

INSPECTION REPORT

**GLEBE INFANT SCHOOL
AND UNIT FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED**

Rayleigh

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114889

Headteacher: Mrs M Dimmock

Lead inspector: Kevin Hodge

Dates of inspection: 9th – 11th February 2004

Inspection number: 256215

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	192
School address:	Creswick Avenue Rayleigh
Postcode:	SS6 9HG
Telephone number:	01268 785414
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Rampley
Date of previous inspection:	19 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated a short distance from the town centre of Rayleigh. It has 192 pupils, which is smaller than the average infant school. A hearing impaired unit is based within the school and is managed by the governing body and headteacher. There are currently 18 pupils registered within the unit. The pupils have a variety of provision including specialist teaching within the unit, visiting specialists, and supported teaching within the main school classes.

The socio-economic background of the pupils is mixed and pupils enter the Nursery with a variety of attainment levels. Both are broadly average overall. The number of pupils who arrive or transfer from the school other than at the normal times is above average. Nearly 13 per cent of pupils have free school meals, is below the national average. There are approximately 14 per cent of pupils with special educational needs. Although this is below average, over half of the pupils identified have statements of special educational needs related to hearing impairment. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language.

The school has a number of nationally recognised awards. These include 'Investors in People' status, Basic skills Quality Mark, Healthy schools advanced award and achievement recognition for two years running from the Department for Education and Skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	English, information and communication technology, history and geography, English as an additional language.
9736	John Brasier	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
31319	Dot Hunter	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage, mathematics, art and design, design and technology and physical education.
30544	Gill Battarbee	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science, music, religious education, special educational needs.
23300	Lily Evans	<i>Team inspector</i>	Hearing impaired unit.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Glebe Infant school provides a **good** standard of education and good value for money. The quality of care for pupils is high, and the way it involves pupils and parents in the life of the school is very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been good in a number of subjects and aspects. The pupils reach the expected standards in all subject areas and they achieve well overall.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are well behaved.
- The headteacher, supported by an able deputy, leads the school with passion and purpose.
- The standard of pupils' writing, speaking and information and communication technology (ICT) is better than expected.
- Attendance is lower than the national average.
- The work involving the pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good.
- The school and class councils work well.
- The work of the hearing impaired unit is good.
- There are very good links with parents.
- Although good overall, teaching is consistently better in some classes than in others.
- The revision to curriculum planning, although innovative, is not yet fully effective in some subject areas.
- The pupils achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Coordination of subjects is sometimes inconsistent.

Several issues were noted in the last inspection. Standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT have improved. The curriculum is satisfactory, but some changes introduced this year are in a trial stage and not yet fully developed in some subjects. Monitoring of teaching is regularly carried out, and the quality of teaching is good overall. The special educational needs provision has improved and is very good. Overall, the school has made good improvement in most areas.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils reach at least **satisfactory standards** in all subjects and areas of learning throughout the school. In some areas, higher standards are reached. Good standards are reached in the Foundation Stage. The pupils often make good gains in their learning and achieve particularly well in a number of areas of learning such as their personal and social development, language and communication skills, and knowledge and understanding of the world for example. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils reach the expected standards in their reading, and reach better than expected standards in their writing, speaking and listening. Pupils' mathematical and science skills reach the expected standards, and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' standards in ICT are better than expected.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	C	C	C	C
writing	B	A	B	A
mathematics	D	B	E	E

*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.*

In the national tests, the school's results were steadily rising until this year, when mathematics results dropped to well below average. In contrast, the pupils reached well above average standards in their writing. Inspection evidence reveals no easy explanation as to why standards vary, although some mathematical activities are not fully developed as pupils move through the school. The school has started extra booster classes in this subject to improve standards, which is beginning to take effect. The pupils who have special educational needs, including those in the hearing impaired unit, achieve well in all areas. In the other subjects inspected, or sampled, the pupils reach the expected standards and achieve satisfactorily. In some subjects such as physical education and religious education achievement is more variable.

Children's personal development is good and they have very good attitudes to school.

Their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard, and they relate to adults and each other in a mature way. Pupils enjoy school, particularly the work of their own school council. The attendance rate is below the national average. Although this is affected by lower attendance of pupils in the hearing impaired unit, overall it is lower than the national picture.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good overall. The teaching is good overall. It is stronger in some year groups and classes where some very good teaching was seen. In the Foundation Stage and hearing impaired unit, the teaching is generally of good quality and the pupils learn well. Some temporary staff taught during the inspection and the teaching in these classes was satisfactory. Teaching has a number of good features. The teachers relate very well to pupils and provide good role models. This increases their rate of learning and achievement. The teachers make good use of class assistants, and all pupils with special educational needs are included well.

The curriculum planning and provision is satisfactory overall. It is broad and balanced and extended by a growing number of enrichment activities such as book weeks. A revision of the curriculum, making it more relevant and exciting for pupils, is in the early stages of being trialled. This means that some subjects are not covered as fully or taught in depth. The school provides high levels of care which contribute to the quality of their learning. The links with parents are very good overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governors provide satisfactory support. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The headteacher gives good leadership to the school and is supported well by the deputy headteacher. They both provide good role models to staff and set high standards for all. Additional teaching groups taken by the deputy headteacher are effective and well managed. There are regular checks on the quality of teaching, although the high standards set by the senior staff are not consistently reached in all classes. The work related to hearing impaired pupils is supported well. The governors, many of whom are new, provide a satisfactory overview and challenge to the work of the school. The finances of the school are managed conscientiously to ensure good value.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The vast majority of parents believe the school provides a secure and caring education for their children. A small number expressed concern about the level of consultation with them, but the inspection evidence suggests this is much better than indicated. The pupils enjoy school and their involvement in decision-making via the school council. They particularly like their teachers and noted the recent improvements to the outside play areas.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has identified a number of worthwhile priorities for development and has elements of the following issues in its plans for improvement.

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

- Review the curriculum planning of foundation subjects, such as history and geography, to improve coverage and pupils' achievement.
- Devise further strategies to help improve attendance.
- Develop consistent coordination to help improve planning and monitoring of subject areas.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils reach at least satisfactory standards in all subject areas. In writing, speaking and listening and ICT, they reach standards better than expected. Their achievement is good in these areas and is satisfactory in all other subjects. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well in a number of areas of learning. In national tests last year, pupils' attainment in mathematics was very low, but high in writing. The girls tend to do better than the boys in national tests, particularly in their writing and in reading.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils reach good standards in their writing.
- Pupils speak with confidence and clarity.
- The pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects.
- In ICT, the pupils use computers confidently.
- In subjects such as physical education and religious education, achievement is more patchy.
- Pupils achieve well in their personal, social and health education skills.
- Pupils' attainment in last year's mathematics tests were low.

Commentary

1. When the children start school, they have varying levels of ability, but are broadly average. In the national tests, the school's results were steadily rising until this year, when mathematics results dropped to well below average. In contrast, the pupils reached well above average standards in their writing. In teachers' assessment of science, the number of pupils reaching the expected levels was average. Compared to similar schools, their writing results were very high, but were very low in mathematics. The pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve at least satisfactorily in all of the areas of learning. In some, such as communication, language and literacy, and mathematical knowledge, they achieve well. Nearly all are on course to meet or exceed the early learning goals. In mathematics, the pupils are on course to reach the expected levels, but in all other areas they achieve well and reach good standards.

2. In English, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in their writing. This is often imaginative, with good use of conventions of spelling and grammar. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. In their speaking and listening, they also reach good standards. They listen carefully, speak very confidently in class and with other individuals. Their reading skills develop steadily and pupils generally read with confidence. Pupils use their speaking, listening and writing skills confidently within other subjects such as science, history and ICT.

3. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics and reach the expected standards by the time they are seven. They achieve well in knowing basic number skills. They are accurate and confident in handling and mentally working out number problems. The pupils use their numeracy skills satisfactorily across different subjects. In science, the pupils reach the expected standards in their day-to-day work, largely confirming the results of teacher assessments in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16 (16.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.2 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 73 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. The trend in national results for reading and writing is one of steady improvement, ahead of national averages. In mathematics, the trend, although below the national average, was rising until this year when the results dropped significantly to well below the results reached by schools nationally. In relation to other similar schools, the results are broadly the same in reading, very high in writing but very low in mathematics. This group of pupils had some difficulties, but there is no easy explanation why the same pupils who did well in writing, did not do so well in their mathematics. The school has taken the situation seriously and has, for example, started extra groups for mathematics taken by the mathematics coordinator. The school's focus on writing has been very successful and may account for the difference in attainment.

5. In ICT, the picture has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils now have good ICT knowledge and skills and exceed the expected standards. They use computers confidently and achieve well. In all other subjects that were inspected or sampled, pupils learn and achieve satisfactorily. Although the pupils generally reach the expected standards, in some subjects, such as religious education and physical education, the pupils' achievement is more variable, as some activities do not challenge them as much.

6. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good overall. Daily activities and strategies support learning very effectively. There is a good focus on teamwork, involving the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO), the class teachers, and the learning-support assistants. The pupils with hearing impairment are involved well in activities both within the unit and in day-to-day class work. Pupils also achieve well in their personal, social and health education and have a mature and responsible attitude.

7. Some differences in achievement between year groups were noted during the inspection, due to the variation in the quality of teaching and curriculum coverage. This was largely due to temporary staff taking classes, but not in all. The results reached in national tests in 2003 indicated that the girls did particularly well and better than the boys. This was particularly noticeable in their writing and reading. The school is aware of these variations. Changes to planning, styles of teaching and the creation of extra groups have been introduced to compensate. Inspection evidence indicates that these measures are beginning to have an effect. For example, the creation of extra mathematics and writing groups is having a good effect. In lessons and work, no obvious differences in standards of work were noted between the boys and girls. There were no significant differences observed in the standards of work between the very few pupils from ethnic minorities and other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Behaviour and attitudes are very good and personal development is good. Attendance is unsatisfactory, but punctuality is good. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enthusiasm and their interest in lessons provide a very good foundation for learning.
- The attendance of pupils has declined from 94.5 per cent in 2000/1 to 92.6 per cent for the autumn term 2003.
- The school has very high expectations of conduct and strongly promotes good relationships.
- Pupils are mature, very confident, and keen to take on responsibilities.
- Racism has never been reported and bullying is rare.
- There are good opportunities for pupils' to reflect on special moments during lessons.
- Moral and social development of pupils is particularly well developed.

Commentary

8. Pupils are keen to answer questions and contribute their own ideas to lessons. They listen with respect to others' viewpoints and enjoy the achievements of others. The youngest pupils in the school behave well and their social development is good. Pupils say that nearly everyone works hard and they work well in groups. For example, in a personal, social and health education lesson using role play to learn about road safety, pairs of pupils collaborated well to 'cross the road' safely. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities offered for them to take on responsibility, such as membership of the class councils. Nearly all pupils appreciate what is expected of them and are keen to comply. Bullying and unsocial behaviour are handled well on the rare occasions when they occur. Pupils warmly welcomed inspectors to the school, enquired whether we were enjoying our visit, and were generally sociable.

9. Their behaviour around the school and in assemblies is very good. Lunch is a pleasant social occasion and pupils play well together on the playground, the children from the hearing impaired unit being included in their games. Teachers and other staff talk to pupils in a very pleasant manner, one encouraging a mature response, and this is a very good model for them, encouraging pupils themselves to solve problems by talking about them. The pupils' very good behaviour is achieved by a strong emphasis on rewards and reminding the pupils they have choices if there is a problem. There was one exclusion last year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
196	1	0

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

10. There is a programme of assemblies that covers the major festivals and a range of topics that support spiritual, moral, and social issues. Personal, social and health education lessons also contribute to the pupils' general understanding of moral and social issues. Pupils have a very clear concept of the difference between right and wrong and appreciate the desirability of respecting the feelings of others. The pupils' cultural and multicultural development are promoted satisfactorily, and the school arranges visitors to the school and visits to local places of interest. A number of activities such as exploring Chinese New Year give pupils knowledge of other cultures and beliefs. The school has a policy on racial issues and implements it effectively.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. The attendance of pupils in the hearing impaired unit was 83.4 per cent last term, due to the high level of medical attention received. Removal of these pupils from the figures increases the attendance of the remainder of the school to 93.3 per cent, still well below the national average. There is concern at the high level of holidays taken in term time, currently accounting for 1.2 per cent of absences. There is a good relationship with the Education Welfare Officer, and the school emphasises to parents the importance of attendance through newsletters and informal conversations. There are occasional awards for pupils' good attendance, but these are not given a high profile. There is no regular arrangement to contact parents on the first day of absence if no message has been received. The statistics on attendance are limited, making it difficult to detect reasons for trends.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good overall. The teaching is consistently stronger in some classes and year groups. Overall, it is good throughout the school. The curriculum is planned well for the key subjects such as English, mathematics and science, but the revision of activities in other subjects is in a trial phase and not yet fully effective. Activities such as personal, social, and health education are particularly well planned. The care of pupils is good. The school develops very good links with parents and good links with other institutions.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, and learning is good overall. The assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Small group teaching of the hearing impaired pupils is very good.
- The good and very good teaching tends to be in certain classes.
- Speaking, listening, ICT and writing are taught well.
- In some subjects, such as design and technology and physical education, the activities lack challenge.
- There are very good relationships between adults and children.
- Assessment is used very well in the youngest classes.
- Class assistants provide good support and are used well.
- Resources are used well to support the most effective lessons.

Commentary

12. Teaching is good overall, though there is some variation and it is sometimes centred on specific year groups or classes. Very good teaching was seen in a Year 2 class, in a writing activity taught by the deputy headteacher, and in personal, social, and emotional development in the Foundation Stage. Good teaching was seen in all year groups, but not in all classes. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Owing to the inspection focus it was not possible to gather enough evidence to judge teaching in all subjects. The school recognises the need to develop more challenge and pace in lessons, particularly those that have different activities such as humanities teaching in the afternoon. The school has recently begun to implement a more innovative curriculum following national guidelines, but planning is still at an early stage and is not yet developed sufficiently to have a greater impact on learning. Teachers and other adults use effective strategies to support learning for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are detailed and clear. They are used to ensure that the work pupils are given is suitably matched to their individual needs. A range of support strategies is in place and assessment is used well to monitor individual pupils' progress and ensure their support is good.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	8 (17%)	22 (48%)	16 (35%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. In the very good and good lessons seen, teachers managed pupils well and set high standards in behaviour and in work. Imaginative methods were used and pupils responded well to these, making good and sometimes very good progress as a result. In a mathematics lesson, Year 2 pupils were counting in tens in the oral mental mathematics session at the start of the lesson. The very well targeted questioning to individuals set the tone of the lesson and showed the highest expectations of everyone. In the Foundation Stage, the children compared artefacts from the past with modern day appliances and good questioning helped them extend their thinking and understanding of how things can change over time. In the best lessons, effective planning, a brisk

pace, and good questioning aimed at different abilities challenged pupils' learning. Teachers made good use of time to maximise opportunities for teaching and learning so that the class atmosphere was purposeful and productive. The quality of teaching in the extra groups and booster classes is good overall and helps pupils to extend their learning and achievement.

14. Teaching for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is planned well, taking into account the six nationally recommended areas of learning. Teachers make very good provision for children's personal, social, and emotional development and good provision for communication, literacy and language development, knowledge and understanding of the world and for creative and physical development. The deployment of teaching assistants in particular is very good. All adults are involved in regular ongoing assessment of the children and, consequently, this adds to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning.

15. Good teaching is provided for hearing impaired pupils. There is very good support both in class, and in the unit, by teachers and learning support assistants, so that pupils make good gains in their learning. The use of the sound system used by teachers in classrooms helps all pupils to concentrate well, not only those who are hearing impaired.

16. Teaching assistants are deployed well throughout the school and they make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. There is very good liaison between the adults working with the pupils, resulting in clear understanding of their roles, and the mutual respect each has for the other means that they provide very good role models for the pupils. Teachers make good use of resources, such as in Year 1, when the use of a programmable toy to enter simple directions engaged pupils' attention so that they were able to make good progress in directional work and the use of road maps.

17. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, where pupils made slower progress, activities did not always take account of what pupils already knew. There was not enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils and opportunities were missed to develop their independent learning and subject specific skills. For example, in a lesson in a Reception class, the children were too often repeating what they knew rather than moving forward in their learning and, in a Year 1 class, the pupils' design and technology skills were not extended or refined. In two classes, short-term supply teachers were still getting to know the pupils. Sometimes the levels of work set for these pupils, along with their management, were not strong features.

18. Overall, assessment procedures are good, with most teachers keeping careful records so that pupils know the next steps in their learning and how well they are progressing. Information is usefully analysed so that individual performance can be monitored and necessary adjustments made in the teaching to improve their rate of learning and overall achievement. The marking of pupils' work is generally helpful to them, showing them how they can improve and meet their individual targets.

The curriculum

The curriculum provision overall is satisfactory. It is enhanced with good features such as the provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and art weeks for example. The accommodation is very good overall and the level of resources is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum development and innovation is well focused on raising achievement.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Some schemes of work are insufficiently planned to ensure equality of access for all pupils.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good and supports the very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- The outdoor provision is very good, providing secure, attractive areas for play and learning.

Commentary

19. The school provides a broad curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 and it meets statutory requirements. For the youngest pupils, the areas of learning are planned well. In Years 1 and 2, the key subjects such as English, mathematics and ICT are also planned well. There is clear progression in the development of skills and knowledge. This is recorded clearly as pupils move through the year groups. In other subjects, planning is more variable and the way subjects are combined is not yet sufficiently effective.

20. The school has a good focus on raising achievement through innovative development of the curriculum. The school has used assessment information well to organise a range of initiatives that have been effective in helping to raise standards for specific groups of pupils. These include booster classes and sessions for pupils who are gifted and talented. The school strives to make the curriculum interesting and to provide pupils with varied opportunities for learning. This is evident in the very good outdoor provision that includes the pupils' garden and the activities connected with achieving Advanced Healthy School status. Currently, cross-curricular themes and projects are being developed in order to link different areas of study. This is partly successful in making the learning more meaningful to the pupils. For example, in Year 2, history, geography and science are brought together through their study of the Victorians. This linking of different subjects is in its early stages, but it is not yet sufficiently planned or consistent for all classes. Good use is also made of visits and visitors to enrich the pupils' learning, such as visits to a local wildlife park and the visit by a local MP, who spent time answering pupils' questions.

21. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is broad and balanced and matches national guidance. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn both through activities that they have chosen themselves, and through teacher directed tasks. There are clear cross-curricular themes which make learning relevant to the children, and there is a strong emphasis on encouraging the pupils to become independent learners. These themes were clearly demonstrated during snack time, in which children washed and prepared fruit, counted out all the items of food, poured the drinks and served one another, whilst contributing to conversations with the adults.

22. A very strong feature of the whole school is the way it endeavours to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs are fully included in the whole curriculum. Much time is spent on planning work for individual pupils who have special educational needs and ensuring that they have exactly the right support to enable them to take a full part in lessons and other activities. The support staff, who are fully involved and know the pupils well, provide good quality guidance. There were no discernable differences in provision between boys and girls. The curriculum is underpinned by the good whole-school emphasis on personal, social and health education.

23. Overall the school's accommodation is good and supports the teaching of all National curriculum subjects and religious education. The indoor areas are attractive and well maintained and provide stimulating displays and mechanisms to involve the pupils, such as the School Council display and the weekly reward system. There is plenty of space and the whole school site is attractive, safe, and secure. The outside play areas are of a very high quality, promoting play and learning for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Pastoral care is very good, with good support and guidance. There is a very effective school council. There are good induction arrangements for children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Trusting and caring relationships with teachers and teaching assistants create a climate for very good pastoral support and guidance.
- Good information is available for academic support and guidance.
- School and class councils give pupils a strong sense of partnership in the school.
- There are good arrangements for the induction of pupils.
- There are good health and safety and child protection procedures.
- Discussion time is used well to share relationship issues that arise.

Commentary

24. Pupils told inspectors how happy they were in the school and parents confirmed this. This provides a very good foundation for their work and demonstrates the quality of the pastoral guidance received. Within classes, whole class discussions times are used well to highlight difficulties and resolve them. Pupils' welfare is well provided for, with several staff trained in handling critical medical conditions. There is a medical room, and the school has a good awareness of the pupils with medical conditions. One of the teaching assistants is trained in physiotherapy. Speech therapy for the hearing impaired is provided in school on a regular basis. Pupils told inspectors how pleased they were with the way the parents and pupils are introduced to school, and the inspection evidence indicates that these arrangements are good. The parents are pleased with the information they receive such as reports on progress and the pupils' achievements. Health and safety are well organised, with regular safety checks and all the expected safeguards in place. The child protection officer is the headteacher. She has good contacts with the local agencies and knows the local procedures. Training for all staff is up to date.

25. The school council has elected representatives chosen from each class council. The council has a number of achievements to its credit, including the purchase of playground equipment. This was a complex project for them. Having decided on the objective, the school council wrote to parents asking for support for a toy sale. They organised and publicised the sale. They selected the equipment they could afford from a catalogue and sent off the purchase order. On its arrival, they unpacked it and checked that it was what they ordered. They are currently waiting to paint the play-bus in the playground. Concerned about delays, the council decided to do it itself, and during the inspection decided on the colour and when they would paint it.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are very good, but links with the community, although satisfactory, are not as well developed. Links with other educational institutions are good and the school facilities are used for some further education classes, targeted at parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided for parents is very good.
- Parents provide good practical support to the school.
- Parents have high opinions of the school.
- There are good transfer arrangements to the junior school.
- Consultation with parents is patchy, but is good overall.
- There are good links with other schools.

Commentary

26. Parents have very high opinions of the school. The school provides very good information to parents and the prospectus is very good, giving a good flavour of the school. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents is quite brief, but it covers all the statutory requirements. The school reports are informative and give a clear idea on progress, including targets for pupils. They convey a good sense of partnership with and note pupils' successes. Newsletters are informative and well presented. Parents are supportive in many ways such as raising funds, helping in class, and running the 'Walking Buses'. Parents are welcome in school and often help. Joint plans are made to tackle attendance or behaviour problems. The usual consultation evenings were changed in favour of more frequent consultation periods every three weeks. This gives parents greater choice of dates, but presents some problems for parents who work full time. This will be reviewed at the end of the year. Currently there are further education opportunities for parents on literacy and on ICT skills. The latter concludes with an opportunity for parent and child to spend time together. Induction arrangements to the junior school are satisfactory. These included opportunities for pupils to visit their new school and meet the teachers.

27. The school seeks parents' opinions every two years, through questionnaires, and from time to time when issues arise, for instance, when meal services were under review. Criticisms were voiced at the pre-inspection parents' meeting concerning a lack of consultation on changes to the school uniform and the replacement of the evening consultation sessions. The inspection evidence indicates that there is some substance to these concerns, but both changes appear to be very popular and consultation will take place to confirm this. The headteacher has started to recruit a parent council to act as a sounding board for school developments.

28. The school works with others locally and this is having a mutually beneficial effect. For example, some initiatives are influencing the development of the curriculum and teaching methods and these are highly valued by the school. Benefits include shared training days, exploration of 'Brain Gym' thinking techniques, and exploring ways of raising boys' achievements. The links with the adjacent junior school are satisfactory, and the school provides regular information about pupils' attainment when they transfer. The links with the local community are developed satisfactorily overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and good management of the school. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership shown by the headteacher and senior staff is good.
- The management of daily routines are good.
- The financial management of the school is good.
- The monitoring by coordinators is a weaker aspect.
- The integration of the pupils with hearing impairment is handled well.
- The school has gained a number of national awards.

Commentary

29. The headteacher and senior staff are committed to high standards and the continuing improvement of the school. This is reflected in them gaining several nationally recognised awards such as 'Investors in People' status, 'basic skills quality mark', and government achievement awards. Several significant issues were identified at the time of the last inspection although the headteacher had not been in post for long. Since then there has been a clear vision for improvement in key areas. These include special educational needs, the development of the hearing impaired unit and in improving standards in pupils' writing and ICT skills for example.

30. Overall, the drive to raise standards has been successful, but pupils' results in mathematics dropped this year following a broadly upward trend. There is no easy explanation for this, as the same group of children did very well in their writing and this has been a focus for improvement. The headteacher and staff are not complacent about the standards of mathematics. They investigated why standards dropped in the subject and why there were differences in attainment between the boys and girls. The deputy headteacher, who has no class-based commitment this year, now takes several higher attaining groups for writing and mathematics to improve their skills still further. The broader aspects of self-evaluation of school performance such as test results and tracking of pupils' progress is good overall. Monitoring by coordinators varies and is not sufficiently developed in some subjects. For example, the school has embraced recent national guidance to broaden the curriculum and teach more subjects such as history and geography together. While this has been successful in some aspects, it is in a trial phase. This is an area where monitoring has not been sufficiently systematic to assess how the changes are affecting pupils' learning or what subjects may not be being taught as effectively.

31. The headteacher manages the school well. The daily routines are well established and there is an effective ethos for learning throughout the school. The staff are managed and guided well overall, but staff turnover has been quite high recently. Good quality teaching is set as an aim for all staff, but not all consistently reach these standards. This is partly caused by staff absences and vacancies filled by temporary staff. It is also due to the coordinators' monitoring arrangements, which do not focus sufficiently upon day-to-day teaching. The school has a satisfactory number of ways of promoting staff development such as performance management procedures, training, and coaching. This has been effective for most, but not all staff. The improvement planning is generally clear, thorough and focuses on the essential areas. It is supported by subject specific action plans, but actions identified are not always focused as effectively on specific actions to improve standards. All teachers, teaching assistants, office staff and caretaker support the school's aims and values and provide good role models for pupils. All make a valuable contribution, and the teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting pupils within lessons and in small groups.

32. The governors provide the school with satisfactory guidance and they meet all their statutory responsibilities. They are supportive to the headteacher and staff, although several governors have only recently taken up their positions. The chair of governors leads the role as a 'critical friend' while newer governors settle into their roles. This is appropriate and effective. He provides good continuity, support and challenge to the headteacher. The arrangements to induct new governors have been effective. For example, links with subjects and particular classes have been established to support and monitor the work. Governors have sufficient knowledge of areas of the school's work such as health and safety, resources and special educational needs. There is a race equality policy and the school promotes racial harmony among the pupils effectively. The school has identified recruitment of staff as a potential barrier to raising standards still further, and this was partly supported by inspection evidence as two classes were taken by temporary staff.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	889,011	Balance from previous year	110,868
Total expenditure	784,629	Balance carried forward to the next	104,382
Expenditure per pupil	4,130		

33. The financial arrangements are organised and administered well. The priorities for development are budgeted for, and both the bursar and headteacher monitor expenditure closely. The routines and procedures to deal with the financial running of the school are clear. They provide governors with good levels of information. The school has arranged regular checks by the finance department of the Local Education Authority, who report on any difficulties and improvements. The school implements 'best value' principles effectively, particularly in terms of getting competitive quotes for work and supplies. The financial secretary is knowledgeable about recent developments in national finance reporting and will shortly be using ways of comparing cost with other schools. The surplus funds have been earmarked for a significant extension to the school and improvements to the library. Taking into account the staffing levels, the standards reached and the income available per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The hearing impaired unit

The school has a hearing impaired unit for 20 pupils within the main school. Nearly all members of the inspection team observed the pupils either within the unit or within other lessons. One inspector was specifically assigned to report on its work and spent one day in the unit, observing pupils, holding discussions with staff and evaluating the documentation provided.

The provision for hearing impaired pupils is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are good.
- The curriculum is broad with good opportunities for enrichment.
- Standards of care are high.
- Accommodation and resources are very good.
- Attendance is low for a few pupils.

Commentary

34. Achievement is very good for the youngest pupils and good in Years 1 and 2. From a very low starting point, pupils make rapid progress in acquiring language skills in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the end of Year 2, the majority achieve standards comparable to national levels in English, mathematics and science. Standards in English skills are below nationally expected levels because of difficulties in acquiring language associated with hearing impairment.

35. Those pupils with more complex needs achieve as well as they can, although a few have a poor rate of attendance, some unavoidable, which affects learning and achievement. Good standards are linked to the strong leadership, and teamwork of both unit and other staff in the school.

36. The quality of teaching that takes place in the unit base and Nursery is of a high standard in most lessons, where signed communication is used effectively to build language skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Teaching is at least good in other lessons, where teachers and learning support assistants have good knowledge, work well as teams and prepare thoroughly using detailed records of each pupil. The plentiful resources used, such as story bags and real objects, ensure that pupils enjoy learning. For example, mathematics and science are taught well because pupils learn from personal and practical experience. Where teaching in the unit is less successful, planned activities are too long so that pupils with short attention spans lose concentration.

37. Pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and religious education, which are adapted appropriately in teachers' plans to ensure it matches their needs. Pupils' individual programmes are closely monitored and these integrate with main classes and groups in order to maximise learning and social opportunities. They are well supported by learning support assistants who give effective signed support. Mixing with other pupils is good, because pupils are based in the mainstream classes, and work and play together for half of each day. Team teaching within mainstream classes is an undeveloped area. However, the teacher of the hearing impaired brings hearing pupils into the unit to teach science. Nursery-age children are included in the same room, where team teaching between the nursery nurse and teacher is very successful. A deaf member of staff from the learning support service is involved in British sign language story-telling and works with parents in their homes developing expertise in

signing skills. The curriculum is enhanced by educational visits and visitors. In addition, lunchtime clubs such as gardening and knitting support learning effectively. All classrooms are very well equipped with sound systems, radio listening aids and are carpeted, so that pupils use their aids well and join in lessons fully.

38. Teachers and classroom assistants give high priority to personal and audiological care of individuals. Every care is taken to check pupils' aids are functioning and comfortable. Pupils and parents are encouraged to be responsible for their hearing aids. When there are faults, the school has a good supply of spare equipment supplemented by a supportive peripatetic audiologist. The system for the repair, maintenance and linking with a number of hospital audiology departments is well developed and efficiently run. The school involves parents from an early stage and provides termly meetings and IEP review meetings. The pupils' plans are very clear and appropriate. Progress in meeting targets is good. Home-school books in the Nursery are exceptionally good as they are illustrated so that pupils can understand them and explain to parents about their work for each day.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the last inspection. Children are prepared well from the time they enter the Nursery class for transfer through to the Reception class and then into Year 1. Some children begin school in the year in which they are four and many, but not all, attend part time in the Nursery, moving into full time education during their Reception year. Children enter the Nursery class with a range of attainment that is broadly average overall. Children generally achieve well because the teaching is good. There is challenge and high expectation in most lessons, with activities matched to the needs of individuals. There is also good evidence of clear planning, where activities are designed to weave together the various areas of learning. The effective Foundation Stage coordinator leads a committed team of teachers and support staff. They liaise very well, and provide very good role models for the pupils. Monitoring of the pupils' progress is very good. The accommodation is very good, with pupils having easy access to an outside play area, which is very well resourced.

Unless otherwise stated, the achievement of children with special educational needs in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. They make good progress because teachers quickly evaluate what additional help they require to enable them to learn effectively and teachers and learning assistants provide consistent high quality support.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the high expectations of staff, the good teaching and the careful monitoring and assessment of their progress.
- Good opportunities are created to foster the children's development so that they make good progress and achieve well.
- Supportive relationships are being established so that the children's self-esteem is raised and they feel confident and happy.

Commentary

39. This area of learning is particularly well taught and by the end of the Reception year the majority of children are likely to have exceeded the expected levels. Most are able to conform to the high expectations of the staff, and the good role models that they provide mean that the children know what is expected of them. They know routines, behave sensibly, and settle to tasks quickly, so that the atmosphere is calm and purposeful. Arguments between pupils are quietly settled and the adults focus on learning together in harmony and respect for each other. Children are interested and eager in their learning, can work for long periods of time and are motivated to succeed even when not directly supervised.

40. The adults encourage children frequently and praise their efforts so that all can feel successful. They intervene when necessary with good questioning, which extends learning and they encourage the children to take a pride in their work. There is consistency in routines so that children know to put up their hands, take turns and listen to others. Children share well and support each other, especially their hearing impaired peers, playing with them happily, and sometimes guiding them to make sure they know what has been explained. There are very supportive relationships so that all the children feel secure and confident to seek help when required.

41. Teachers use targets such as ‘being able to put overalls on without adult help’, and ‘remembering to say excuse me’ to encourage independence. These are simple so that the children understand them, but they play a real part in the development of independence, courtesy, and respect. There is an unspoken expectation that children should take responsibility for themselves, as was seen when children in the Nursery class prepared the mid-session snack, peeling and cutting banana and apple into pieces for the rest of the group. The teacher watched discreetly as she prepared the drinks nearby, but allowed the children the freedom to make the snack and set the table for the rest of the group.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good.
- Teachers and support staff take every opportunity to develop children’s language skills, using very good questioning techniques to encourage the children to speak and listen.
- Activities are varied and motivate children to achieve well.

Commentary

42. Teaching in communication, language and literacy is good. Children make good progress and the majority of them will exceed expectations in this area by the time they enter Year 1. They listen well and attention to constant questioning, explanation and activities designed to widen their vocabulary is a strong feature of teachers’ planning. Adults talk to children frequently, and the provision of imaginative activities helps them to think and choose appropriate language to describe what they are doing. Adults take time to listen and they value what the children say. This gives them confidence to talk. Books are available and most children take them home regularly to be shared with adults. In the Nursery class, children know about illustrators and understand how to use books, and enjoy ‘reading’ them. When teachers read stories, children listen avidly and enjoy the imaginative world described. There is good emphasis on teaching of letter sounds, and children make good progress in sound recognition, learning through rhymes, sound and picture games. Constant reinforcement from adults helps the children to recognise sounds and match them to letters. They have opportunities to write and colour. Children in the Reception class can copy by either writing over letters or copying words from a card, and higher attaining pupils can write simple sentences independently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers take every opportunity to promote mathematical development in all activities.
- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to ensure that children achieve well.
- There is inconsistency in the challenge demanded of the higher attaining children.
- Pupils’ knowledge of shape and counting develops well.

Commentary

43. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning. Teachers plan a range of interesting activities to promote mathematical understanding. Most children are working at levels expected for their age. Most are able to count to ten in the Nursery class. They sing rhymes to help them count and teachers imaginatively use these rhymes to extend and develop children's understanding. For example, a lesson on coin recognition and shopping was woven around the rhyme 'five currant buns in a baker's shop'. Children are aware of money and are beginning to recognise coins. Working with an adult in small groups, they can buy items of dolls' clothing costing up to five pence. They have opportunities to write numbers and the most able are beginning to match objects to numbers. Adults question children and use a variety of mathematical words, such as 'above', 'below', 'under', 'over', and 'beside', in many incidental ways to help develop vocabulary. By the time they are in the Reception class, children are counting and using numbers to 20, with some being able to count beyond, to 30 and more, with an understanding of 'one more than' and 'one less'. Teachers do not always capitalise on the children's knowledge and understanding, so extended learning opportunities are missed. Children recognise shapes, but there is sometimes too much repetition of previous activities so that the higher attaining children in particular are not being challenged enough. For example, many children in the Nursery class are familiar with shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles and triangles, and these are covered again in the Reception class with little additional challenge.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning provides a wide range of activities to promote learning.
- Teachers question the children well so that they develop a sense of time and place from an early age.
- Children are familiar with and confident in their use of computers.

Commentary

44. Teaching is good. Good provision extends children's knowledge and understanding well so that they make good progress and achieve well. They should exceed the levels expected of them by the time they reach Year 1. They take part in activities to stimulate their curiosity and enhance their understanding, such as looking at artefacts from modern and olden times. In one session in a Reception class, groups of children were comparing the use of a carpet beater as opposed to a modern vacuum cleaner. The teacher's questioning encouraged them to compare the objects and she then moved the discussion into electricity, switches and plugs, with children well able to talk about the uses of electricity and connected safety aspects. Children have the opportunity to use a computer in the classrooms and have weekly group learning sessions in the computer suite. They are confident and eager to talk about their activities and can move the mouse with dexterity. They understand terms such as 'drag' and 'icon' and some understand that the Internet is used to send messages. They use listening centres with confidence and some can follow the text in storybooks with their fingers as they listen.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Access to the well developed outside play area with well-planned, structured activities, helps to develop learning in other areas.
- All children benefit from well planned activities in the hall.

Commentary

45. Children enjoy physical activity both indoors and out. They make good progress and achieve well so that it is anticipated that they will exceed the expected goals by the end of the year. Teachers plan so that outside activities are structured to extend learning in the classroom, as was seen when, after considering how people used to drive around in carriages, the children made a human carriage and went outside to trot and jog around the play area. They were then able to use rocking horses, rope and coconut shells to extend the activity themselves, becoming so involved that one child went to find a spade from the play house to clear up behind the horse and cart. Children have good access to the outdoor play area, use it well and make the most of opportunities for physical development. The resources are very good, with ride-on toys, prams, playhouses and climbing equipment available that all enhance the activities in which the children are involved.

46. In hall lessons, children pay good attention and are responsive to teachers' expectations. They stretch, and are aware of balance and can begin to make sequences of movement. They move in different directions, and teachers' use of language reinforces mathematical and positional vocabulary. Sometimes children are not aware of space sufficiently, tend to crowd together and bump into each other. They have a good understanding of health and safety matters and have been trained well in getting out and putting away equipment such as mats, hoops and cones. Children have good opportunities to develop fine motor skills in a variety of activities in the classroom. They use scissors, thread beads, build with construction toys and handle paintbrushes, crayons and modelling material confidently.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning gives many opportunities for creativity in a variety of situations.
- Children are aware of the expectations and produce careful work.

Commentary

47. The activities planned in the Reception class enable the children to develop their language and imagination well so that by the end of the year they will have made good progress and many are expected to exceed the expected goals in this area. The teaching is good and this promotes good learning overall. For example, role-play is encouraged so that children can develop their imagination. The children ride bikes and scooters, travelling around the play area. They stop to 'fill up' with petrol at the toy petrol pump or to allow 'people to cross the road' at the zebra crossing. They play in the home corners both indoors and outside, and Nursery children 'washed' the dolls' clothes and hung them up to dry outside. Children have opportunity to paint and to colour as well as to use scissors and glue to make models. They enjoy singing, which is often a feature of a range of activities not necessarily directly connected with music lessons, and will tap out or clap the beat and enjoy the rhythms of the music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

Unless otherwise stated, the achievement of children with special educational needs in Years 1 and 2 is good. The teachers quickly assess what additional help they require to learn effectively. The teachers and learning assistants provide high quality support.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** overall. This is a much improved picture from the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' extended writing skills are good.
- Pupils speak articulately in class and informal situations.
- The monitoring of the subject is not carried out systematically.
- Activities for the higher attaining pupils are catered for well.
- Word building and writing skills are taught well and promoted effectively in other subjects.
- The library is satisfactory, but is not particularly enticing to pupils.

Commentary

48. In the 2003 national tests, the pupils' results were good, particularly in writing. In reading, the school was in line with the national average, and compared satisfactorily with similar schools. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was better than the national picture. In writing, the pupils' results were above the national average and well above average for similar schools. The percentage reaching the higher Level 3 was also better than the national average. The boys did not achieve as well as the girls, and there is no easy explanation for this. The school recognises the differences reached in test results and has taken steps to improve boys' achievement generally. The inspection findings confirm that standards are high in writing, satisfactory in reading and levels of speaking and listening are better than expected nationally. The differences in achievement between boys and girls were not evident in their past work or within lesson activities. Overall, the pupils achieve well.

49. The pupils speak with a high degree of confidence, clarity and expression when appropriate. The pupils contribute meaningfully to class discussions and readily speak to visitors and each other. They generally listen well and this helps them to respond in a mature way. The teachers create useful opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 class discussion, the pupils enjoyed outlining their thoughts about different characters prior to writing different profiles. The teacher allowed time for the pupils to respond and develop their ideas, which improved their learning. In some classes where teaching is not consistently effective, the pupils' speaking skills, although satisfactory, develop more slowly. Pupils listen well both to each other and their teacher when the activities are interesting. In a history related lesson in Year 2, the pupils stopped working quickly and they listened intently to the teacher explaining what she expected of them during activities related to their history project. In contrast, in another lesson taken by a temporary teacher, the pupils did not listen as well, and some called out answers inappropriately during the teacher's introduction. The pupils learn and achieve well and the way that teachers plan opportunities to develop pupils' skills during the lessons increases their rate of learning.

50. The pupils' reading skills develop systematically, building on the secure skills gained in the Reception and Nursery classes. They read fluently and with good expression. Pupils enjoy reading storybooks and are confident in reading instructions and information from reference books. The highest attaining pupils can readily indicate what type of books they like, although few readily recalled the names of popular authors. This is due partly to the pupils following a well-structured reading scheme. Pupils knew how to use the library, but were not enthused about it. The books are not displayed to the best effect, and this may also partly account for why they knew few authors.

Pupils attempt unfamiliar words with confidence, and the lower attaining pupils usually sound out the words correctly if they are not sure. Most pupils read with a secure degree of confidence and fluency. The teachers use a number of effective ways of teaching reading, words and letter sounds. These are included well within other activities, such as when the class reads a 'big book' together on the carpet as an introduction to the lesson. The text is often read together and unusual spellings are discussed to help pupils read the words more easily next time. Class work and activities are supported satisfactorily with simple homework, and reading diaries that accurately record and comment on progress. Pupils of all abilities learn and achieve well in the majority of classes, although this is more noticeable in the classes where teaching is consistently good.

51. The pupils' writing skills are good and better than those expected. The variations between boys and girls found in the test results last year were not evident in their day-to-day work. The school is reviewing its approaches and is trying to promote the boys' achievement more in daily activities. All the pupils are confident and willing writers and their skills develop well as they move through the school. In lessons, the pupils readily settle down to get their thoughts down on paper. The activities chosen motivate the pupils to write. For example, the pupils recorded some interesting ideas about possible adventures on a 'magic carpet', following discussion and role play using the teacher's 'magic carpet' in the classroom. Groups formed for different attainment levels are helping to improve writing still further. For example, a group of pupils taught by the deputy headteacher, produced a significant amount of writing on the same theme and the quality was high. The interesting vocabulary, combined with the good level of accurate spelling, produced good first drafts. In another Year 2 lesson, the class teacher highlighted the use of commas in an interesting way, along with the pupils writing adjectives and verbs on their own whiteboards. Follow-on activities are well conceived, with individual groups reminded of different targets such as putting in full stops and capital letters. The pupils' past work is also of good quality and covers writing for different purposes. Instructional writing such as how to make a sandwich or writing a letter of complaint to a travel agent were good examples. Extended writing is also evident. For example, a pupil's story about a child trapped on the 99th floor of a skyscraper provided an interesting starting point.

52. The teaching is good overall, although this not consistently so in all classes. The teaching in classes taught by temporary staff was satisfactory, but little higher quality teaching was seen. This restricts some of the good progress and achievement found in other classes. The National Literacy Strategy is followed and implemented effectively. The coordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. She has worked hard to identify areas for development, including the difference in attainment in boys and girls. The library is recognised as an area for improvement. The monitoring of work and teaching is not always frequent or diagnostic enough to point to further improvements, particularly in those classes where teaching is not as consistently good. The additional resources spent on reading books and additional teaching given in small groups such as writing, is helping to raise the pupils' standards generally. The new computer suite is providing additional opportunities for pupils to publish their work using simple word processors and labelling their work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. The pupils have good opportunities to develop their English skills across the curriculum, particularly writing. The teachers promote pupils' speaking skills well during other activities. For example in a history and religious education activity, the pupils in one Year 2 class were encouraged to discuss how they felt, and to ask questions when the class teacher pretended to be an historical character. In nearly all activities, the pupils listen effectively, particularly in Year 2, where more consistently good teaching promotes careful attention. The pupils' writing skills develop well through the curriculum. Different examples are illustrated in pupils' history, religious education and science work. In geography work for example, the pupils wrote about different destinations and put them together to form a travel brochure. The pupils' reading skills develop satisfactorily by reading stories on computers, guidance sheets, reference books and the variety of good labelled displays found in classrooms.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved since the last inspection.
- Good focus is placed on developing numeracy skills.
- Expectations between classes in the same year groups are not consistent.
- There is insufficient challenge in some lessons.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and show interest in lessons.

Commentary

54. Despite low results compared to both the national picture and similar schools in the 2003 national tests, the standards achieved by pupils by the time they are seven meet national expectations. The school has put in place ways to raise standards and ensure better preparation for the tests and it is likely that there will be an improvement in results this year. Booster groups work in both Years 1 and 2 and these are intended to help to raise standards in mathematics, together with activities for the gifted and talented designed to raise the numbers of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. In national tests, the attainment of boys is marginally better than that of girls.

55. Pupils generally learn and achieve satisfactorily. The National Numeracy Strategy is well developed throughout the school and supports learning effectively. The oral mental mathematics sessions which begin the lessons are usually briskly conducted, giving the pupils good opportunities to focus on learning, and set the tone for the lessons. Many pupils demonstrate good number skills and are able to apply them to solve mathematical problems. For example, Year 2 pupils used whiteboards to work out how many 5p apples could be bought for 27p. The majority could then work out the change given and what coinage could be used. In another Year 2 lesson a mental maths test developed a variety of strategies, and pupils were encouraged to use jottings to help them solve the problems. Despite the testing nature of this session, pupils enjoyed finding ways to solve problems and explaining how they reached their conclusions. The best conclusions to lessons identified clear progress in learning. Pupils have opportunity to explain their activity or are set further challenges to extend learning. Homework is sometimes presented at the end of the lesson, often in the form of an investigation, when pupils apply their learning to real life situations. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are hearing impaired achieve well and there is good attention to their specific needs. In Year 1 some higher attaining pupils are working within Level 2 and are being extended well. However, this is inconsistent between classes.

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and consistently good in one Year 2 class, where there is high expectation and effective planning. Where teaching is good, planning identifies clear learning objectives, and the teacher explains these to the pupils, relating them well to previous learning. There is good pace in these lessons, with very high expectations. There is good challenge appropriate to all levels of ability, and pupils respond well showing good concentration and an ability to keep working. There is real enjoyment in the success found in work at higher levels, which gives pupils greater confidence in tackling other challenging problems. Teachers make sure pupils use correct mathematical language in their explanations, and pupils are familiar with the names of common two-dimensional shapes and their properties by Year 2. However, in an otherwise satisfactory lesson emphasising shape and measures, pupils often repeated their learning about shapes taught in the Nursery class. They were not moved on quickly enough to explore properties of more unusual, irregular two-dimensional shapes, which are featured in the best lessons.

57. The mathematics subject leader provides sound leadership for the subject and has begun to analyse data to ascertain strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Monitoring procedures do not promote consistent expectations for all staff. The subject leader is aware of the need to develop investigative work more consistently throughout the school. She is raising the profile of this aspect of teaching with weekly maths challenges, which are popular amongst pupils. Resources are used

well so that pupils can develop their skills in a variety of ways. Pupils' books are used to record work clearly and neatly. Marking is variable and does not always tell pupils how to improve, but some teachers in Year 1 annotate work well to show individual achievement. Teachers and teaching assistants liaise well so that they provide good support to individuals and groups.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Pupils use mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and begin to develop an understanding of the practical use of their skills. They measure materials in design and technology and use rulers to draw straight lines. They can construct charts showing the class birthdays. Links to other subjects are comparatively weak. Pupils use the computers to sort shapes using Venn diagrams and in displaying results of research into their heights and hand spans.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear focus on investigative and problem-solving work is supporting the improvement in standards.
- Well-organised, practical lessons ensure that pupils enjoy their learning in science.
- Inconsistencies in expectations undermine the equality of access and opportunity for some pupils.
- Monitoring is inconsistent and does not yet ensure that all pupils achieve the highest possible standards.

Commentary

59. Taking into account the lessons seen, along with analysis of their work, the pupils reach the nationally expected standards by the time they are seven. Overall, they achieve satisfactorily and make appropriate gains in their learning both within lessons and as they progress through the school. The teacher assessments in 2003 were in line with the national average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. The percentages of pupils who achieve the higher Level 3 are also in line with the national averages. These show an improvement since the last inspection when standards were below the national average. This improvement has been achieved through a clear focus on the investigative strand of the subject, which has increased the pupils' skills and understanding. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well, largely due to the very good support they receive in lessons.

60. The teaching and learning varied from satisfactory to very good. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Pupils are clear about what they are learning, lessons are well planned and organised, and the focus for learning is practical and investigative. Pupils enjoy the activities and understand the relevance of their learning. In the lesson where pupils achieved very well and made very good progress the teaching was crisp, clear and well-informed, had high expectations of every pupil, questions challenged pupils' thinking and motivated them to contribute ideas, raise questions of their own and try out their ideas. Discussion with pupils and an analysis of work indicated that the quality of teaching in Year 2 during the autumn term was inconsistent between the two classes and this has had a negative impact on some pupils' learning.

61. Overall, there is a good emphasis on the use of correct specific vocabulary, which ensures that all pupils understand scientific terms and are encouraged to use their literacy and numeracy skills well. Year 2 pupils, for example, wrote up their ideas about how to investigate the effect of the weight of presents on the mobility of Santa's sleigh and used tables well to show their findings.

Year 1 investigated colours that can or cannot be seen in the dark and used charts to show their findings. The quality of marking is good, teachers write positive comments which often provide the pupils with further ideas to consider. Some of the more able pupils respond to the marking with their own comments, making the learning an ongoing dialogue between teacher and pupil.

62. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The science action plan gives a clear indication of how the subject will be developed to improve standards and has introduced a good range of ideas to motivate and interest the pupils, such as Science Week and the development of the school garden. The coordinator is keen to continue to drive forward further innovations. However, as yet there is a lack of clear guidance about the teaching and learning of science within the school's new thematic approach and this is leading to inequalities and inconsistencies between the classes. The management of the subject is also satisfactory. Monitoring of the subject is inconsistent and insufficiently developed. It does not provide adequate information about the quality of teaching and learning, and therefore misses some issues that could be addressed to ensure all pupils have equality and access to the highest possible standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for ICT is **good**. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good understanding of the different features found on computers.
- Pupils know how to gain information from computer programs and the World Wide Web.
- Pupils use computers to present information and results.
- Pupils use computers well to produce graphics and text.
- The computer suite is a high quality resource that is used well.
- Pupils' knowledge of how technology is used in day-to-day devices is less well developed.

Commentary

63. By the time the pupils are seven, they reach standards exceed the nationally expected level. Two lessons that involved the direct teaching of ICT skills, along with discussion and scrutiny of pupils' past work were taken into account. The computer suite provides a very good resource for teaching. This ensures that over time, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and hearing impairment, learn and achieve well.

64. The pupils have a good understanding of how to use computers, particularly in entering and presenting information. They are well aware of how to use the simple and more advanced functions of programs. For example, they know how to fill a shape with colour and how to change it. They know keyboard functions such as the 'enter' key, and the higher attaining pupils are aware of how to check their spelling and use simple cutting and pasting. The pupils' past work indicates they have good levels of knowledge about simple designing, drawing, and information handling skills, such as using programs to produce graphs of their mass or lengths of their hand spans. The pupils also have a good knowledge of simple programming. For example in Year 1, the pupils know how to move a programmable floor robot (a 'Roamer') by entering in simple instructions, and others can do this in a computer program prompting them to move cars around a simple route map or other obstacles.

65. Past work and discussion with pupils indicate they have good skills and knowledge of what computer programs can do. Many pupils have access to a computer at home, which supplements their skills, but few were aware of how computer technology is used in everyday items or situations. The pupils enjoy their work and are often enthusiastic to use computers and explain their features. For example, the pupils understand the basic features of the Internet and websites. Pupils have also contributed some of their writing to the Local Education Authority's 'grid for learning' so that it can be accessed by other schools as good examples.

66. The subject is coordinated well. The monitoring of pupils' work using electronic storage is effective, and enables the coordinator see how the planned work is being covered. The monitoring of teaching is less systematic. The coordinator has compiled a thorough file of support material, such as addresses and passwords, although there is proportionately less information about monitoring or developments. The school website is a good feature and pupils regularly contribute work, particularly members of the school council. Overall, the coordination and leadership shown has contributed to the rise in standards since the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The pupils use computers well within other subjects such as mathematics. Classes have the opportunity to do this weekly. In mathematics, the pupils have entered in information about themselves to produce graphs and during the inspection, the pupils used computers to explore different shapes and how they fit together. In another lesson in a Year 1 and 2 class, the pupils created simple optical illusions effectively using the drawing functions of the computer. Other examples from past work indicated that computers are used for pupils' stories, shape work in mathematics, and digital photographs of models.

HUMANITIES

68. **History** related activities were observed, but no **geography** activities were seen. The school is moving towards combining more subjects in the afternoon. This term, the history theme in Year 2 is 'Victorians'. This was related to other subjects such as art and design and design and technology. History and geography were not inspected in detail during the inspection. Additional past evidence and discussion with pupils indicate they achieve satisfactorily in both subjects and reach the expected standards for their age.

69. In **geography**, the pupils' past work indicates they study distant places such as different continents, and know terms such as 'equatorial', 'polar', 'deserts' and 'coastal features'. The pupils understand the features of coasts and the activities that often take place there. Some pupils in Year 2 wrote a safari leaflet describing different animals you might find, labelled with their Swahili names.

70. In **history** work, pupils demonstrate their understanding of events and people from the past, such as the Victorian era and characters such as Dr Barnardo. They develop a sense of chronology through comparing the differences between artefacts used today with those used by their parents and their grandparents. In a Year 2 class activity, the pupils were working in a variety of ways. For example, some pupils were designing some tiles in the style of William Morris and others were using some of their science skills to make circuits. They then successfully made simple Morse code tappers to decode a message. In another class in Year 1, their theme was living things. The activities here were not particularly challenging, and only the group working with the teacher really made good gains in their learning. Other activities such as making animals with modelling material, or making simple puppets were not successful, and few pupils could see the connection with the main theme.

Religious education

Provision in the subject is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils study a wide range of religious festivals that contribute to their good attitudes towards others.
- There are no assessment procedures and little monitoring of teaching and learning.
- The best teaching is innovative and relevant to the pupils.

Commentary

71. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection remain in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Only two lessons were observed and much of the work covered in religious education lessons centres around discussion, so there was limited written work to examine. From discussion with pupils they were able to talk about their most recent work on Chinese New Year, but were unable to recall other learning. However, the analysis of the available work demonstrated pupils' understanding of stories from different religions, such as the Buddha and the Elephant, and the Parable of the Sower. Pupils have also studied moral issues, such as the work about best friends, and the high quality and thoughtful book Class 9 produced about Poppies. Overall the pupils achieve satisfactorily in their knowledge and understanding.

72. In one very good lesson seen in Year 2, the teacher did link her history work well with the concept of caring. The class discussed the work of Dr. Barnardo, and the pupils quickly related their own thoughts about caring for others. The teacher skilfully used pupils' own ideas and challenged their thinking when needed. Some pupils had the opportunity to interview the teacher as she acted the part of Dr. Barnardo. This increased the pupils' learning and ensured that they achieved satisfactorily overall.

73. The scheme of work for religious education is in line with the locally agreed syllabus and is carefully planned. However, there is insufficient clarity regarding the extent to which the subject is taught discreetly, incorporated into the integrated studies work, or taught through other opportunities. This leads to inequality of access and opportunity for some pupils. The coordinator has had no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject, but has taken other classes, which has helped to gain some picture of standards across the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. Only one lesson was seen in **art and design** and no specific lessons were seen in **design and technology**, so it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision. From talking to pupils, looking at work displayed on the walls and from discussion with the art and design subject leader, the indications are that work planned in art and design is interesting and varied. Standards of pupils' work are at least in line with national expectations. Work on display is well presented and of a high quality. In **music**, a small number of activities were observed such as singing in assembly, and this was satisfactory.

75. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen in **art and design** in Year 1, where the teacher had high expectations of pupils. They were able to sketch portraits of themselves using mirrors and feeling their faces in order to place their features in the correct place. The teacher carefully demonstrated the techniques of using 'aquarelle pencils.' Pupils understood the nature of sketching and used shading with pencils to good effect. Displays are of a good standard and show

that pupils experience collage, printing, and painting. They also compose computer-generated designs using the work of William Morris as inspiration, and create composite art works using tiles painted with ceramics and acrylics. Art weeks are held, with visiting artists and sculptors working alongside pupils to make works of art such as mosaics which are displayed in the school.

76. In **design and technology**, some activities were seen as part of other lessons. In Year 1, pupils were making simple puppets in a lesson related to the theme of living things. The quality of these was satisfactory, but there was little attention to the design process. In their past work, pupils designed and made musical instruments, and in Year 2, pupils have made furniture out of balsa wood, material and buttons, for rooms in the Victorian House as part of a Victorian topic. Year 2 pupils also designed, made and tested bridge constructions using paper, sellotape and card. Pupils could explain how they had made pop-up puppets. There was some attempt at evaluating their own work but this was not a consistent feature of pupils' learning. Staff absence meant it was not possible to discuss planned activities, but from teachers' planning, the work seen and from discussion with pupils it is clear that there are planned design and technology activities that link with the topics which classes follow during the year. The provision for the subject has improved since the last inspection, when there were no planned activities or scheme of work. Resources are good for the teaching of the subject.

77. In **music**, pupils were only observed singing during assembly and for a short time in small group work in Year 1 as part of their integrated studies. Weekly music lessons are planned alongside additional opportunities to practise and develop skills in small groups during integrated study sessions. For example, Year 1 pupils enjoyed creating musical patterns with untuned percussion instruments. Pupils sing tunefully and enjoy singing together and Year 2 pupils spoke enthusiastically about the Music Festival and Christmas Concert. The two music co-ordinators have produced a detailed action plan focused on improving the quality of provision and have recognised the need to update the scheme of work. They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their subject but their overview of whole-school strengths and weaknesses is limited by their lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation. This satisfactory picture has been maintained since the last inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are aware of how exercise is beneficial.
- Emphasis is given to an awareness of the need for exercise.
- There is little challenge in some lessons.

Commentary

78. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards in physical education are in line with national expectations. Pupils work with effort and enthusiasm in their lessons, and expectations in one Year 2 class were very high. In all year groups, pupils understood about the need for exercise and its effect on their health. A feature of some lessons seen in both Year 1 and Year 2 was an awareness of how the heart reacts to exercise, so that children were able to feel their pulse at different stages of the lesson.

79. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan lessons appropriately, with opportunities for warming up, the main part of the lesson when skills are taught, and cooling down activities before the conclusion to the lesson when aspects of learning are discussed. In one lesson in Year 2, attention was paid to control and style so that pupils were challenged to consider their stance and the need to develop skills necessary for gymnastics and games. However, in most lessons seen there was little opportunity for pupils to evaluate each other's work or for individual coaching to improve

performance, and the quality of activity was only satisfactory. There was little additional challenge for the higher attaining pupils for example. In Year 1, pupils worked with partners and shared equipment well, while in Year 2 they were able to take part in team games, showing a growing tolerance of each other and an awareness of tactics in a lively ball game. No dance activities were seen during the inspection.

80. The subject leader has only been in post for a very short time but she has clear ideas of the development of the subject through the school. There are good facilities for physical activity and resources are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for PSHE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good scheme of work supports teachers' planning.
- There is planned circle time every week.
- Class council time is valued by the pupils.
- The subject is managed well.
- The school has gained Advanced Healthy Schools status in 2002.
- The pupils are aware of others and are responsible members of the school community.
- The school evaluates its provision regularly.

Commentary

81. The subject is well managed and developed. The school and class councils are very effective and make a very good contribution to citizenship. The pupils have a very responsible attitude and willingly talk about developments in the school and the areas they are seeking to develop further. They are aware of how they should deal with other pupils and adults. They are aware of the potential dangers of talking to strangers for example. The pupils also responded enthusiastically in a well-taught lesson about road safety. They investigated the dangers that can be posed, and used role-play effectively to reinforce the messages learnt. A range of activities promoting simple concepts of growth and development are covered along with the benefits of healthy eating for example. The school highlights the importance of this area of work, by giving the pupils responsibilities and valuing their efforts. For example, in the entrance hall, the school council members are displayed, along with minutes of the meetings. The deputy headteacher leads development and regards the subject as being at the heart of the school. The work done to produce a comprehensive scheme of work has been very effective and helped to improve planning and coverage of activities. Good resources are available.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).