

INSPECTION REPORT

HUTHWAITE ALL SAINTS CE (AIDED) INFANT SCHOOL

Huthwaite, Sutton-in-Ashfield

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122824

Headteacher: Eleanor Greaves

Lead inspector: Barbara Crane

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th December 2003

Inspection number: 256531

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	74
School address:	Common Road Huthwaite Sutton-in-Ashfield Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG17 2JR
Telephone number:	01623 459199
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Lake
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd February 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average voluntary aided infant school, with 74 pupils aged from four to seven years. The school's assessment of children when they start school shows that their attainment is below average. Few have had any pre-school experience in an educational setting. About 42 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much higher than average. All of the pupils come from white, British backgrounds and have English as their first language. About 25 per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is higher than average, but none have statements of special needs.

The school has had a difficult time with staffing over the last two years and there have been several temporary teachers. Due to the previous headteacher's long-term illness, the senior teacher was acting headteacher between February and October 2003. She was appointed as the permanent headteacher in October. The school gained a Healthy Schools Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21227	Barbara Crane	Lead inspector	English, science, Foundation Stage, history, geography.
9146	Mark Brennand	Lay inspector	
30398	Chris Scola	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, art and design, music, physical education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Pupils achieve well to reach better than average standards in reading, writing and science because of good quality teaching. They do very well in mathematics and standards are even higher. Pupils' personal development is good. The leadership by the headteacher is good and the school is well managed. It gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well mathematics and also do well in reading, writing and science.
- The headteacher's good leadership has been instrumental in raising standards and improving teaching and learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very effectively supported and make rapid progress.
- Teaching is good and the curriculum interests pupils and is enriched by a very good variety of activities outside normal lessons.
- Pupils' personal development is good and they grow in self-esteem and confidence.
- Listening is not as well promoted as other skills.
- Too little use is made of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Attendance is too low.

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in 1998. Standards are higher and the teaching has improved. The school has worked effectively to improve the management of subjects and the curriculum. Reception children now benefit from better provision for outdoor play. There is still work to do to ensure that pupils' skills in ICT are used in lessons.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Standards have improved rapidly over the last two years. By the time they start in Year 1 most children have reached the goals for their age in all areas of learning. Standards in Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and science. Standards in mathematics are well above average. Pupils use their skills in literacy and numeracy well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils do not make the best possible progress in listening and although standards are broadly average, they could do better. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because of the effective support. Standards in ICT are average but pupils do not use what they have learned sufficiently in other lessons. In all other subjects, standards are average. The school's results last year were very good compared to those in similar schools.

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

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.

Pupils' moral, social, spiritual and cultural development is good. Their attitudes to school are positive and they enjoy school and helping each other. Pupils grow in self-esteem and develop a good understanding of how to get on well together and respect others. Pupils behave well and are eager to take responsibility. Attendance has fallen in recent years and is below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education. Teaching and learning are good in all parts of the school. Children in the Reception class get a firm foundation of skills that sets them up for continued success in Year 1. All teachers have good expectations of behaviour and so children learn in a well-ordered atmosphere. Pupils are keen to learn because lessons are interesting and adults praise their efforts. The basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics and speaking are very well taught in all years, but pupils' listening is less well promoted. Very good support for pupils with special educational needs is evident in all classes. A good curriculum is carefully planned so that pupils use what they have learned in one subject in other subjects. The curriculum is enriched by many exciting activities outside normal lessons such as clubs, visits and sporting activities. The staff know pupils well and take good care of them. The school has a good partnership with parents and welcomes them in school daily so that they have good contact with teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The staff and governors are increasingly working well together under the leadership of the new headteacher and there is a strong commitment to raise standards, which is reflected in the better results of tests last year and the sustained good standards seen now. The governors provide satisfactory support for the school, understand its strengths and weaknesses, and have started to check on its performance more effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views about the school. They appreciate what it does for their children and the effort that the school makes to broaden children's experiences through extra activities. Pupils are also positive about the school and know that adults will listen to them and take their views into account.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things that the school needs to do now are to:

- improve pupils' progress in listening;
- provide better opportunities for pupils to use ICT in lessons;
- seek further ways to improve pupils' attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards in reading, writing and science are above average. Standards in mathematics are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have taken an upturn in the last two years.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well in mathematics, and well in reading and writing.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and most reach average standards by the time they leave.
- Pupils' listening should be better.
- Progress in ICT is limited by the lack of opportunities to practise skills in relevant situations in other lessons.

Commentary

1. Although standards have varied considerably since the last inspection, the school is now firmly on the right track and improvement overall has been good. There was an overall downward trend in standards from 1998 to 2001 and the results in 2001 were a low point for the school. Results in 2002 improved somewhat, although the school had fewer pupils gaining the higher level than nationally in reading and mathematics. In reading and writing, a high proportion of pupils only barely gained the level expected for their age. Results in 2003 continued the upward trend more strongly and were above the national average in reading and well above average in writing and mathematics. Compared to similar schools, the results were well above average. Many more pupils gained the higher level and the proportion of pupils only just reaching the expected level fell. The table showing the standards in national tests in 2003 is given below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.5 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.2 (14.2)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	17.4 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The improvement in standards has been maintained this year and standards are above average in reading, writing and science and well above average in mathematics. These improvements have been brought about by the school's concerted efforts to focus on what needed to improve and consequent adaptations to teaching. There has been, for example, an effective focus on improving pupils' speaking so that their vocabulary is extended and they use more complex structures in speech. This is reflected in the quality of their writing and in their discussions about what they read. In addition, the school has looked at ways in which it can improve boys' performance, and strategies such as providing a more relevant range of reading material and writing for purposes that better motivate boys have proved successful. There is now little difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The needs of the more able pupils are being well met through work that takes them beyond the level expected and allows them to develop and use their skills.

3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because their needs are quickly identified and met through precise planning to resolve difficulties. Frequent reviews of progress are used to set new targets. This means that few pupils do not reach the level expected for their age by the time they leave.
4. The school has put a great deal of effort into refining its target setting in all age groups and this has resulted in a closer match of work for pupils of different abilities. Reception children achieve well from a lower than average starting point. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development and in the mathematical area of learning. Children are on track to reach the goals set for their age in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1 and to exceed them in mathematics.
5. Pupils of all abilities in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because the work is challenging. They read confidently because they have been taught to look at the sense of what they read as well as the sounds of groups of letters. Pupils enjoy reading and use good expression when reading. As pupils have good opportunities to talk about their ideas, they know what they want to say when they write. As well as using their knowledge of how to spell common words, they use the sound of words and how letters combine in spelling patterns efficiently to help them spell accurately. Pupils are quick to calculate and have a good understanding of the relationships between numbers. They use their skills well when solving problems. Pupils' listening, while average, is not as good as it could be because teaching does not promote consistent use of listening skills in relevant situations, such as when listening to each other's contributions in discussions.
6. Standards in ICT are average; for example, the oldest pupils word-process their work and use a drawing program competently. Pupils are making good progress in lessons that focus specifically on skills but they have too few opportunities to put these into practice in other lessons, which slows their overall progress. In all other subjects, standards are average and the pupils achieve well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Punctuality is satisfactory but attendance is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave well because of the school's good guidance and clear rules.
- Personal development is well promoted so that pupils become confident, are willing to take responsibility and respect others.
- Relationships between the pupils and with the staff are good and create a good climate for learning.
- Attendance is too low.

Commentary

7. The school helps pupils to gain a good understanding of what is right and wrong and so their moral development is good. They respond well to the school's expectations of good behaviour, know the rules and keep to them. This is evident in the calm way in which pupils start the day and cope with the limited space in the school. They go straight into classrooms on arriving at school in the morning and staff are on hand to greet them as they organise their belongings and settle to work. Behaviour is very good in the dining areas and lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion. Pupils know the routines and why these are necessary. They are well mannered and greet visitors politely. There have been no exclusions.
8. Pupils' social development is good. They get on well together, regardless of age or background, whether at work or play. They willingly take on responsibility and are helpful in the daily running of the school. They help to organise the composting of remnants of fruit from break times and

ring the bell at the end of sessions. The classrooms often need re-organising, as there is no hall, and pupils are sensible about rearranging furniture for lunch or assembly. In order to prepare for one assembly, for example, a group of Year 2 pupils helped each other to set out a cloth to cover a table that would take a candle, while another fetched a plant. Other pupils sensibly helped to move back furniture to make space for the other classes.

9. Pupils' spiritual development and cultural development are good. Adults set a consistently strong example of sensitivity and respect for others that pupils follow. Pupils' self-esteem is raised through the praise of adults and their peers. They have a strong sense of belonging to the school community and are proud of what they do to help it thrive. Pupils learn about their own and others' cultural heritage through work in geography, history, art, music and religious education. They learn about festivals and celebrations in other cultures and in geography pupils in Year 2 are currently comparing life in a Mexican village with their daily lives.

Attendance

10. Attendance in the last school year was poor, mainly because of a small number of pupils whose attendance was very low. Since September, however, the school has raised the profile of attendance by making regular references to it in newsletters. The involvement of outside agencies has promoted better attendance and in addition a copy of the revised attendance policy has been sent home to all parents. Much work has been done to improve the attendance of those few who were causing the bulk of the absence. As a result there has been a marked improvement in the level of attendance for the current term so that it currently stands at 94 per cent and unauthorised absence is minimal. Although this overall attendance is still lower than average, it is an improvement and the school needs to continue to build on the work it has undertaken to improve further the overall level.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.9
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
73	0	0
1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a firm grasp of their subjects and of how to teach them in an interesting way.
- Pupils' language is very well promoted.
- The basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are very well taught.
- Teachers effectively use information from their assessments to plan work for different abilities.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for.
- Pupils' listening is not always as well supported through teaching.

Commentary

11. Teaching and learning are good in all parts of the school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Reception children get what they need to get off to a good start and good work habits are firmly established. Teachers have a good grasp of what they are teaching and of how to vary the structure of lessons so that the pupils remain interested. There is a good balance of direct teaching of skills, followed by well-planned practical activities so that pupils can put into practice what they have learned. The basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are very well taught, which builds pupils' confidence in approaching new work.
12. The good use of information from the checks teachers make on how well pupils are doing ensures that work is well planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Lower attaining pupils have work that is carefully adapted and the more able pupils are given plenty of challenging work that stretches their understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported through individual planning that targets their specific needs. Classroom assistants are thoroughly briefed to provide support for these pupils and so contribute effectively to the pupils' very good progress. This was seen in a small group session with Year 1 pupils when skilful questioning by the classroom assistant drew out more extended replies from pupils about what was happening in a story. By the end of the session, all of the pupils were answering in complete sentences rather than in phrases. All of the staff promote pupils' language very well. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to air their views or explain how they have arrived at answers. Teachers identify the vocabulary needed for each subject and teach it thoroughly so that pupils use it when they talk about their work.
13. Pupils find listening difficult and teaching does not always help them to overcome their difficulties. The strategies used by teachers to promote good listening are not as consistent or effective as those used to teach other basic skills. Teachers sometimes ask general questions of the whole class that prompt everyone to reply at once and so pupils cannot listen to what others are saying. While there are good opportunities for pupils to read and write or use their number skills for different purposes, teachers do not often plan activities that specifically enhance pupils' listening and so pupils do not make the best possible progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 14 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5	7	2	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum with a very good range of activities outside normal lessons. The staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of extra-curricular activities and community links enriches the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Numeracy and literacy are promoted very well across the curriculum.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health development is good.
- ICT is not yet regularly used across the curriculum

Commentary

14. The curriculum shows good improvement since the previous inspection. Detailed guidance is now in place to help teachers plan for all subjects. All teachers now plan work to match the needs of pupils of all abilities very effectively. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Despite not having a suitable hall for physical education the school has arranged very good provision using local community resources. Very good links with other local schools and particularly the secondary school ensure that pupils receive skilled coaching in a very wide range of activities such as trampolining and gymnastics. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. There is now good provision for outdoor play, which ensures that children develop good physical skills.
15. Many opportunities are taken to enrich the curriculum. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities that supports the pupils' learning, such as an art and craft club, a gardening club and a recorder group. In the humanities and the arts, the school provides a very good range of visits to support the curriculum, such as visits to museums, outdoor centres and workshops, and trips to the theatre. The school takes part in a range of events run in conjunction with other local schools, such as the speech and drama festival.
16. The curriculum also supports the personal development of pupils very well. This is a 'Healthy Eating' school that emphasises the importance of a healthy life-style. Pupils know the importance of eating fresh fruit, exercising regularly and recycling as much waste as possible. The school ensures there are opportunities to put these values into practice by, for example, providing fruit at break times, recycling paper and composting kitchen waste.
17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. It is well planned, effective and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Individual education plans are detailed and thorough. They contain appropriate targets, which are communicated well to all relevant staff. The expertise of outside agencies is called in when necessary and used effectively to inform teaching.
18. A relative weakness in the curriculum is the lack of use of ICT to support pupils' learning. The school previously had a computer suite but has recently updated its computer facilities with laptops to replace the old computers and ensure ICT is used more widely to support other subjects across the curriculum. However, the laptop computers did not arrive until very recently and planning for their use in lessons is too sparse. Although the school has been successful in ensuring that pupils develop skills in ICT through good, direct teaching in specific lessons, there are too few opportunities to use these skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for the care, safety and welfare of pupils are satisfactory. Provision for support and guidance, based on monitoring, is good. The way in which the school involves pupils through seeking their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff work hard at promoting pupils' personal development.
- The school is good at seeking pupils' views.
- There are good induction arrangements for pupils.
- There has been no recent training for child protection.
- The documenting of risk assessment needs is out of date.

Commentary

19. This is a small and caring school where staff know the children well and provide good daily care. As a result children feel confident and secure. From this solid base the school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop on a personal level. The school has a good scheme of work for personal, social and health education in which circle time plays a significant part. The 'All Saints Superstars' is a good system for rewarding achievement, good attendance, or being particularly helpful. These awards are recognised at the weekly celebration assembly and, together with daily stickers, they help to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
20. The way in which the school seeks pupils' views is good. As part of the Healthy School initiative, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were elected to be part of the task group that sought others' views. Children have also been consulted on the behaviour policy and they help to set class and school rules as well as making decisions on what acts should be worthy of rewards. All this work helps them to gain them an appreciation of the difference between right and wrong. When the library van visits the school, pupils are elected to select books for their class. The school has periodically established a school council, usually in the summer term when Year 2 pupils are at their most mature.
21. Arrangements for the induction of new children are good and a range of visits is organised to help them and their parents. In the final month of the school year before they start school, children attend for four afternoons a week over a period of four weeks to allow them to become familiar with their surroundings and their teacher.
22. Although the arrangements for child protection are sound, the newly appointed co-ordinator has not had recent training and knows that this should be arranged as soon as possible. Furthermore, although the governors have had recent training in risk assessment, the programme of documenting these risks has fallen behind.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good, with the overwhelming majority of parents saying that they are happy with the school. Links with the community are good. Links with other schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a good relationship with parents.
- The school is good at seeking parents' views and takes these into account.
- There are very good links with the local family of schools to enrich the curriculum, particularly in sport.

Commentary

23. The good links that the school fosters with parents begins at the start of each day with parents being encouraged to bring their children in to school and to stay with them for ten minutes and work together on a literacy or numeracy activity. Not only does this allow them to get involved with their child's learning but it also provides an opportunity to meet with staff and discuss areas of concern or otherwise. Many parents take the opportunity to do this because of the warm welcome extended to them. The school helps parents to understand what it is doing and to become involved; for example, once a term, each class holds a parents' meeting to discuss the curriculum topics for that term. Parents are also encouraged to attend the fortnightly service at the church, together with the numerous other initiatives and events including the gardening club and sports day. There is a parents' notice board together with a regular supply of newsletters, which are pleasingly presented. All of this work encourages positive interaction with parents and keeps them well informed about what is going on.
24. The school is good at seeking parents' views and acting upon them. On an annual basis it sends out a questionnaire to accompany the governors' annual report to parents. The response to the most recent questionnaire indicated that parents would like even more information about how their children are progressing. In response to this the headteacher included a note in a recent newsletter asking those parents who raised this point to contact her so that she can get a better indication of what it is that they want. As yet, none has come forward but the offer is still open. As a further example of its willingness to listen, earlier in the year, concern from parents about the number of entrances used by children led to the school reviewing this and reducing it.
25. There are good links with the community, especially the local church. Expertise in the community is well used; for example, the community nutritionist helped the school to gain its award as a Healthy School. All Saints has established a very good working relationship with the local secondary school, which enriches the curriculum, particularly in sport; the Sport England initiative allows the school to tap into resources to deliver sports coaching and training. The secondary school's facilities are regularly used to provide after-school clubs in dance, trampoline, gymnastics and handball and pupils in Year 12 from the secondary school help to coach hockey and badminton. Within the small family of schools, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators meet regularly to discuss schemes of work for Year 2 children. These meetings are used effectively to share good practice and to moderate work. Through the small family of schools there have also been joint training days on special educational needs and also behaviour management for mid-day supervisors. A group of Year 2 children join those from local schools to undertake a youth hostel residential that could not happen without the shared funding. All of this has a very good impact on pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher's leadership is good and she is well supported by key staff. The management of the school is good and governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a strong vision for the school that is supported by the staff and governors.
- The right priorities have been established and worked upon diligently.
- There is a good team spirit, and roles and responsibilities are clear.
- The governors are at an early stage of developing systems for checking the school's work.

Commentary

26. The school has weathered a troubled time of uncertainty over staffing. Central to the school's success has been the good leadership exerted by the headteacher, who has ensured that the

school has a comprehensive plan for improvement based on careful analysis of what needs to improve. Previously, the school did not have a complete plan setting out priorities for its development that was known to all staff and governors, and so they were unsure of how they could support improvement. Much has been achieved in a short time. Policies have been updated and the involvement of governors and staff in deciding the school's priorities has been improved. As a result, a strong team spirit is evident and morale is high. The induction of new staff is effective and staff development is well planned to reflect the school's priorities.

27. The commitment and determination by the staff to include all pupils, to sustain a good, broad curriculum and to improve standards are a reflection of the headteacher's clear vision for the school. The improved standards last year, replicated again this year, are testimony to the school's effective management and the diligence of the staff in working towards targets set as a result of the effective checks made on teaching and learning. The co-ordinators for English, science and the Foundation Stage are very new but management of these areas is good and there is already a firm understanding of what needs to be done to further improve provision in these areas because of the school's climate of self-evaluation, and good teamwork. The management of special educational needs and mathematics, where key staff have had these responsibilities for a longer time, is very effective and so provision in these areas is even stronger, reflected in the very good progress made by pupils.
28. Governance is satisfactory. The governors ensure that the school fulfils all of its statutory responsibilities. Some governors are very new and others have changed responsibilities recently. There is a real commitment to improve their expertise and involvement. Training by these new governors has been undertaken in key areas such as financial management and the assessment of risks to health and safety. Before the last 18 months, the governors' role in shaping the direction of the school was limited. There was no comprehensive development planning to which they could refer to check how well the school was working towards its targets. This situation has improved and governors now have a sound understanding of the school's priorities and how these will be achieved. Governors have started to visit to evaluate the school's performance and help it to improve. This is at an early stage but governors are well placed to further develop their role as a critical friend to the school through the improved communication and documentation available to them. The governors do not do enough to promote better attendance. The annual report that governors send to parents, for example, does not sufficiently stress the need for good attendance, nor does it point out that attendance is below that in most schools.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	292976	Balance from previous year	51860
Total expenditure	292076	Balance carried forward to the next	52760
Expenditure per pupil	3708		

29. Financial management is good and the governors seek the best value for their expenditure. The school uses its money wisely to support the school's priorities, for example, in increasing the level of support available for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. This has paid dividends and has resulted in the very good progress made by these pupils. Although the carry-forward figure from the previous year looks high, the difficulties with staffing over the previous year mean that much of this sum was allocated and has now been used.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

30. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved since the last inspection. Children achieve well in all areas of learning and firm foundations are laid for future learning in Year 1. Children start in the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five, with the summer-born children initially attending part-time. Very few have benefited from any provision in an educational setting before starting school and their attainment on entry, while covering the full spectrum, is mainly below average. This is particularly apparent in their language and literacy skills and their personal and social development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear routines and warm relationships mean that children settle quickly into school life.
- Children are encouraged to become independent and think for themselves.
- High expectations are reflected in children's good behaviour and interest.
- The emphasis in teaching on children sharing and helping each other is very effective.

Commentary

31. Teaching and learning are very good and so children are on course to meet the goals for their age by the time they start Year 1. Relationships are warm and supportive and children behave well because expectations are made clear. The tone for the day is set by a calm start, with well-defined routines for organising personal belongings and when children gather with the teacher to find out what activities will be available during the morning. Parents are welcomed into the classroom and often spend some minutes looking at what children have done. This enhances the children's feeling of security and pride in their achievements. The good emphasis on promoting independence and sharing is a strong feature of lessons and although the majority of children find this hard at first, they come to realise that life becomes easier when they have mastered these skills. This is evident when they play together in the role-play area and help each other to dress up to act out parts. In one lesson the children organised themselves very well into groups of three and when sheets were distributed on which they had to sort objects they shared them well. Good manners are praised and so children are polite to each other and adults.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's language is very well promoted in all activities.
- The basic skills in reading and writing are very well taught and children have plenty of opportunities to use these skills.
- Listening is sometimes not promoted as well as it should be.

Commentary

32. Teaching and learning are good and so children achieve well. They are on course to reach the goals for their age by the end of the year. There is particularly rapid progress in speaking, reading and writing because the basic skills are very well taught and activities are planned so that children practise them in relevant situations. In the role-play area, for example, in one session, children used the vocabulary that they had learned from the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' to support their play very well. The classroom assistant provided very good support for language during this session, enabling more reticent children to take a full part. The teacher's emphasis on creating different voices for the characters when reading the story was also evident as they took on different parts. The instruction to use a 'silky soft voice' for the fox was relished by the class in another session, as they read the story together. Thorough teaching of the sounds of individual and groups of letters means that children approach reading confidently. Children read familiar words and are given good opportunities to write down their ideas in letters, messages and instructions. Listening is less well promoted because there are times when children shout out answers to questions that are directed to the whole class. When this happens, children do not listen to each other as carefully as they should. At other times, when expectations of listening are more firmly established, children's progress is better.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good emphasis on developing mathematical language effectively supports children's progress.
- There is a very good level of challenge for more able children.
- Practical activities are well planned so that children learn through doing and are encouraged to explain their thinking.

Commentary

33. Teaching and learning are very good and so children achieve very well in this area of learning. Most are on track to exceed the expectations for their age by the end of the Reception year. This is because the work planned is exciting and challenging for all abilities. Teaching places a very good emphasis on using mathematical terms and children use these in practical work with numbers, shape and measurement. Lessons are fast and interesting, so that children are motivated and engaged by activities. Many activities involve touching, looking and moving, as when children ordered objects so that they could check that their estimates of the number of balls in a bag were correct. They had plenty of ideas about how they could make sure that they were counting correctly, such as "Put them in order...put them in a line...give one to everyone". More able children have plenty of opportunities to extend their skills with numbers. In one session, for example, where the class were working with ten objects, the teacher challenged these children to work out mentally how many more would be needed to make ten from different starting points. They rose to the task very well and quickly gave correct answers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of activities is planned to link children's learning about the world.
- Attractive displays stimulate children's enthusiasm for learning.
- Practical activities interest children and harness their curiosity.
- There is limited use of technology such as tape recorders or listening centres.

Commentary

34. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. They are on course to meet the expectations set for their age in this area of learning by the start of Year 1. Children's achievement is good because of the broad range of activities that is planned to make sure that they can explore why things happen and how they can change things around them. The current work is built around the story of the Gingerbread Man and children are, for example, set challenges to build a bridge with construction kits to carry the character over the river. In another session, they made gingerbread men and when the teacher asked what they might do to make icing sugar fix decorations to the biscuits, they quickly decided to try water. Children look at changes in the weather and use terms such as 'cloudy', 'foggy' or 'sunny', representing these conditions in their paintings. They have looked at different textures in tree bark and describe them as 'smooth', 'wiggly', 'bumpy' and 'fluffy' when talking about the rubbings they have made. When looking at different celebrations involving light, children created interesting collages of divas and Advent candles. Children work on the computer and increase their control over the mouse by clicking on icons on the screen to move these around. Children do not often use everyday technology such as tape recorders or listening centres to enhance their learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-equipped outdoor play area that is used effectively for imaginative play.
- Good emphasis is placed on developing control over tools.

Commentary

35. Good learning reflects the good quality teaching, with activities planned to develop all aspects of children's physical development. The outdoor play area, which is new since the last inspection, when facilities were very limited, is well used to promote imaginative play. Poor weather during the inspection meant that children's access to this area was limited, but planning shows that children build large models or use the fixed equipment to enact stories and that proper emphasis is placed on children developing better control over their larger movements as they climb or ride on equipment. There is good coaching by adults for children to hold and use tools, such as pencils and paintbrushes, correctly. Children are on course to meet the goals for their age by the time they start Year 1.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's creativity is well promoted through good quality resources for role-play.
- They choose from a wide range of materials to represent their ideas.

Commentary

36. Children achieve well and are set to reach the goals for their age by the end of the year. Teaching is good and so is learning because of good quality resources that allow children to explore their ideas. The role-play area is very well equipped with props and costumes that stimulate children's ideas and help them to sustain their play. They use these imaginatively, as when a group organised themselves to act out a story involving a journey that was beset with difficulties and they packed up the provisions that they had 'cooked' in the oven before setting off. Children choose from a good range of media when they create winter collages that are assembled as mobiles, or weave on a frame. They sing a good range of familiar songs, often connected to their work in other areas, and do so tunefully.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The basic skills in reading and writing are taught very well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.
- Pupils' speaking is well promoted but listening is not so well developed.
- Skills in reading and writing are well used in other subjects.
- Good management has brought about an improvement in standards.

Commentary

37. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in both standards and teaching. Standards are above average in reading and writing, with more pupils working at the level that is expected for their age than in most schools. Standards rose markedly in 2003 and the pupils currently in Year 2 are set to do well by the time they leave the school. Good management, including the careful analysis of what is needed to improve teaching and learning and subsequent action to improve, has brought about the improvement. This has involved improving the quality of reading resources, better opportunities for writing for different purposes and a closer focus on what motivates boys to learn.

38. Teaching is good and the basic skills in reading and writing are taught thoroughly so that pupils of all abilities develop confidence in facing the challenging work. Pupils are keen to write and because their ideas are stimulated through good teaching, they set their ideas down quickly, with accurate spelling and punctuation. Precise targets are set for pupils' writing, based on careful assessments, and pupils know what they are working on next to improve. Teachers remind pupils of their targets as they work and keep a careful check on progress. The times when Year 2 pupils read in pairs as 'book buddies' enhance their enjoyment of sharing books and they relish these opportunities, settling down quickly and helping each other when needed. Pupils remember what they have learned and are enthusiastic; they chat animatedly together about the pictures as they leaf through the book, gathering an idea of what it might be about

before starting to read. They pay good attention to punctuation when they read and show a good understanding of what happens in stories. Pupils reflect the teachers' lively reading of stories and poems in the way in which they read aloud to each other or to the class. In one session, for example, the teacher's skilful reading of 'Peace at Last' fully engaged the Year 1 pupils' attention and enhanced their ideas about what might prevent them from getting to sleep at night.

39. Speaking develops well through teachers' good encouragement and prompts that enable pupils to extend their replies. Teachers insist that pupils give answers in sentences and pupils' language reflects the good vocabulary used by teachers. The value placed on pupils' contributions to discussions means that they are eager to speak. Pupils' listening is not as good as their speaking. Although pupils sometimes listen carefully, there are times when they demonstrate that they have not done so. In one lesson, for example, some average attaining Year 1 pupils gave an answer to a question that had been asked previously, even though a classmate had given the answer and the teacher had asked a subsequent question.
40. The very good support for pupils with special educational needs means that few pupils do not reach the average level in reading and writing by the time they leave the school. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the high quality support provided for a small group of pupils meant that they were able to enter fully into the class activity about a story because they had been helped to explore their ideas when reading it together with a classroom assistant. A group of Year 2 pupils with special educational needs were supported by the teacher to improve their ability to check over the page to see if any characters spoke in speech bubbles and they demonstrated they could do this well when faced with a new story.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Good planning means that pupils extend their skills in speaking, reading and writing in other subjects. In a Year 2 science lesson, for example, pupils quickly set about reading the instructions on a worksheet and so knew what to do with very little extra guidance. When pupils gather information from books to support their learning in history and geography, they scan the page to find relevant information and use the contents and index sections efficiently. Pupils record their ideas in writing confidently in science, when they predict what might happen. There are good opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas in lessons and to use the vocabulary that they have learned.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve high standards.
- Teaching is very good right across the school.
- Numeracy skills are well developed through other subjects.
- Leadership and management are very effective.
- Pupils of all abilities benefit from extra support in the classroom.
- Opportunities to use ICT in mathematics are missed.

Commentary

42. In 2001 standards were very low but have risen rapidly over the last two years. Standards are now well above average, with nearly half of Year 2 working above the level expected for their age and very few working below the expected level. This represents very good progress from when these pupils entered the school.

43. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Over the last two years, particularly, there has been a very effective focus on improving the teaching of mathematics. Lessons have been observed and the teachers given detailed feedback on how to improve pupils' learning. The teachers have benefited from a great deal of high quality training provided by the local authority. They now have a very good understanding of the subject and are able to make learning fun as well as rigorously promoting mathematical skills. Very well planned and well-paced sessions, which develop the pupils' understanding of number and their capacity to calculate mentally, start all numeracy lessons. Pupils really enjoy the challenge of these lessons, are very motivated and achieve very well because the work is pitched at the right level for different capabilities. Teaching promotes the accurate use of mathematical terms and so pupils can explain how they arrived at answers. Early morning voluntary sessions, well supported by pupils and parents, also reinforce and consolidate pupils' mental skills. Applying mathematical skills to everyday situations is another very strong aspect of teaching. For example, the Year 2 pupils estimated the number of different-sized sweets in containers, discussing how they had arrived at an answer and how big the difference was between their estimate and the actual number.
44. In all mathematics lessons there is always at least one supporting adult and often more. This ensures that small groups of pupils work closely with a skilled and well-briefed and informed adult who reinforces and consolidates the work introduced by the teacher. This provides very effective support for pupils of all abilities but especially for those pupils who have particular difficulties in learning. This ensures these pupils too make very good progress.
45. The leadership in the subject is very good. The reasons for the poor performance in 2001 were looked at closely and very effective action was taken to resolve the problems. Improved assessment systems were introduced which resulted in all pupils being challenged appropriately in their mathematics work. A successful programme of training was introduced which greatly increased teachers' expertise and confidence. Also, more recently, individual targets are set for each pupil. This means that pupils know what they need to do next to improve and the targets motivate them to learn more effectively.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. The school has a very thoughtful approach to identifying times when pupils can use their knowledge and skills in other subjects and so see the relevance of what they have learned in a practical sense. The very good planning ensures that pupils use what they know very well, particularly in literacy, art, geography and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good balance of direct teaching and practical activities, and effective links with mathematics.
- Teaching promotes the use of scientific language very well and a good range of visits supports pupils' learning.
- The subject is well managed.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning in the subject.

Commentary

47. Standards are above average and pupils of all abilities achieve well. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The cause of the improvement is the good management of the subject that has focused on areas that needed to improve, such as providing a broader

range of practical activities that interest pupils, and gives them opportunities to explore their ideas.

48. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are careful to introduce the correct scientific terms and pupils use these when talking about their ideas. Lessons have a good balance of activities, with well-paced periods of direct teaching interspersed with practical activities that allow pupils to put into practice what they have just learned. These factors lead to pupils' good achievement. This was evident in a Year 1 lesson, where pupils were learning that shiny objects need light to shine. Through an interesting range of investigations, the pupils gained a good understanding about shiny objects not being a source of light, but reflecting it from another source. They had previously used black boxes in which they placed objects and torches to illuminate them. They recorded their results in charts that they could interpret and discuss in groups. In another lesson with Year 2, the pupils had to predict whether different materials would change shape through squashing, bending, twisting or stretching and also whether they would naturally return to their original shape. The good link with mathematics in this lesson, as pupils had to decide how to record and interpret the data gathered, is a strong aspect of all of the teachers' planning. Year 2 pupils know that some materials change when they are heated and that sometimes these changes cannot be reversed. Higher attaining pupils explain that the clay in their pots cannot be made soft again but that chocolate can become hard after it has been melted, if it is put in the fridge.
49. Visits to places of scientific interest are planned very well and support pupils' learning. They visit, for example, the local nature reserve, an arboretum and a local farm to gain first hand experience of how things grow and change. There is too little use of ICT to support pupils' learning at present. While teachers plan carefully to use pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics in science lessons, there is not yet the same rigour in identifying opportunities to use pupils' skills in ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the last inspection teaching and learning in ICT have improved
- Pupils make good progress in developing ICT skills.
- Assessment procedures in ICT have improved.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other subjects.

Commentary

50. Standards in ICT are now average and have improved since the most recent inspection. Difficulties with the installation of hardware and changes in systems have meant that the school's progress in developing its provision has been slowed at times, but improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. All pupils now make good progress in developing skills and teachers now have a much clearer understanding of each pupil's ability through good assessment systems. The school has recently shifted its provision from a suite of computers to laptops and pupils are at an early stage of familiarisation with the new computers.
51. Specialist expertise has been used successfully to train teachers and develop their confidence. A well-planned curriculum now supports the teaching and learning. This has resulted in skills being well taught across the school. For example, in a very good ICT lesson, Year 2 pupils confidently used a drawing program to create their own designs in the style of Mondrian. They demonstrated good mouse control and used tools such as on-screen brushes and rubbers to achieve the desired effect. The teacher made effective use of a laptop linked to an overhead projector to teach skills, which the pupils were able to apply using their own laptops.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

52. In some areas of the curriculum, such as art and literacy, ICT is beginning to be used to support pupils' learning. However, delays to the programme of introducing laptops have meant that this is still an area that the school knows it needs to develop further, particularly in such subjects as mathematics and science.

HUMANITIES

53. Work was sampled in **history** and **geography** as no lessons were seen in these subjects. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. However, there is every indication from pupils' work that standards are average and pupils are achieving well in both areas. This is similar to the position at the last inspection. Visits within the local area and beyond are well planned to support pupils' learning. A visit to a museum, for example, has enabled pupils to gain an insight into everyday Victorian life and they enjoyed a day back at school when they dressed as Victorian children and adopted the characteristic routines of a Victorian school day. Pupils use their skills in writing well in history, as when Year 2 pupils wrote a letter to Louis Braille to ask how he devised a special alphabet.
54. In geography, good use is made of the local area to extend pupils' understanding of the positive features of their environment and what could be improved. Pupils have compared two local playgrounds to establish which provided the best facilities and linked work in design and technology when they designed a new play area that included the best features. Pupils also take part in the 'Trailblazer' scheme that is run by the local authority, through which they gain experience of fieldwork in different localities and widen their understanding of environmental and conservation issues.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

55. No lessons were seen in design and technology and music and so there was insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement about provision in these subjects. Nevertheless, from looking at teachers' planning in these subjects and pupils' previous work in design and technology, it is evident that both areas are suitably planned to cover all aspects. Pupils develop a sound understanding of how to plan and execute their designs and to think about how these could be improved. Singing in assemblies is tuneful and pupils start and finish together, modulating their voices well and keeping in rhythm.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in art and design is good and pupils achieve well.
- Good links are often made with other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

56. Standards in art and design are average. Pupils achieve well in art and enjoy their lessons. There is a very good cross-curricular approach. For example, a well-displayed owl collage is used to increase the pupils' mathematical vocabulary and there are good links with ICT when studying the work of Mondrian and Jackson Pollock. Artwork is attractively displayed around the school and stimulates the pupils' interest. The subject is well used to develop the pupils' understanding of different cultures. The school, for example, recently joined other small schools to attend a workshop run by a theatre group to learn about Hindu and Chinese art. In the one

lesson seen, the teacher had a very good knowledge of the subject and used ICT imaginatively to demonstrate the way in which a particular artist worked with geometrical shapes. The Year 2 pupils successfully used a drawing program to create pictures based on Mondrian's style and flooded the shapes they created with colours that were carefully chosen.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school overcomes the shortcomings of its accommodation very well.
- A very good range of activities is provided, often involving other schools.

Commentary

57. Despite the restrictions of its accommodation, the school provides a very broad physical education curriculum. To ensure that all pupils receive the full curriculum in physical education, the school makes good use of a local sports hall. Also, through imaginative use of the Sport England initiative, the expertise and facilities of the local secondary school are used. This ensures that the pupils enjoy a wide range of sports such as gymnastics, athletics and such games as hockey and receive skilled specialist coaching. Standards in physical education are average. Pupils enjoy lessons and achieve well. They speak warmly about their experiences and appreciate what the school provides for them. Teaching is good. In the one dance lesson seen there were very good links with literacy and music, when the pupils interpreted the movements and actions of the 'Mysterious Cat' in Debbi Loach's poem. The teacher's very good feedback to pupils about how they could improve the quality of their movements resulted in a sensitive and imaginative response as pupils refined their sequences to better reflect the mood of the poem.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

58. No lessons were seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgement is made about overall provision. However, the school places a good emphasis on pupils' personal development and promotes this successfully through work in most subjects, as well as in particular lessons when pupils explore and talk about pertinent issues. Pupils extend their understanding of a healthy lifestyle through work in science and physical education and through the school's initiative that provides fruit at break time.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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