

INSPECTION REPORT

HIMBLETON CHURCH OF ENGLAND FIRST SCHOOL

Himbleton, Droitwich

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116821

Headteacher: Mrs C Gent

Lead inspector: Mrs J Moore

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 24th February 2004

Inspection number: 256444

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	59
School address:	Himbleton Droitwich Worcestershire
Postcode:	WR9 7LE
Telephone number:	01905 391231
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L Holdway
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Himbleton is a small first school with 59 pupils on roll, aged between four and nine. It is situated on the outskirts of the small village of Himbleton, near Droitwich. Pupils are taught in three classes and there are none from ethnic minority backgrounds. Most pupils travel considerable distances to attend the school, and the others are from local villages. The school is popular and is always over-subscribed. Pupils are from a range of backgrounds and when they join the reception class their skills and understanding are broadly average for their age. However, this can vary from year-to-year. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. Most pupils' needs are identified as moderate or specific learning difficulties. There are no pupils with statements of special educational need.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8710	Julie Moore	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English as an additional language Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education
14226	Alison Willatts	Lay inspector	
22182	Fiona Robinson	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design technology Music Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Himbleton Church of England First School is a **very effective** school. Standards are well above average in English and mathematics because pupils are well taught and, as a result, they achieve highly. The school is given a firm steer by the headteacher. Teamwork is strong and everyone pulls together to make sure that pupils achieve as well as they can in all aspects of school life. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- High standards and achievement are the result of high expectations, a stimulating curriculum and very good teaching.
- The headteacher's leadership is very good. She is ably supported by staff, governors, pupils and parents. The school runs smoothly and is managed very well.
- Children make a very good start in the reception class.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used well enough to support pupils' learning in different subjects.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are well used to working independently, they enjoy learning and are very happy to be at school.
- Pupils with special educational needs do very well.

Very good progress has been made in tackling all the issues raised by the last inspection. Pupils' progress and achievement is successfully tracked and charted at regular intervals. Effective use is made of all the data about how well the school is doing. Governors play a full role in prioritising and planning the school's work. Standards, teaching and learning have all improved and are now very good, as is the leadership of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

Boys' and girls' achievement is **very good**. When children join the reception class their skills and understanding are broadly average in all areas of learning, but this can vary from year-to-year. They get off to a very good start, and many of them are on course to exceed the early learning goals¹ well by the end of the reception year. By the end of Year 2 standards are in the highest five per cent in the country in reading and writing, and they are well above average in mathematics and science. These standards hold up successfully when compared to those in similar schools. This very good progress continues in Years 3 and 4, where standards are well above average in the main subjects of English and mathematics and above average in science. ICT is an area for development and standards are average, but they could be better. Standards in religious education (RE) exceed the expectation for pupils of similar ages.

Boys and girls have very positive attitudes towards school. They enjoy school because their tasks interest them and they are well challenged. Pupils are very willing to take responsibility, they organise their work independently and effectively. Behaviour and relationships are very good, as is attendance,

¹ The goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception.

and all of this helps pupils to learn rapidly and successfully. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** and this helps them to develop as individuals.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching is **very good**, as is learning. Teachers know their pupils very well in this small school and they have very good systems for assessing their individual progress and achievement. Tasks are pitched at the right level and the vast majority of lessons move forward at a cracking pace, no time is wasted. Pupils are confident and capable learners. In their group work they contribute successfully, playing a full role in making joint decisions about the shape of their group task. The curriculum has a richness and breadth that encourages pupils to want to learn more in every class. Everyone is included in all aspects of school life, no-one is left out. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and they achieve as well as their classmates. All pupils are cared for in a safe and secure environment, and their needs are met very well. The partnership with parents, the church and the wider community, is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**, as is the governance of the school. The headteacher is quietly inspirational. She has the ability to motivate and challenge her team, providing high quality leadership. Governors provide a clear steer to the school, working in partnership with the school team and parents. Senior staff have significant strengths, creating a very strong working partnership that moves the school forward at a rapid pace.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and parents like the school very much. Parents appreciate being consulted about their children's education and they feel their opinions are valued. Pupils also appreciate their school and they are happy to be there.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards and achievement in ICT from a satisfactory base to the good or very good levels seen in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Boys and girls achievement is **very good**. Standards are **high** in the main subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of Years 2 and 4 in English and mathematics. They are well above average at the end of Year 2 in science, and above average at the end of Year 4.
- Children's achievement is very good in the foundation stage and they are on course to well exceed their targets by the end of the reception year.
- Achievement is very good for pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with special gifts or talents.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory but they could be better.

Commentary

1. Children start school in the reception class with average skills and understanding in all areas of learning. When they leave Himbleton, at the end of Year 4, their achievement is very good in the main subjects, an improvement since the last inspection. ICT is a priority in the school improvement plan, and is a focus for development. In this subject achievement is only adequate because of the lack of structure in developing pupils' skills.
2. Standards achieved in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were outstanding and were in the highest five per cent in the country in reading and writing. They were well above average in mathematics. The group was not large with only 13 pupils so the results of one pupil can make a significant difference. Differences in standards year-on-year are the result of the significant variation in the sizes of the year groups in this small school, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year. Despite this, there is an upward trend in attainment, which is the result of very good leadership and high quality teaching.
3. When compared to similar schools nationally, in the final column of the table in the summary report, pupils did very well, especially in reading and writing. Inspection findings indicate that standards are well above average in English and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 4. They are well above average in science at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 4. This slight drop is caused by a limited focus on science investigation during last year. This has been tackled and is no longer an issue as standards and achievement are moving forward at a good pace. Standards in religious education (RE) exceed the expected level for pupils' age, and their achievement is good. Standards in ICT are average and achievement is satisfactory.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	18.4 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	17.9 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.8 (15.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Individual targets are used successfully to boost standards and improve achievement across the main subjects. This works very well in this small school. Pupils' progress and achievement are tracked and charted very effectively, enabling teachers to set specific targets for pupils of all capabilities. Pupils are fully involved in this process and this means that they are very clear about what they have to do to continue to improve. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and their achievement is very good, like their classmates. Higher attaining pupils also achieve especially well, as demonstrated by the very high test results. The main strength in the school's approach lies in making the best use of all the information about how well pupils are doing, and then creating teaching styles that ensure rapid learning.
5. All of this holds good for children in the foundation stage. Children join the reception class with average skills and understanding in all areas of their learning. Many of them are on course to well exceed their targets by the end of the reception year. Their achievement is very good, and this ensures that children have a very good start to their education. Their skills are firmly and securely in place, providing a firm framework for all their later learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development, relationships, attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is **very good**, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a very good attitude to learning and to school life generally.
- Behaviour throughout the school is very good.
- Attendance is very good.
- Pupils are independent. They willingly take the responsibility for many aspects of their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.

Commentary

6. Pupils enjoy their lessons and look forward to coming to school. They enjoy the challenges they meet during the day, for instance when studying force and analysing the powers of friction using shoes and planks of wood during a science lesson in Years 1 and 2. They appreciate their school environment, including the outdoor learning area, known as the *Forest School*, where they learn about environmental issues and how to work in safety when possible hazards are around.
7. Parents have commented on the very good behaviour in school, and visitors find the pupils polite, communicative and helpful. The staff reinforce the expectations of good behaviour by the positive way they interact with the pupils. Pupils treat each other with respect and know each other well. There have been no recent incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour. One incident of bullying, prior to the inspection, had been dealt with well according to the parents and staff involved.
8. Attendance exceeds 96 per cent of available sessions and punctuality is very good. There have been no unauthorised absences or exclusions in the last academic year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

9. Pupils have a degree of independence in their day-to-day life in the school. They are taught to assess risks and take responsibility for their actions within reason. Younger and older pupils take care of the school and its grounds, they are aware of how to take care of their community environment, as well as in the world at large. All of which prepares them well for their role as sensible and mature young people.
10. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school environment is pleasant and welcoming, and there are strong links with the local church, which is appropriate for a church school. The aesthetic appearance of the school is important to everyone, and the *Forest School* and the school grounds, provide pupils with a quick access to the wonderful natural world outside school. The strong Christian ethos underpins all the school's work and is an essential part of daily life at Himbleton.
11. Pupils throughout the school respect one another. They have a very definite sense of right and wrong and are happy to discuss this in, for instance, RE lessons and play times. They look after each other and know one another well. The summer camp for Years 3 and 4 is successful and shows pupils that they can look after each other in strenuous circumstances.
12. Pupils are articulate and happy to talk to visitors, staff, and each other. They enjoy meeting visitors, interact well with one another, visitors, and, especially the staff who care for them. They have respect for the staff of the school and feel safe and secure in their care.
13. Pupils enjoy exploring different cultures, which enhances their understanding of the world we live in. The rich and varied mix of spiritual and cultural activities ensures that all pupils have a secure understanding of the wider ethnic diversity and cultural traditions that exist in the world about us.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **very good** quality of education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **very good** and pupils learn rapidly as a result. This holds good for pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs and those with special gifts or talents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is challenging and exciting because lessons are planned very well, tasks are pitched at the right levels and there is a brisk pace to learning.
- Individual targets give pupils a clear steer towards improvement. This pushes up standards and enhances achievement for everyone.
- Teachers take care to make sure that pupils have many opportunities to be independent, to plan their work and to exercise personal responsibility.
- There are very good systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress and achievement.
- All teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour.
- Pupils rise to the challenges set for them and they work very well with high levels of concentration.
- ICT is not used consistently enough to support learning across the board.

Commentary

14. Teaching is enthusiastic and interesting, holding pupils' interest and fully engaging them in their tasks. This makes learning productive and is instrumental in pupils' high achievement. Lessons are carefully planned and teachers assess how well pupils are doing at regular intervals. This information guides their plans, making sure that pupils' learning is always on-course as it moves forward rapidly. Pupils' own targets clearly identify what has to be done if work and standards

are to improve, motivating pupils to do their best and to work hard. The system works very well in boosting pupils' achievement and standards across the board.

15. When teachers are planning tasks for their pupils they always identify how and when pupils are to work independently in the lesson. There are many planned opportunities for pupils to discuss how they are going to set about their task, plan their activity and decide how findings are to be recorded. Without exception, there is a consistency across the entire school, and this ensures that pupils' competence as learners is developed very successfully. Only once during the inspection did learning slip, and this was because the group needed some extra help and their teacher was working with another group. Learning speedily gained momentum again when the teacher gave the group the support they needed. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour, alongside very good relationships, means that pupils rise to the demands set for them very successfully.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	1	3	0	0	0

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

16. Skills of observation, gathering information, posing questions and solving problems are extended right from the start of their time in school, giving pupils a very secure base for all their later learning. For example, in a reception lesson the pupils were discussing their holiday experiences prior to doing a written task. They discussed their activities with a partner before sharing experiences with the other children in the group. As each child reported back, other children asked questions for clarification or made a comment about the activity described. Children were brimming with confidence, listening attentively and with a great deal of empathy for the needs of other children. By the time pupils reach Year 4 they set themselves time goals to achieve their oral and written tasks. Evaluative skills are honed successfully so that pupils know how close they are to achieving their set targets. All of this is the result of high quality teaching throughout the school. The headteacher steers her team very well and staff are well motivated to maintain improvements. There is only one point for development and that is that ICT is not used consistently enough to support learning in every class. The very good support from Pershore High School is helping the school to tackle this issue very effectively.
17. The foundation stage is one of the many strengths of the school. Staff have a very good understanding of the most effective ways to make sure that young children learn well and achieve highly. Teaching is very good, it is brisk and lively, always capturing children's interest and encouraging them to try hard. Gaps in children's learning are identified and tackled straight away because of very effective systems for assessing children's skills, progress and achievement. Parents are fully involved in supporting children's learning, which boosts their progress successfully.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. Their needs are identified accurately, and their individual education plans have specific targets that are relevant and achievable. Like their classmates, these pupils achieve highly as do those pupils with special gifts or talents. Everyone is included in all aspects of day-to-life at Himbleton, no-one is left out.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is stimulating and rich and it inspires pupils to want to learn.

- Children in reception make a very good start to their education. They too, have a rich and balanced curriculum.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is very good.
- The quality of planning is very good.
- There are a very good number of visits out and visitors into school, which broadens pupils' experience very well.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- ICT is an integral part of the curriculum but its use is inconsistent.

Commentary

19. The school provides a broad, balanced, rich, relevant and interesting curriculum. There were no specific weaknesses in the curriculum the last time the school was inspected, but the curriculum has continued to improve and is now very good. There are many practical first hand experiences provided to promote pupils' achievements and help them to reach high standards. The school has fully embraced the principle of educational inclusion and makes very good provision to ensure that all pupils have full access to all subjects and activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and teachers and support staff are very aware of pupils' individual needs. They plan carefully to make sure there are valuable and appropriate opportunities for all to achieve success. Pupils with special educational needs all have well-planned individual educational plans which ensure that work is matched very well to their ability and personal needs.
20. There is considerable enrichment of the curriculum, which stimulates pupils to learn. Parents are very pleased with the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. Pupils and parents like the residential camp on the school field for Year 3 and feel this is beneficial for their children. *Forest School* is an outdoor classroom that adds an extra dimension to the curriculum on offer. French is usually taught in Year 3 and Year 4 as part of the Pershore Pyramid initiative. The school also enjoys competitive games afternoons with other schools in the cluster group. Beacon funding has enabled the school to take part in two events; firstly, creating a 3D structure of insects and secondly, pupils worked with an American jazz musician, culminating in an enjoyable outdoor concert. Pupils also benefit from opportunities presented at games club for skill development.
21. Suitable emphasis is placed on English and mathematics. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been used very well by teachers as their basis for planning in these subjects and have contributed to the significant improvement in standards. The provision, standards and the quality of learning in ICT is satisfactory and has been maintained since the last inspection. However, ICT is not used consistently enough to support pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum. Staff need more training to help them with this.
22. Provision in the foundation stage is a strength. Children are helped to settle in very quickly and work from an imaginative curriculum. They have a very good range of very interesting experiences and are helped to develop the social skills necessary to learn successfully. As a result of very good teaching and a very good curriculum, they achieve very well and enjoy learning.
23. The school has a very good match of well qualified teachers to the demands of the curriculum and the learning needs of all pupils. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. There is no hall, which means that pupils are taught physical education in the local village hall. This is not ideal but the provision is the best that is available. The small school is set in very attractive grounds. There has been considerable refurbishment to the Victorian building, which is attractive. The library/ICT area is being developed and this is a significant improvement to the accommodation.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **very good** care of its pupils' welfare, health and safety.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well cared for within the school.
- The systems for promoting good behaviour and attendance are very effective.
- Relationships are very good, and pupils know who to turn to for help and support.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and their achievement is good.

Commentary

24. Pupils respond positively by showing that the trust the staff have in them with regard to behaviour and discipline is well founded. Pupils have good relationships with staff and, in general, feel they can approach any staff member if they have problems with which they need help.
25. Child protection procedures are suitably in place. Staff know the system well, supply staff are informed of the arrangements and they implement them effectively. The headteacher is responsible for child protection. She has a good relationship with social services and liaises with them if necessary. Child protection arrangements work well.
26. Pupils and staff are aware of the positive methods of promoting good behaviour and act on these. The staff treat the pupils with respect and courtesy and expect this standard to be maintained by the pupils. The staff expect pupils to show a degree of independence in school life and, although discrete supervision is present, pupils respond positively to this. Staff monitor and evaluate this aspect of pupils' school life. The pupils are involved in 'circle time' where they can express views about the day-to-day running of the school or wider issues thus giving them a 'voice' in this.
27. The school has good procedures for introducing children to school. They spend two and a half days in reception, experiencing the daily routines, and this helps them to adjust successfully when the time comes. Parents are also invited to meetings where the school's routines are discussed, improving their understanding so they can successfully assist in preparing their child for starting school. Pupils in Year 4 spend time in the local middle school, or other schools to which they are to transfer. This helps them to feel confident and secure when they transfer.
28. The school is a safe and secure environment, and this is appreciated by both pupils and their parents or carers. The governors review health and safety issues regularly and act upon the decisions made about these issues. Secure provision is made for fire precautions and first aid.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **very good** links with parents, other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relationship between the parents and the school is very good.
 - The school is highly valued by the community. It plays a central role in village life.
29. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that they are very happy with the education and pastoral care the pupils receive. Parents receive regular newsletters and information about current events such as cluster events and games. The quality of, and information present in the annual reports to parents is good. Parents/carers are encouraged to speak to the teaching staff on an informal basis at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents were seen to use this time effectively. A questionnaire sent to parents

recently showed that, generally, they are pleased with the provision of both academic and pastoral care their children receive. The ' Friends' of the school arrange many fundraising and social events which raise money, and support the funding of educational outings undertaken by the school. Most parents are happy with the provision for special educational needs for their children. Most parents are happy about the amount of work sent home with their children. A small number of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that there should be more homework. In general parents and pupils feel that the provision and marking of homework is satisfactory. Inspectors judge that homework is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and that it successfully supports their learning.

30. The school has strong links with the local church and the village. Pupils have physical education (PE) sessions in the village hall. This is not an ideal arrangement as pupils have to walk a fair distance to get to the hall. The adventure playground in the school grounds is available for use by the local community and the parish council meets in the school at regular intervals. The school has a significant role in village life.
31. There are very good links between the school and the middle school to which most pupils transfer. They have 'taster' days at the school and attend various events such as concerts or sports events. The school community is very supportive and makes the most of the resources, environment and the very good relationships between parents and staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Governance is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is very good.
- Governors are closely involved with the school. They help to shape the way forward and are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The management of the school is very effective because the systems for evaluating its work are rigorous.
- Special educational needs is managed very well, as is the foundation stage.
- Standards, achievement, teaching and learning are monitored very well by the headteacher and key staff. This means that the school moves forward at a cracking pace.

Commentary

32. The headteacher, her team, and the governors have a clear goal. This is to ensure that every pupil achieves his or her personal best in all aspects of school life. They are successful, and this is a significant improvement. The school is full, and is always over-subscribed. This is because parents and pupils appreciate the family atmosphere of the school. Everyone is valued and included in the day-to-day life of the school, and care for the pupils is at the heart of all its work.
33. The school's success has been brought about by hard work, very good leadership, effective teamwork, careful planning for improvement, and through the efficient systems the staff use to measure the pupils' and the school's performance. All aspects of the school's work are carefully monitored and evaluated. The teachers set challenging targets for themselves and their pupils, and these act as a focus for driving up standards and improving the quality of the school's work. Teachers are well trained, and they work very well with pupils who have special educational needs as well as those that have special gifts or talents. The team approach to managing the work of these pupils means that they all achieve highly, to the best of their capability.
34. Governors are very competent and extremely capable, and they are fully involved in moving the school forward. Regular visits enable them to get to know the school well. The written and verbal reports they receive from the headteacher means that they are well placed to fulfil their

role as a critical friend, challenging the school's decisions when this is necessary. Financial systems are well-run and efficient, and the budget is a strong vehicle to drive the school's improvements forward. Planned savings are specifically targeted towards improvements to the foundation stage accommodation and the outdoor classroom and environment. This is the reason for the significant funds that the school currently holds in its balance.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	194791	Balance from previous year	38153
Total expenditure	205353	Balance carried forward to the next	27591
Expenditure per pupil	3259		

The many strengths of the school, alongside its well above average standards, show that the school is providing good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the foundation stage is **very good**, and is one of the school's main strengths. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Children start school at the beginning of the school year they are five. Most of them have average skills and understanding when they start school, but this can vary year-on-year. Children are taught in a small group of reception and Year 1 pupils by one teacher and a teaching assistant. Teaching is very good and the children achieve highly. Very good systems identify how well the children are doing, so that right from the start of their time in school they get suitable support that helps their learning to speed up rapidly. Work is well planned and pitched at the right levels for the children's capabilities, and the whole curriculum is planned around the early learning goals. Parents are fully involved in helping their children and they are well pleased with what the school provides for them. Leadership and management are very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good because of very good teaching.
- Children's confidence and independence are promoted very well.
- Relationships are very good and children are keen and eager to learn.

Commentary

35. There is strong emphasis on developing the whole child and this means that most children are on course to well exceed their early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The staff know the children very well in this small school, and very good systems for tracking children's progress mean that children's development is kept well on course. Routines are well established so that the children feel safe and confident, and no opportunities are missed to praise children's independence and to reward them. Children are well used to taking turns with their equipment and toys. They are sensitive to the needs of others, especially when playing their 'happy and sad' games. Adults are very good role models, ensuring that all children know what is expected of them in every aspect of their day-to-day lives in the reception class. The sheer delight and fun, shown by the children when singing their *BINGO* song, was a good example of all children enjoying and appreciating humour, especially in the *woof* sound at the end of each line.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good.
- Children are developing a love of books and literature. They are making an excellent start with reading.
- High quality teaching and an interesting and stimulating curriculum, means that children's communication, language and literacy skills are developing rapidly.

Commentary

36. Most children are on course to well exceed their goals in this area of learning. Speaking and listening skills are a focus right from the start of the reception year, and children have many opportunities to share their ideas, ask questions and enjoy songs, rhymes and games. Learning is fun and enjoyable. Staff are adept at asking questions that challenge and extend the children's imagination. For example, '..... what do you mean when you say a cat is following Mummy, where are they going and what will happen?'. Books are enjoyed and children listen attentively to stories. Reading skills are first rate because children are taught a range of strategies which help to develop fluent reading. Most children are able to write their name and the higher attaining children can also write short sentences using a capital letter and a full stop.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good and this is due to high quality teaching.
- A well-structured curriculum means that children's mathematical skills are developed very well.

Commentary

37. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's mathematical skills, both incidentally and formally. As a result, children achieve highly and most of them are on course to well exceed their early learning goals by the end of the reception year. In one session the children were excited when they were counting to 100. Most of them clapped and clicked whilst counting and maintaining a brisk pace. This made learning enjoyable and fun. Lively displays encourage children to participate in counting, comparing the size of objects and the different types of weighing scale. The strong focus on practical activities ensures that children have an excellent understanding of numbers and number patterns. Songs, rhymes and singing games support learning successfully, as well as creating many opportunities for children to use their mental mathematics. Higher, average and lower attaining children are well challenged, both orally and practically, by the very good teaching. This is why their achievement is very good.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD, PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

38. It was not possible in the time available to make a judgement about the provision or standards in these areas of learning. There is a full and rich foundation stage curriculum in place and there are very effective systems for tracking children's achievement and progress. Gaps are identified straight away and tackled immediately, and children with special educational needs have extra support that enables them to achieve as well as their classmates. Every child is fully included in all aspects of day-to-day life in the reception class, no-one is left out.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average in Years 2 and 4.
- Pupils achieve very well because of the very good quality teaching and learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress against their specific targets.
- The subject is very well managed.
- English makes a very effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

Commentary

39. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests pupils achieved very high, in the top five per cent in reading and writing for the seven-year-olds in comparison with all schools. Similar schools comparison is equally favourable. Standards in English have improved considerably since the last inspection when they were above average. At the time of the inspection, standards were well above average at Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs and the higher ability pupils have made very good progress in relation to prior attainment. Pupils are well placed to meet or exceed the targets set for them in the 2004 national tests. The very positive standards reached are due to very good planning, very good teaching and very effective use of assessment. The analysis of pupils' work, together with lesson observations, confirms this picture.
40. From a broadly average starting point, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well during their time at school to reach well above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by adults in lessons. Every effort is made by staff to raise their attainment by carefully planned work and very good support and encouragement. In all year groups, there is an average span of ability. Girls tend to do better than boys; however, there are significantly more boys with special educational needs and they achieve as well as their classmates.
41. Overall, standards in speaking and listening are well above average in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4. Most pupils speak confidently and make themselves understood, with younger pupils having an improving vocabulary due to very good teaching having a very good impact on their learning. Staff work very hard to help pupils to extend their vocabulary by:
 - Encouraging pupils to talk to each other.
 - Using drama activities or interesting starts to lessons to help pupils to communicate effectively. For example, in a very good Year 3 and Year 4 lesson, the teacher used a very effective strategy, which involved pupils recounting events and activities during the half term break in pairs, before tape recording these accounts in front of the class.
42. Pupils achieve very well in reading, with the very good development of their knowledge and enjoyment of books being developed very well alongside their reading skills. There is a well-structured reading programme, with pupils working through published schemes. Standards are currently well above average in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4. There are very good opportunities during the school day for pupils to engage in groups, pairs and in silent reading. All pupils enjoy reading with parents and carers at home and this helps them to progress very well. Most tackle new reading material confidently. They are very clear about the strategies that they need to use to work out how to read words and sentences. Pupils enjoy reading the books of Dick King Smith, J K Rowling and Roald Dahl. Book areas in classrooms are well organised; however, the new library area is being developed to ensure both quality and quantity of provision.

43. Well taught reading skills ensure that younger pupils read accurately and fluently, and by Year 4, pupils read in a mature expressive way. The school provides regular, targeted support for pupils with difficulties with their reading and for pupils nearly attaining average levels. The older pupils' very good speaking skills enable them to understand harder words and to explore books at a deeper level of meaning.
44. Standards in writing are well above average for seven-year-olds and nine-year-olds. The very good subject leader has inspired staff to work hard and successfully raise standards in writing. Pupils achieve very well because of very good teaching. Standards have risen because of:
- Revised planning which is of a very good quality.
 - Interesting writing tasks set for a range of audiences.
 - Valuable opportunities for extended writing.
 - Pupils' writing is celebrated in display.
45. The teachers have high expectations of handwriting and spelling, and focused marking, so that pupils are very clear about what they have to do to improve. Year 2 pupils successfully retold the story of *The Hare and the Tortoise*. Some pupils chose to change the animals in the story. The following is an extract of the story of *The Parrot and the Slug*.
- One day a parrot and a slug were having a fight about who was the fastest.*
- At the end of the story the pupil concluded:
- The parrot could not believe it. He was too late – the slug had won.*
- The pupils' stories are fully valued in the displays.
46. Some very good teaching was observed across the school during the inspection. Pupils concentrate very well in lessons and work very hard. Most teaching is of a high quality with an emphasis on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills through enjoyable and purposeful activities. This enables pupils to achieve very well. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils worked very hard to sequence the events of their half term holiday. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of the subject and teach it well. They make sound use of ICT to support learning.
47. The subject is managed very well, with very good use being made of assessment to formulate pupils' targets. Teaching, planning and learning are very well monitored. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through well planned activities and stimulating resources.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, use their language and literacy skills very well in other subjects. Writing skills are developed very well in science, history, geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are very good because pupils are taught very well and they have a curriculum that interests and challenges them.
- Due attention is paid to mental mathematics and problem solving.
- Marking clearly identifies what pupils need to do to improve their work.
- ICT is not used fully enough to support learning.

Commentary

49. Standards are well above average. They dipped last year in the national curriculum tests, but are now back on track due to very good teaching. Standards, teaching and learning have all improved since the last inspection. This is a small school and teachers and support staff work together very well. There is effective teamwork, and this ensures that pupils of all capabilities achieve highly. Work is pitched at the right level for pupils with special educational needs and their achievement is good, like their classmates. There are some pupils who are talented young mathematicians. Their needs are met well because their work is carefully planned, it challenges their thinking and successfully extends their understanding.
50. The strong focus on developing pupils' numeracy skills has paid dividends. Pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts is firmly fixed and provides a firm basis for future learning. In one lesson pupils in Years 3 and 4 were estimating and comparing weight. Their task was to work as an effective team, as well as working out the mathematical problems correctly. Pupils' first task was to estimate the weight of a range of substances including flour, butter etc. This they did with a good degree of accuracy as well as recording their findings speedily and effectively. The next stage was to estimate the weight of packages using a known weight, e.g. 750 g. Working with larger numbers proved more challenging, but the pupils succeeded well. High quality teaching moves learning forward at a good pace, and teachers' plans show that due attention has been paid to their on-going assessment of how well the pupils are doing. Pupils' individual targets give a clear steer towards what is expected, and pupils rise to the challenges set for them. Effective explanations ensure that all pupils know and understand what they are doing and how to complete their tasks successfully. This means that learning moved forward at a cracking pace and no time is wasted. What is missing is a stronger focus on using ICT to support learning in mathematics, and this leaves a gap.
51. The subject leader has worked hard to ensure that the mathematics curriculum is relevant and appropriate to pupils' needs. She is successful. The subject has a high profile across the school and is enjoyed by many pupils. Standards, achievement, teaching and learning are monitored very well so that everyone has a clear understanding of where there are gaps. These are then tackled successfully by the school team, who work closely together.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Pupils are very adept at using their numeracy skills across the curriculum. Graphs, charts and tables are used very effectively to record the findings of pupils' investigations in science. Measuring skills are used in design and technology, and all of these experiences mean that pupils develop an appreciation of the practical use of their numeracy skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good range of science activities with a strong focus on investigations.
- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 2 and they are above average at the end of Year 4.
- Good teaching and effective learning all contribute to good achievement.
- ICT is not used fully enough to support learning.

Commentary

53. Standards are above average. Achievement and teaching have all improved since the last inspection when they were average. They are now good. The school has worked hard to improve the breadth of pupils' experiences in science, and it is successful. The science curriculum is tackled in a multi-faceted way throughout the school, and this allows the best use to be made of the very stimulating outdoor classroom and environment.
54. Tasks are carefully planned and well thought out to engage the pupils' interest. For example, in one lesson the Year 1 and 2 pupils were extending their understanding of 'friction'. Previous work on forces was well understood, and the pupils quickly identified that the 'roughness' or the 'smoothness' of different surfaces affected the speed of movement. The teacher's questions were carefully structured to extend pupils' knowledge and to check out their understanding. Higher attaining pupils extended their learning very well by working out that the higher their slope the faster their shoes slipped down. This in turn led to an exploration of fair testing, with all pupils in the group achieving highly. Teaching was very good, and pupils' achieved highly in this lesson.
55. Previous learning is built on and extended soundly in Years 3 and 4. Very occasionally, pupils' learning slipped because they needed extra support from their teacher and she was working with another group. When this happened learning slowed down for a short time. It quickly picked up again when their teacher moved across to support them. Across the school, the science curriculum is stimulating and interesting and this holds pupils' attention very well. Due attention is paid to investigative work and pupils enjoy the challenges set for them, they achieve well. A good range of appropriate methods are used for pupils to record the findings of their investigations, and this is done well. However, ICT needs to have a stronger role here, as it not used enough to support pupils' learning in science. The subject leader is aware of this issue and is tackling it effectively.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all year groups.
- Pupils' skills are developed in an ad-hoc way. This needs to be more systematic if pupils are to improve their ICT skills.
- The very good support from staff at Pershore High School is driving forward improvements.
- ICT is not used enough to support pupils' learning across the full range of curriculum subjects.

Commentary

56. Standards have held up since the last inspection, and are satisfactory in all year groups but they could be better. Younger pupils, in Years 1 and 2, can access their programs and use the mouse and space bar. With help from their teaching assistant they can program a toy to move in a particular direction. Some pupils can write simple stories, using their word processing skills, but others need help to do this successfully.
57. Older pupils, in Years 3 and 4, have benefited from the additional support provided by the local high school, especially when preparing their power point presentations. It is planned that younger pupils will also have sessions to develop their skills as well. The partnership project enables staff and pupils to benefit from high quality teaching that demonstrates a range of successful teaching styles, encouraging pupils to make rapid progress in developing their ICT skills and understanding.
58. The subject is currently the temporary responsibility of the headteacher, who monitors standards, teaching and learning. What is missing is a co-ordinated approach to develop the subject, train staff, and to make sure that pupils' learning is fully supported.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. ICT is being used to support learning across the curriculum, but the system lacks structure and cohesion and needs improving, especially in mathematics and science.

HUMANITIES

60. Work was sampled in history and geography and no lessons were seen. These subjects were not a focus in this inspection and no judgements were made about their provision. There is a breadth and richness to the history and geography curricula that stimulates pupils' interest and makes very good use of the local environment. The curriculum is planned around a series of topics, such as 'The Victorians' and 'Journeys'. Tasks are carefully structured and pitched at the right levels, making sure that learning is meaningful for pupils of all capabilities. Visits to places of interest, drama groups visiting the school and museum visits by all year groups, all contribute towards high quality learning experiences for the pupils at Himbleton.

Religious education

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards exceed expectations by Year 2 and Year 4.
- All pupils achieve well because of the very good teaching.
- The quality of the curriculum is very good.
- The school is developing the use of ICT in this subject.

Commentary

61. Standards exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Two lessons were observed. Together with a scrutiny of the available work and talking to pupils, the indication is that pupils' achievement is at least good, throughout the school.
62. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, achieve very well because of the very good teaching. Lessons are very well planned and resources support pupils' learning very well.

63. Infant pupils have a good knowledge of biblical journeys such as *Noah and the Flood* and *Jonah and the Whale*. Reception pupils have a very good understanding of *Joshua fought the battle of Jericho*. In a very good lesson they marched around the 'Walls of Jericho', which were made of cardboard boxes, singing the song very enthusiastically. Their written and drawing exercise in their *Journey* books helped to consolidate their very good knowledge and understanding of this topic. Very good use is made of resources to support children's learning and adults are very good role models, who support pupils' learning very well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are able to identify the qualities of leadership, for example they make good reference to the life of Moses, as well as reflecting on their own qualities.
64. The quality of the curriculum is very good. It is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and is directly linked to the current topic of *Journeys*. It is very well planned by the subject leader who teaches all of the pupils throughout the school. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has identified the need to extend the use of ICT in this subject and this is an area for future development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65. Only one lesson was seen in each of the following subjects: design and technology and music and no lessons were seen in art and design or PE. It is not therefore possible to make a firm judgement about overall provision; however, the evidence available indicates that it is very good in all three areas. In addition to observing lessons, inspectors spoke to pupils about what they had learnt in art and design and design and technology, and sampled pupils' work.
66. It is evident from teachers' planning, the prospectus and discussion with pupils that work planned in **art and design** is varied and interesting. Standards of work on display are well above expectations for pupils of their age in both Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. There is a very good improvement on the previous inspection where standards were average. They are currently well above average in Years 2 and 4. Displays are bright, attractive and very colourful around the school and the subject makes a very effective contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
67. The curriculum is very good and is broad, balanced, rich and relevant. There are displays of high quality work. Year 1 pupils have designed and painted lovely plates in the style of Clarice Cliff. Year 2 pupils have produced very effective silhouette pictures featuring the outlines of buildings and rooftops set against wonderful sunset backgrounds. Pupils in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 have also made bright, imaginative glittering models of animals and birds as part of a *Birds and Creatures* topic. Standards are high due to lessons being very well planned and taught. It is clear that very imaginative use is made of resources. Pupils enjoy clay work and 3D art.
68. Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are very interested in art and design and have worked very hard to create continuous patterns with a metre of string in their string pictures. Very attractive collages were created using fabric and chalk whilst working on the project *Journeys and Movement*. Pupils, including those who are gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, achieve very well according to work examined. The co-ordinator is providing very good clear educational direction for the subject. Very good use is made of pupils' artistic skills across the curriculum. However, ICT is not used enough, and this is a weakness.
69. In **design and technology**, discussion with pupils and an observation of a very good Year 1 group activity showed that they are gaining very good experience of a wide range of materials. They are also developing very well the expected subject skills through designing and making a wide variety of products. For example, Year 1 pupils acted as designers and looked at a selection of William Morris designs before they designed their own patterns. They imaginatively used flowers, birds and leaves in the designs for their wallpaper. Standards are well above average for seven-year-olds and well above average by Year 4.

70. During the inspection, a very well taught food technology activity in Year 1 resulted in highly motivated pupils successfully making jam tarts decorated with stars. The teaching assistant captured their interest from the outset and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieved very well in relation to ability due to very good teaching. She was a very good role model and all pupils were excited about the challenge as she expertly modelled the skills at each stage of the recipe. They co-operated very well with one another and eagerly noted the changes brought about through cooking. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are supported very well in their learning by staff.
71. It is clear that pupils are used to evaluating their own work and that of their classmates. The subject leader provides very good clear educational direction for this subject and this is moving the subject forward successfully.
72. In **music**, the whole school was heard singing enthusiastically in assemblies. They sang *The Lord's Prayer* with full awareness of breathing, diction and dynamics. The standard of singing is very good. The quality of the curriculum is also very good and the subject makes a very effective contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Music is taught to each class by the subject leader. Her very good subject expertise and her skilful development of pupils' musical skills help pupils to develop their singing, listening and appraising and composition skills. All adults, including the teaching assistants, support pupils very well in their learning.
73. In the one lesson seen, reception pupils were developing a very good understanding of composition work. They also made very good progress with their singing and were provided with valuable opportunities to practise, refine and perform the *Bingo* song. They enjoyed comparing their performance to a video recording of older pupils performing this song. All pupils achieved very well, including those with special educational needs. Very good cross-curricular links were evident through examining the planning.
74. Standards are well above average in singing and composition work by Year 2 and Year 4. The co-ordinator provides valuable opportunities for pupils to work with professional musicians. Recently they worked with an American jazz musician culminating in an outdoor concert. The school has identified the need for pupils to make more use of ICT to support their learning.
75. **Physical education** takes place in the playground and in the village hall, which is some distance away from the school. This is not an ideal arrangement but is the best one possible under the circumstances. Pupils receive an adequate curriculum in PE.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and their families are valued and respected. The school is a very happy and caring community.
 - The strong focus on a healthy lifestyle is developing pupils' future role as responsible citizens.
76. Personal, social and health education is covered very well, and the school has a very strong focus on pupils' personal development. This is because staff and governors feel very strongly that personal development is the lynch pin of pupils' achievement, and they are correct. All adults are very effective role models for pupils, and their very good relationships successfully exemplify this for pupils. The emphasis on developing really effective learning styles means that pupils are well aware of their own and each other's needs, all of which contributes towards their growing body of knowledge about their responsibilities as citizens of the future.
77. Health education is very well planned and is taught very well as part of the science and personal, social and health education provision. The focus on healthy eating and a positive

lifestyle helps pupils to keep healthy, well and happy. They learn how to keep safe when playing outside or when walking in the local countryside. School and class rules are adhered to and pupils display a mature sense of self-discipline in their daily lives. Good attention is paid to living a healthy and well-balanced life. Sex education means that pupils have positive support and guidance. All of these experiences enhance the very good education enjoyed by the pupils at Himbleton First School.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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