

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGHCLIFFE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Leicester

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120091

Headteacher: Mr Iain Munro

Lead inspector: John Ayerst

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th June 2004

Inspection number: 256422

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	408
School address:	Greengate Lane Birstall Leicester Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE4 3DL
Telephone number:	0116 2101112
Fax number:	0116 2101116
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Paul Goffin
Date of previous inspection:	1 st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Highcliffe Primary School and Community Centre is much bigger than other primary schools, with 408 boys and girls aged 5-11. Most of the pupils come from the surrounding residential area. The school also serves the local community with a wide range of community activities for adults and children at all times of the day. A lower than average number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times of first admission and transfer. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (0.5 per cent) is well below average. The proportion of families from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average with the majority coming from an Asian background. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is high (14.5 per cent). However, no pupils are at an early level of learning to speak English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (10.7 per cent) is below the national average and the percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (1.2 per cent) is broadly average. Pupils with special educational needs are identified as needing help with speech or communication difficulties or with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). A number have physical difficulties or impairments or special educational needs connected with autism. Overall, however, pupils' attainment on entry is above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3832	John Ayerst	Lead inspector	Art and design, music, English as an additional language.
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector	
18638	Christopher Shaw	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education and citizenship.
32133	Joan Elton	Team inspector	English, physical education, religious education, the Foundation Stage.
2220	Ian Nelson	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

Serco QAA
Herringston Barn
Herringston
Dorchester
Dorset
DT2 9PU

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Highcliffe School is an effective school that provides good value for money. Pupils achieve well and, at the end of Year 6, attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. While teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, teaching and learning are good in English and science. The leadership and management of the school are also good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school, but they underachieve in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 3 to 6, and in music.
- Teaching and learning are good in English, physical education, music and science. In mathematics, teaching is sound but pupils achieve well because of the good provision made through setting of classes, visiting specialist teaching in Year 6 and a strong focus on calculation.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide and varied programme of experiences that enrich their learning, including very good links with the community.
- The provision for social and moral education is very good so that pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and they relate well to each other and to adults.
- Subject leadership is variable in quality, largely because co-ordinators do not have time to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in English, mathematics and science, but it is not used consistently well to plan the next stage of learning in other subjects.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The` above average standards reported in the last inspection in 1998 have been broadly maintained. The key issues from the last inspection have continued to be addressed under the leadership of a different headteacher. Provision for ICT is now established and is improving rapidly, although there is still room for improvement. Curriculum planning has improved, but this is not yet fully impacting on lesson planning. Assessment has improved but still has some way to go before it can be fully useful to inform planning. Provision for the Foundation Stage is now good. The school development plan is now an effective tool to take the school forward.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' attainment on entry is above average and by the end of the reception classes children exceed the expected goals. In most years they leave, at the end of Year 6, with standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science when compared with national standards and above average in English, mathematics and science when compared with similar schools. Standards in English dropped to the national average last year and were well below average in comparison with similar schools. This was due to a staffing deployment issue that has now been resolved. In the tests for Year 2 last year, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average.

In the current Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. For the present group of pupils in Year 2 standards are above average in English, science and religious education, and well above average in mathematics. Standards in ICT are average but pupils in Years 3 to 6 underachieve in ICT because the improvements in the subject have not yet had time to take full effect. In physical education standards are above average. In music standards are below average because pupils are mostly taught in double classes. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and their personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall. Attendance is good and pupils' punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **good** quality of education. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall, but good in English, physical education, science, and in the Foundation Stage. Assessment is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in some subjects. The curriculum is of good quality, though insufficient time is provided for music, and opportunities for enrichment are good. Pupils are well cared for and all have full access to all of the school's activities. Parents make a good contribution to their children's progress and links with the community are very effective in supporting pupils' development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school and community activities are **good**. The headteacher successfully promotes a positive climate and has good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff work confidently in teams and demonstrate positive attitudes, but not all work to the same high level of rigour across the curriculum that is evident in English and science. The quality of subject leadership is variable, but generally satisfactory. The governors are effective in their understanding of the school. Statutory requirements are not always met for collective worship.

PARENTS AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a largely positive view of the school and the education their children receive. In the questionnaire returns, a number of parents expressed concern about bullying, about the information they received from the school and about the advice they are given on how to help their child. On investigation, inspectors consider the school has effective arrangements to deal with each of these issues satisfactorily. The inspectors also agree with the overwhelmingly positive views expressed by pupils about their school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve pupils' achievement in music and ICT.
- Make sure subject co-ordinators have sufficient non-contact time to be effective in school improvement.
- Improve the use of assessments in some subjects to track pupils' progress and to plan the next stage of learning.
- Improve teaching in mathematics.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Arrange for assemblies to meet the requirement for a daily act of worship.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well overall and standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average at the end of Year 6. There are no differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well overall in English, mathematics and science as they move through the school. Pupils' achievement in music and in ICT for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and very well in their personal and social skills.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.5 (17.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.6 (15.7)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.9 (18.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (29.2)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.1 (29.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.7 (31.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 71 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The table shows that standards in the tests for Year 6 at the end of last year were average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science when compared with national standards. In comparison with similar schools they were well below average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. In the tests for Year 2 last year standards in reading, writing and mathematics were well above average. In comparison with similar schools standards were above average in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing. In general, standards are broadly similar over the last three years at both stages, except for a dip in English at Year 6 last year, which was due to a staff deployment issue that has now been resolved.
2. Work seen during the inspection indicates that in response to good teaching in English, science and religious education and good curriculum provision in mathematics, the current Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. In Year 2 standards of the present cohorts are well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science.
3. Standards in ICT are broadly average throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in religious education and improving rapidly in information and communication technology in response to the recently improved provision. In physical education standards are above average and pupils are achieving well because teaching and learning are good. In music achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below average, because insufficient lesson time is provided and pupils are taught in double classes. In other subjects, in the lessons seen and in pupils' work, pupils were achieving at least satisfactorily. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
4. Owing to the good provision made in the Foundation Stage, children achieve well overall. They achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional skills, their physical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world because teaching and learning are very good in these areas. They enter the school with above average attainment and a large proportion are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals for children of this age by the time they enter Year 1.
5. Across the curriculum in general, pupils of all levels of attainment, including the most and the least able, make good progress. Many of those with special educational needs attain the levels expected of their age in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with physical or medical special educational needs are supported within their normal class lessons and helped to take a full and active part in their lessons. Pupils with specific learning difficulties receive support from their class teachers in lessons and sometimes receive extra small group support in English so that they achieve well overall. Pupils from minority cultures achieve well in the school. There are none at present whose access to the curriculum is constrained by lack of English and, when that does happen, the school makes good provision to ensure that communication is quickly established.
6. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum. The school's strategies for developing literacy and numeracy are good and support the development of skills in English and mathematics lessons as well as in other subjects. Pupils show sound levels of competency in the use of ICT in many subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school develops pupils' personal qualities well and they are good overall. Attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attendance is good and pupils' punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy learning and have very positive attitudes towards school and each other, so attendance is good.
- Pupils are very well behaved; occasionally less so when not stimulated or organised well.
- The school promotes independence and initiative and pupils respond very well when given responsibility.
- As a result of good cooperation between home and school attendance is good.

Commentary

7. The pupils' enthusiasm for learning is evident in their enjoyment of lessons, their participation in the exciting extra-curricular and community activities and their very positive attitudes towards adults and each other. Even when sometimes lessons are too easy, they are very self-motivating and keen to find things out. They are encouraged by their parents, teachers and other adults to pursue a wide range of interests. Their environment is stimulating with displays of pupils' work and the school also rewards achievement of all kinds with praise and awards. From the time the children arrive in the Reception class, they are expected to behave well and behaviour is very good. In a very few lessons, however, when teaching is less effective, there can be some noise or fidgety behaviour. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good in the Foundation Stage and almost all exceed the expectations for children of that age by the time they enter Year 1.
8. The pupils play very well together in the extensive grounds and play areas. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to the younger ones to ensure they feel welcome and safe. Although the parents' and pupils' questionnaires indicated that there was some bullying taking place, the inspection could find no cases of this. Pupils are confident that bullying is not an issue; they take anything that worries them to the teachers and problems are sorted out. There is an increasing minority of pupils from a range of different cultural backgrounds and pupils work harmoniously together. They get on well together because the school promotes awareness, understanding and, indeed, celebration of cultural differences. Pupils have very good moral values and an understanding of each other's feelings. There have been no exclusions.
9. The pupils' personal development is well fostered in most aspects of school life. Lunchtimes are very civilised affairs with pupils paying for their own lunch in the canteen and sitting where they like. From the Reception class, pupils learn how to use the barcode reader in the library to borrow books for themselves. Older pupils say they enjoy the respect of adults, which adds to their maturity. There are very good opportunities for social development through exciting clubs and sports activities. Older pupils organise some of these events themselves, like the 'European Cup' - a football knockout tournament open to all boys and girls - or the very serious chess tournament with an 'invited' audience. As a community school, open to community groups after hours, there are other good opportunities to mix with people from outside school, and to learn about life in the community. The good programme of personal, social and health education also helps prepare pupils for life in general and the responsibilities of living in a community.

The school council gives all pupils a say in how the school is run and has been responsible for initiatives to improve school meals and reopen the swimming pool. The school is sometimes overwhelmed by requests to raise money for charity and where these are possible, the events are organised by the pupils.

10. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own cultural traditions, and those of others, in lessons and visits. Having a mix of pupils from different backgrounds means that the school is able to draw on parents and other representatives of Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Christian and other religions to enrich the experience and understanding of the pupils. All pupils take part in assembly every day and these are varied and interesting, with good opportunities for pupils to participate by playing music, acting in dramas or making announcements. They provide sound opportunities for spiritual development, through a range of universal themes, songs and opportunities for contemplation and reflection. They do not, however, always include an act of worship.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. Attendance is good and improves as pupils progress through the school to Year 6. Nearly all pupils arrive on time for school and they are very punctual at the start of lessons. There are low levels of unauthorised absence because of the effective home and school partnerships.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good in English, science, physical education and in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is of a good quality and opportunities for enrichment are good. Pupils are well cared for. Parents make a good contribution to their children's progress and links with the community are very effective in supporting pupils' development.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Assessment is also satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in some subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding in English and science that helps to support pupils' good learning.
- Relationships between teachers and their pupils are very good so pupils behave very well.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are used well to support learning across the curriculum.
- Pupils are very willing learners who respond very positively to the good teaching provided.
- In many lessons, teachers do not always make explicit the learning aims for the lesson, either for the whole class or for the different groups of pupils in the class.

- Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage, satisfactory in English, mathematics and science and underdeveloped in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	4 (9%)	20 (43%)	18 (39%)	3 (7%)	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.

- Although the proportion of good and very good lessons has reduced from the last inspection, the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has also reduced. Teaching is now satisfactory overall, but in the Foundation Stage and in English and science teaching is good. A strong feature of the teaching is the very good relationships that are evident in most lessons and facilitate teaching and learning. In mathematics, teaching is satisfactory, but the good curriculum provision and pupils enthusiasm, as well as additional provision in Year 6, ensure that pupils achieve well. These additional factors acting in mathematics are also the reason that overall judgements made during the inspection on teaching and learning in lessons are not as good as overall achievement.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding in English and science. Consequently, teachers are confident in setting high expectations of their pupils in those subjects, who respond well to the challenge and make good gains in developing skills and furthering their understanding in most lessons. Teachers and pupils enjoy good relationships with each other. The pupils settle quickly to work and sustain their concentration well and their behaviour is very good overall.
- In lessons that are satisfactory, rather than good or better, it is usually where teachers have not sufficiently clarified the aims of the lesson. Assessments from previous lessons have not been used well enough to prepare the learning targets for the different groups of pupils in the class. Consequently, the learning is not so well focused and tasks are less appropriate. Similar features are evident when teaching is unsatisfactory, but the lack of focus and less than appropriate tasks lead to unsatisfactory achievement in those lessons.
- The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is sound in general classes. However, here lesson plans do not usually show clearly how the learning will be structured to ensure that all pupils, including those with special learning needs, will be given well-matched work. Teachers tend to give all pupils the same task and to spend time supporting the lower attaining and special educational needs pupils while the more able work more independently. In English lessons, pupils with special educational needs are sometimes withdrawn from the lesson for extra small group support, which is usually good and supports their progress well. It is the quality of this focussed support that ensures they achieve well overall. In the best lessons the class teacher refers to the pupils' individual education plans and matches the tasks to them but this quality of support is the exception rather than the rule.
- Overall assessment is satisfactory. Appropriate procedures are established in English, mathematics, science and the Foundation Stage. In other areas systems for assessment

do not sufficiently measure and record pupils' progress. Consequently, teachers' planning for the next stage of learning is not sufficiently informed.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is good. It is inclusive and opportunities to take part in extra curriculum activities are good, particularly in sport. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, the curriculum has good breadth and balance and meets the needs of the pupil
- Extra-curricular enrichment is very good and helps raise pupils interest and achievement.
- There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- There is insufficient time for music and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Assemblies do not meet statutory requirements.

Commentary

17. The curriculum has good breadth and balance. It covers all the National Curriculum subjects including religious education. Personal, social and health education is well planned and incorporates aspects of citizenship. For example, pupils in Year 6 learn how personal information is used and misused by society, as well as how to use the Internet and World Wide Web safely. The science curriculum is exciting, as it is made relevant to pupils' interests and concerns, particularly in the fields of the environment and ecology. Since new hardware and software have been installed in the last eighteen months, ICT has begun to permeate all aspects of the school curriculum. Teachers and pupils use computers regularly in English, history, geography and mathematics. In science pupils log on to web-sites or observe mini-beasts through the video microscope. Although assemblies are relevant and stimulating, the school does not meet the requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship.
18. The timetable ensures that all pupils have equal access to the well-planned curriculum. However, the percentage of time allocated to music is very much lower than usual because, in most years, the pupils are taught in very large groups, two classes at a time. This limits the amount of time that can be spared for individuals, as well as cutting down on the types of activity that can be attempted, so achievement in music is unsatisfactory. The school has a top group and a lower group for mathematics and English from Year 4 onwards, which helps teachers to match more closely the work to the needs of the pupils. In mathematics, 'Booster' classes and extra support provide Year 6 pupils with added confidence to tackle the national tests, as well as filling any gaps in knowledge. As they move through the school, between the two sites and then on into the secondary school, pupils are well prepared to make the necessary adjustments.
19. The school's regular curriculum is enriched with 'science' days linked to the national science weeks. Visits to farm centres and other field trips make sure that pupils have a wide variety of experiences to support their learning. Gifted and talented pupils are supported well with more demanding work and extra activities in maths and science as well as a 'think club' (brain teasers). The support for learning outside the school day is very good. The school encourages and stimulates pupils' interests outside the regular curriculum. For example, although time provided for music is too brief, a good percentage of pupils are learning to play a musical instrument or sing in the choir. Year 6 pupils have

formed their own 'band'. There is a high level of participation in sport, and the many other clubs. The 'eco' club, called 'Little Rotters', is run under the wing of the science co-ordinator. The club has parent helpers and incorporates a special composting team. Providing pupils with opportunities to take initiatives is a very good feature of the school and they play a major part in devising and running the activities. As well as the full range of sports activities and teams, the school benefits from community-organised clubs such as football, tennis and gymnastics, often run by professional sportsmen and women.

20. Although the ratio of pupils to teachers is higher than average there is a good match of experienced teachers who are used effectively across the school. There are also visiting teachers to support music and a satisfactory allocation of learning support and special needs assistants. The resources are satisfactory and meet the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation is very good. The two separate buildings function well and the academic and social integration is very effective. The buildings are spacious and well used, as are the extensive grounds. The very pleasant environment is stimulating and varied and provides many opportunities for both study and relaxation.
21. The school has improved its curriculum well since the previous inspection. It is now well planned and incorporates good development of learning based on national guidelines.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Those with statements in respect of their medical or physical needs are well supported within lessons. Those with learning needs are sometimes withdrawn from English lessons for extra help in small groups or supported by the class teacher within the lesson alongside other lower attaining pupils, which provides effective support for their learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for the care, welfare and health of the pupils, who are encouraged very well to take an active part in the work and development of the school. The provision for pupils' support and guidance is sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and they are very well cared for.
- Pupils are confident in seeking advice from school staff if they have a concern.
- The school council enables pupils to be fully involved in the work of the school. The views of pupils are valued and, when appropriate, acted upon.
- The school encourages pupils to adopt a healthy life style.
- The data used in advising pupils and informing them on their progress is not consistent in all subjects.

Commentary

23. There is a very happy and industrious atmosphere in the school, which encourages learning and helps to build on pupils' self-confidence. Staff are vigilant about health and safety matters. The governors and senior management undertake regular risk assessment and pay due regard to any issue that needs attention. Staff are well qualified to attend to pupils if they are sick or injured. Records are kept and parents informed. Child protection procedures are good and staff are well aware of their responsibilities. There is a vigorous programme to encourage healthy eating as part of a well-developed personal,

social and health education programme. The school's personal development programme encourages stimulating discussions in class on, for example, anti-social behaviour, and pupils benefit from interesting talks by the police and other outside speakers.

24. Because pupils have very good relationships with staff they are confident in seeking advice or further explanations if they have not fully understood a teaching point. Staff know the pupils well. So they are well able to monitor and support their personal development. However, assessment procedures are not fully developed in subjects other than the core subjects of English, maths and science and in the Foundation Stage, so staff are not so well able to track and advise pupils about their academic progress in other subjects. Tests are well marked and teachers indicate through the marking systems how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to progress. The school has introduced the use of targets in English, which pupils find useful.
25. Induction arrangements are good. Pupils in the Reception classes settle quickly into school routines because relationships with pre-school providers are good. Other pupils who are new to the school settle into their classes happily. The recently introduced 'Buddy' system is working very well as older pupils help children in the junior playgrounds to make friends and to play together without any friction. There are well-developed procedures for preparing pupils for their new life in secondary school.
26. The school continuously finds ways of involving pupils in the way the school is run. The school council is well established and is respected for the work it does. Pupils on the school council take initiatives and discuss matters with the confidence that the school will make changes if appropriate. The council gives all pupils an insight into the way the school works as a community. This sense is further encouraged by the many after school clubs and activities provided by the school, often working with the co-operation of members of the community.
27. The school has effective systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are drawn up by the class teachers, but the quality of these is variable. While the best include very precise and measurable targets, some have targets that are too vague and broad.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with the community and the links with parents and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are supportive of the school and they make good contributions to their children's learning.
- Parents' views are taken into consideration well as the school plans developments.
- There are very good links with the community.
- The good links with other schools contribute well to the wider partnership.

Commentary

28. Parents are generally satisfied with the school and all that it provides for their children. They value education and are keen to secure the best for their children. This has a

beneficial effect on the partnership with the school in its efforts to achieve higher standards. Parents agree that the teaching helps their children make good progress. They also agree that with the encouragement of all staff, their children increase in maturity and independence as they progress through the school. They see that the added responsibilities given to their children and the wide range of extra-curricular activities help pupils to grow in self-esteem.

29. Parents are kept well informed about the school and its activities through newsletters, special notices and the School Prospectus. Well-written annual reports keep parents informed about their children's progress. This is particularly so in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science, but the reports are not so detailed in the other subjects. However, parents report that there are ample opportunities for them to meet with class teachers who suggest ways for them to help their children to cover the work more efficiently. The school involves the parents of pupils with special educational needs in the regular reviews of their progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs comment on their child's progress and are given suggestions for helping their child to learn so that they can make a direct impact on their child's achievement.
30. The school is successful in encouraging almost all parents to become involved with their children's education. Meetings with parents are well attended, whether for reviewing their children's work or for explaining methods of teaching reading and mathematics, so the work of the school can be supported by parents at home. Parents provide valuable help in the classrooms and on visits. Parents feel they are consulted. For instance their views were carefully considered as the school reviewed its homework policy. These views were highly valued by headteacher and staff as almost all parents support their children with their homework. Parents raise considerable funds through the active Parent and Teacher Association.
31. There are very good links with the community. Members of the community use the school for many of their activities, some of which can involve and benefit pupils. For example, a group of children joined in after-school games led by a local vicar and some of his parishioners. Such activities not only emphasise the value of the community, but also help to develop pupils' social skills. Visitors to school as well as visits to local museums, galleries and country parks enrich the curriculum and make pupils aware of their own and other cultures. Close links with playgroups and nursery schools help to prepare the children for the Reception classes. The good links with the secondary schools in the area ensure that pupils transfer happily to the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, with good support from the deputy headteacher, provides good leadership and management with clear strategic planning to raise standards. Leadership by other key staff is sound overall. Governance of the school is effective, but not all assemblies meet requirements for an act of worship.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and his deputy set a clear vision and sense of purpose for the school.
- Governors are effective in helping to shape the vision and direction of the school.
- The monitoring of school performance data is sound and information is used to make appropriate provision.

- The development plan sets out the strategic direction for the school with appropriate targets, but it could be better focused on the strategic priorities for improvement.
- The management by other key staff is variable, but satisfactory overall.
- Financial needs and priorities are analysed and resources are used well, so the school makes best use of the money available to it.

Commentary

32. The headteacher successfully fosters a positive climate that motivates staff and gains the confidence of parents. Staff in the school have a good sense of teamwork and a positive attitude towards their work. Although the school is housed in two separate buildings, some distance apart, the staff work successfully as a cohesive whole and communication between the sites is good. Most of the teaching staff are well established and have taught at the school for many years. They are aware that they are dealing with able pupils and that standards are well above average in English and mathematics, in particular. Not all staff, however, work to the same levels of rigour across the whole curriculum.
33. Overall, the quality of subject leadership is satisfactory. Teachers with curriculum leadership roles take their responsibilities seriously and are working, with varying degrees of effectiveness, to create and implement schemes of work and assessment in their subjects. Last year the school arranged a number of training courses to improve the quality of subject leadership, but there is still some way to go before a consistency of provision is established. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good.
34. Pupils are regularly assessed through tests and in their lessons in English, mathematics and science. Teachers have a clear view of individual pupils' progress in these subjects. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is well established. It is sufficiently frequent and rigorous and is used well to inform the school's plans for whole school professional staff development, but it mainly focuses on English and mathematics. Systems for performance management are well established. Budgetary constraints have meant that most subject co-ordinators have not been released from their classes to monitor teaching in their subject. At present not all co-ordinators have a clear view of the quality of standards and provision in subjects other than English, science and mathematics. The headteacher has been very successful in intervening to support subjects when necessary.
35. The school improvement plan is a useful tool for development and identifies appropriate areas and strategies. Criteria for measuring the successful implementation of the plan are appropriate. It could be set out with greater clarity by identifying more clearly the main aims for improvement at the beginning of each section so that the aims are more clearly focussed.
36. Governors are very supportive of the school and carry out their statutory duties well, with the exception of the provision for worship. Most assemblies observed during the inspection contained strong moral messages and time for reflection, but they did not meet the requirements for a daily act of worship. Governors are committed to the school's principles of inclusion and raising achievement. Most of the Governors try to visit the school regularly, but it is not always possible for the visits to be frequent. Governors' are well informed and have a good view of the broad strengths and areas for improvement for the school and of what is needed to continue to take the school forward. They were not

aware, however, of the deficiency of the assemblies not always meeting requirements, because it has not happened on the occasions of their visits.

37. Good use is made of the resources available to the school, including the use of specific grants. Principles of best value are applied well and contribute to the cost effectiveness of the school. This includes financial comparisons with similar schools. Two years ago the Governors were forced, by unforeseen commitments, to move into a considerable overspend. They did this with the agreement of the local education authority. It is to the headteacher and the Governors credit that they have brought the school almost to a level budget within one year, so that by the end of next year they are forecast to be reporting a credit reserve.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	822275	Balance from previous year	-29800
Total expenditure	795385	Balance carried forward to the next	-2910
Expenditure per pupil	1949		

38. Management of special educational needs is satisfactory overall. In the absence of the special educational needs coordinator another member of staff has taken over the management role and is ensuring that the register is kept up to date and that regular reviews are conducted. Support staff make an effective contribution to helping pupils with special educational needs, particularly in enabling those with physical or medical needs to take a full part in lessons and be included in the whole life of the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. Children join two Reception classes in the Autumn and Spring terms in which they are five. They experience an attractive and structured environment where there is a good balance of teacher-led and child-chosen activities and where pupils are helped towards independent learning. The outdoor area is exciting and imaginative and teachers plan an interesting range of activities there in order to extend all aspects of the curriculum. There is a thorough induction package for parents and children, and written and oral communication with home continues to be good throughout the year. Arrangements are also made to ease the transition into Year 1 and here staff are familiar with the Foundation Stage curriculum in order to provide for the few children who are not yet secure with the Early Learning Goals. When children enter reception from a variety of nursery and playgroup provision, although there is a wide ability range, their general attainment is above the level expected nationally in all areas of the curriculum. Children achieve well and by the end of reception 74% of this year's children are expected to attain all the Early Learning Goals for children of this age, and the rest will be near this achievement. Children generally make good progress because teaching and learning are good and because of the caring relationships between adults and children. Staff work well as a team and teacher assistants are highly competent. The provision is well led and managed and staff keep up to date with current practice by meeting other foundation

stage staff and visiting other units. Good assessment systems ensure that children's progress in all areas of learning is carefully monitored. However, sometimes, because the opportunity to gather ongoing data is missed, work is not always adjusted during the day to meet children's developing needs. Compared with the previous inspection good progress has been made, teaching and learning have improved and there is a better-balanced curriculum with improved provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Emphasis is placed on courtesy and consideration.
- Children are confident because of the well-established classroom routines.
- Children learn to co-operate very well with other children.

Commentary

40. At the start of the school day children and teachers greet each other and a relaxed and respectful relationship continues throughout the school day. Routines and procedures are well established and children conform to these with a minimum of fuss. Movement about the building and into the yard is always orderly. Children choose activities independently and they concentrate well until they are completed and then tidy equipment away after use. Teachers set high expectations and are very good role models. As a result, children know when to say 'please' and 'thank-you'. Children appreciate why they must raise their hands to answer and they understand the fairness of taking turns. In board games children maintain the rules easily. They are enthusiastic when they win points but they are also pleased when other children succeed. Children play very well together. They not only co-exist harmoniously but also interact in the same spirit. Teachers organise many opportunities for collaboration and give praise when this is successful. In the same way children are frequently asked to speak to the groups and to the whole class. Adults and children value their contributions and as a consequence children have increased self-esteem and tackle new experiences with confidence and enthusiasm.
41. Teaching and learning are very good in this aspect and because of this achievement is high. Children are on course to exceed the standards set for this age group and will enter Year 1 as well-adjusted and well-behaved children, eager to learn.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Priority is successfully given to speaking and listening.
- Basic literacy skills are planned across the curriculum and taught well.

Commentary

42. Speaking and listening are developed well through role-play activities, through collaboration with other children and through interaction with adults. When activities involve all personnel there is a very good teacher-child ratio and so the number of opportunities to converse with adults is increased significantly.
43. Staff are also very good role models: they enunciate clear Standard English and vary their word order and types of question continuously. As a result children use language for a variety of purposes and, because of the teacher's encouragement, are willing to try out the new words they hear. Children often try to project their voices when talking to a group. Staff are very interesting to listen to and hold pupils' attention for a sustained period. Teachers give priority to oral sessions and use a variety of stimuli to initiate discussion. They listen to children, give them time to answer extensively and often ask supplementary questions to help clarify a child's contribution. As a result, children listen to each other and add to a viewpoint.
44. Basic literacy skills are taught progressively each day both as aspects of the literacy hour and across the curriculum. Both classes follow the same phonics programme. They practise key words, teach the correct writing strokes from the beginning and ensure children receive much practice throughout the day. Children are therefore confident trying to read, spell and write unknown words. They have acquired a simple sight vocabulary and point out words they know about the room or in books. Their spelling is always phonetically readable, they understand the concept of the simple sentence and they are proud of their efforts, whatever the media.
45. Children achieve well because teaching and learning are good. All children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals, with a majority working beyond in speaking and listening. In reading and writing a small minority will exceed these goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers give clear explanations.
- Activities develop basic mathematical ideas throughout the day.
- Teachers challenge and check understanding well during these activities.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are good in this area. Children achieve well with nearly all expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals and a significant number to exceed them. The majority will exceed them in shape and space because they enter school at a higher level in this aspect.
47. Teachers give very clear explanations to introduce basic mathematical ideas, such as telling the o'clock times. Their language is straightforward: they repeat sequences in many different ways and use a variety of equipment until children understand and remember. They also use song, actions and activities effectively to appeal to children's different learning styles. To learn to tell the time children examined a set of clocks, played 'What

time is it, Mr Wolf?', cut out pictures of watches and participated in matching games such as bingo!

48. Throughout the day children match, sort, sequence and label apparatus. They become more critical about the right shade of colour match and can reject or include in collage according to two criteria such as colour and shape. All these activities extend mathematical understanding. In addition, teachers question them about 2 more or 2 less than a number, they regularly count with them, they use basic information about themselves to construct graphs and extend work on simple stories to teach concepts such as higher, lower etc. in relation to the hill that was climbed by Jack and Jill. The outdoor area with its slope, its three dimensional structures, markings and walkways provides opportunities for children's basic concepts of space, shape and measure to grow, and teachers use this resource well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children study a wide range of topics and achieve very well in ICT activities.
- Children's language is extended very well in these sessions.

Commentary

49. Children experience an interesting curriculum to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world because of the wide range of topics studied and the number of visitors to the classrooms. To extend a topic on animals, visitors have included the vet, the pet shop owners and guinea pigs! Teachers plan interesting activities across the curriculum to teach these topics. In one card game children were encouraged to contribute orally on a specific topic related to animals such as 'food', 'home' and 'care'. They did this holding a soft toy animal. Not only did the game consolidate basic sight vocabulary, it allowed the teacher to check their understanding of the idea and to extend the individual child's utterance. For example, one child volunteered 'jelly' when asked about dog food and the teaching assistant said 'nice juicy jelly'. The children were then encouraged to offer more detailed phrases and eventually sentences. She also seized the occasion to teach more specific vocabulary such as 'hutch' and to introduce the idea of personal responsibility to meet an animal's needs. In this lesson, as in other similar lessons, children's achievement was very good because teaching and learning were very good.
50. An analysis of ICT work with children on their free drawings of Humpty Dumpty revealed a high standard of mouse control, the ability to change and fill-in colour and the ability to select fonts to label with a title and the owner's name. Children were proud to point out their own work during this analysis.
51. All children will reach the goals for knowledge and understanding of the world but in their ICT work the majority of children are currently working beyond the expected goals.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an excellent outdoor play area with a lot of space and equipment.
- Teaching is very good: teachers provide opportunities throughout the day to refine children's fine motor skills.

Commentary

52. Some good robust, energetic and creative play was seen during the inspection when children rode tricycles, scooters and similar vehicles at speed, with increasing control and co-ordination. They co-operated well together to ensure safety on the track and fair division of labour when pulling other children in trailers! Teachers worked beside them in the garden, demonstrating tool use and plant care so that movement was efficiently used. The teachers challenged the children to use the hoops on different parts of the body, and to climb the slope carefully holding on to their egg and spoon in a particular game. By the end of the session some had not only achieved this but had also balanced on a tree stump walk to climb the slope! Teaching and learning are very good in this area.
53. Children's fine motor skills are developing very well because teachers demonstrate the skills, work beside them and set up activities to practise them daily with increasing control and dexterity. Children confidently make models and collages using increasingly fine materials and are encouraged, first to cut along outlines and then nearer and more precisely around small details. They are frequently taught about safety and are careful how they pass tools such as scissors to another child. Children achieve very well; they are all on course to reach the expected levels for their age and the majority will be working beyond.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

54. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision in this area of learning as little teaching was seen. However, all children have access to good musical experiences with a specialist teacher on a weekly basis and all children experience a variety of role-play situations, both inside and outside the classroom. Observation of children in the puppet theatre demonstrated their confidence with the medium and their confident imaginative play when improvising. However, analysis of classroom display indicates some over-direction where children complete pictures using teacher's outlines and teacher's pre-cut materials. There is also little evidence of paint mixing or free drawing, nor is paint available in the continuous classroom provision for child selection. Nevertheless teachers' own assessment indicates that pupils are on course to reach their Early Learning Goals.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well by the time they reach Year 6.
- Speaking and listening are given priority and pupils reach very high standards.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and very effective readers.
- Writing has improved considerably over the past year.
- Work does not always match more able pupils' needs, because assessment is not always used effectively, except in Year 6.
- The less able pupils are well supported in lessons.
- The subject is led well and any weaknesses are successfully dealt with.

Commentary

55. Pupils achieve well overall in English. Many pupils begin school in the Reception class with above average literacy skills. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and, by the end of Year 2, standards continue to be above average. Pupils achieve well during Years 3 to 6, and, at the end of Year 6, because standards are well above average. A large majority of pupils leave primary school with very good oral, reading and writing skills.
56. Pupils perform very well in oral sessions because teachers use a variety of questioning techniques and some good literary resources to sustain interest and focus attention. They also include co-operative sessions where pupils can learn effectively from each other. Pupils are patient and attentive listeners and teachers prompt them to develop their ideas at length. This is particularly helpful to the less able pupils who sometimes need more time and support to express their ideas. Teaching assistants are used well in this capacity. However, questioning is often not sufficiently challenging for the most able. Pupils for whom English is an additional language generally make good progress in English. On the whole pupils from all ethnic origins come to the school with a good level of competence in English and it is rare for a pupils not to have ready access to the curriculum in terms of language.
57. Pupils enjoy reading and can speak with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors. Records show that they develop these skills regularly both at home and in school, so that they are familiar with a wide range of texts. They acquire a good range of word attack and information retrieval skills, using reference books and the Internet. They have access to very good school libraries and the enthusiasm of individual teachers encourages many to acquire the reading habit. Displays around the school, however, are not utilised well to provide a variety of text and interaction.
58. In 2003 the test results for Year 6 pupils dipped. The school has taken effective action, by moving staff around, and current standards at Year 6 have now returned to well above average. Assessment and marking are particularly good in Year 6 and targets for pupils with special educational needs are incorporated into the lesson planning. Marking is supportive; it indicates the way forward and includes questions and comments which challenge. It also sets achievable targets for pupils and recognises when these have been achieved.
59. Generally, writing has been given priority in the school. There is a focussed writing week during which teachers give particular emphasis to scrutinising pupils' work more thoroughly; assessment is tracked in detail and the head teacher assists with the teaching so that smaller classes are created. Analysis of pupils' work reveals that there is broad

coverage of the different genres and that pupils have a good awareness of different audiences. Presentation of work is generally good and there is a successful structured scheme in place to teach phonics.

60. These improvements demonstrate effective leadership and management but despite them, there are still some shortcomings across the school. Assessment and marking are not always detailed enough, in year groups other than Year 6, to accurately identify pupils' needs. In addition, teachers do not consistently use assessment information sufficiently to inform planning. Consequently, pupils are not always given different tasks according to their needs, particularly for the more able. Additional support is given to the less able pupils and the average are challenged by the main lesson focus. The more able, however, sometimes go unchallenged even when their needs are correctly identified.
61. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. They are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. All teachers try to make their lessons interesting, give pupils plenty of encouragement, begin their lessons briskly and model good practice well. Resources such as letters to Greenpeace, play scripts and details about Indian culture all engage the pupils and they participate enthusiastically. Effective use of ICT further assists flexibility and clarity. In Years 1 and 2, however, there are rarely any short, measured, timed tasks to focus the attention and prevent off-task chatter. In most classes at all ages pupils work on the same activity whatever their ability, and there are few 'writing frames' or 'aide memoires' to assist them and to facilitate their learning.

Example of outstanding practice

In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used a variety of strategies to produce lively discussion and high standards of writing.

In this lesson the teacher drew attention to the literature of Michael Morpurgo, which pupils had studied. The teacher had an excellent knowledge of her subject and read passages to the pupils with very clear expression to draw from them appreciation of a number of literary devices such as repetition, the use of unexplained pronouns and the over use of 'and'. Pupils had enjoyed the novels and could use contextual information to illustrate teaching points such as use of 'flashback' and the specific notion of a 'promise.' The lesson had pace: discussion was interactive and animated; many pupils contributed and used technical terms to do so. After an excellent and vigorous discussion pupils were set the task of planning the opening of a similar story in groups using the same literary devices. The teacher checked pupils' understanding and all pupils were quickly on task negotiating and developing ideas. The teacher reminded them of the features to include and, using an individual aide-memoire, they wrote in silence for half an hour whilst she gave individual support. Writing standards were very high and at the end of the lesson, pupils were proud to contribute their own creations to show the various features. All pupils had achieved very well.

62. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in assessment procedures and in the use of information technology, but there is still room for improvement. Good progress has been made throughout the school in reading and writing and overall teaching and learning remains good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. Teachers help pupils to develop their skills effectively across the curriculum. Pupils have weekly opportunities to read in most subjects. The increased use of information and communication technology also assists younger pupils in their reading development, whilst older pupils use the Internet to retrieve information. In Year 3, pupils use the skills learned in literacy sessions to compose a letter from a ninth century monk, complaining about the Viking raids, and in Year 2 to describe a hurricane in St. Lucia. They also keep

a spaceman's log of his explorations. In Year 6, pupils use posters to display their findings about topics such as microbes and Gambia, and use poetry to describe their feelings about music.

Mathematics

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in the annual tests at Year 2 and Year 6 is well above average.
- Pupils show a very good knowledge of tables and other number facts.
- Pupils are very confident, quick and accurate in mental calculation.
- The school successfully provides extra support through a visiting tutor for the most able pupils at Year 6.
- Although the school groups pupils in Years 4 to 6 into sets according to ability, the work is not always planned effectively enough to meet the diverse learning needs of different abilities within each set.

Commentary

64. Over recent years pupils have attained standards well above average in the national tests at Year 2 and Year 6. Given that pupils enter the school with above average standards this indicates good achievement overall. However, an analysis of the assessment data indicates that pupils' achievement is better in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6 and good numeracy skills are established at that stage. The school has maintained the position reported at the last inspection.
65. Teaching is satisfactory, but learning and achievement are good because of the consistent focus on numeracy skills that runs throughout the mathematics curriculum, setting of classes, visiting specialist teaching in Year 6, and because pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and keen to do well. While teaching is sound overall, features of good teaching are to be seen in most lessons. Teachers have a confident understanding of the mathematics they teach and their enthusiasm for the subject rubs off on to the pupils who enjoy their lessons. Pupils are very well motivated and have a strong desire to learn. They respond very well to the mental challenges teachers set them. Teaching places a very strong emphasis on number work and this enables pupils to acquire and consolidate a very good grasp of basic number facts and calculation techniques. By Year 6, pupils show a good understanding of ratio, proportion and percentages. They work with fractions and their decimal equivalents, and use simple algebra to solve number problems. The most able pupils show great confidence and often work with little support from their teachers. The average and lower attaining pupils achieve similar tasks, but with the support of the teacher. Those who finish quickly are then given harder work to do rather than being given the harder work from the start. However, pupils often receive the same work across all abilities in the class. In a Year 2 lesson for example, all the pupils worked through problems relating to the three and four times table before the more able tackled problems related to the six and eight times tables, even though these pupils could have tackled the harder work from the beginning of the lesson. In a Year 1 lesson on ordering numbers all pupils were given the same worksheet to complete. The most able finished the sheet very quickly and went on to sorting and ordering number cards on the carpet but the lowest attaining pupils took much longer and

needed extra teacher support. The initial task had not really challenged the more able pupils and the follow on activity seemed to be largely more of the same.

66. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 are grouped into sets according to the results of the end of year tests, but there is sometimes insufficient planning to match the different abilities within a set. Most of the pupils achieve the tasks set, but not all pupils are sufficiently challenged. Even so, most pupils achieve well because they work hard to complete the tasks given to them. There is little evidence of pupils making use of ICT in their mathematics lessons, but in one lesson pupils used lap top computers to practise their times tables.
67. In Year 6 the achievement of higher attainers is extended by a visiting tutor, whose main role is to broaden the mathematics curriculum. Even so he provides them with a good range of demanding problems to extend their thinking and mathematical skills. This helps them to achieve well and, together with some challenging work in the top mathematics set, results in the high standards to be seen at the end of the year.
68. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school is committed to high standards in mathematics and to helping all pupils to achieve well. This has led to initiatives such as the extra support for the most able Year 6 pupils and the development of the calculation policy. The subject coordinator analyses the results of the national tests at Year 2 and Year 6 and checks pupils' work in their books. While there is some monitoring of the quality of teaching this is largely related to the annual performance management requirements rather than a systematic check on the teaching of this particular subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Mathematics is used effectively in a range of other subjects. In science and in design and technology, for example, pupils use their mathematical skills to measure accurately when carrying out investigations or designing artefacts.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and this leads to good achievement.
- The curriculum is stimulating and raises the pupils' interest and enthusiasm.
- The subject is well led and managed and ensures consistency.
- Assessment is not always used well enough to plan lessons and challenge individuals to do better.

Commentary

70. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. At the end of Year 6 standards are well above average compared with all schools nationally and also when compared with similar schools. This means that the pupils' achievement is good overall, because they come into school with above average knowledge and understanding of the world. Boys and girls do equally well and the relatively few pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. The pupils' skills in the use of language and maths also help them to record their observations, make measurements and develop an understanding of the relationships between different areas of knowledge. For example, Year 3 pupils used their mathematical knowledge to interpret data they had collected on diet to determine the most popular foods.
71. Teaching and learning are consistently good because of the enthusiasm and commitment of both the staff and pupils, and the well-planned scheme of work. Teachers recognise the above average ability of the pupils and generally set challenging tasks, which interest and stimulate the pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils were set an experiment to test the production of carbon dioxide by yeast. Their predictions of the results were logical and based on good scientific understanding. Because the pupils are keen to learn, their behaviour is good and teachers can rely on good collaboration and cooperation when pupils are working in groups, for example when conducting experiments. An over-reliance on this sometimes leads teachers into not setting tasks at different levels for pupils of differing ability, resulting in everyone working at the pace of the slowest pupils. However, gifted or talented pupils are usually allowed to 'shine' and teachers give them opportunities to pursue their enthusiasm both at home and in school. In a Year 2 lesson, there was a wonderful moment when a very knowledgeable pupil was allowed to come to the front of the class, with a globe, to demonstrate the equator and the forest and desert regions on either side, to support his theories about the habitats of grassland animals.
72. The leadership of science is good and the knowledgeable and hard working co-ordinator has ensured good teamwork and consistency of planning. She has enriched the curriculum with initiatives such as 'science week' and national competitions, as well as ensuring that full use is made of the extensive grounds for study. In addition, during the inspection, Year 2 classes prepared for and visited a local farm study centre. All these 'extras' are neatly planned and integrated into the scheme of work to provide a rich experience, which excites both boys and girls. Teachers use ICT well to support learning such as during the inspection, when pupils were able to observe the transit of Venus 'live' on a computer screen.

73. Although the scheme of work, based on national guidelines, enables teachers to assess the pupils' work fairly accurately, the system of recording is new. It does not yet enable the co-ordinator to easily track the progress of individual pupils, or to set targets. None of the older pupils knew what they needed to do to improve. This is partly because the marking consists mostly of ticks and rarely gives an indication of achievement or areas for improvement. However, Year 6 pupils were aware of the levels they were likely to achieve in the recent national tests.
74. The school has made good improvements in science since the previous inspection. Standards have risen, as has achievement in Years 3 - 6. Lessons are more consistently challenging and there is no unsatisfactory teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall in Years 3-6 the recently improved provision is beginning to have an effect.
- Development planning is good and standards are rising.
- The curriculum is imaginative; pupils use ICT in many lessons.
- Assessment is not yet helping all teachers to plan lessons that are appropriately challenging.

Commentary

75. Standards at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 are average. By the time they leave school pupils can produce a range of documents for different purposes, extract information from a database or produce a simple multimedia presentation. Their work is less advanced in the area of simulation using spreadsheets, computer control and Internet searching. When they come into the school, pupils are above average in all the expected areas of learning, so the standards in ICT indicate unsatisfactory achievement by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. However, both boys and girls are now learning fast, after the recent introduction of new equipment and a new syllabus. The achievement of the younger pupils is satisfactory as teachers and pupils realise that they can tackle more challenging tasks.
76. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with examples of good teaching. Both are improving as teachers' skills and confidence increase. A pilot scheme using laptop computers gives training and support. In addition, the new leader for ICT is providing a good role model for the teachers. Although the recently introduced scheme of work, based on national guidelines, ensures that work is planned consistently, the lessons are often not challenging enough, especially for the higher attainers. Assessment is not yet consistent enough to ensure that teachers plan appropriate work. Also, teachers are sometimes not familiar enough with the software, which, again, hinders learning. This was the case in an unsatisfactory lesson at the beginning of the inspection where Year 4 pupils of all abilities struggled with inappropriate instructions to control a screen 'turtle'. Later in the inspection, it was made evident that teachers had got together with the co-ordinator to re-plan a similar lesson. This was good: the instructions given by the teacher, and the resources provided, guided pupils through a step-by-step learning process. More importantly, the

teacher built well on the pupils' prior knowledge so both she and they had a clear idea of the goals they needed to achieve. Some of the lower attaining pupils had difficulty in keeping up but were helped by a learning support assistant and a technician.

77. The leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. The changes that the school has made to the curriculum, resources and staffing since the previous inspection have been dramatic but relatively recent. The enthusiasm and commitment of the staff to make these changes work ensures that the laptops, the computer suite and the classroom computers are used regularly for everything from mathematics to art and design. Some imaginative programs enable pupils to create animations, search the Internet safely, send e-mails and design new layouts for their classrooms. The teachers who have 'interactive whiteboards' are beginning to see their powerful potential for enhancing teaching and learning. The improvement has been satisfactory since the previous inspection. Standards are now average at the end of Year 6, the curriculum is now good and assessment is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The pupils' competence in ICT is average. It is also improving rapidly because the teachers are developing confidence and experience of the new equipment and software so they can plan a more diverse range of activities. Pupils are able to exercise their computer skills in art and design, to make paintings in the style of Mondrian; in mathematics to create charts and graphs; in geography to explore the housing market; in English to write poems and in science to make leaflets or record their observations. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and the school has appropriate software. Gifted pupils are given good opportunities both in school and out of school. One pupil has created a 'chat room' facility to communicate safely with friends.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in depth and is reported in full below. History and geography were sampled.

History

79. A scrutiny of pupils' books and discussion with pupils indicates standards that are above average by Year 6. This is much the same as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have a secure grasp of historical facts about the periods they have studied and they enjoy the subject. They study the history of the local area, through old photographs, maps and books and explore census information from Victorian times. They understand that different people have different views and that this can lead to conflicting evidence on historical events. The scheme of work provides satisfactory cover for the requirements of the National Curriculum. Assessment systems are fairly new and there is little evidence from the work seen that the results of assessments are used to plan work to match the range of abilities within a class or to track pupils' progress. Leadership and management appear to be broadly satisfactory although there has been little systematic monitoring of how well the school is doing in history over recent years.

Geography

80. A scrutiny of pupils' books and discussion with pupils indicates standards that are broadly average. Pupils learn about a contrasting locality and learn basic mapping skills. The work seen shows a preponderance of worksheets with little evidence of work being given to match the different abilities within a class. Assessment is through the recently introduced assessment matrix showing when pupils have covered and understood various elements of the subject. The work indicates satisfactory coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. Leadership is broadly satisfactory although there are no systematic and rigorous procedures for checking how well the school is doing in geography.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use resources, visits and visitors to motivate pupils.

- Knowledge about and from religion is sound.
- Recording opportunities are missed.
- There is little monitoring of this subject.

Commentary

81. Teaching and learning are sound throughout the school and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Teachers make the work interesting and varied by the use of visits to local churches, visitors such as the vicar, appropriate computer software, artefacts, local magazines and the full school celebration of Diwali. Pupils understand what they are expected to do and activities in lessons have sufficient challenge to keep them working both independently and collaboratively. Pupils enjoy these lessons and are interested in the subject. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of individuals and of groups.
82. Standards at Year 2 and Year 6 are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. For example, in Year 2, pupils know religious stories and practices from Christianity and Judaism. In Year 6, pupils can describe the key beliefs of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism and can make comparisons between them. Through their studies, pupils have developed a good understanding and very good respect for beliefs of others. Pupils' use of technical vocabulary is sparse but they can express a clear viewpoint on the rights and wrongs of an issue such as the attitudes of the father and his son when the prodigal brother returns home. Their answers indicated a sound understanding of moral and religious issues.
83. Analysis of pupils' work reveals varied presentation and communication. However, opportunities to use religious texts for shared or guided reading and to explore extended language and other cross-curricular opportunities are too rarely utilised. Moreover, because much of the work is oral, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have limited experience of recording work in this subject.
84. Although the co-ordinator has not monitored lessons in this subject she is currently reviewing the results of the newly installed assessment system in preparation for the introduction of the new Leicestershire Sacre document.
85. Provision for religious education has been maintained satisfactorily since the last inspection. Teaching and learning, leadership and management are still broadly satisfactory. Assemblies still do not contribute well to spiritual awareness, nor are pupils given many opportunities to participate, reflect, question or respond to ideas. More artefacts and resources have been purchased and there continues to be an extensive range of books on this subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education and music were inspected in depth and are reported in full below. Art and design, and design and technology were sampled.

86. It was not possible to see lessons in **art and design**. There are examples of work of a good standard evident on display throughout the school, but there is insufficient evidence of work in lessons to judge standards overall. Management of the subject is sound and the coordinator is enthusiastic and conscientious. Schemes of work give a good structure for the teachers' planning, but the time allocation for art is below average because the time is shared with design and technology. At present, the coordinator is not given time to monitor teaching or learning in the subject.
87. In **design and technology** pupils in Year 6 design and make slippers out of fabric, or motor driven carousels based on their researches. These are well made and finished and

the analysis of the results through drawing and labelling are particularly good. However, all the designs are based on the same pattern so that pupils' opportunity to find a more individual solution is restricted, limiting their individual achievement.

88. In a satisfactory lesson for Year 5, pupils investigated ways to make musical instruments. Some stringed, percussion and wind instruments were provided, but the lack of clarity in the learning objectives led to open ended tasks that were insufficiently challenging or purposeful. However, it was clear that pupils understood the science of sound production and they all made some progress in developing their understanding of the instruments, as a first step in designing their own.

Music

The provision for music is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are below average, and achievement is unsatisfactory.
- The time provided for music is about 50 per cent of the national average.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to extend their musical experiences.

Commentary

89. Attainment in music is below the national expectation at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils are generally not performing to their potential. Achievement is unsatisfactory for the majority, although those that sing in the choir, or play instruments, perform to a good standard with good musical skills.
90. The time allocation for music varies considerably from year to year. When pupils are taught by their class teachers, in Years 4 and 6, they have sufficient access to the subject and generally make good progress. In other years, they are taught by a visiting teacher for half the average time and, while the quality of teaching is good, the classes are doubled in size and this is a considerable constraint on the range and breadth of the curriculum, on the amount of attention and provision for pupils' needs that the teacher can meet. Opportunities for pupils to make musical decisions are very limited. Consequently, by the time they reach Year 6 pupils demonstrate musical skills that are below average. For example, many are unable to hold a pulse independently so that rhythmic skills are constrained.
91. Attitudes to music are good. Pupils sing willingly and listen to music carefully. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Several teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well managed and control is firm but kindly. Learning is often limited because there are too many pupils in the hall and this restricts the range and nature of the tasks and activities that the teacher can use.
92. Management of the subject is not satisfactory from the whole school perspective. However, the part time visiting teacher works effectively at managing the subject within the set constraints. Opportunities to work with computers in the subject are limited. Assessment is still under development. Extra-curricular activities are strong and pupils make music with instruments and with their voices. Since the last inspection standards and the quality of provision for music have decreased.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Extra curricular opportunities for pupils are very good.
- Facilities are very good and the subject has a good time allocation.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- There is good co-operation between pupils.

Commentary

93. Owing to very good community links, pupils have access to a large range of extra-curricular provision, including football, karate, cross-country, tennis and swimming. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential outdoor pursuits centre and there is alternative provision for those who cannot attend. The school also participates in cycling proficiency and the national walk-to-school campaign.
94. The school has very good facilities and these include three halls, a pool, spacious yards and grounds and a wide variety of adventure play apparatus. Children in the Reception class have secure access to their own outdoor site, which contains a garden area, tree house, toy store and various grass and hard features. The school allocates, on average, two and a half hours a week for physical education but as the pool is undergoing extensive repairs this allocation has been reduced.
95. Pupils with special physical needs are particularly well supported by staff, who ensure their full participation and enjoyment. Staff encourage co-operation, courtesy and fair play at all times and as a result pupils behave responsibly, conform to directions and are very caring to each other. They show generosity to others and a genuine appreciation of effort and achievement.
96. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average and pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Staff have good subject knowledge and organise, in response to assessment, progressive activities to develop skills. Pupils perform well because they enjoy the activities. They are encouraged to achieve and they are given good instruction with effective modelling. Clear directions for turning during a shuttle run, holding a tennis racket as though 'shaking hands' and standing sideways to hit a ball ensure pupils' success and progress.
97. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator has analysed the results of recent assessments and has interviewed pupils to assess attitudes to this subject. From such evidence, she has identified training and resource needs and although she has not monitored teaching and learning, she is making a positive contribution to attainment and progress.
98. Overall, the school has maintained the standards of the previous inspection and pupils continue to make good progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled.

99. The school's arrangements for personal, social and health education, including drugs awareness education and citizenship are good. All classes have regular sessions in personal, social and health education. Overall, the teaching seen was satisfactory. In the best lesson, with Year 6, good use was made of the pupils' ability to read quickly and extract relevant information from documents about drugs, which extended their understanding. Their understanding of the difference between legal, prescription and illegal drugs was good, as was their knowledge and understanding of the health problems associated with alcohol and tobacco. 'Circle time' is used effectively with younger pupils to encourage them to recognise and respond appropriately to emotional

signals. However, the impact of these sessions can be reduced when they take place in a busy and distracting assembly hall.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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