

INSPECTION REPORT

GEOFFREY FIELD INFANT SCHOOL

Whitley Wood, Reading

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 109782

Headteacher: S Farrow

Lead inspector: D Watson

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th February 2004

Inspection number: 256198

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	180
School address:	Exbourne Road Whitley Wood Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG2 8RH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Shelley La Rose-Jones
Date of previous inspection:	16 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Geoffrey Field Infant School is of average size for a school of this type. It is situated south of Reading town centre and draws its pupils from the immediate area. There are pockets of deprivation in the area, and the economic circumstances of many families are below the national average: 22.2 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. There are 174 pupils on roll plus a further 52 children who attend the Nursery part time. There are more boys than girls, especially in Year 2. The school is ethnically diverse. The great majority of pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is high (10.7 per cent), although only a few are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (37.2 per cent) is well above the national average. Many pupils have moderate learning difficulties or social and emotional needs. The number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is below the national average. Attainment on entry is below that expected, the weakest areas being language and personal development. There are few high attaining pupils. Pupil mobility at the school is well above the national average. In recent years there has been a high turnover of staff. Four teachers joined last September. The school is part of the newly formed Whitley Excellence Cluster.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23494	D Whatson	<i>Lead inspector</i>	The Foundation Stage curriculum; English as an additional language; Science; Art and design; Design and technology; Music.
11072	S Elomari	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
30544	G Battarbee	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Citizenship; Geography; History; Religious education.
21373	R Capel	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Physical education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Geoffrey Field Infant School provides a good standard of education. As a result, pupils achieve well and many develop appropriate attitudes and standards of behaviour. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Standards in reading, writing and speaking are below the expected level.
- Pupils underachieve in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The good leadership of the school provides the drive for improvement.
- Pupils are not always involved in their own learning.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes receive a good start to their education.
- Good personal development promotes happiness and good behaviour.
- The school is very caring and pupils feel safe.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Even though the school has faced difficulties because of recruiting and retaining staff it has addressed well the issues identified in the last report. These include the quality of assessment. In addition to this, from a low base, they have improved the standards that pupils attain in reading, writing and mathematics as well as improving the levels of attendance.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment on entry is below that expected, the weakest areas being children's language and personal development. By the end of Reception, children make good progress, and although many are unlikely to achieve the expected goals in their language development by the end of the year, most will have broadly met them in most other areas. This includes their mathematical and creative development as well as their personal and social development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Although children achieve satisfactorily in their physical development, they are likely to meet the expected goals in this area of learning.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2. At the end of Year 2, standards in the 2003 tests were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with those in similar schools, results were below average in reading and writing, but average in mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and the rate at which pupils join and leave the school are above the national average.

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

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

Based on teacher assessments, standards in science at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were below the national average, and average when compared to similar schools. Over the last few years results at the school have improved at a faster rate than the national trend.

Current standards in Year 2 are higher than those recorded in last year's tests. Standards in reading and writing are below the expected level, but in mathematics and science many pupils are working at

the expected level. Boys and girls attain equally well. All pupils, irrespective of ability, ethnicity, or linguistic background, achieve well. In their personal, social and health education (PSHE), including citizenship, pupils do well throughout the school, and standards are in line with those expected. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well in the humanities, including religious education, and reach the expected standard. Pupils achieve well in music and particularly well in singing. Overall standards in music are above those expected; singing is well above. Pupils achieve well in art and design and design and technology and reach standards that are in line with those expected. In ICT standards are below those expected and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good.

Attitudes to the school and the behaviour of pupils are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory but improving. Punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and is sometimes very good. Good use is made of teaching assistants, who help many pupils, especially those with learning difficulties, to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding. All staff insist on high standards of behaviour. Teachers plan well and therefore meet the needs of all pupils and build on their prior learning. Lessons are often interesting and this engages pupils well, especially in the Nursery and Reception classes, where good use is made of resources and practical activities. However, in the rest of the school, more formal lessons hinder pupils' independence and involvement in their own learning. When the teaching is very good the lessons have a buzz and excitement that encourage pupils to ask questions and be inquisitive. Assessment procedures are generally good and are used well, but pupils do not always understand how they can improve.

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils, including those in the Nursery and Reception classes. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good and support pupils' learning well. All pupils have equal access to good support, advice and guidance, based on good overall monitoring. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing, and acting on their views is satisfactory.

The school fosters good partnerships with parents, the local community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is good. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She and other key staff have high aspirations and a sense of purpose. Their effectiveness is enhanced by very good self-evaluation. Governance is good. The governing body fulfils all of its statutory duties.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very pleased with what the school provides.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in reading, writing and speaking by the end of Year 2.
- Raise pupil achievement in ICT across the school.
- Encourage pupils to become more involved in their learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils start school with levels of attainment below those expected, and do well to get to the level they do. Their **achievement is good** but Year 2 current **standards are below those expected**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in reading, writing, and speaking are below those expected.
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science because of good teaching.
- In relation to their prior attainment pupils achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils do not do as well as they could in ICT.
- Pupils' weak literacy and oracy skills are barriers to raising achievement in many subjects.

Commentary

1. On the evidence of the teacher assessments undertaken of the children when they start Nursery, attainment is below that expected. Literacy skills and personal development are the weakest areas for many children. Few high attaining pupils are noted.
2. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well because of good teaching, good levels of supervision and a well-planned and interesting curriculum that meets all their needs.

Area of learning	Achievement	Attainment
Personal, social and emotional development	Better than expected	Most children are likely to meet the expected goals.
Communication, language and literacy	Better than expected	Most children are unlikely to meet the expected goals.
Mathematical development	Better than expected	Most children are likely to meet the expected goals
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Better than expected	Most children are likely to meet the expected goals
Physical development	As expected	Most children are likely to meet the expected goals.
Creative development	Better than expected	Most children are likely to meet the expected goals.

3. In the 2003 national tests in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 2 the overall standard was well below the national average. In relation to those in similar schools, results were average in mathematics but below in reading and writing. However, the school has a far higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, and greater pupil mobility than other schools. Based on teacher assessment, standards in science were below the national average but average when compared to those in similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.3 (14.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.1(12.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.3 (15.6)	15.3 (15.6)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Geoffrey Field School has a high level of pupil mobility (45 per cent of the current Year 2 pupils did not start in the Nursery), and this distorts the school's published results. School data shows that pupils who have remained at the school since the last inspection attain overall standards below rather than well the national average. They are below the national average in reading, well below average in writing and above average in mathematics. When compared to those in similar schools overall results are average. These pupils achieve well. Those pupils who arrive at the school after Geoffrey Field Infant School

the start of Nursery also achieve well but they are not at the school long enough to benefit from the good education being delivered. As a result they do not have the knowledge, skills or understanding to acquire standards similar to those of other pupils at the school.

5. Over the last three years, girls have not done as well as boys in the national tests either at this school or nationally.

6. In recent years the trend in pupil performance has been improving faster than that nationally due to improved teaching and well-targeted intervention programs aimed at less able pupils. The upward trend is strongest in mathematics.

7. In the current Year 2, standards in reading and writing remain below the expected level, although there has been an improvement since the 2003 national tests. Parents, in their response to the questionnaire, said that their children achieve well. This is because of the quality of education pupils receive.

Subject or area of learning	Attainment	Achievement
Speaking and listening	Speaking – below the expected level Listening – close to the expected level	Speaking – satisfactory Listening - satisfactory
PSHE – including citizenship	Close to those expected	Good
Design and technology	Close to the expected level	Good
Art and design	Close to the expected level	Good
ICT	Below the expected level	Unsatisfactory
Religious education	Close to the expected level	Good

8. Pupils' weak literacy skills hinder their learning in other subjects. They do not have enough opportunities to develop and extend their numeracy or ICT skills in other subjects.

9. During the inspection there was no noticeable difference in attainment between boys and girls. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils from different ethnic minorities achieve well and they attain similar standards to other pupils at the school. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well. Pupils with learning disabilities achieve well in relation to their individual targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values, and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are **good**. Behaviour throughout the school is **good**. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** but improving. Punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school's provision for the personal development of its pupils is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to one another and to school are good.
- Pupils are not encouraged to become sufficiently independent.
- Attendance is well below the national average.

Commentary

10. Pupils, irrespective of their ability, gender, age, ethnicity, or linguistic background respond well to the school's good provision for their personal development. Their moral and social development is very good because the school promotes a strong moral code. Pupils are given a range of everyday tasks and willingly take responsibility for them. They are encouraged to be kind, to look after one another and take care of their own possessions. The school does this well. However, pupils lack confidence when they speak in class, which means that they do not benefit fully from opportunities for discussion. The spiritual development of pupils is addressed well, so that pupils are able to reflect on what they have seen and done. They often respond in a spiritual way, for example when singing together. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are in line to achieve the expected goals for personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1. Through the

study of famous artists, famous people and different religions, pupils' cultural development is good. The school values the ethnic diversity of its pupils and promotes racial harmony well through displays and the strong moral and social messages that it gives.

11. Pupils behave well both during lessons and at other times. They learn to take some responsibility for their own behaviour because each class negotiates its own rules at the start of the year. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and this fosters good relationships. All pupils are well motivated by a range of rewards. They play well together. No disruptive or unkind behaviour was observed during the inspection. Parents state that there is little bullying and that it is dealt with promptly and effectively when it does occur. There have been no exclusions in the last school year.

12. Throughout the school, pupils are not sufficiently involved in their own learning and this limits their achievement. They do not work well independently, either individually or in small groups. They often wait for the teacher to sort out problems rather than taking the initiative themselves. Too few opportunities are provided for them to ask challenging questions or to take part in independent research.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.7
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.

13. Attendance is well below the national average. However, because attendance is very well monitored and supported, the school has been successful in raising attendance significantly in recent years. However, not all parents support the school in ensuring that their children attend regularly. Most pupils regularly arrive on time.

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. Assessment is good. The school provides a good curriculum that is well balanced and broad. It meets the needs of all pupils. Accommodation and resources are good. Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good and support pupils' learning well. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory. All pupils have access to good support, advice and guidance that are based on good overall monitoring. Links with parents are good, as are links with the community and other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good and as a result pupils make good gains in their learning. Assessment procedures are good and this information is used well to raise standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science because of good teaching.
- Good use is made of the school's many experienced teaching assistants.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and lessons are controlled and orderly.
- Teachers do not always engage pupils in their own learning.
- Robust assessment procedures are used well to raise standards.
- Assessment is not used enough to help teachers decide how individual pupils learn.

Commentary

14. The overall quality of teaching is good. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. This was supported by the analysis of pupils' work and is confirmed by almost all parents, who state that the teaching is good and their children are expected to work hard and make good progress. Good teaching was observed in every year group, including the Nursery and Reception classes. Teaching is occasionally very good and even excellent. Pupils make significant gains and enjoy their learning. Although the overall quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good, the proportion of good teaching in mathematics and science is higher than in English. The teaching of music seen during the inspection was very good, and that of religious education was good.

15. Due to the good systems for recruiting staff, strong induction procedures and good professional development, the proportion of good teaching has increased since the last inspection and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	6	16	5	0	0	0

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

16. Teachers have good subject knowledge and professional expertise in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. All teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes also have good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. Lessons are sharply focused and planned thoroughly, with careful attention paid to ensuring that a wide range of pupils' needs is met. Pupils, therefore, build well on their prior learning. However, some of the additional literacy sessions intended to support pupils' learning in speaking and their knowledge of the sounds the letters of the alphabet makes (phonics) are not as well planned or delivered, and pupils often achieve only satisfactorily. In these sessions teaching strategies and planning do not always take into account pupils' different abilities or use a wide range of teaching methods that would promote their learning.

17. Several strong elements of teaching are exhibited throughout the school. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and opportunity in lessons. They interact with boys and girls, and those from different ethnic or linguistic backgrounds in the same way. Relationships are very good because of the teachers' caring attitudes. This promotes a safe and secure environment in which pupils learn. Teachers have high expectations of pupil behaviour. This consistent approach ensures that pupils are well behaved and lessons conducted safely, as they are in the Nursery and Reception classes. However, pupils are not regularly encouraged to be enterprising or take the initiative and this limits their involvement in their own learning.

18. Teachers make good use of resources and time to interest and motivate pupils. This is evident in many of the lessons in the Nursery and Reception classes and also in the daily numeracy lessons, and accounts for the good learning. The school's efforts to raise standards have been helped by the good adult-pupil ratio in the school which allows very good levels of supervision. The good deployment of the well-briefed teaching assistants provides good support both to groups of pupils and to individuals. This helps these pupils achieve well, especially in the basic skills. However, on a few occasions pupils relied on the teaching assistant, and opportunities were missed for them to be responsible for their own learning, or to learn from their mistakes. This aspect of pupils' learning is therefore slower than the gaining of knowledge and skills.

19. In the very good and excellent lessons it is the teacher's passion and enthusiasm for the subject that inspires pupils to learn so well. This was very evident in the music and singing lessons. In other lessons, such as the making of a post box in Reception, the teacher questioned pupils effectively, asking questions of the whole class that required a one-word answer and then following up with more probing ones. This encourages all to think and be involved in their own learning. In the excellent religious education lesson the teacher encouraged the pupils to learn from others and ask challenging questions, even of herself. Pupils' interest and curiosity during this lesson was very evident.

20. Pupils with learning difficulties are assessed well. Their needs are carefully identified and regularly reviewed. Thus individual education plans are relevant to their changing needs and used well by both teachers and teaching assistants. As a consequence these pupils achieve well in both their academic and their personal development. Pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported by expert help from outside agencies. As language development is given a high priority across the school, these pupils also benefit from good teaching during the literacy hour, and their acquisition of English proceeds well.

21. In-depth assessments are made throughout the Foundation Stage. These include detailed initial informal observations, and more formal assessments. All the information is carefully recorded and analysed. This ensures that activities are well matched to pupils' needs so that they can achieve well and their future performance can be predicted.

22. In English and mathematics there are very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress and this has helped to raise standards. In all other subjects, such as science and ICT, pupils' progress is regularly tracked through the school's assessment and record keeping books known as the 'Blue Book'. In English and mathematics, as in other subjects, pupils' progress is frequently discussed at year group meetings so that appropriate challenge or support can be given. There has therefore, been a good response to the key issue of the last report. Many teachers also use this assessment information well to guide future planning, but a few teachers do not consistently record their assessments on their daily planning sheets. As a consequence, a few sessions are not as challenging as they could be. The information gained from assessment is not well used by teachers to identify how individual pupils learn and therefore plan the best way to teach them.

23. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, identifying what they need to do next, and setting group targets in English and mathematics. However, many pupils cannot read these comments due to their weak literacy skills and are not therefore taking responsibility for their own learning.

THE CURRICULUM

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils, including those in the Nursery and Reception classes. Opportunities for enrichment are good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum and enhance pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is not planned to encourage pupils to become active in their own learning.
- The school provides well for all pupils.
- A good ratio of well-experienced teachers supports pupils' learning well.
- The resources, space and time allotted for ICT are inadequate.

Commentary

24. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is well planned and shows clear progression for pupils in terms of their skills, knowledge and understanding through all the year groups. However, the teaching of ICT in short sessions does not promote good achievement. Planning ensures that pupils develop some independence so that they learn to follow routines and to look after equipment and themselves. However, it does not plan beyond this by promoting more independence, with pupils becoming responsible for the quality and quantity of their work. This limits their achievement. Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich pupils' learning.

25. The school strives hard to ensure all pupils have equal access to the curriculum and the opportunity to achieve their best. The school has identified the need to focus on particular groups of pupils, such as the more able pupils, those with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language. The school has demonstrated good flexibility in its planning and

organisation in order to address their needs, especially in the intervention programmes in reading and writing aimed largely at less able pupils. In addition, pupils who are gifted and talented in some aspect of their learning have been identified. However, curriculum planning does not yet meet their needs consistently.

26. Provision for PSHE is very good and is supported by well-structured programmes that cover pupils' health, welfare and safety. There is a good range of out of class activities. Although there are not many after school clubs for pupils to participate in, there are a few at lunchtimes. However, the school does provide a very good range of visits and visitors to the school. This adds positively to pupils' learning. The priority given to these activities by the school reflects the school's aims of attempting to broaden the pupils' horizons and compensate for the deprivation that some pupils experience at home.

27. Following a period of instability in the staffing, the school has been successful in gathering a strong, experienced team of teachers who are well supported by knowledgeable classroom assistants. This provides a good ratio of adults to pupils, consistent teaching and very good levels of care and supervision.

28. Resources in many areas of learning and subjects are good. The resources for ICT are sufficient to provide for the basic curriculum but there are insufficient of them to drive up standards.

29. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory and provides well for the teaching of most areas of learning and subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Internal accommodation is attractive and well kept thus making it appealing so that pupils want to come to school and learn. Although there are plans to improve the teaching space for ICT, it is currently limited and this restricts pupils' use of the equipment and their independence. Children in the Nursery have ample secure space that they constantly use. However, children in the Reception classes have no dedicated outdoor space, reducing the opportunities for independent outdoor play.

Care, guidance and support

The school looks after the welfare, health and safety of all its pupils **very well**, so that they feel safe in school. All pupils receive good support, advice and guidance throughout their time at the school. The school seeks and listens to their views to a satisfactory degree.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are very well cared for and feel safe in school.
- Pupils develop secure, trusting relationships with teachers and other adults.
- The school's systems for inducting pupils are good.
- The school provides all pupils with good support and guidance.
- The school helps children to settle quickly when they start.

Commentary

30. This is a very caring school where the safety and wellbeing of pupils has a very high priority. Teachers and other staff make sure that pupils know how to behave sensibly and safely in lessons and around the school. There are very clear procedures in place for monitoring health and safety, and for first aid so that pupils work in a safe environment. The procedures in place for child protection comply fully with requirements. Full records are kept of incidents of unacceptable behaviour and appropriate support is provided. Parents speak very highly of the care provided.

31. Pupils benefit from very strong relationships with teachers and other staff. Pupils feel safe in school because they are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and offer help when needed. They are willing to share problems or worries because they trust adults to help. This helps to ensure that pupils concentrate on their learning.

32. The school monitors pupils' personal development very well so that support and guidance are securely based on very good knowledge of the individual. Pupils whose behaviour is a cause for concern benefit from individual targets and their progress is carefully monitored. Teachers monitor achievement well so that appropriate help is given. Pupils with learning difficulties have well-focused individual education plans that help them make good progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported as they learn English. The school involves outside agencies well so that pupils receive expert additional help when needed. Teachers provide good advice and support for learning in lessons but pupils are not always sufficiently aware of how to improve their work through independent efforts. Pupils are not involved often enough in monitoring their own progress.

33. The involvement of pupils in the life of the school is satisfactory. Pupils from across the school are proud to be members of the well-led and organised school council. The council often discusses issues that are relevant to the school and their views are regularly fed back to their classes. However, in many lessons, through a lack of questioning and independence, pupils' ideas and views are not always sought.

34. The induction programme is good and helps children to settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes, and happily into school life. When children start in the Nursery, they and their parents have the chance to visit. Parents are very well informed about the school's expectations so that they can help their children settle in. A significant number of pupils join the school at other times and their induction is equally well orchestrated. They have a 'buddy' to show them the ropes and befriend them. Their academic ability is assessed quickly so that any additional help that may be needed can be provided as soon as possible. This helps them to do their best.

Partnership with parents, other schools, and the community

The school fosters **good** partnerships with parents, the local community and with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Parents are very happy with all aspects of the school's work.
- Parents are provided with a very good range of information about the school and their children's work and progress.
- The school works hard to enable parents to support children's learning.
- Links with the community and other schools make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement and to their wellbeing.
- A few parents are not supportive of the school's efforts.

Commentary

35. Parents hold the school in very high esteem. Those parents who made their views known to the inspection team are very satisfied with all aspects of the work of the school.

36. The school ensures that parents are very well informed about all aspects of its life. Parents are very appreciative, and this encourages them to become involved in their children's education.

37. The school is committed to enabling all parents to help their children learn. Not all parents share this commitment, but the school is working hard and with good success to involve more of them. There are numerous good approaches that the school takes to ensure this. The school frequently holds curriculum workshops that help parents understand how to support their children, for example in reading. All parents regularly receive newsletters telling them what their children are learning. The homework diary is used well both by teachers and by parents as a means of communication. Annual reports are of a very good standard overall but occasionally contain over-formal language and jargon that may not be accessible to all parents.

38. Parents of children with learning difficulties are well informed and involved at all stages so they are both knowledgeable and supportive of their children's needs and learning. The active involvement of parents makes a significant contribution to the good progress which pupils make.

39. Links with the community make a positive contribution to pupils' achievement by providing a range of interesting experiences, such as an African drumming workshop and visits from the police and ambulance service, which enhance their learning. Theatre groups come into school regularly, providing pupils with rich cultural experiences. The school also benefits from some sponsorship, for example to provide the butterfly garden and, soon, outdoors seating. This offers pupils a wider range of experiences than the school budget can provide. The school works closely with the junior school to which almost all pupils transfer, so that the move is accomplished smoothly. The school is part of the recently formed Whitley Excellence Cluster but it is too early for the impact of this to be assessed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good** and show many strengths. The governance of the school is **good**. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is **good** and the management of the school is **effective**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher and staff have a clear vision, sense of purpose and high aspirations.
- Strategic planning is detailed, well thought out and reflects the school's ambitions and goals.
- Systems to monitor, analyse, and evaluate the school's effectiveness are very good.
- Governance of the school is good.
- The majority of subjects are effectively led and managed.

Commentary

40. The headteacher provides a strong strategic lead to the work of the school and is supported by an effective senior management team, especially the deputy head. Along with her staff, the headteacher has high aspirations for the pupils' academic progress and their personal development. She has maintained a clear vision for the direction of the school and has ensured that very effective management systems are focused on raising standards and on ensuring that pupils are able to achieve as well as they can. A particular strength is the way in which the headteacher and senior management team have established an ethos that encourages all pupils, irrespective of ethnicity, linguistic background, gender, or ability, to behave very well, care for each other and achieve well. All of its policies and procedures are effective in helping the school achieve this. The quality of the leadership and management of the school has been maintained since the last inspection.

41. Staff work together well and the headteacher and senior management team provide a strong lead on subjects such as mathematics and literacy. The deputy head has been instrumental in promoting many of the intervention strategies that have done much to raise achievement. Good strategies aimed at overcoming recent staff recruitment difficulties have resulted in the school now having a more stable and experienced staff. Staff teams are effectively led and all staff share a corporate responsibility for pupils' learning that has resulted in consistency in the quality of teaching. The headteacher promotes the development of staff well and effectively marshals the different knowledge, skills and expertise the staff bring to the school.

42. The school development plan is very good and provides a clear and detailed direction to the work of the school. The effective system for monitoring and supporting staff and the staff development arrangements are closely linked to taking forward the actions in the plan, as is the targeting of finance. The headteacher and senior management team are firmly focused on improving what the school does and on evaluation of the school and its performance. The very good monitoring of teaching combined with good professional support ensures that teaching is consistently good and often very good. The school analyses the data on pupils' performance in

detail, looking at different groups where appropriate to make sure that all pupils achieve well. This enables the school to identify with clarity the barriers it faces in raising achievement, such as parental aspirations and pupil's language skills, and to develop the most appropriate approaches to overcome them.

43. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties are good. Effective systems are in place to ensure that these pupils are identified early on and appropriate action is taken to meet their needs. Co-ordinators have a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects even though some are relatively new to the school. This is because of the very good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating subjects and the quality of teaching. New staff quickly gain a detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses in their subject and then begin to work on areas that have been identified for improvement.

44. The school uses its available resources well to further its educational aims. The headteacher and governors evaluate expenditure closely with a focus on improving provision for all pupils and on ensuring best value for money in its spending. Financial systems are effective and efficient. Savings accrued by the school in the past from having young staff have been wisely spent on employing more teaching assistants, valuable members of staff who are proving their worth.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	472,029.00
Total expenditure	491,015.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,888.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	37,558.00
Balance carried forward to the next	20,268.00

45. Governors play an effective role, know the school well and understand the barriers faced by the school in seeking to raise achievement. They fulfil their statutory duties. They come into school on a regular basis to meet staff and to observe lessons. Governors know the strengths of the school and what is being done to raise standards. They are closely involved in strategic planning and challenge the headteacher on issues such as expenditure and any proposed developments that may have potential benefits for the pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

46. The **good provision** for the **Nursery and Reception classes** has been maintained since the last inspection. All children, irrespective of their ability, gender, linguistic background or ethnicity **achieve well** because the teaching is good, and the curriculum is appropriately planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities that are well matched to their needs. There are 37 children in the Reception classes, 17 of whom joined Reception as 'Rising fives' in January of this year. There are a further 52 children in the Nursery who attend either in the morning or afternoon. They start school the term after their third birthday. Overall, attainment on entry is below that expected for their age, with language development and personal development being the two weakest areas.

47. There is a good ratio of adults to children, ensuring their needs are well met and they are very well supervised. Children are inducted well into the Nursery, and parents are pleased with this. Children's progress is carefully monitored across the Foundation Stage. The indoor accommodation is good, although it is more limited outside. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good. The co-ordinator is a very good practitioner and offers a good role model for others. She has used the school's well-established management systems to good effect. They have helped her to build a cohesive team of adults and to become well aware of the quality of education being provided and the barriers to raising achievement that need to be overcome.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Trusting, warm relationships result in a pleasant place to learn, and confident, happy children.
- Well-established routines and good models of behaviour promote an orderly community.

Commentary

48. Due to their knowledge of the children and acts of kindness, all adults establish warm and trusting relationships. The good teamwork amongst the adults, and the good role models that they provide make clear the school's high expectations. As a result, children are attentive and co-operative. They often take turns in games. Their behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to school and Nursery staff make sure that their daily routines are well established. Children settle quickly and happily into school life, a feature confirmed by parents. Good teaching builds swiftly on successful relationships and teaches the children to be responsible and independent. As a result, when requested, they tidy and put away equipment, and both boys and girls choose their own activity. Due to good teaching, all children achieve well in this area and the majority are likely to meet the expected level at the end of Reception.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children's language development is given a high priority.
- There is good provision for the development of reading and writing skills.
- Children achieve well because of good teaching.
- The teaching of phonics is not as good as it could be.

Commentary

49. The school correctly views children's weak language skills as a barrier to raising achievement. Many lessons are therefore linked well to the planned programme that leads to the accepted level for five-year-olds in communication, language, and literacy.

50. Teachers develop children's listening skills well as a result of the many opportunities children are given to talk and listen. Adults insist that children are attentive and ensure that their teaching is lively and the topics are interesting so that children want to listen. Adults regularly participate in meaningful conversation with them and encourage them to speak clearly and in full sentences. Staff continually extend children's vocabulary by focusing on subject specific language in other areas of learning. For example, when wrapping up parcels to post in the Nursery or constructing a post box in the Reception, the adults continually chatted to the children so that they had to think and choose the appropriate words to explain their choices. Very good relationships mean that children achieve well. Many are hesitant in the Nursery, but, by the time they are in Reception, children have the confidence to talk, and know that all adults are genuinely interested. Children in Reception listen well and will often converse when this is promoted, but do not participate in lengthy negotiations, discussions or explanations with other children.

51. There is a good emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children read and write. Children are regularly taught the sounds that letters make and these sounds are often reinforced during the day. In Reception, such sessions are lively affairs with a good range of resources and games to reinforce initial sounds. However, the needs of children of different abilities are not well catered for and all children cover the same initial sounds. This slows the learning of a few children. Many children in Reception do not know all of their initial sounds and few have a firm knowledge of final sounds.

52. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children's reading and writing are well developed. Because of the availability of books and the numerous stories read to them most children handle books well. They are frequently encouraged to 'read', for example, when children enter Nursery at the beginning of each session. Throughout the Foundation Stage, teachers identify key sounds, words, and pictures so that children understand the elements such as the characters and the order of the story. Children are regularly heard read in the Reception classes. Their progress is carefully monitored and the next step in their learning clearly identified. Most children in the Reception classes use the pictures to tell a story, although a few more able ones recognise key words. Children take books home on a regular basis.

53. Children are given regular opportunities to experiment with making marks and writing. Fortnightly themes, such as 'Messages', promote awareness in children that writing can be used for different purposes. Under good guidance, children in Nursery sit correctly at the writing table and under supervision hold a pencil well, although most can only trace the letters of their names. Older children in Reception write more extensively and clearly, with several of them being able to write, or dictate, sentences. However, a few still have difficulties forming their letters correctly and do not have good pencil control.

54. Because of good teaching throughout the Foundation Stage children achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry, but due to their low starting point in this area of their development it is unlikely that many will achieve the expected level by the time they start Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well and sometimes very well because of lively teaching.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support both individuals and groups.

Commentary

55. The quality of teaching is good and children achieve well. Under the Nursery teacher's sensitive direction children willingly played a game where they counted and matched numbers to labels. Teachers plan activities that cover the full range of mathematical development. Where teaching was very good in Reception, children made good gains in their understanding of pairs because of the range of games, songs and activities that they undertook. Children even made two jam sandwiches each for a teddy bears' picnic. All this developed a sense of fun and enjoyment that captured their interest and improved their learning. Examination of pupils' work shows that work is often planned for children of different abilities. Many pupils in Reception can combine and order numbers, some as high as ten. Many other activities during the day, whether playing in the sand area, having a tea party for the teddy bears or making a letter box, were used well to reinforce mathematical understanding and vocabulary. The good ratio of adults to children, and the well-briefed and experienced teaching assistants ensured that these activities were effective in developing the mathematical understanding of all children, including those with learning difficulties. Teachers focus well on introducing the correct mathematical vocabulary and through good questioning and persistence, encourage children to use the correct words. This was well done in the Nursery, where a child learning English as an additional language counted to five and found the number five. Given these indications, and because of this consistently good and enthusiastic teaching, it is probable that many children will meet the expectations in this area of learning by the start of Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum is well planned to make meaningful links between different areas of learning.
- Good teaching by all adults enhances children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) software is not always challenging.

Commentary

56. Very focused and well-planned teaching opportunities provide a good range of opportunities to extend children's understanding of the wider world. Activities are often based on real experiences that require children to use their language and mathematical skills. Good use of support staff ensures that all children are fully included in all aspects of their learning. In one lesson, the teacher's own enthusiasm so excited the children that they were eager to answer questions and start their work. The teacher and the teaching assistant worked intensively with two groups of Reception children, talking about letters, the post office, and the world around them. Because of very good questioning that encouraged children to express their ideas and explain their choices, they made good gains in their learning. Children have regular use of the computer. They have relevant, but not always challenging computer programs, but the children develop their skills and confidence well because of good adult support from parents and teaching assistants. Whereas many children in Nursery lack mouse control, those in Reception use the mouse confidently, although many only recognise a few of the keys on the keyboard. Due to good teaching many children are likely to meet the expected outcomes in this area of learning by the end of Reception; they achieve well. No teaching of religious education was observed in the Reception classes.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Due to careful instruction and the best use that is made of facilities, children's learning is promoted well.
- On occasion, in short sessions, children are not physically active enough.
- There is limited outdoor space in which children can play and develop.

Commentary

57. Overall the quality of teaching is good. There are well-planned and organised times and opportunities for children to improve their physical skills. There are various learning areas that encourage them to use a good range of tools and materials. Good adult support provides guidance so that children achieve well. For example, adults demonstrate how to use scissors, hold a paintbrush and decide on shapes and colours. However, the fine manipulative skills of many children are weak.

58. When in the hall, teachers conduct lessons very safely and children are aware of their own space, and that of others. Staff instruct children well so that they were seen to make good gains in learning, as they did in Nursery when learning to catch and throw a beanbag. However, there was little physical exertion in the lessons and the sessions are too short for a range of more expressive activities to be developed.

59. Although there are plans for its development, the outdoor space for children is limited and it lacks equipment and a cover. Teachers make reasonable use of the outside area so that children have the experience of being outside, but due to its limitations they do not have continuous use of an outdoor space.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children enjoy a wide range of well-planned experiences.
- Children's singing is good.
- Spacious, well-equipped classrooms promote children's development well.

Commentary

60. A range of well-planned art and design activities improves children's learning. Children use a wide range of materials, including pencils, crayons, paints, modelling materials, beads and counters. When making a post box in Reception, the class teacher, through her questioning, developed pupils' designing and making skills well. However, there was a lack of exploration and investigation of materials. Children use tools safely and can offer reasonable suggestions and explanations for their choices.

61. The teaching of singing at the school is particularly good, and the children in Reception benefit greatly from attending sessions in which the whole school sings together. Children were able to join in favourite songs and follow rhythms. In the Nursery they are also given regular opportunities to learn simple songs and chants, many of which support their learning in other areas of their development.

62. Each classroom has a well-equipped corner that encourages imaginative play. During the inspection a post office became a focus where children played happily, developing their imagination as well as their literacy and numeracy skills. Furthermore, the outside area in the Nursery is used well for games such as treasure hunts. Due to the good teaching, and good use of facilities, many children are likely to achieve the expected outcomes in this area of learning by the time they start Year 1. Pupils' achievements are better than those expected.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in reading, writing and speaking are below the expected level.
- Pupils achieve well in listening, reading, and writing because of good teaching in the literacy hour.
- Higher standards are not being attained because pupils are not being encouraged to be responsible for their own work.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject have done much to raise standards.
- A few of the additional literacy programmes aimed at raising achievement are not well focused.

63. When compared with schools nationally, standards in the 2003 national tests in reading and writing are well below average, and below average when compared with similar schools. The high rate of pupil mobility and a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties have a significant and negative impact on the school's reported standards. Pupils enter Nursery with language skills below the expected level. The school's focus on improving the lower levels of attainment in reading and writing is resulting in good achievement. The majority of pupils who remain at the school from Nursery to the end of Year 2 achieve average or above-average standards when compared with similar schools. Irrespective of ability, gender, ethnicity or linguistic background, all pupils achieve equally well because of good teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the quality of teaching they receive from the teachers and support staff, as well as many of the intervention programmes aimed at improving their reading and writing.

64. By the end of Year 2, and across the school, standards in speaking are below the expected level and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Their restricted vocabulary and lack of fluency limit many pupils, since their understanding and ability to communicate effectively are reduced. This weakness in spoken language hinders their development in reading and writing. In a few lessons teachers do encourage pupils to be articulate and answer in complete sentences, but this is not consistent across the school. The school has acknowledged the weaknesses in pupils' spoken language and has introduced short teaching sessions aimed at improving these basic skills. However, they are not sharply focused and do not use a wide range of activities. Standards of listening are in line with those expected and pupils achieve well because they enjoy good teaching. Pupils listen attentively, remember what has been said, and are able to answer questions. They are rarely encouraged to be active listeners and speakers.

65. Standards in reading in Year 2 are below the expected level. Lesson observation and planning show that the school teaches a range of reading skills and school records demonstrate that pupils have the confidence to use a wide range of strategies, and this allows them to read more challenging books. However, a few still lack these skills and confidence. Pupils achieve well because there is a structured reading programme, pupils read regularly in school and are encouraged to take their reading and library books home daily. There are also sharply focused and well-planned reading intervention programmes taken by experienced and well-trained teaching assistants. However, short teaching sessions to improve pupils' phonics knowledge are not as successful. The teaching within these sessions does not include a range of strategies that reflect how different pupils learn or take into consideration pupils' prior attainment. Pupils learn satisfactorily, but some of them could probably progress more quickly.

66. Attainment in writing in Year 2 is below that expected. Pupils achieve well in writing because staff have very good assessment data about individual pupils. In addition, they have worked hard on improving spelling, and teaching in the literacy hour is good. Assessment data is used

effectively to identify pupils who would benefit from specific support, such as the spelling intervention programme or the Year 2 higher attainers programme. Careful evaluation of these support programmes by the school, and scrutiny of the records during inspection indicate that they are instrumental in raising standards, especially those of low attaining pupils. However, the presentation of pupils' work is often unsatisfactory and does not support the development of pupils' literacy skills.

67. Teaching in the literacy hour is good. Teachers plan, organise and structure their lessons effectively, ensure the pupils understand what they are learning about and work hard to motivate them. Teachers explain well and give clear instructions. Although the planning takes into consideration the needs of pupils of different abilities, there is on occasion a lack of challenge for more able pupils. The lessons in which pupils were fully engaged and made significant progress were those in which the teachers used a wide range of strategies to motivate and interest them. Learning was reinforced using a range of senses, and questions and conversation were encouraged. Teachers have very high expectations of pupil behaviour. Where this dominates the lesson, pupils are dependent on the teacher and are not involved in their own learning. They lack the confidence to ask questions, to use their initiative or learn from their mistakes, thus hampering their progress in developing literacy skills.

68. Due to a lack of resources and time, insufficient use is made of ICT to improve pupils' literacy skills.

69. The marking of work is good and pupils also have individual targets. However, the majority of them cannot read the comments or targets. They do not, therefore know how to improve or take part in their own learning.

70. The subject leader, working alongside the deputy head, provides very good leadership, creates effective teams, and provides support for staff. They understand the subject very well and in their comprehensive action plan have established a wide range of strategies to raise achievement. The management of the subject is very good. Their monitoring systems are thorough and effective at improving attainment and the quality of teaching. The quality provision noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. In attempting to overcome the barrier to raising achievement caused by weak literacy skills, teachers carefully plan a wide range of opportunities for pupils to use the skills that they learn in English. For example, in Year 2, pupils wrote about Florence Nightingale in history and their investigations into loud sounds in science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Due to good teaching most pupils achieve well.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to carry out problem solving and investigative work, especially for higher attaining pupils.
- Mathematics is not used enough in other subjects.
- The subject is well led.
- Computers are not used enough to support learning.

Commentary

72. The school has maintained its good provision for the subject since the last inspection. Because of this, from a low base, standards have been rising faster than the national trend. Due to the school's efforts to raise standards, far fewer pupils are achieving the lowest grades. When compared to schools nationally, standards in the national tests at the end of 2003 were well below average, and average when compared to similar schools. The school has high levels of mobility and a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. This adversely affects the school's reported standards. Those pupils who have remained at the school since the start of Nursery attained standards close to the national average and above those of similar schools, reflecting their good achievement. Taken as an average over the past three years, boys have performed slightly better than girls, although this was not evident during the inspection. Pupils achieve well, irrespective of ability, ethnic or linguistic background. Those pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because of the good provision that meets their needs well.

73. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good, and sometimes very good. The good teaching and support from the teaching assistants helps pupils with learning difficulties achieve well and gain confidence in the subject. This is helping to raise standards. Many pupils in Year 2 are currently working close to the expected level in areas such as number, estimation, measuring and the identification of different shapes, although few pupils attain Level 3. In relation to their prior attainment pupils have achieved well.

74. Teachers are best at providing well-paced and challenging starts to lessons, which motivate and include all the pupils, capture their attention and prepare them for what they have to do in the rest of the lesson; they are well supported in this by teaching assistants. Pupils therefore build well upon their prior knowledge. Because of good subject knowledge, teachers are good at explaining new concepts and reinforcing the use of the correct mathematical vocabulary. This helps all pupils to achieve well. Teachers also make best use of the end of the lessons to ensure that pupils have learnt the main points, to correct any misunderstandings and to provide further teaching. Teachers are good at asking challenging questions to pupils of different abilities but do not always encourage them to provide the fullest possible answer or ask questions themselves. Because of this, they are not fully involved in their own learning.

75. Pupils apply themselves well to the start and the end of the lesson, but on a few occasions where pupils have to work on their own or with a group that is not directly led by an adult, they sometimes lack concentration and do not achieve as well as they could. This is because pupils find it difficult to tackle problems on their own and do not have the skills to work and learn independently, as there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to carry out problem solving and investigative activities. Generally, computers are not used enough to support learning in the subject, and especially in enabling them to attain the higher levels.

76. Assessment is very effective and is used well to quickly identify areas for improvement in provision and in pupil attainment. Marking is thorough and appropriate, and short-term targets are set for pupils. However, pupils find it difficult to read these and the written comments, and therefore find it difficult to know how to improve.

77. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator leads termly mathematics conferences for staff at the school and although new to the school has already led training sessions. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and the actions needed to make further improvements.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Not enough use is made of mathematics in other subjects. Although links to mathematics are outlined in the overall plan for the different subjects, lesson plans do not always highlight areas where it would be possible to promote the use of pupils' mathematical knowledge, skills, and understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching.
- Pupils' weak literacy and oracy skills hinder achievement.
- There is a good coverage of all aspects of the science National Curriculum.
- Pupils are not fully involved in every aspect of their learning.
- Too little use is made of computers.

Commentary

79. In the national tests in 2003 results were below the national average but average when compared to pupils in similar schools. The weakest aspect of their learning was in life processes and living things. To improve pupil achievement in this area additional resources have been purchased. During the course of this year standards have improved and are close to the expected level. Pupils' weak literacy and oracy skills, however, still hinder their achievement. No differences were observed between the achievement of boys and girls, and they all achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and those from different ethnic or linguistic backgrounds.

80. The teaching of science is good and pupils make good gains in their knowledge, understanding, and skills. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, their planning is focused, and their instructions and explanations are clear. Because of this, pupils learn well, showing interest in their work and thinking about which materials would make the best waterproof coat for '*Little Red Riding Hood*'. In doing so they have a reasonable understanding of why some materials are chosen for specific uses because of their simple properties. There are regular opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments, and in those observed during the inspection pupils made sensible predictions as to which material would or would not be waterproof, and a few more of the articulate pupils could give their reasons. Others struggled with finding the correct scientific words and making sentences with them, even though there is a good emphasis on the correct use of specific vocabulary. Many pupils have a secure idea of what a fair test is, although they have difficulty in identifying which features have to stay the same or change. Pupils enjoyed undertaking the experiment but had little responsibility for choosing the equipment or preparing the experiment. Although teaching assistants interact well with pupils, guiding and questioning, their presence means that pupils are too reliant on their guidance and do not learn from each other or their own mistakes. This limits the opportunities for them to become independent. Pupils' ability to record their own findings is hindered by their weak literacy skills and by having too few opportunities to undertake this task. Pupils are not therefore fully involved in all aspects of their learning and do not always work independently.

81. It is too soon to judge the quality of leadership of the new co-ordinator, appointed in September 2003, but her management of the subject is good. She has used the school's robust systems well to monitor the quality of education it provides and has formed clear ideas about further improvements. The curriculum is well planned, with some good links with literacy and design and technology. Links with mathematics are, however, limited and those with ICT negligible. Improvements since the last inspection in the procedures to assess pupils and monitor their progress have been good. Teachers have a clear picture of pupils' attainment, but do not always annotate or change their planning in the light of what pupils know. Pupils' work is thoroughly marked but due to their weak literacy skills a few pupils cannot always read what has been written.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils underachieve because of a lack of teaching time and insufficient resources.
- Standards are below those expected.
- Computers are not used enough in other subjects.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

82. Standards have fallen since the last inspection. Standards in Year 2 are below those expected and throughout the school pupils have limited knowledge and skills in the subject. They do, however, have an appropriate awareness of ICT around them and how it is used. Pupils do use ICT, for example tape recorders, in other subjects, but their achievement is unsatisfactory due to insufficient opportunities to use computers on a regular basis. Although teaching in the small number of short lessons seen was satisfactory, pupils in these lessons showed a lack of confidence and limited keyboard skills. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and use computers with confidence. During the lessons, they use questioning well and maintain a calm atmosphere in which the pupils can make the most of the short time they have to work on the computers. Very good management of behaviour keeps pupils concentrating and applying themselves to their work. Assessments are consistently conducted across the school. This is a good improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when assessment procedures were not used consistently across the school.

83. The quality of teaching in the short lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. However, because there are too few computers in school and the follow-up work during the week in the classroom with their teacher or teaching assistant is too short, pupils do not have enough opportunities to gain confidence, practise new skills and make progress. A few older pupils know how to load, save and print their work and some good work has been produced in a few other subjects. This demonstrates that they can use paint programs to good effect. However, a lack of computers limits their opportunities to support learning through planning, modelling, undertaking independent research, or control.

84. The subject leader has led and managed the subject well since joining the school last term. The very good systems for monitoring and evaluating subjects throughout the school have helped the co-ordinator to become quickly acquainted with the difficulties being faced in ICT. There is a three-year plan to increase the amount of computers in the school and address the main reason for pupils' underachievement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. Information and communication technology (ICT) in a broad sense is used across the curriculum, for example digital cameras, programmable floor robots and tape recorders, but the use of computers is unsatisfactory. They are, on occasion, used well, for example in art, but during the inspection very little use of ICT in other subjects was noted. There is an insufficient range of software to support learning effectively in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

86. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, but as no lessons were observed it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. Judging from an analysis of work in both subjects, pupils achieve well, and this results in standards of work across the school that are in line with national expectations. This maintains the standards achieved at the last inspection. Pupils

present their work carefully and illustrate it well, although their low attainment in literacy limits the quality of their written work. Much of the work is linked and made relevant to the pupils through themes, such as 'Journeys'. Both subjects are well supported by a range of visits and visitors, such as the popular visit by the farm.

87. Subject leaders have designed detailed schemes of work that are successfully interesting the pupils, and individual pupil records of achievement are kept. The monitoring of the subjects is in place and provides useful information that is used to improve the provision for the subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The teaching of religious education is good.
- Pupils show respect and a keen interest in learning about religious doctrine.
- The curriculum planning is good.
- The pupils' low literacy and oracy skills restrict their learning in religious education.
- The lack of the use of computers in religious education limits the opportunities to extend the pupils' learning.

Commentary

88. Overall, the quality of teaching and curriculum planning is good. The curriculum is linked to bringing meaning to pupils' everyday lives and also to make links with their PSHE and collective worship. This results in them achieving well. The curriculum content is carefully planned to interest pupils and to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. From work seen during lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work the standards of attainment are in line with expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. This remains the same as the standards recorded at the time of the last inspection.

89. In the lessons observed, pupils showed that they had understood their previous learning and talked about it with interest and enthusiasm. They received good support from the teachers in encouraging them to find words to express their ideas, as their low oracy and literacy skills limit their potential learning. In Year 2, pupils were encouraged to ask very challenging questions of the teacher about doctrine relating to the Ten Commandments. This developed into a lively discussion to formulate their own commandments and made their learning very meaningful to them. In this lesson pupils were encouraged to be independent and decide for themselves how to approach the work. Pupils with learning difficulties were particularly well supported by the classroom assistant, who questioned and encouraged them to produce sensitive and thoughtful work. All the pupils worked hard and showed interest in, and respect for, different religions and beliefs, thus adding well to their personal development.

90. Pupils' progress is systematically recorded in their records of achievement, but there is little evidence to suggest that this is used to influence lesson planning.

91. The leadership provided by the new subject leader is satisfactory. Supported by the school's good systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, she is developing her understanding of the standards and provision in the school, and is formulating a clear vision for the future development of the subject in order to raise standards of achievement. Her work in the management of the subject is good. She has already started to monitor and evaluate the provision and the quality of pupils' work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

92. It was only possible to see one lesson in each of the following subjects: art and design, and design and technology. It is therefore not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors had discussions with co-ordinators, and spoke to pupils about their work, and examined work samples. As no teaching of **physical education** was observed, **no judgements can be made**.

93. The work planned in **art and design** is varied and interesting. There has been an improvement since the time of the last inspection. There are now good links with ICT. Pupils used their computing skills to create pictures in the style of Mondrian and also took digital photographs of themselves. Art appreciation now has a higher priority and pupils in Year 2 can discuss the different styles of Mondrian and Pollock and identify which they prefer. Judging from work on display, by the end of Year 2 pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment, and their skill in painting and choice of colours is much improved. Good attention to the development of pupils' imagination was a feature of the one lesson observed. Pupils had to visualise how they would distort a photograph by cutting. Pupils achieved satisfactorily because there were good resources and they had the skill to use scissors accurately.

94. In **design and technology** the analysis of pupils' work shows that they are gaining experience of a range of material and techniques and developing the expected subject skills through designing and making a variety of products. Pupils in Year 1 designed, made and evaluated their own moving pictures, and pupils in Year 2 went through a similar process to make glove puppets. The photographic evidence of these demonstrated an appropriate level of skill in sewing and evaluating their own work. However, their weak literacy skills hindered them in clearly writing their views. In the one lesson observed pupils worked fast because of the lively pace that the teacher set. Her quick questioning, and high expectations of hard and fast work so motivated the pupils that they did not want to leave their designs to move on to the next activity. There are good links with some other subjects, such as science, but the use of computers is limited.

95. In both these subjects **assessment** is satisfactory. This is an improvement upon the last inspection when it was noted there were no consistent means of monitoring pupils' attainment. Pupils' efforts are regularly assessed. Records are updated termly or half-termly and these are discussed at year group meetings so that planning can be revised and support offered to those who may be underachieving. It is too soon to judge the **leadership** of art and design and design and technology, as the co-ordinator is new to her posts. The management of all these subjects is good. The co-ordinator uses the school's deeply embedded systems to monitor and evaluate both subjects, so she has a good insight into the quality of provision.

Music

The provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The passion, knowledge, and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator.

Commentary

96. The two music sessions seen during the inspection were both taken by the music co-ordinator. Her subject expertise is used well to help pupils move forward. She takes the weekly singing assembly. She is passionate about singing and this is reflected in how she inspires the pupils. She has skilfully taught them how to sing in tune, with the correct posture and breathing. Pupils know a range of songs from memory and can perform them in two and four part rounds. The singing session observed was an uplifting experience that added positively to pupils' spiritual development. Some pupils sang joyfully while others beat the rhythm with a collection of musical instruments. All of them were so enthusiastic that they were visibly itching to stand up and move with the music. A similar level of vibrancy and achievement was observed in a lesson that the co-ordinator taught her own Year 1 class. Pupils achieve well in music and standards are above those

expected; in singing they are well above and their achievement is very good. Music has a high profile in the school. There is a good range of musical equipment to support pupils' learning. Concerts, performances, and the making of their own CD contribute very well to pupils' overall musical experience. This positive picture has been maintained since the last inspection. Although ICT in the form of tape recorders is used in lessons, the use of computers is rarely identified in teachers' planning, and resources in this area are limited. However, the leadership of music is very good. The co-ordinator has the ability to inspire others and has a very clear vision of the importance of music for pupils of this age. Good use is also made of the school's management systems.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

97. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements can be made about overall provision. The school perceives this to be a fundamental part of its work and has developed close curricular links with religious education and collective worship. Pupils' social education permeates well many aspects of school life. The detailed policies and schemes of work are good and include work on diet, health, sex and relationships, drugs, and personal safety. The school organises a wide range of enrichment activities to help pupils lead a safe and healthy life, such as the Healthy Week, in which a local chef talks to the pupils about a particular type of food. Because of all these factors pupils achieve well and standards are in line with those expected.

98. The programme of work for PSHE supports pupils in learning from the start of Nursery to the end of Year 2. All pupils are encouraged to look after and respect themselves, others and their property. Children in Nursery and older pupils in Years 1 and 2 are expected to make choices and look after their own belongings. However, the school programme of work does not clearly identify how pupils are to build upon the independence that the school has already developed in them, so that they can become more successful learners.

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	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
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	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).