

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGHBURY FIRST SCHOOL

Salisbury

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126265

Headteacher: Mrs A Munns

Lead inspector: Mrs W. Knight

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th September 2003

Inspection number: 256420

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	231
School address:	Highbury Avenue, Salisbury
Post code:	SP2 7EY
Telephone number:	01722 322832
Fax number:	01722 339283
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Axtell
Date of previous inspection:	1 st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has seven classes and a specialist learning centre for up to 12 pupils with moderate learning and speech and language difficulties. It is scheduled in 2004 to become a primary school taking pupils aged 5 to 11. Pupils come from a range of homes giving a broadly average socio-economic background, although the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are white but 4 per cent are of Asian origin and 5 per cent do not have English as their home language. There are many more boys than girls in Reception and Year 2 and many more girls than boys in Year 1. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The overall number of pupils with special educational needs is average, though some year groups contain a higher than average proportion of such pupils.

The school recently achieved an "Investors in People" Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12172	Wendy Knight	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Design and technology; Music.
9472	John Edmond	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
20063	Gerry Slamon	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; Physical Education; Religious Education; Special Educational Needs.
32168	Ann Keen	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Science; Art; History; English as an additional language.

The inspection contractor was:

VT Education
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London

SW11 3AD

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	14
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school is **not as effective as it should be**. Standards in English, mathematics and science are **below average** and too many pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Shortcomings in teaching adversely affect pupils' progress over the long term although most lessons are satisfactory. The school is **soundly led and managed** overall, but the teachers responsible for subjects are not supporting the headteacher sufficiently to ensure developments are properly and consistently implemented. **It does not give satisfactory value for money**. The school has **serious weaknesses** because of the shortcomings in teaching which result in underachievement. However, parents and pupils are happy with what it offers and support its ethos.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average and a significant proportion of pupils are not achieving as well as they could.
- Teaching and provision are good for pupils in the specialist learning centre.
- Shortcomings in teaching in Years 1 – 4 adversely affect how hard pupils work, concentrate and practise, and consequently their progress over the long term.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are not effective in the main school.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for individuals, especially those pupils with special needs and children in Reception.
- The teachers responsible for particular subjects are not ensuring that agreed developments are put into place and maintained.
- All pupils are safe, well cared for and cherished as individuals.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes due to the school's good work in developing constructive relationships and promoting pupils' social and moral awareness.
- The work planned for pupils is not sufficiently well matched to their needs and interests, which is a contributory factor in underachievement, including that of boys and pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- Standards in art and dance are good, and there are many opportunities for learning about the arts, which include useful links with the local community.

The school's performance has **declined** since the time of the last inspection because standards are lower and teaching is not as good. Provision for ICT and physical education has improved. Although teachers now assess pupils regularly, procedures do not give teachers detailed enough information. Co-ordinators now have a better knowledge of provision in their subjects but are not active enough in influencing standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	E	E	D	E
writing	E	E	D	E
mathematics	E	E	D	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

Most children achieve the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Standards are **below average** in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in English,

mathematics and science by Year 4. In English, the lower and average attaining pupils **underachieve**, and in mathematics and science average and higher attainers **underachieve**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good** and attendance is **average**. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is **unsatisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **good** in the SEN unit and **satisfactory** in Reception but **unsatisfactory** in Years 1- 4. In the unit, work is carefully matched to individual needs. Lessons in mainstream classes are often not planned well enough to build on pupils' existing knowledge, and this adversely affects their understanding. The pace is too slow in many lessons, even though they include interesting activities, so pupils lose concentration and fail to complete enough work.

The curriculum is **sound** overall, although it is not planned to meet the particular needs and interests of the pupils. There are appropriate extra-curricular activities. The care and support given to pupils are **good**. Guidance on academic progress is not effective because information about pupils is not precise enough. The school's partnership with parents is **satisfactory**. Parents' views are welcomed and the school provides timely information. Links with the community are **good** and enhance the curriculum, especially in the arts.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The work of the governing body is sound. The governors have a clear understanding of what needs to be done and some actively support the school in its work. The headteacher's leadership is **sound**. She knows exactly what the school needs to do to improve and has established a willingness amongst teachers to work together. The leadership of subject leaders is **unsatisfactory** because they have not been accountable for standards in the past. Management is **satisfactory**. Support is provided to staff to develop the skills needed to implement improvements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with all the school's strengths, as recorded by the inspection team. Pupils like the school because it is friendly and caring although they would like lessons to be more interesting and to be given help more promptly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science;
- Improve the quality of the teaching so that all pupils sustain concentration, participate fully and work harder in lessons;
- Gather and use more effectively information on what pupils know, understand and can do, to plan suitable work for them and guide them more precisely on how they can improve;
- Ensure that subject leaders take responsibility for developments in their subjects, putting in place and sustaining agreed policies and procedures;
- Plan work for pupils which takes account of their needs and interests, including motivating boys;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure all assemblies are collective acts of worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses.

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** in Reception and **good** in the specialist learning centre but **unsatisfactory** in Year 1 – Year 4. Standards are **below average** in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, and in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 4.

Main strengths:

- Standards in art are above average.
- Pupils in the specialist learning centre are achieving well.

and weaknesses:

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average.
- Pupils do not regularly use literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in their daily work across the curriculum.
- A significant number of pupils throughout Year 1 – Year 4 are underachieving.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage

Standards in relation to the early learning goals by the end of Reception in:	
Personal, social and emotional development	Satisfactory
Communication, language and literacy	Satisfactory
Mathematical development	Satisfactory
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory
Physical development	Good
Creative development	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

1 Children in Reception know letter sounds, enjoy books and stories and write their names. They count to 10, recognise numbers and acquire relevant mathematical vocabulary. Children use the computer and construction toys with confidence and explore artefacts and specimens from nature with curiosity. They learn to handle tools and apparatus correctly and create pictures and models imaginatively. Children balance, travel and jump with appropriate control.

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.1 (14.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.4 (12.6)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	15.8 (14.6)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2 Standards in reading and writing are below average by Year 2. The trend in results is generally upwards, but the school has not made up for the drop in standards in 2000. Although pupils know

their letter sounds and are able to use these to work out unknown words, they often lack fluency and gain limited understanding of the text as a result. Pupils know basic spelling skills and the need for full stops and capital letters in their writing, but too few have the confidence to apply these consistently. Because the needs of average and lower attaining pupils are not accurately assessed, many underachieve when they are expected to apply skills and knowledge before they are properly practised and consolidated.

3 Standards in English continue to be below average by Year 4. Although pupils are taught the basic skills for locating information from books, they seldom need to do this independently as part of work in other subjects so do not have regular practice. Only higher attaining pupils are confident about recalling and understanding what they have read. The accuracy of pupils' writing is often poor, particularly spelling and handwriting. As with their younger peers, this is often because different styles and structures are introduced before pupils use basic skills confidently. As in Year 2, many lower and average attaining pupils underachieve because of this.

4 Although many pupils speak confidently and offer ideas and opinions readily, a significant proportion of pupils lack the necessary vocabulary to express their thinking. Too many pupils do not volunteer during discussions and so they fail to develop skills in explaining their thoughts, which in turn contributes to their underachievement in reading and writing.

5 Standards in mathematics are below average in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils' lack of understanding of the decimal number system handicaps them when doing basic calculations, like addition and subtraction, and limits their ability to use a range of mental arithmetic strategies. Too many struggle to count on other than one by one. Pupils have been taught different strategies for calculating, such as counting on from the higher number and calculating the tens and units separately, but only higher attainers apply these confidently and flexibly. Higher attaining pupils are seldom challenged, and continue to practise skills unnecessarily. There are limited opportunities to use numeracy skills in other subjects, and when they do occur, such as reading scales requiring knowledge of numbers in the hundreds, the mathematics involved is often too challenging for many pupils. Some boys are also underachieving because their interest wanes when work does not interest and actively involve them, and they are unwilling to persevere if no immediate help is available.

6 Standards in science are below average throughout the school. Opportunities for pupils to observe, predict, hypothesise and record results have improved but have not been tackled consistently for long enough to have an impact on standards. As a result, pupils are not confident in putting their basic knowledge of scientific facts to practical use. Pupils are underachieving because they do not fully understand the necessary scientific processes involved in making and recording discoveries. Assessment procedures do not identify how far pupils understand principles so that work can build on existing skills and develop others.

7 Basic ICT skills are now regularly and systematically taught, but pupils rarely use computers except during their weekly lesson in the computer suite. When they do, programs seldom provide practice in the skills recently taught, but are more often planned to consolidate mathematical or literacy skills. As a result, many pupils do not use common procedures such as retrieving and saving work and printing it and so cannot be independent users. They do not understand the basic principles under which computers operate and are often surprised if their actions result in lost work or unwanted outcomes. Progress in ICT skills is generally satisfactory. However, if standards are to rise, pupils require more practice in the necessary skills and procedures. Currently, procedures for assessing pupils' skills and understanding are inadequate for this purpose.

8 Standards in art are above average and this strength has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils develop and apply techniques well and use a range of materials and media with confidence and skill.

9 Pupils in the specialist learning centre make consistently good progress in their learning and achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Because their individual needs are accurately

identified and this information is used to plan work, they are set suitable tasks and practise regularly in a variety of different ways until skills are mastered. Nevertheless, the limited provision for speech therapy means that their progress in this area is not as good as it should be. Other pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress in their learning when they receive specific support in lessons. In most lessons they make the same progress as other pupils. However, teachers have not been giving enough consideration to the targets identified in the individual education plans (IEPs) of pupils in mainstream classes, and, as a result, the overall achievement of these pupils is inconsistent over time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are **good** as a result of the school's effective provision for their spiritual, moral and social development.

Main strengths:

- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy school.
- Relationships are good and the school community is harmonious, any form of harassment being rare.
- Pupils' behaviour is good as the result of high expectations and suitable rewards.
- Pupils are taught to have a strong understanding of right and wrong including showing respect for people's feelings and property.

Main weaknesses:

- More needs to be done within the curriculum to prepare pupils for life in our multicultural society.
- The school does not build sufficiently on pupils' willingness to be enterprising and to take responsibility.

10 Pupils like school and take a full part in all that it has to offer. They are normally interested in their work, only losing interest when it is either too hard or too easy. Discussions with pupils show that they want to achieve as well as they can and that they recognise areas of the curriculum in which they feel they are not sufficiently challenged. Playtimes are friendly and safe, with boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds playing happily together.

11 Through religious education lessons, pupils understand the importance of festivals and religious traditions of a number of communities. They respect different beliefs and cultures and show no signs of racism or intolerance. The school could do more through displays, literature, art, music, and visits to different places of worship, to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society. Assemblies, some religious education lessons, dance lessons and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme are used well to help pupils develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. Pupils give good support to the local community by donating food parcels for the elderly, by inviting them to concerts and refreshments, and by singing at nearby residential homes. They co-operate very well when the school raises funds for the wider community by donating to charities such as the Shoe Box Appeal for children in Eastern Europe, Macmillan Cancer Research, Barnardos and Riding for the Disabled. Most pupils in the Reception class are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Foundation Stage. However, older pupils in Year 3 and 4 have insufficient opportunities to take the initiative.

12 Pupils report that they are not bullied in the school and no form of harassment was seen during the inspection. A few parents are concerned about bullying, but pupils consider that this has reduced considerably this term. Relationships between all members of the school community are good and pupils understand the need to listen to and respect the views of others. This quality of respect is especially evident in the way other pupils accept and welcome pupils from the Specialist Learning Centre, and, as a result, these pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school. All

pupils, even the youngest, are given a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are very aware of the 'Golden Rules' and are enthusiastic about getting 'positive points' for good work and behaviour. This willingness to respond positively to rewards has the potential for promoting desirable responses, such as in pupils taking more responsibility for their own learning. The school is aware of the need to develop pupils' understanding of justice and fair play. Pupils themselves have been involved in devising the rules for lunchtime football sessions and they respect these rules and referees' decisions. Year 4 pupils have been involved in designing their own book corner in the classroom.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
201	4	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
7	0	0

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

Attendance is now **broadly average** and punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Nearly all pupils are punctual.
- The school telephones home immediately when pupils are absent.
- Most parents take good care to ensure their children attend school.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.6%
National data	5.4%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4%
National data	0.5%

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

13 Attendance has remained fairly consistent over the last four years. Unauthorised absence fell very slightly in 2002/2003. The school has maintained a good system to promote attendance. Parents now actively co-operate in ensuring that their children attend regularly. Only a very small minority of pupils is late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** in the Learning Centre, **sound** in Reception but **unsatisfactory** in Years 1 – 4. Teaching in lessons is satisfactory in English, but some unsatisfactory lessons were observed in mathematics and science; over the long term there are shortcomings in the teaching of all three subjects. Learning matches the quality of teaching throughout the school. The quality of teaching is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths:

- The teaching of pupils in the specialist learning centre is good.
- Effective use is made of teaching assistants and they provide good support for the pupils with whom they work.
- Teachers use a wide range of methods to interest and appeal to pupils.
- Teachers regularly review what has been discussed to help pupils know what they should remember.

and weaknesses:

- Instruction in too many lessons proceeds so slowly that pupils lose concentration.
- Expectations of what pupils could do are often too low.
- Procedures for identifying what pupils know and understand are inadequate so work set often fails to build on their prior learning satisfactorily.
- Pupils are not given enough guidance on how to improve their work in lessons, and the quality of marking is inconsistent.
- Pupils are not often expected to make an effort, so they produce too little work and do not present it neatly enough.
- There is no system for identifying the specific needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL).

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (2%)	16 (31%)	30 (80%)	5 (10%)	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.

14 The needs of the pupils in the specialist learning centre are clearly identified as specific targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). These targets are constantly used by all the adults and drawn to the attention of the pupils to ensure that each makes steady progress. There is timely support for these pupils from the adults who work with them, enabling them to be integrated with their peers in mainstream classes whenever it is appropriate. Pupils with special needs in mainstream classes also have regular support from well-trained teaching assistants. This helps them to participate fully in lessons and achieve regular success in the tasks set, so developing greater self-esteem. Staff working with special needs pupils know their individual needs and quickly intervene if they become frustrated or confused.

15 Teachers are alert to a range of games, activities and competitions which appeal to their pupils and use these to stimulate interest and involvement. For instance, a 'pirate attack' was used in a Year 2 numeracy lesson where the pupils acted as pirates finding treasure by working out its location using mathematical facts in competition with the teacher. Pupils concentrate fully during such activities, but when teachers give long explanations or expositions, they lose concentration and do not listen to the instructions which follow. As a result, those pupils who paid attention at first but became restless often do not know what to do when set tasks to complete. Pupils reflected this in the response to questionnaires, with only a quarter regarding lessons as sufficiently interesting and fun. At the end of the lesson, teachers often usefully summarise the important points to be recalled but they seldom challenge pupils to think further by extending an idea or posing a question to pursue. Such challenges are also rarely set in lessons, even for higher attainers, so pupils do not think for themselves or ask their own questions. Too many of them, although keen to learn, do not have the initiative to take an active role.

16 The school has checklists of key learning objectives in reading, writing and mathematics and records that individual pupils have shown they can do them. However, these records are not precise enough to provide the information needed by class teachers to plan work at an appropriate level in daily literacy and numeracy lessons. Moreover, 'Celebration Books' give insufficient information on progress to be useful to teachers. As a result, some fundamental problems in learning, such as lack of understanding of the decimal number system, are not identified, and pupils working on independent tasks are completely baffled by them. In a Year 2 numeracy session, for instance, pupils adding on 11 were giving unreasonable answers because they were not secure about adding 10 and then 1 more. Too often when pupils experience difficulty with work set, adults repeat the way the teacher explained in the introduction instead of seeking the underlying misconception. As a result, the pupil completes an example satisfactorily, but encounters a similar problem again later. Pupils' responses to questionnaires indicated that they recognised these problems themselves, with one in four expressing dissatisfaction with the help provided when they were stuck. During discussion, many pupils commented on work that they had found too hard or too easy for them. Too many pupils take home unsuitable reading books or continue to take home the same book for months. One of the pupils who read to an inspector, for instance, had had the same book since March. This does not ensure regular and consistent reading practice for all pupils.

17 Marking in books is often similarly unhelpful as it does not make it clear to pupils how they can improve. Remarks about issues such as poor appearance are rarely followed up to ensure that the next piece of work is neatly presented. Indeed, few pupils take a pride in the appearance of their work. Scribbling out is common, pupils fail to use lines or squares, and handwriting is not neat enough. Comments are seldom made about the amount of work done in lessons. At worst, the teacher demands more work when a pupil cannot do it at all, for example when a pupil could not use a 100 square to complete additions because the answers were greater than 100. Few pupils are confident enough to tell the teacher they do not understand. As a result, pupils are not completing an appropriate amount of work to develop and consolidate necessary skills. Some teachers do have useful methods to involve pupils in indicating whether they feel confident with the work, such as the 'thumbs up' (or down) used in Year 4.

18 The school has identified those pupils for whom English is an additional language, but not necessarily those who are at an early stage of learning English. Consequently, the school is not making a distinction and there is no specific provision to track the progress of these pupils. They are all assessed and taught alongside the rest of the school. Few pupils struggle specifically because they are learning English, but existing systems are inadequate to support most effective learning, and they are underachieving. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not specifically used to support these pupils.

The curriculum

The Foundation Stage curriculum is **satisfactory**. The English, mathematics and science curricula are adequate but are not regularly adapted to meet the needs of individual children.

Main strengths:

- Special educational needs (SEN) provision is good, especially in the specialist learning centre.
- Pupils enjoy the physical education curriculum and swimming is provided in Year 4.

and weaknesses:

- The mathematics curriculum is not planned to ensure best progress.
- The outside accommodation is not adequate for the Reception class.

Commentary

19 The curriculum in the Reception class is based on national guidelines and provides for all six areas of learning together with religious education. However, opportunities for using structured play to increase children's skills more effectively are not regularly planned. In the rest of the school, a relevant curriculum is provided that includes all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. However, the daily act of worship does not always meet statutory requirements. English, mathematics and science are adequately covered. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently adapted to meet the individual needs of pupils so that they learn, achieve and progress adequately. The particular needs of boys who are not keen to practise reading and writing are beginning to be considered, but further work remains to be done in this respect. The organisation of a two-year programme in some subjects of the curriculum hinders pupils' achievement because they repeat some of the work unnecessarily.

20 The school is implementing the government's recommended National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies but not planning them to provide for pupils' individual requirements. This results in pupils of all levels of attainment, especially the average and higher attaining pupils, not being provided with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy. This also applies to the national requirements for science. The mathematics curriculum is not planned effectively to ensure that the pupils progress sufficiently smoothly, building on their understanding systematically.

21 The curriculum for pupils in the specialist learning centre is well adapted to their individual needs. The teacher in charge and her teaching assistants are well trained and give good support to pupils' learning. The accommodation is arranged with care and attention and provides pupils with a rich, secure learning environment. Curriculum provision for other pupils with SEN is generally satisfactory. While support staff work hard to ensure that these pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum, teachers do not always adapt the curriculum sufficiently to meet their needs. In English, for example, the tasks set for these pupils is frequently too hard, and so they produce little work.

22 The school actively includes all pupils in everything it offers. Pupils from the specialist learning centre are fully included in activities when integrated into mainstream classes. Every effort is made to include as far as possible those pupils whose religious beliefs mean their parents do not wish them to take part in such aspects as collective worship or religious education. Since the last inspection, positive arrangements mean these pupils are no longer disapplied from the ICT curriculum, for instance. On a personal basis, therefore, the school is totally inclusive. However, weaknesses in assessing different pupils' learning needs prevent the school from completely fulfilling its aims. Notably, the progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is not adequately assessed to check that they are not underachieving.

23 The school provides appropriately for pupils' personal, social and health education. It helps to provide pupils with information and skills to make informed decisions about a healthy life style. For example drug and alcohol awareness education is included in the curriculum. The school is aware of the expectations to provide well-informed sex education when the school changes its status to a primary school.

24 An adequate range of extra-curricular activities is provided to enrich the pupils' learning, including opportunities to participate in physical activities, a range of artistic activities and music tuition. The school choir participates in a local music festival, and school clubs include disco dancing. Community events extend pupils' experiences and the school has good links with its partner institutions, including the local middle schools to which many older pupils have transferred when they have left in the past.

25 The school has sufficient, appropriately qualified staff including well-trained teaching assistants. These teaching assistants are used well to support the children, especially those with SEN. The resources and accommodation are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum,

although the accommodation has some limitations. The steps and slopes around the school present difficulties for those with mobility difficulties. The outside facilities for the Reception class limit their opportunities for independent learning since it is difficult to supervise activities and there are limited spaces between outbuildings. The outside facilities for physical education present difficulties. The playground slopes and is uneven, making it very difficult to learn games and athletic skills. The staff strive hard to ensure that the curriculum is not adversely affected.

Care, guidance and support.

Pupils are **well cared for** and given appropriate support and guidance, but whereas advice on behaviour is **good**, monitoring of academic progress is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths:

- Proper child protection measures are now in place (an improvement since the last inspection) and the school has close and effective relations with the appropriate outside agencies.
- The school is very clean and its health and safety practices are of high quality, ensuring a safe environment.
- Pupils are highly confident that staff are caring, fair and successfully help those with learning or behavioural problems; as a result, pupils are happy.

and weakness:

- The school does not monitor individual progress in sufficient detail.

Commentary

26 The school ensures that it constantly keeps its child protection practices up-to-date and in line with those laid down by the local education authority. All staff know what to do, and their training is kept up-to-date. Links with outside agencies operate effectively in the pupils' interest. The school pays particular attention to health and safety, and revised its procedures last year. The governors are properly involved. As a result, pupils and staff work in a very clean, litter-free environment, which is healthy and safe. Risk assessments are carried out by the head teacher and the caretaker, who have both received external training, as well as by appropriate teachers. All equipment is regularly tested and fire drills are carried out each term. Access to the Internet is strictly controlled. The school actively helps pupils develop healthy eating habits and tactfully advises parents, as necessary.

27 The school pays great attention to supporting and caring for its pupils, which results in happy children. Staff all know pupils well and there is always at least one member, often several, with whom pupils can and do develop a thoroughly trusting relationship. Ninety seven per cent of pupils recorded a positive response to this question on the questionnaire. Pupils consider that teachers treat them fairly and help those few pupils who have difficulty in conforming. However, the school has not yet developed its monitoring procedures sufficiently to ensure that advice is directed specifically enough towards the needs of each individual. Different racial groups play well together.

28 The school is effective in helping pupils with statements of SEN to meet their targets. Teachers have been trained to write the individual educational plans of pupils with SEN in their classes. The co-ordinator has plans to hold further training sessions to make teachers aware of how to focus on these targets when they are planning work for this group of pupils. There are good procedures for placing pupils on and for moving them off the school's register of SEN. The school is happy with the support provided for pupils in the unit but both the school and parents are concerned by the limited amount of speech therapy available to these pupils.

29 The school is currently working on setting up a school council and a 'buddy' system. Already the school has implemented pupils' ideas in a few areas, such as rules for playing football and how to make the playground more pleasant.

30 Induction arrangements with the pre-school groups are extensive and well thought-out. They include staff visiting the pre-school, and potential pupils and parents visiting the school. Staff are made aware of new pupils' needs and backgrounds. There are further mechanisms for supporting any new pupils who shown signs of early distress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community.

Links with parents are **satisfactory**. Those with the local community, the pre-school and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths:

- The school values parents and listens to their views.
- Links with the local community and other educational establishments are extensive, varied and valuable to pupils.

and weaknesses:

- Academic reporting and target-setting are too vague and not directed firmly enough at standards achieved or specific recommendations for improvement.
- Homework arrangements are underdeveloped.

Commentary

31 The school has an effective mechanism to deal fast with any complaints. It regularly consults parents through an annual questionnaire and uses these views when considering developments. The levels of response by parents are slowly improving. A small number of parents help in various ways in the school. The Home and School Association holds regular social and fund-raising activities, which benefit the pupils considerably. Parents of pupils with special needs are invited to take full part in the reviews of their children's progress. A useful information booklet for parents advises them how they can help their children at home. The special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has good links with colleagues in the schools to which pupils from the specialist learning centre transfer so as to ensure systematic progress in their learning.

32 The prospectus and the last governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements. The prospectus is of high quality, but the governors' report is rather thin. Parents are regularly kept in touch with school activities through a newsletter, issued about five times a term. The annual reports on pupils also meet statutory requirements, but are mainly concerned with work done and attitudes. They lack sufficiently detailed comments on standards achieved and what children know, can do and understand in the context of the curriculum. Targets are noted, but they are often too vaguely drawn for progress to be validly measured, or too short-term to be useful. The induction information for new parents is helpful and is supported by a number of workshops specifically directed at Reception parents, for example how phonics and numeracy are taught.

33 Parents are not always satisfactorily involved in the promotion of their children's learning at home. Some help their children with reading and other homework, but the homework policy and practice are not really helping pupils' learning at present.

34 Links with the local community are strong and effective. Some organisations use the premises, and pupils really gain from the school's athletic, cultural, artistic and commercial connections. Pupils' sense of service to others is developed by their sponsorship of charities and their work with old people nearby.

35 Links with the local pre-school are close and very constructive. Those with other schools in the cluster are also businesslike and practical. For example, they are working together to develop common approaches to such matters as record-keeping systems and development planning. Even though the school is about to become a primary school for pupils aged 5 to 11, and so will not be transferring pupils onwards for two years, it makes sure it maintains a satisfactory link with the main secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory** overall. Its governance is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **sound** but there are **shortcomings** in the leadership of other key staff. The school is **soundly** managed.

Main strengths:

- The governing body knows where the school needs to improve, and some governors are actively involved in supporting developments.
- The headteacher has successfully built a team which is committed to improvement.
- She has evaluated information from monitoring to have a clear view of what needs to be done to improve standards.
- The co-ordinator for special needs is effective.

and weakness:

- The co-ordinators are not sufficiently accountable for the development of the subjects for which they are responsible.

Commentary

36 The governors have the opportunity to be actively involved in setting priorities in the school development plan and consequently have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Some governors are attached to particular subject areas and have observed lessons alongside the co-ordinators, giving them a good understanding of actual provision so that they can discuss it knowledgeably. Financial priorities are directly related to school priorities, and governors are becoming increasingly aware of the need to check whether their decisions have given value for money.

37 The headteacher identified early after her appointment many of the shortcomings which the local education authority (LEA) reported in its review nearly three years later (in May 2003), and requested support to assist teachers to improve provision. Despite the limited support available, she identified priorities and tackled problems wisely. Although made aware of the many shortcomings, teachers have viewed the situation positively and come to accept the need to work together and support each other in order to overcome them.

38 Through systematic observation and monitoring of teachers' work, the headteacher has an appropriate overview of the school's work and has evaluated its strengths and weaknesses correctly. Training and resources have been purchased to address the main priorities, particularly in raising standards in literacy and numeracy. In recognising the need to have staff committed to developments, some of the actions have been taken quite slowly but have resulted in the staff responsible understanding the need for change and being committed to taking the necessary action.

39 The co-ordination of provision for pupils with SEN is good. The co-ordinator understands the importance of close liaison between classroom teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. She has appropriate plans to continue to strengthen provision for all pupils with SEN. The SEN governor is supportive of the school and pays regular visits to gain first hand knowledge of this area of the school's provision.

40 Subject co-ordinators, however, are not effective enough. In the light of the previous key issue, their responsibilities have been increased, but they are still not accountable enough for provision in their subjects. Where there has been an important resource or organisational issue, such as the development of the ICT suite, the co-ordinators have worked hard to implement plans and support colleagues with training. However, when standards are below average and the co-ordinators need to implement strategies to raise them, they have had limited impact on provision. Although performance management arrangements are in place, teachers have not yet used the target-setting process to improve their accountability, and are not using statistical data effectively to measure progress made. Analysis of test results has been used to identify where pupils are scoring poorly, and training sought to help teachers address these areas, but attention to these issues is not thorough and rigorous enough. Even where whole school issues, such as marking, have been identified as needing to improve, subject co-ordinators have not taken the responsibility for monitoring the consistency of agreed procedures even though they have had the opportunity to monitor pupils' work, teachers' planning and some lessons.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	548,441.00
Total expenditure	570,299.00
Expenditure per pupil	2677.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	29,392.00
Balance carried forward to the next	3811.00

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Main strengths:

- There are good relationships between adults and children.
- Staff have high expectations of what the children should learn.
- Children receive adequate curriculum coverage.

and weaknesses:

- Too little emphasis is placed on independent learning.
- Planning for structured play is not sufficiently well linked to the early learning goals and the stepping stones.
- The outside accommodation is inadequate.
- The outside play area is not used as well as it could be to promote learning.

41 The children's level of attainment when they start in the Reception class is broadly what is expected for their age. The children with SEN have full access to the curriculum and achieve satisfactorily. Overall, the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory so that the children's achievement is sound by the time they reach the end of the Reception classes. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Staff plan a varied programme of activities, which the children participate in enthusiastically. Staff form good relationships with the children, enabling them to feel confident. Consequently, they are relaxed and learn in a calm environment. The teaching assistants are used well to support children. Parents are welcomed into the classrooms, so that the children feel secure, and they are able to talk to staff if necessary. However, assessment procedures do not provide enough detail about children's learning to ensure work planned meets their different needs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory.

Main strengths:

- Children are well behaved.
- They learn to listen well.
- They form good relationships with adults.

and weakness:

- There are limited opportunities for independent learning, particularly using the outside as a learning environment.

Commentary

42 Overall, the standard of the children's personal, social and emotional development is sound by the end of the Reception class. Staff provide good role models for the children by treating them patiently, kindly and with respect so that they learn how to behave. The teacher and teaching assistants have good relationships with the children, creating an atmosphere in which they learn acceptable standards of behaviour. Children with SEN are effectively included in the activities.

43 The quality of teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory. When children are able to sustain concentration in group times, it is because they are interested in the stimulating activities. The outside is not used as well as it could be to provide the children with opportunities to develop their independence and initiative. Adults are particularly good at developing the children's self-esteem by praising them so that they learn that they are able to achieve. By the time children leave the Reception, many of them are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strength:

- Children systematically learn the sounds that letters make.

and weakness:

- Staff do not use structured play activities as effectively as they could to promote literacy.

Commentary

44 Group times are used well to extend the children's ideas. They are learning to listen and realise that they need to put their hand up if they wish to speak. Consequently, they are learning essential skills of communication. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books and they are helped to learn the elements of a story and the nature of books. Children are being encouraged to write their names and some of them are able to write recognisable letters very early in the year. Insufficient use is made of structured play activities to develop literacy skills so that children are able to consolidate their skills through independent learning.

45 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is sound. Teaching is good at times when it is very directed. Staff plan the children's learning according to national guidance and they have high expectations of what they expect the children to learn. By the time they leave the Reception class, most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in this area.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths:

- The children are taught well to count to 10.
- Children are learning to recognise numbers well.

and weakness:

- Staff do not use structured play activities as effectively as they could to promote numeracy.

Commentary

46 The children's mathematical learning is satisfactory. Consequently, many are achieving the expected level and are set to reach the early learning goals in this area by the time they leave the Reception class.

47 Teaching is effective when it is well directed. A good emphasis is placed on learning numbers. The children have a growing awareness of mathematical vocabulary because teachers draw their attention to it. Children are supported well through focused groups. Specific activities with a teacher or teaching assistant are used effectively to concentrate on essential mathematical teaching points such as recognising numbers. All children have the opportunity to fully participate in activities during the sessions. Behaviour is good so the children's time is not wasted and they enjoy their experience of learning about numbers.

48 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is sound in the area of mathematics. Methods of teaching are generally suitable and children's interest is stimulated by involvement in practical activities. The teacher recapitulates on children's learning, as a group, to help them remember what they have done in previous sessions. However, better use could be made of structured play activities to develop numeracy skills so that children are able to consolidate their skills through independent learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strength:

- The computer is available on a daily basis.

Commentary

49. The children have a wide range of construction toys, which they use effectively to initiate their own learning. The computer is available in the classrooms and the children enjoy using it in independent learning sessions. Reception children are able to use drawing programs to create their own pictures. They are beginning to see it as a tool to help them learn as a normal part of their learning experience.

50 Overall, the quality of teaching in this area is sound. Children are helped to experience a range of activities to stimulate their natural curiosity. For example, they have a collection of 'old' things to see how things used to be. Many children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception class.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Children are taught skills using apparatus effectively.
- Both fine and large motor skills are taught well.
- Children have experience in using a range of equipment.

Commentary

51 The children's achievement in the area of physical development is good. Consequently most children would normally be expected to attain or exceed the early learning goals in this area. Good use is made of the indoor equipment in directed activities; they use the hall very regularly. Children work productively both independently and with good adult support to increase their skills. They

follow instructions very well and are learning to control their movements successfully. Consequently children are learning a sense of space and moving with growing confidence. Children use a selection of simple tools and small equipment to develop their fine manipulative skills effectively. They display accuracy in controlling the computer and handling writing materials.

52 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in this area of learning. The children develop skills in using a variety of small 'tools' like the computer mouse or scissors, for example. They have the opportunity to experience a variety of physical activities using some large equipment like wheeled toys.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strength:

- Techniques are carefully taught.

Commentary

53 The children are achieving what would be expected for their age in the area of creative development. Role-play and 'small world' play contribute successfully in helping the children to expand their imagination and express their thoughts. Children express their ideas and interests as they use language creatively. Displays and plans show that they have the opportunity to paint and draw their own pictures. They are taught techniques and skills well. However, better use could be made of structured play activities to develop skills through independent learning.

54 The quality of teaching is sound and children enjoy a range of experiences. Teaching assistants support children well so that they receive individual attention when necessary. The children are well behaved, enjoy creative activities and have a good attitude to their work.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 attain standards that are **below average** and they have been **underachieving**. This is the result of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching they have received since joining the school, and because work is not matched closely enough to the needs of groups and individuals, particularly those of below average and average abilities.

Main strengths:

- Most pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and behave well in lessons.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are positive and promote a good climate for learning.
- Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special needs in lessons.

Main weaknesses:

- Assessment procedures do not ensure systematic progress as pupils move through the school.
- Leadership of the subject is not rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils receive consistently good teaching.

- The teaching and organisation of reading are not good enough to ensure that pupils are progressing as well as they could.
- Although test results are thoroughly analysed, the school does not evaluate the information well enough to identify weaknesses in provision.

Commentary

55 Although standards in reading and writing are below average and not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection, there are indications that they are slowly rising. However, to ensure a greater rate of progress, the school urgently needs to tackle the weaknesses noted above. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall. Of the six lessons observed, teaching was good in three and satisfactory in three. All evidence indicates that the quality of teaching is improving and this is resulting in the rising standards. However, it is still inconsistent across the school because rigorous assessment procedures do not support teachers' planning of work for different groups of pupils. Good teaching occurs where teachers ensure that all pupils benefit from a high level of direct teaching as they work on group tasks. As a result, pupils learn at a good pace at all stages of the lesson and teachers get a good idea of what pupils know, understand and can do, and use this information to guide planning for the next lesson. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, teachers concentrate for too long on one group of pupils and this does not help ensure that other groups are being challenged as they work. As a result of this, and also because the task is not appropriate for some pupils, they produce little work when not directed. Pupils with SEN are well supported in lessons to make the same progress as other pupils. Although there is no specific support for pupils with EAL, they are fluent in English and make the same progress as other pupils of similar abilities.

56 Standards in speaking and listening are in line with those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4, and a significant number speak confidently and with assurance. Teachers are largely successful in engaging the interest of pupils of all abilities and backgrounds during whole class sessions. In the best lessons, teachers hold pupils' attention well and challenge their understanding through questions that are directed at individuals, rather than expecting answers only from those who put their hands up. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher's storytelling ability held the pupils spellbound as they listened in awe and wonder. As a result, their imagination was stretched and their vocabulary enriched. Many examples were seen in assemblies and lessons during the inspection of teachers telling stories rather than reading them from books. This is a highly successful way of gaining pupils' interest and holding their attention.

57. The focus on the teaching of phonics across the school helps pupils to learn letter-sounds effectively. Although the standard in reading is below that expected for their age in the current Year 2 and Year 4, most pupils make good attempts at sounding out unfamiliar words. The majority of pupils enjoy reading and have good attitudes towards it. The school has recognised the need to encourage boys to read and has invested money to buy books which are of interest to them. Although girls perform better than boys in tests, there was no evidence during the lessons of a difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

58. Pupils in Year 2 read well enough to make sense of simple texts and retell well-known stories. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 read accurately and fluently and use punctuation well to add expression to their reading. Other pupils lack fluency because they read slowly and carefully to avoid making mistakes. Pupils do have opportunities for guided reading sessions with adults and this is having a positive impact. However, reading needs to be better organised and more account taken of pupils' abilities when moving them through the school's reading programme. Reading records show that some pupils have not changed their reading scheme book for many months. Although it is early in the first term of the school year, teachers have not made rigorous assessments of pupils' reading or writing skills and, as a result, they have not adapted their lesson plans to address pupils' needs. The co-ordinators have failed to pursue this important issue and ensure that lessons are appropriate, and leadership is not, therefore satisfactory. Nor have the co-ordinators pursued the concern over allocation of suitable reading books. Pupils in Year 4 know how libraries are organised and are developing satisfactory reference skills. However, it is not evident that they use these skills in

lessons for independent research. Pupils' reading records show that most parents give good support to pupils' reading at home.

59. In all year groups, pupils' attainment in writing is below average. The analysis of pupils' work shows that lessons cover the range of topics expected by the National Literacy Strategy. However, whilst there is an appropriate emphasis on acquiring skills, pupils are not then given sufficient opportunities to apply the skills learnt. In the case of pupils of average and below average abilities, these skills are introduced before they are ready for them. Pupils do not have enough time to apply basic skills before moving on to advanced language structure and variation. As a result, the work of a significant number of pupils shows slow progress over time. Opportunities to draft, evaluate and improve writing in English and other subjects of the curriculum are not provided frequently enough to develop pupils' skills as writers. Although there is an increasing use of ICT for pupils to enter, save, retrieve and print their work to enhance its quality, it is still not used regularly enough. Standards of spelling and handwriting are improving through regular practice. However, teachers' expectations that these skills be applied in other subjects are not high enough and the emphasis on the quality of presentation of all written work is too low. The annual Book Week, including visits from authors and poets, enriches the curriculum and increases pupils' interest in the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Although examples of writing were seen in subjects such as history, geography, science and religious education, teachers rarely mark mistakes in spelling or punctuation. As a result, the potential that other subjects can make to pupils' literacy skills has not yet been fully realised.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory** because of the mismatch of work to pupils' needs, resulting in significant underachievement. The broadly average standards at the time of the last inspection have not been maintained.

Main strength:

- Teachers use a range of interesting activities to provide practice in mental skills.

and weaknesses:

- Standards are below average and a significant proportion of pupils are underachieving.
- Procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do are not effective.
- Work is not planned to build on previous learning, nor does it meet pupils' different needs.
- Pupils are given insufficient guidance on how well they are doing and how they can improve.
- Pupils do not do enough work.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used regularly to support mathematical learning.

Commentary

61. Lessons usually start with interesting activities planned to develop pupils' skills in mental arithmetic. They often involve games, recitation with hand actions and exploration of pattern which interest all pupils including boys. In some lessons, the activities that follow also appeal to pupils, such as the spending of money in the museum shop in one of Year 3/4's lessons. Pupils concentrate well during such activities, enjoy their participation and improve their skills.

62. This enthusiastic start is not regularly sustained throughout all lessons, though, and pupils' progress is too often limited during the main focus of the lesson. Because pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding have not been precisely identified and recorded, teachers plan work from the National Numeracy Strategy that does not meet the needs of enough pupils in the class. Teachers sometimes move on too quickly before understanding is reached. The National Numeracy Strategy format of involving pupils in discussing the ways they work out answers works well with higher and average attaining pupils who have understood previous methods, but confuses lower attainers whose grasp of number is limited. Teachers sometimes cause further confusion by suggesting methods for the lesson but then select examples which are better tackled using a different method. In a Year 3/4 lesson, for instance, the first example of $5 + 7 + 3$ was given for pupils to practise using larger numbers first. It was better done by identifying that $7 + 3$ make 10, then adding the 5. There were instances of pupils experiencing difficulty with one to one correspondence being set work which relied on being able to count. This involved inappropriate support strategies like counting on fingers beyond 10. There is no intervention when pupils write figures the wrong way round, so some pupils are still doing this regularly in the juniors. When pupils were clearly struggling with work in lessons, too many interventions by adults focused on carrying out a prescribed method rather than dealing with underlying misconceptions. Pupils are rarely given advice on what they need to do to improve skills. Remarks about what pupils are good at are also often unhelpful because vague praise or remarks of "Excellent!" for a single correct answer do not indicate significant achievements. The problems encountered by lower attaining pupils mean that most teachers fail to plan more demanding work for higher attaining pupils, who then practise skills they have already acquired and make little effort. Although some of these issues, including poor understanding of place value, have been correctly identified and training has been provided to help teachers address them, the co-ordinator is not assiduously seeking the root of such concerns and pursuing action which will raise standards effectively.

63. As a result of this mismatch of work, standards in mathematics are below average in Year 2 and Year 4, and higher and average attaining pupils underachieve because of lack of challenge. Because pupils lack understanding of the decimal number system, they are not secure when carrying out basic calculations like addition and subtraction. Pupils are not confident about counting on and back from any number, or in steps other than one. The problems encountered in lessons often mean that lower attaining pupils complete few examples and over the long term do not consolidate their learning, while higher attaining pupils are unproductive because they lose interest. In practice, the work of pupils in the juniors is not much more advanced than in the infants. Pupils in Years 2 and 3, for example, were both looking at the ways in which additions to 20 can be expressed using different vocabulary. Boys are enthusiastic about competitive activities, but lose interest when teachers talk too long. They are also often less willing to persevere when there is no immediate help available. Over the long term, this adversely affects progress and goes some way to explaining why they do less well in tests. Pupils with SEN are well supported by teaching assistants in lessons, which enables them to complete tasks. However, fundamental misunderstandings are often missed because of the teacher's failure to assess their needs. Daily practice in lessons is intended to be inclusive but is not in fact producing equal opportunities.

64. During the inspection, a few pupils in three of the eight lessons had the opportunity to use ICT. However, in all cases, this was either as an alternative way of recording (for instance, where a pupil had a broken arm) or an activity to consolidate the same basic skills. Worksheets produced by teachers rarely use ICT. In pupils' work over the long term, there is little evidence of the computer being used. Information and communication technology (ICT) programs have not been explored for helping pupils' understanding, as an integral part in mathematics planning or even to improve pupils' speed of recall. The possibilities for enhancing the curriculum and motivating pupils have not been explored.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Although pupils do occasionally use mathematics across the curriculum, such as taking measurements in science and using co-ordinates in geography, such use is not regularly planned and is not a consistent feature of planning to reinforce key skills where they apply. The mathematics involved often challenges all but the higher attaining pupils. If pupils' attention were drawn to factors like relative size and symmetry, it would improve outcomes in subjects such as design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**. The above average standards reported at the time of the last inspection have not been maintained, and a significant proportion of pupils are **underachieving**.

Main strengths:

- Pupils enjoy science.
- The school is now placing greater emphasis on investigative work so pupils learn through suitable methods.

and weaknesses:

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- Pupils are not assessed accurately so that the planning of lessons provides for different needs.
- Pupils' work is not marked adequately so that they know how to improve.

Commentary

66. Standards in science are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The school has tried to concentrate their efforts on raising standards in English. Consequently, science has not received sufficient attention and necessary improvements have not been made since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is not as good as it could be. The school now places greater emphasis on investigative work to try to raise attainment. Teachers are starting to encourage the pupils to investigate and hypothesise so that they develop scientific thinking. Pupils are now beginning to participate in a range of investigations so that they have good opportunities to experiment. They have learnt how some materials change when a force is exerted on them. They are beginning to make accurate observations and record their findings. However, these improvements in investigative work have not yet had time to have an impact on the extent of their learning. National guidelines are used to plan the work but the teachers do not plan well enough for the differences in pupils' learning, particularly the average and higher attaining pupils.

67. Teachers are starting to encourage the pupils to question, predict and draw conclusions from their own experiences. At the end of the lessons, teachers draw the pupils' experiences together and provide sound summaries of the learning made by the class as a whole.

68. Overall, the quality of teaching throughout the school is unsatisfactory. Appropriate work is being covered to meet National Curriculum Programmes of Study. However, lessons are not always planned to provide for individual needs. Resources are being improved so that a range of materials and equipment is available. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used adequately to support science teaching throughout the school and there are limited opportunities for pupils to apply numeracy skills. The headteacher has recently taken on the role of co-ordinator for the subject and has identified those areas where improvements are needed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**. Since the last inspection when it was identified as a key issue, the school has established an ICT suite, built up the software and trained teachers in teaching the subject. Standards are **below national expectations** but pupils are making satisfactory progress.

Main strengths:

- Pupils have regular lessons in the computer suite to learn essential skills.
- They are now making regular and steady progress in acquiring the skills required.
- The subject is effectively resourced, and the present co-ordinator is aware of priorities for development.

and weaknesses:

- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used regularly in other lessons.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' ICT skills are not effective.

Commentary

69. Since the last inspection, the school has established an ICT suite to which pupils go regularly for a weekly lesson. Careful consideration was given to this resource, and it was established economically. Work is now being planned to include all areas of the National Curriculum, with associated training provided for teachers and teaching assistants as they introduce new work to pupils. The co-ordinator provides support to staff if they encounter difficulties despite the training so that pupils do cover the necessary skills. Work thus provides planned introductions to basic skills and gives appropriate practice in the skills taught in the lesson that week. Some classes have additional lessons in the suite, which the teacher books by arrangement, and these pupils usefully practise their skills in different situations, but not all classes make such arrangements on a regular basis. In this respect, pupils throughout the school are not having equal opportunities to benefit from ICT, although pupils in the specialist learning centre do benefit from programs on the computer in their classroom which specifically focus on their needs. During the inspection, ICT was used in the classroom in about 10 per cent lessons observed, usually by just one or two pupils at a time. This is not sufficient to practise skills in a range of different contexts. Programs used in lessons outside the suite seldom provide practice in the skills recently taught in ICT lessons, more often being ones which consolidate mathematical or literacy skills. Many pupils are not sufficiently confident about using common procedures, such as opening files, saving and printing, to be independent users. There are also many still finding their way round the keyboard. Many pupils do not understand how computers work and are surprised if their actions result in lost work or unwanted outcomes.

70. Procedures for assessing pupils' skills and understanding of ICT do not give teachers the information they need to plan tasks that meet pupils' differing needs. Information is not gathered regularly on pupils' competence in using the computer, which sometimes results in teachers having to modify lessons as they are taught. This occurs when teachers find that procedures which have been covered and are thought to be secure for most pupils have not in fact been consolidated by many. Although teaching is generally satisfactory in lessons, weaknesses in planning and assessment mean that pupils do not make the quick progress needed to catch up and reach the expected standard. Conversely, where pupils use computers at home, some tasks set are quickly completed and the pupils concerned learn nothing new.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Although some ICT is used in subjects, for instance in searching the Internet for information in history, it is not a regular part of planned work and has been rightly identified as an area for development by the co-ordinator.

HUMANITIES

Geography

In geography, pupils achieve **satisfactorily** and reach the nationally expected standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 as at the time of the last inspection. It is regularly taught using national guidance. Evidence was drawn from a sample of pupils' work and teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and staff, and observation of two geography lessons: one in a Year 1 class and the other in a Year 1/2 class.

Main strengths:

- Use of the local environment.
- The contribution the subject makes to pupils' understanding of citizenship in caring for the environment.
- Pupils with SEN are fully included in lessons when additional support is provided.

and weaknesses:

- The subject does not make enough contribution to pupils' writing skills.
- Assessment information is not well used to provide appropriate work for potentially higher attaining pupils.

72. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson and satisfactory in the other. The unsatisfactory lesson was not well enough resourced to allow for an interesting range of well-planned activities to stimulate pupils' interest. As a result, many lost interest and learning was limited. Nevertheless, all evidence indicates that the satisfactory standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and that pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall. Pupils with SEN make the same progress as their peers when support is provided. Although no specific support is provided for pupils with EAL, they make the same progress as other pupils in lessons. However, potentially higher attaining pupils are not identified through assessment and as a result appropriate work is not provided to extend the skills and independence of these pupils. By the end of Year 2, most pupils demonstrate an awareness of localities beyond their own and compare their lives to those of children living on an island, for example. They make simple maps using keys to show where things are located and other features of the environment. Planning and completed work show that, by the end of Year 4, pupils use suitable geographical terminology to identify and describe what places are like. They use co-ordinates to identify places and features on maps and explain patterns produced by physical or human features within the local environment.

73. Simple research and mapping skills are generally well developed, but pupils do not make consistent progress as they move through the school. Evidence indicates that pupils in Years 3 and 4 have too few opportunities for independent work, using a range of books, atlases and ICT. As a result, pupils' reading and writing skills are not developed and they rarely write reports of what they have discovered. The subject does not make a significant contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Some completed work shows that teachers pay insufficient attention to pupils' spelling and punctuation in written work, despite the need to raise standards in English. The co-ordinator has not taken enough action in this respect.

74. The school makes good use of visits to support the curriculum and pupils' learning. Visits to the local environment, the city cathedral, museums and visits by Barnaby Bear to different parts of Britain and the world, do much to enrich pupils' experiences. They are made aware of the similarities and differences between their lives and those of children in other countries when they study a village in a less economically developed country. In this respect, the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural awareness. The residential trip undertaken by Year 4 pupils helps them develop and use their fieldwork skills.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory** but the good standards reported at the time of the last inspection have not been maintained.

Main strengths:

- Some lessons are livelier than they are in other subjects.
- Resources are used well.
- Pupils enjoy the subject.

and weakness:

- Assessment is not used to plan well for the next step in individual children's learning.

Commentary

75. All three junior classes were observed during the inspection, but no infant pupils were being taught history during inspection week so evidence is chiefly from an analysis of recorded work. Standards in history meet national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 4, and pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Provision for pupils with SEN is good in relation to their agreed targets. Consequently, pupils' achievement in history is sound overall. However, assessment is not used effectively to identify what pupils know and can do so that new work builds on prior learning and extends the higher attainers' knowledge and understanding.

76. Pupils are developing a sense of the passing of time and learning which events come after others. By the end of Year 4, pupils continue to deepen their understanding of past times. Staff use 'themed days', where the pupils dress up in appropriate costumes, for example, to help make the experiences come alive for the pupils. The topic on the Ancient Egyptians has fired the pupils' imagination and, during the inspection, pupils in Year 4 became deeply involved in their historical enquiries. They are successfully learning to use relevant artefacts to raise questions and make deductions. Although the overall quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory, two lively and interesting lessons were seen which motivated pupils to want to learn. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and in the best lessons they pose searching questions to make pupils think deeply and increase their understanding of their work. They manage pupils' behaviour well and use appropriate methods to support the learning activity. Teachers effectively remind pupils of their earlier work and put the period in context. They explain to pupils what they are going to do in that lesson and recapitulate on what has been learnt at the end of the lesson. Links are made with other subjects, such as art and work on the computer, although active promotion of literacy skills is limited. Pupils generally enjoy lessons, take care of the resources that they use and listen to others' ideas.

77. There is no systematic assessment of pupils' progress against specific learning outcomes to guide planning of the next step in learning so there is no way of ensuring progression. The co-ordinator has no overview of standards in the subject, and makes a limited impact on provision.

Religious Education

The locally agreed syllabus guides teachers' planning and pupils achieve **satisfactory standards**. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Standards are not as good as they were at the time of the last inspection.

Main strength:

- Pupils' gain a good understanding of moral values. They understand that a feature of different faiths is that of caring for each other.

and weakness:

- Pupils forget facts they have been taught about different faiths because they have too few opportunities to research information for themselves rather than being given facts by their teachers.

Commentary

78. Four lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching and learning was good in one lesson and satisfactory in four. The difference between the good lesson and those that were satisfactory is the teacher made effective use of drama in the good lesson to give pupils an understanding of the content and moral behind the parable of the 'Lost Sheep'. Pupils were inspired to learn and all took part in the activities with interest and enthusiasm. In the other lessons, which were otherwise satisfactory, teachers did not engage the interest of all pupils through a range of interesting methods such as personal research or role-play. Although the group and paired discussions resulted in some meaningful debate, written tasks were not devised well enough to challenge pupils' thinking through extended writing, which would also contribute to their literacy skills. Teachers ensure that all pupils, including those with SEN and those who speak English as an additional language, are fully included so that they make progress similar to that of other pupils. The co-ordinator has not provided the necessary oversight to ensure that provision for religious education is promoting literacy and independent learning.

79. Pupils are taught about Christianity and aspects of other major faiths, such as Judaism and Islam, so that they gain an understanding of the nature of religious belief. They understand that a major element in different faiths is that of caring for one another and realise the need to respect people who are different as well as those who believe the same as they do. They also learn the importance of festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Eid to followers of those faiths, and that religions have key figures such as Jesus, Moses and Mohammad. They know that each religion has a place of worship such as a church, mosque and synagogue. Pupils know that religious books such as the Bible and Torah contain rules and examples for living. Spiritual, moral and social development is a strong feature of the school, and pupils are given a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. This is promoted not only in religious education but also throughout the school day. In this respect, teachers ensure that pupils not only learn *about* religion, but also *from* religion.

80. Well prepared assemblies give good support to the religious education curriculum and to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Themes such as why we need rules, the evils of bullying and on being kind and friendly, are so well presented that they capture pupils' interest. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes reflect their understanding of what they are taught in lessons and assemblies. Visits to the cathedral and the local church give pupils a sound understanding of the purpose and function of different parts of these buildings but knowledge of other faiths' places of worship is limited.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**. Only one lesson was observed, but work on display and records of previous displays were scrutinised.

Main strengths:

- Techniques in drawing are taught well.
- The curriculum provides a broad balance of opportunities.
- Pupils have good opportunities for direct observation.
- Sketchbooks are used well.

Commentary

81. Standards in art and design have been maintained since the previous inspection and are good by the end of Year 4. Although attention to the subject has twice been postponed because of more important priorities, the co-ordinator has maintained its profile and ensured that provision continues to be good. Pupils are achieving well in developing skills and techniques, especially in learning to draw. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special needs, have the opportunity to experience a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills. Pupils are using computer programs successfully to create designs.

82. By the end of Year 4, the pupils have appropriate skills in designing and making interesting pieces of work, developed through the use of a range of materials and media. The local upper school has been involved in helping the children to create imaginative and colourful work. An example of this is the 'Under The Sea' display, which shows attractive use of colour and texture.

83. Teaching is most successful in promoting pupils' skills and techniques because teachers have a good understanding of the processes involved in art work. As a result, pupils gain a secure understanding of a variety of skills and techniques. In their work on famous artists, such as Murillo, the pupils use the techniques and stimuli of the work to develop their own skills.

84. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard to achieve. They concentrate for extended periods because good use is made of resources, and the use of visitors is a strength. For example, a visit from the 'bird man' stimulated the pupils' imagination and they created interesting pieces of work in three dimensions representing giant birds. Pupils use sketchbooks well to practise and refine skills. Teachers manage behaviour effectively and the pupils co-operate appropriately. The teachers give good guidance by working alongside the pupils and making suggestions for improvement. Pupils with special needs have full access to the curriculum.

Design and technology

Two design and technology lessons were observed in the infants, and accumulated evidence of work from a single project was scrutinised for each year group. No overall judgment on provision is possible, but some of the shortcomings identified in the last report remain, particularly the limited joining techniques used by junior pupils.

Main strength:

- Useful opportunities are provided in infant lessons to make choices and take decisions about constructing artefacts.

and weaknesses:

- The two year programme is not ensuring sufficient progression for the pupils in Year 2 and Year 4.
- Not all projects planned are appropriate for the subject.
- Artefacts are poorly finished and use a limited range of materials and joining techniques.
- Pupils have limited opportunities to evaluate their products.

Commentary

85. In the work completed and saved for scrutiny, there was often little discernible difference between the products of younger and older pupils in terms of techniques used, quality of finish or comments made in evaluating the outcomes. Year 4 pupils who briefly discussed their design and technology work with the inspector felt they would not know how to improve subsequent work as the result of considering what they had done previously. Different expectations of the two year-groups are not clearly defined in terms of skills in making, designing or evaluating. Moreover, some of the work planned as design and technology has no function, and therefore is art and design rather than technology. The co-ordinator is not actively involved in developing the subject.

86. In the lessons observed, pupils were learning how to make simple vehicles actually work, having had a useful opportunity to use construction toys first so that they saw how wheels and axles could be constructed. Adults worked with individual pupils to help them to make sensible choices about which resources to select, and how to join the parts successfully to enable the skateboard to roll. All pupils, including those from the specialist learning centre, were fully involved in constructing a skateboard. Attention to size and finish was, however, limited. Numeracy skills are not being actively promoted through design and technology projects, and ICT is rarely used.

Music

87. Three music lessons were observed, and pupils were heard singing in assembly and some other lessons. The co-ordinator provided a file to show what actions had been taken in the subject and a video recording of a school production was watched. Year 2 and Year 4 pupils discussed briefly their experiences of music in school. However, it is not possible to make an overall judgment on the subject as no composing or appraising was observed nor to assess whether the average standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.

Main strengths:

- Singing is tuneful, even when unaccompanied.
- The curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular activities, and some pupils benefit from instrument lessons taught by a visiting specialist.
- Music makes a strong contribution to the school's work with the community.

and weakness:

- Music provision makes a limited contribution to pupils' cultural awareness.

Commentary

88. Pupils sing tunefully in assembly, during music lessons and at times in other lessons; one teacher, for instance, used a short song to establish the focus for the afternoon when pupils returned for lunch. Although some older pupils are reluctant to join in with singing, adults set a good example. Many pupils who performed with percussion instruments showed a lack of confidence both in keeping the pulse and maintaining a rhythm. Infant pupils were keen to offer ideas for creating music on a theme, but no evidence of composition was available. All pupils have the same opportunities to participate in musical activities, and pupils from the specialist learning centre are well integrated when they join mainstream classes.

89. The teaching was good in one lesson, satisfactory in another but unsatisfactory in the third. The quality was largely dependent on teachers' confidence in the subject and how far they relied on the published scheme of work which forms the core of the planned provision. Less confident teachers who follow the scheme closely prompted low participation by pupils, particularly in playing

percussion instruments, and parts of their lessons lacked pace. Where teachers' enthusiasm influenced lessons, pupils joined in willingly with activities and not only practised skills readily but also keenly offered ideas. The co-ordinator has rightly identified some of these shortcomings, but the low priority of the subject has meant little has been done to change provision.

90. There are useful opportunities for pupils to join an extra-curricular choir which entertains groups in the community, and some older pupils benefit from peripatetic instrument lessons. Opportunities to take part in music festivals, carol services, concerts for old folk and school productions not only enhance provision, but also forge useful links with the community. Pupils also enjoy and benefit from visits by musicians and trips to hear performers locally. Pupils have some opportunities to listen to recorded music in assembly and in some music lessons. However, the range of music used and the attention it receives to enrich pupils' experience of different cultural traditions is limited.

Physical Education

Provision has improved since the last inspection and is now **satisfactory**.

Main strengths:

- Teaching of dance.
- Provision of swimming for Year 4 pupils.
- Very good attitudes of the pupils.

and weakness:

- Teachers do not make use of assessment to plan appropriate work for higher attaining pupils in games lessons.

91. Teachers are more confident in teaching the subject than at the time of the previous inspection. As a result, pupils are now achieving good standards in dance and satisfactory standards in all other aspects of the subject. All the juniors were observed during a games lesson, and one dance lesson was seen in each key stage. The co-ordinator gave additional evidence of work done to tackle the key issue from the last inspection. The school provides its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum, which is designed to promote their physical development and social interaction. Year 4 pupils attend swimming lessons at the local pool and they make good progress because of the quality teaching by the instructors, parents who are qualified to teach swimming, and the accompanying teachers. Pupils in Year 4 take part in a range of outdoor and adventurous activities during their annual residential trip. Staff report that pupils enjoy these activities, are good ambassadors for their school, and are well taught to develop skills of a problem-solving nature. The co-ordinator has been actively involved in ensuring the key issue from the last inspection has been addressed but is not actively developing the subject further even though concerns have been identified.

92. The quality of teaching was good in the two dance lessons seen during the inspection and satisfactory in the games lesson. Lessons have clear learning intentions and begin with good warm-up sessions. They are generally structured well enough to keep pupils warm and to allow them enough time to explore, practice and improve their skills. In dance lessons, teachers make good use of rest periods for pupils to demonstrate their techniques as a stimulus for improvement. Throughout the school, there is a proper emphasis on teaching the correct skills. Teachers have developed positive relationships within their classes. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons, behave well and work together safely and co-operatively. All teachers are aware of the needs of less able pupils. The quality of support provided for these pupils ensures that they are fully included in lessons. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make the same progress as pupils of similar abilities in lessons. However, work is not always planned to extend higher attaining pupils.

93. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, guided by this knowledgeable and supportive teaching, pupils have increased their confidence in physical control and mobility. Standards in dance are good because of the quality of teaching and the systematic programme that develops skills in a coherent way. Pupils employ movements in an imaginative way, responding to music and other stimuli. The school's own sloping outdoor play area is inappropriate for games but teachers make good use of the Middle School's field and outdoor hard surface. Although this means that adults and pupils carry equipment quite a long way, this is well organised so that little learning time is lost. In a junior games lesson, pupils were observed learning to refine and develop ball skills such as throwing, passing, bouncing and catching. The quality of teaching ensures that pupils develop satisfactory skills and go on to apply these within small-team games, thinking about attacking and defending tactics. Although there is only a small range of extra-curricular sport, opportunities to take part in inter-school competitions, such as athletics and cross-country, support pupils' social development and sense of achievement.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	6
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	4

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