those subjects. The governors have devised a five-year budget plan to show the effects of the rising roll from year to year, which illustrates their forward thinking approach to the management of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	323879	Balance from previous year	31281
Total expenditure	329621	Balance carried forward to the next	25538
Expenditure per pupil	2786		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

47. Until two weeks before this inspection, Reception children had been taught alongside Year 1 pupils in a mixed-age class for most of the time. The school has two intakes, in September and January, and all children attend part-time for the first term. At the time of this inspection, 21 children were attending full-time; of these, 13 had only been full-time for two weeks. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is evolving to take account of the fact that this is the first time Reception children have been taught in a separate class. Most aspects are satisfactory, although there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning as the class is taught by two teachers on different days. This was a new and temporary arrangement that had been in place for a few days at the time of this inspection. Curricular provision is satisfactory, and addresses all six areas of learning appropriately, but there are too few opportunities for children to make choices within a range of activities in each lesson. Overall, teachers' planning is satisfactory, but it does not always make explicit the links with the Early Learning Goals and does not fully exploit the possibilities for incorporating several areas of learning into each lesson. There is currently no designated co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, but one of the two class teachers, who has previous experience in teaching this age group, is working with the headteacher to develop and improve provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good induction procedures help children to settle quickly into school.
- Good relationships between adults and children ensure that children feel secure and happy in school.
- There are insufficient opportunities for children to make choices independently and to take responsibility for their own learning.
- There are inconsistencies in the way different teachers manage children's behaviour.

Commentary

48. Most children reach the standards expected of them in this area of learning, and their achievement is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, although good teaching was observed in some lessons. Well planned induction procedures include visits by the class teacher to see children in their pre-school settings and opportunities for children to spend two afternoons in the Reception class before they start school. These enable teachers and children to get to know each other, which helps to form good relationships once they start school. As a result, children settle quickly and are happy to be at school. On the whole, children are interested and motivated to learn. They are confident to try new activities and interact well with others when taking part in group activities. When teaching is good, and the teacher has high expectations of children's behaviour, they maintain concentration and sit quietly when the teacher is talking to them. However, when the teacher does not insist on good listening, children call out inappropriately and too much time is spent waiting for them to be quiet. On these occasions, there is not enough emphasis on ensuring that children understand the need for an agreed code of behaviour. In one lesson, children were able to choose from a range of activities including role play, writing activities, sand play and outdoor play involving construction with large bricks. During this lesson, children worked as part of a group, taking turns to prepare a cake mixture with the teaching assistant. They acted independently as they chose different activities and were confident to initiate ideas for themselves.

However, these structured play activities are timetabled as a separate lesson, rather than being integral to all areas of learning and used as a means to promote learning across the curriculum.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching of speaking, reading and writing skills.
- As a result, children make good progress and achieve well.
- The activities planned for the more able children do not always present enough challenge.
- Good assessment procedures promote good progress.

Commentary

49. Standards in this area of learning are above average and children achieve well. The quality of teaching is good. In a good lesson based on *The Fish who could Wish*, children listened with enjoyment to the story and responded to the teacher with relevant comments and actions. In the subsequent activities, they were able to identify the letters 's' and 'h' and find things that begin with those sounds. Some children successfully distinguished between pictures of objects that began with 's' and 'h' and those that did not. Others located objects around the room and identified the initial letter in the word. The more able children used their knowledge of sounds to write a sentence which began 'I wish...'. Most could have done more had they had the opportunity as they finished the task very quickly. Most children speak clearly and audibly and use language when taking part in role play to act out their ideas. They write their own names independently and attempt writing for various purposes, such as labels and lists. Good teaching of handwriting skills ensures that children are able to hold a pencil correctly and form recognisable letters. The teacher's expressive reading of stories and skilful questioning ensures that children are developing enjoyment in books and, through this, an understanding of the different elements of a story. The use of non-fiction texts, such as a Big Book about the blue whale, also extends children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Good ongoing assessment of children's attainment informs teachers' planning and aids children's progress.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have many opportunities to use and observe numbers and shapes in their daily routines.
- Teachers plan a good range of practical activities which promote effective learning.

Commentary

50. Children achieve well and reach above average standards in this area of learning. The lesson observed illustrated the good features of the teaching. To begin with, the children counted to and from 20 and revised their knowledge of 'o'clock' times. The teacher then introduced them to the concept of position as she demonstrated with a variety of toys the meaning of 'under', 'behind', 'in front' and 'near'. The teacher involved the children well by asking them to say where the teddy was placed or to carry out the instruction. The subsequent activities were well planned to meet the needs of different groups of children within the class. Some children reinforced their understanding of position through role play outside. The most able pupils were challenged well as they named and described solid shapes. More able pupils are already working within the National Curriculum. They count, sequence, add and subtract numbers and recognise both two and three-dimensional shapes, using their correct mathematical names. For example, in the lesson observed, children recognised

and named cube, cuboid, sphere, and pyramid and counted the number of faces and edges on each. The classroom is rich in number displays and the teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to count and use numbers in their daily routines. The strong emphasis on learning through practical activities and investigations is a good feature of the curriculum.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide good opportunities for children to investigate the world around them using their senses.
- Activities are sometimes over-directed by the teacher and do not allow children enough opportunities to find things out for themselves or to work at their own level.

Commentary

51. Children reach the standards expected of them in this area of learning and their achievement is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan activities around a central theme, such as 'Water', and provide children with a range of activities to attract their interest and curiosity. For example, after reading a book about the blue whale to the children and showing them pictures, the teacher passed round a shelled hard-boiled egg, so that children could experience what a whale might feel like. In a structured play session, children constructed a 'pirate ship' from building bricks and used a hole punch, stapler and treasury tags to join paper in order to make a book. Some children used the computer to support learning about numbers, while others measured out ingredients and learned how to make small cakes. Teachers ensure that children have opportunities to explore the school and local environment at different times of the year to experience, observe and discuss the changing seasons. Sometimes, the same activity is planned for all children and is directed by the teacher, with insufficient opportunities for children to explore, ask questions and work at their own level of capability. The timetable is still too closely allied to a subject-based Year 1 timetable to encourage cross-curricular learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities for developing dance, gymnastics and games skills are planned in physical education lessons.
- There is a limited range of wheeled toys and climbing equipment for developing children's control and co-ordination.

Commentary

52. Children reach the standards expected of them in physical development and their achievement is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the hall, children move with confidence and control as they 'follow my leader' and balance a bean bag on their head or shoulder. They demonstrate sound catching and throwing skills using bean bags. They show awareness of space and of others as they move around. In the classroom, children handle tools, building equipment and moulding materials with increasing control. They hold a pencil correctly and exert control when forming letters and drawing. Although children now benefit from a spacious outdoor area, there is a limited range of equipment for climbing and riding on.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for children to develop their imagination and creativity through role play, but adults do not always participate in the activities to exploit their potential to the full.
- Opportunities for children to express their ideas through art, design and music are not integral to other activities but often taught as separate subjects.

Commentary

53. Most children in Reception are on track to reach the designated goals by the end of the year. Achievement is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Role-play is planned effectively to match the chosen topic theme. At the time of this inspection, the children were playing the role of pirates, sailing on a pirate ship and searching for treasure. In one lesson, an adult working with a group of children observed and supervised them rather than engaging with them in their play to develop and extend their language, imagination and creativity. Children are introduced to a variety of percussion instruments as well as body percussion, and can use these to accompany songs and tunes with a simple beat. They sing simple songs from memory and clap patterns in imitation of the teacher. However, music is taught separately by a specialist teacher, rather than as an integral part of everyday activities. The timetabled music lesson is rather too long for children of this age. In art and design, children are introduced to a variety of media and techniques, including painting, drawing, print-making, and collage. In one lesson they modelled sea creatures from playdough. As with music, these activities are not always integral to and linked carefully enough with other areas of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6.
- The achievement of pupils is good overall.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Use of language and literacy in other subjects is satisfactory and developing well.
- Improvement in provision since previous inspection is good.

Commentary

54. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are above average across the school. On some occasions, when the focus of a lesson is on this aspect, standards are well above average. The majority of younger pupils speak clearly, listen carefully and show understanding of the main points in a discussion, as when they describe and discuss the setting of a story and what happens. Pupils in Year 6 have well developed listening skills. This enables them to contribute effectively to discussions. For example, they discussed different viewpoints about a situation of conflict intelligently, thoughtfully and fluently. Most pupils use appropriate vocabulary with precision to convey their ideas and they are responsive to the opinion of others.

55. Standards in reading are well above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Younger pupils put their learned skills to good use. For example, they discuss with their teacher aspects of reading such as authorship and the function of illustrations and titles. In Year 6, pupils use a good range of learned skills very well. They show clear understanding of what they read, readily discuss texts and thoughtfully answer questions posed. Their ability to isolate key ideas in non-fiction texts is developing well.

56. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach above average standards in writing. In Year 2, the majority use an appropriate vocabulary with some emphasis on the choice of words for interest. They develop their ideas in logical order into sentences and use punctuation well. Most write legibly and form letters carefully; some produce good joined handwriting. Pupils in Year 6 write for a good range of purposes. For example, they learn to isolate important ideas in texts and then use them to write a factual report. Handwriting is legible and presentation of work is mostly of good quality. They organize their work well, use vocabulary imaginatively and many write in well-structured paragraphs.

57. Pupils' overall achievement, which takes account of their capabilities, is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with SEN and those who are more able achieve very well for their capabilities. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, as has pupils' achievement.

58. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 to 6. Although there are variations across the school, teaching is never less than satisfactory. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils showed sustained interest because the teacher expected them to work hard. The teacher presented a realistic challenge for them to identify reasons for events in a story and this helped to maintain their interest. They then went on to produce a range of written ideas with the use of appropriate vocabulary. In Year 6, stimulating and challenging teaching resulted in a good lesson. The response of pupils to the probing nature of the teacher's questions challenged them to develop their ideas and understanding. The purpose of the task was clearly explained and therefore they settled very quickly to their writing. They worked with considerable concentration to produce well-written factual reports. The teacher provided very good support to a group of lower attaining pupils

through close and focused discussion with them. A good lesson in Year 4 was based upon stories from a range of different cultures. Very good questioning enabled pupils to identify similarities and differences between stories. They understood the nature of oral traditions and the moral aspects involved in such tales. They wrote good stories in the first person with due regard to spelling and punctuation. Higher attaining pupils wrote expressively and carefully chose words for effect.

59. Analysis of pupils' written work in Year 2 indicates that they make mostly good progress over time. However, its presentation, particularly by those who are lower attaining, is not of consistently good quality. Regular marking of their work provides good encouragement for pupils; some marking shows them how to improve. In Year 6, teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve are generally good. There is appropriate emphasis on the identification of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work and regular marking highlights this. Pupils in Year 6 make good and sometimes very good progress over time.

60. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management for the subject. Priorities for the development of the curriculum, for example in writing, have been identified through analysis of test data. Where there are weaknesses in the attainment of pupils, the co-ordinator has identified these and is beginning to analyse the reasons. Teaching and learning are monitored through observation and some analysis of pupils' work. This is an area for development to ensure greater rigour. Since the previous inspection, there have been improvements in library resources, in the co-ordination of the subject and in the analysis of test results to inform curricular planning. Overall, improvement in provision has been good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is good and developing. There is effective application in subjects such as history, science, music, and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain very high standards, and they have improved since the last inspection.
- Pupils' achievement and progress are very good across the school as a result of the high quality of the teaching.
- Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are very good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

62. Standards of attainment are well above average in Year 2. This finding matches the results of the 2003 national tests when pupils' results were in the top five per cent of all schools. It is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were above average. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is also well above average. This exceeds both the findings of the last inspection and the results of the 2003 national tests. Higher attaining pupils do very well due to some very good teaching which challenges them and encourages them forward. Pupils are making very good progress throughout the school and this includes those who have special educational needs. Achievement is very good.

63. The quality of teaching overall is good. In the few lessons seen, teaching was very good. The mathematics lessons observed were lively and pupils enjoyed them greatly. For example in the very good Year 2 lesson, they began with a game. One pupil was given a headband on which was written a mathematical operation, such as 'subtract 4'. The rest of the class gave facts and figures that enabled the chosen pupil to guess what was on the headband. Later they all settled down to

finding missing numbers in the problems set for them. Many worked independently and all were very well focused on their work, behaving very well and concentrating fully.

64. The class of 'young mathematicians' in Year 6 revelled in the deliberate mistakes that the teacher made. They were working on angles, and knowing that in a circle there are 360 degrees, they delighted in discovering that one of her given angles was 'wrong' and made the total 370 degrees. They used protractors accurately and applied themselves very well to the work, most working speedily and carefully. Pupils with SEN were very well supported. In Year 6, for example, the teacher worked closely with one pupil and made sure that she could understand and do the work.

65. Teachers have nurtured pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics and they therefore respond very well to the very good challenges given to them. There is a strong emphasis on numeracy skills but the other aspects of the mathematics curriculum are also addressed very well.

66. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is very good and teachers have a very clear understanding of how well each pupil is doing. Very detailed, careful records are kept and these are clearly referenced to National Curriculum levels. Targets for these levels are pasted into the front of exercise books so that both teacher and pupil know where they are.

67. Mathematics is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator. She has a very clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress and leads by example with some very good and inspired teaching of her own. Pupils are challenged and motivated very well and they really enjoy mathematics. The subject is, as a result, a great success. ICT plays a large part in pupils' mathematics work. A very strong aspect is that of data handling and many pupils are competent at using a computer to represent the outcomes of surveys and research, producing graphs and charts. However, they are also very capable of drawing these by hand.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Mathematics is used well in other subjects and pupils are developing an awareness of the use they can make of these practical applications. For example, they successfully weigh and measure in DT and science. This was seen in their work about bread, weighing ingredients accurately while following the recipe. In ICT, pupils learn to handle and record data, and they use these skills in science as well, producing charts and graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good in Year 2 and good in Year 6.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to learn through enquiry and investigation.
- There is insufficient emphasis in Years 3 to 6 on teaching pupils to analyse the results of investigations and draw conclusions from them.
- There is an over-reliance on commercial worksheets in some year groups which limit the opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills.
- Teachers build in good opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy skills in science.

Commentary

69. Standards in Year 2 are well above average and achievement is very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, overall, with a number of very good features. This is because teachers have a good understanding of the need for pupils to learn through enquiry and plan interesting activities for them. Teachers' high expectations of the pupils are reflected in the levels of challenge in the planned activities and in the

quality of pupils' written work. Pupils record their work in a variety of ways, including lists, tables and diagrams. They explain the life cycle of a human being and understand the changes that take place throughout life. They compare and contrast animals and plants and group animals as reptiles, birds, mammals, fish and amphibians. Pupils make predictions about which materials will change when they are heated or frozen. They test whether ice cubes weigh more than the equivalent water, make predictions and explain their findings. Pupils explain why a bulb is dimmer when there are two in the same circuit and construct electrical circuits that incorporate switches and buzzers.

70. Standards are above average in Year 6 where a high proportion of pupils are on course to achieve Level 4 and almost half are working towards Level 5. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good, overall, but is stronger in Years 5 and 6, where expectations are higher, than in Years 3 and 4, where there is a heavy reliance on published worksheets and insufficient emphasis on finishing a piece of work and recording findings neatly. In all year groups, pupils learn how to plan and carry out a fair test. However, although pupils record their results, they do not always draw appropriate conclusions from the investigation and relate these to their scientific knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 6 understand the functions of the main organs of the body and explain the factors that contribute to healthy living. They know that sound is caused by vibrations and explain ways of soundproofing by using their knowledge of materials. Pupils investigate what happens when a light source is moved further away from or closer to an object. They make predictions about the outcome, measure the height of shadows and construct a graph to show how the length of a shadow changes according to the distance from the light source to the object.

71. In all year groups, teachers show pupils how to record their work accurately in a suitable format, using appropriate scientific language. This is particularly well done in Years 1 and 2. Teachers also build in opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical knowledge. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 measured length and height as part of their work on similarities and differences between pairs of pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 calculated the percentage of seeds that had germinated in their investigation.

72. Leadership in science is satisfactory. The science co-ordinator left the school in 2003 and is due to be replaced by the newly qualified teacher once she has completed training. In the meantime, an experienced teacher is overseeing the subject. Overall, provision is stronger than at the time of the previous inspection in Years 1 and 2, but not quite as strong in Years 3 to 6, or in terms of subject leadership.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in Year 6 is above average.
- Pupils' progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good and they achieve well.
- By Year 6, pupils can use a good range of skills on the computers.
- Teaching and learning are generally good.
- ICT lessons are used successfully for teaching topics in other subjects.
- Staff do not yet get together to agree on the standards related to the National Curriculum.

Commentary

73. In Year 6 attainment is above average. In the ICT lessons, good teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress and achieve well. The use of the interactive whiteboard helps this good teaching considerably. Lessons were observed only in Years 5 and 6, but analysis of pupils' work shows that good progress is being made in all years, including pupils who have SEN. This is a

considerable improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was below average. Resources are now good and the dedicated area for ICT has 12 computers. This means that every pupil in a lesson group has access to a machine, working in pairs. This makes sure that everyone has plenty of opportunity to put into practice what they have learnt at the beginning of the lesson.

74. Pupils are learning how to use computer skills for word processing, graphics, and data handling, including spreadsheets and databases. They are confident in accessing the Internet and some Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were seen copying and pasting parts of the Bayeux Tapestry, or Greek vase decorations in their art class. They record sensor data and present enhanced text with colour, choice of fonts and graphics.

75. In the two lessons seen, the teachers' own knowledge and competence were good. They lead pupils confidently, demonstrating an example, and then getting pupils to work through the operation themselves. For example in Year 5, pupils saw how to sequence the computer to make zebra crossing lights flash. Then they chose something of their own from a list. This included a lighthouse and a level crossing, and then they wrote the programme to make the respective lights work. Not only did this enhance their computer skills, but also added some science knowledge as well. Teachers move round to make sure that everyone understands how to do the task in hand, and they check to see the outcomes. These ICT lessons enable quick understanding and pupils make good gains in these sessions.

76. Leadership and management of the subject are good and the co-ordinator ensures that she keeps up to date with courses and initiatives. These have included a visit from the schools' adviser for ICT. Plans for the future include wireless connections and networking for the computers and printers. The co-ordinator finds time to monitor lessons and support colleagues as well as checking assessments and resources. Staff do not yet meet to agree on the standards for the National Curriculum levels, but this is already in hand for the next school year.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Several subjects make good use of the computer area and resources to enhance the subject material. These include surveys, recording findings and sorting for science, research for art and history, geography facts from the Internet, and the whole process of data handling in mathematics. The school has a digital camera which this is used across several subjects to record pupils' work for displays. Most pupils are very confident when using computers for research and they know how to use search engines.

HUMANITIES

78. No judgements are made about religious education as it is inspected separately. Inspectors did not see any lessons in **geography** during the inspection and it was not possible to make a reliable judgement about standards. Planning shows that Year 2 pupils find out about places around the world that they have visited on holidays through the travels of 'Samantha Swan'. There is very little evidence of the development of mapping skills in pupils' books, although some can be seen in the classroom. Year 1 pupils have drawn their own maps and diagrams and carried out a traffic survey, when they found that eight cars passed in ten minutes. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have all studied topics related to water. Pupils learn about the water cycle, rainfall, waterfalls and rivers. Year 6 pupils have considered environmental issues in this context, and have learnt about water wasters. They discovered facts such as that cleaning teeth under a running tap uses up to ten litres of water. There are indications that there is insufficient emphasis on teaching geographical skills. The amount of work in pupils' books suggests that the amount of time allocated for the subject may not be enough to ensure that topics are covered in sufficient depth.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the national average.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on historical research.
- There are shortcomings in the planning and organisation of the history curriculum.

Commentary

79. In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average compared with pupils of similar age. This judgement is based on one lesson seen in Year 2 and an analysis of pupils' work. It is similar to the judgement made by the previous inspection in Year 2, but standards have fallen in Year 6. This is because there has been a whole school focus on raising standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT and there has been insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' historical knowledge and skills. No lessons were seen in Year 6; therefore, the judgement is based solely on analysis of previously completed work. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but the school has recognised the need to develop the subject further in order to raise standards.

80. Judged on a limited amount of work, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In a mixed Year 1/2 lesson on the identification of evidence in old pictures, key ideas were taught quite clearly and pupils showed a good level of interest. There was an appropriate level of challenge, and the teacher promoted learning effectively through questioning and discussion. As a result, pupils began to develop and use the skills of historical enquiry and recognised differences between the past and the present. No teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6 so it is not possible to make reliable judgements about the quality of teaching and learning overall. However, analysis of pupils' work indicates that they have learned about Ancient Greece, including traditional stories and the concept of democracy. Pupils have also carried out historical research, for example, into the conditions in Victorian Britain. This has contributed well to their knowledge and understanding.

81. The curriculum for history is satisfactory but it has some shortcomings. This is because of way it is planned and timetabled over the course of the year and because it has not been a focus for development recently. As a result, planning does not ensure that every topic is covered in sufficient depth. There was insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements about the quality of leadership and management in the subject. There is an action plan for improvement, but this does not focus enough on raising standards in the subject and ways to do this.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. No lessons were observed in DT and only one in art and PE during the inspection. There was insufficient evidence to make reliable judgements about standards or the quality of provision in these subjects.

83. In **art**, an examination of pupils' sketchbooks and displays of work around the school shows that teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities which provide pupils with opportunities to use a variety of media while learning different techniques and skills. Sketchbooks are not used to their full effect to develop pupils' drawing skills. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils carried out research on the Internet before using a computer art program to save designs for future use. Year 6 pupils have also created their own 'willow pattern' plates in the style of the originals. Pupils in Year 2 made fabric collages to illustrate their work on the Great Fire of London and produced a map of the village made from clay tiles. This work illustrates the good links that are made between art and other areas of the curriculum to enhance pupils' learning. All pupils benefited greatly from a recent exciting Arts Week, in which they had opportunities to sew cushions, decorate T-shirts, create mosaics and make African masks. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has clear ideas for its future development. Displays around the school are colourful and enhance the environment as well as celebrating pupils' achievements.

84. In **DT**, analysis of pupils' work and displays around the school show that pupils are gaining experience in a satisfactory range of skills and materials. Year 2 have made small model felt coats. They designed them and considered how they would sew and decorate them. The resulting models are colourful and well made. Pupils also have the opportunity to evaluate their own work and consider what they would have done differently if they made them again. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, have researched all sorts of bread and then made some of their own, following a recipe. They have also designed slippers, although the finished articles were not available. Year 5 made pop-up pictures using paper, glue and rods. Pupils are learning how to create a flow-chart when planning their work and they carry out careful research before attempting work of their own. Curricular planning and organisation in DT does not ensure that the subject is covered in sufficient breadth and depth to allow pupils to reach high standards.

85. Only one **PE** lesson was seen and that was in Year 6. The teacher had planned an outdoor games lesson, but a sudden change in the weather required an improvised lesson indoors. Overall, this lesson was characterised by very good teaching and learning. A warm-up session with a good range of probing questions to the pupils about exercise created an effective start. Teaching was very imaginative and skilfully presented, and, as a result, pupils were enthusiastically engaged in a good range of demanding physical activities. A good focus on safety issues and awareness of others ensured that they were very well involved in a relatively restricted space. Overall, the accommodation supports the PE curriculum well and pupils enjoy an appropriate range of extracurricular activities.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The specialist teacher provides high levels of expertise in the subject and is leading its development very well.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well.
- The quality of teaching and curricular provision are good.
- The subject is enriched by a very good range of additional activities.

Commentary

86. The specialist teacher, who co-ordinates provision in the subject throughout the school, has held the post just over a year. She has considerable expertise in teaching music and, as a result, she generates enthusiasm amongst pupils and motivates them to learn. During the past year, the teacher has focused on improving pupils' composition skills and has adapted the school's scheme of work to match pupils' needs and address gaps in their knowledge and skills. Resources have been updated and improved to include a greater variety of ethnic instruments.

87. During the inspection, it was possible to observe one lesson for Reception children and one for Years 1 and 2 but none in Years 3 to 6, due to timetabling arrangements. The lesson observed showed that, in Years 1 and 2, standards are very high. Pupils responded well to pictures of animals by clapping out the number of syllables in each name. Effective teaching built upon this learning, as the teacher held up pictures of shapes such as a 'red square', 'yellow star', 'orange oval' and 'blue triangle'. Pupils soon learned the rhythmic patterns and clapped them, first in groups following the teacher's example, and then in response to a 'score' with a 'conductor' leading them through. Each group was able to clap its own pattern as the 'conductor' pointed to it. Pupils then progressed to using different types of 'body percussion' as well as instruments. The teacher ensured that each part of the lesson made provision for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and took account of their differing capabilities. The teacher has very high expectation of the pupils and plans challenging activities for them. Occasionally, too much is expected in a single lesson, especially for the younger children.

88. A portfolio of work shows that Year 2 pupils have also explored timbre, tempo and dynamics and worked in groups to compose music to represent the parts of an island, such as a waterfall, a coconut grove and a jungle. Pupils in Year 6 have used pictures as a stimulus to create sounds and have produced a graphic score to represent a 'Journey into the Galaxy'. Good curricular planning makes effective links with other subjects, as when Year 1 and 2 pupils recreated the Great Fire of London using paper sounds. The music teacher liaises closely with colleagues to make the most of cross-curricular opportunities.

89. Music enjoys a high profile in the school and pupils benefit from a range of additional activities. They are able to take part in a percussion group, a string ensemble and a choir. Pupils take part in the local primary schools' music festival, as well as school Christmas and summer productions. Visiting musicians have included a string quartet, a percussionist and African drummers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

90. There is appropriate planning for all aspects of personal, social, health and citizenship education. However, there is currently too much use of commercial teaching material. This has not been adapted enough to the specific needs of the school and its pupils. The newly appointed headteacher is aware of this. Each class has regular lessons in the subject and this includes opportunities for role-play and discussion. In the one lesson observed, pupils were challenged to consider the consequences of their actions in a range of situations. The teacher presented the ideas well and this engaged and sustained pupils' interest. They worked well together, were confident, articulate and had a generally mature attitude to the challenge presented. However, the time allowed for small group discussion did not give them long enough to explore the consequences of others' actions in sufficient depth.

91. Overall, the curriculum for teaching personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. Evidence for this is seen in the good attitudes and relationships that exist in the school. The overall school ethos is carefully reinforced by the content and the delivery of the teaching programme for this subject.

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	3
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	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
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).

