

INSPECTION REPORT

Ibstone Church of England Infant School

High Wycombe, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

LEA area: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Unique reference number: 110464

Headteacher: Mrs S E James

Lead inspector: Chris Rhodes

Dates of inspection: 13 – 14 October 2003

Inspection number: 256535

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	17
School address:	Ibstone High Wycombe
Postcode:	HP14 3XZ
Telephone number:	01491 638281
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Martin-Fagg
Date of previous inspection:	8 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ibstone Church of England Infant School is in the village of Ibstone, near High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. There are 17 pupils aged between 4 and 7 on roll, which is very much smaller than most primary schools. Pupils come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Most are of white British origins. A below-average proportion are entitled to free school meals. Very few pupils have special educational needs, usually moderate learning difficulties. None require the protection of a statement of special educational needs. Attainment on entry varies but is currently above nationally expected levels.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16408	Chris Rhodes	Lead inspector	English Geography History Music Physical education English as an additional language
9334	Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector	
22831	Clive Lewis	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology Mathematics Science Foundation stage Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. Standards in Year 2 are well above average in English and mathematics, and pupils have made very good progress since they started in the reception class. Teaching and learning are good, and overall standards of leadership and management are very good. The school gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths are:

- The headteacher is a very effective leader. The governing body is extremely efficient, especially in the way it conducts its work and manages the budget.
- Pupils make very good progress, and standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils know what they have to do to improve.
- Teachers know the pupils very well, and set work that matches their individual levels of ability. Every pupil is fully involved in all the school's activities.
- Pupils behave very well and have positive attitudes. Relationships are very strong.
- The level of care, welfare, and health and safety is very high.
- Links with parents are very good, and the school is an integral part of the local community.

There are three areas for development:

- The range of practical activities for children in the reception class is less than that found in many schools.
- Pupils do not have enough planned opportunities to use their information and communication technology [ICT] skills in other subjects.
- Standards of attendance by some individual pupils are too low.

Improvement has been good since the school was previously inspected in 1998. Standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT are higher, and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. There are now very good systems for measuring how well pupils are doing and for setting targets for improvement. Pupils still do not have enough opportunities to use ICT and more work is needed to develop the role of subject co-ordinator. Overall attendance rates are not as high as they were.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

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

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

The comparisons detailed above should be treated with great caution as the number of pupils in the school is very small, and the performance of one can alter the overall picture substantially.

Pupils achieve very well. Current standards in Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and above average in science. The pupils concerned have made very good progress since they started in the reception class. Standards in ICT and other subjects are in line with expected levels. Boys and girls of all abilities do equally well. Children in the reception class are likely to exceed most of the goals expected for the end of the school year. They started school six

weeks before the inspection, settled quickly and are making appropriate progress. The initial analysis of the results for the 2003 national tests indicated that standards in reading continued to be well above average, and that results in writing and mathematics improved to above average levels.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Their behaviour is very good, and they have positive attitudes to school and to learning. Relationships are very good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and have an increasing awareness of life in a culturally diverse society. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory because too many pupils lose important school time when holidays are taken during the term. Most pupils are punctual and lessons start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching is good, with particular strengths in the Year 1/2 class. Teachers in both classes plan very carefully but pupils have to sit too long on the carpet in some lessons and can lose concentration. Teachers know their pupils very well. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs or a particular ability, are given work that challenges them at the correct level of difficulty. English, mathematics and science are well taught in Year 1/2 because teachers have a good understanding of their subjects, teach basic skills effectively, and set work that is interesting as well as challenging. Pupils learn effectively. Their positive attitudes and very good behaviour mean that they are keen to learn, and enjoy acquiring new skills and developing their ideas. The teaching assistant plays an important part in supporting individual pupils or groups.

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. The school is a very caring and supportive 'family' where pupils are happy, feel safe, and know what they have to do to improve. The partnership with parents, the local community, church and other schools is outstanding.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher is a very effective leader. She is strongly and wisely supported by an efficient governing body. Subject co-ordinators have started to be effective in their own right. The school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils feel very positive about the school. Parents are particularly appreciative of the quality of the teaching and that they can talk so readily to staff about any concerns they might have.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the range of practical activities for children in the reception class.
- Increase the planned use of pupils' ICT skills in all subjects.
- Raise standards of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

1. **Standards** in English and mathematics in **Year 2** are well above the national average. **Achievement** is very good because the pupils concerned have made very significant progress since they first started in the school. Boys and girls do equally well. Children in the **reception class** have made satisfactory progress in the six weeks they have been in school, and are on course to exceed most of the goals expected of them by the end of the summer term.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is well above average in reading and writing, and in mathematics.
- Pupils in the current Year 2 have made very good progress since they first started school.
- Standards are above average in science and close to expected levels in ICT and other subjects.
- Overall standards in writing and mathematics have risen considerably over the past few years, and have been maintained at well above average levels in reading.
- Children in the reception class are on course to exceed the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and for personal and social education.

Commentary

2. Standards are judged in Year 2, the end of the first key stage in primary education. The most recent validated data that compares pupils' performance with other schools relates to 2002. These should be studied with great caution as the number of pupils involved was very small, and the results of one pupil can have a disproportionate effect on overall averages. The data illustrates steady improvement in mathematics and sustained high attainment in reading. The group contained a very high proportion of boys, and the 2002 results in writing followed a similar pattern to the national picture where boys did less well overall than girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.8 [16.6]	15.8 [15.7]
writing	14.2 [15.0]	14.4 [14.3]
mathematics	16.0 [15.4]	16.5 [16.2]

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The unvalidated results for the 2003 national tests indicated that standards in reading continued to be well above average, and that results in writing and mathematics improved to above average levels. The relative performance of boys and girls in the tests was monitored very carefully, and no anomalies were identified. The school sets challenging targets based on a detailed knowledge of individual pupils, and works hard and successfully to achieve them.
4. **Children in the current reception class** have made steady progress since they started school in September. They came with many skills and most, for example, were already able to speak easily with the adults with whom they worked. The group is very small, but their overall levels of attainment are higher than those normally seen in children of this age. They are well on course to exceed the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and for personal and social education. They will meet the targets for physical and creative development, which is an improvement

since the previous inspection. The school does not employ a teaching assistant specifically for this age group, which limits the teachers' opportunities for using the outside area for physical, creative or social development because there is no one available to take out a small group.

5. **Standards in Year 2** are high in speaking and listening. The standard of reading is well above average, although some pupils are in such a hurry to 'read on' they will say a word too quickly, and not think through whether their choice makes sense. The standard of writing is well above average and has improved considerably. Pupils write imaginatively and at length, but some higher attaining pupils are not accurate enough in their use of basic punctuation and spelling. Good quality marking helps all pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Attainment in mathematics is also well above average and is above average in science. **Overall achievement** is very good because this group of pupils started in the reception class with average levels of attainment. Their books show considerable progress and increasing maturity as they grow older, and their high standards reflect the above average quality of English, mathematics and science teaching.
6. Standards in ICT are in line with national expectations, an improvement since the previous inspection, but pupils' ICT skills are not used enough in other subjects. Literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively in all areas of the curriculum and help pupils to make greater progress. The evidence from pupils' books, and from discussions, indicates that standards in other subjects are close to expected levels. There was not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards in history.
7. Due to the very small size of the school cohort, there are very few pupils with special educational needs. The individual learning needs of these pupils are very well known by all staff and, consequently, they are well-supported and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. This constitutes an improvement in both provision and achievement since the previous inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

8. Pupils' behave very well, and their attitudes to school and learning are good. The provision for their spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well. Their positive attitudes and eagerness to learn enable them to make good or better progress.
- Relationships are very good between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves.
- The school provides constructive opportunities to help pupils develop their confidence, reflect, and take on responsibility.
- The good provision for pupils' moral and social development results in them valuing and respecting others and understanding right from wrong.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory because too many pupils miss time in school when holidays are taken in term time.

Commentary

9. Pupils and parents have very positive views about the school. Parents are particularly pleased that their children are happy, enjoy school and behave well. They feel that teachers expect their children to work hard and to achieve their best, and that they are developing in confidence and making good progress. Pupils are enthusiastic and spoke of their willingness to learn, and of their interest in lessons and 'everything about the school'. Behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond very well to incentives and the

reward systems, and are eager to accumulate beads in the jar and win extra playtime. Harmony is a strong feature of the school and there is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. There have been no exclusions.

10. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well integrated into the school and curriculum, and contributes effectively to pupils' personal development. Provision for spiritual development is very good and reflects the school's Christian ethos. The school uses many opportunities to develop pupils' self knowledge and spiritual awareness, and pupils show great respect for the values and beliefs of others. Children in the reception class are on course to exceed the early learning goals for personal, social and emotional development by the end of the school year.
11. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils know right from wrong, have helped to devise their class rules. They are fully aware of how their actions affect others. They gain an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves through support of charities. The good behaviour of pupils in and around the school is a result of their developing self-discipline and is reflected in the absence of exclusions. Social development is well developed and results in constructive relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. This promotes a good working atmosphere and has a positive impact on achievement. Even the youngest children learn quickly to work and play well together. Pupils accept responsibility readily and complete any tasks they have been given conscientiously. Older pupils look after the younger ones at lunch or break time 'if they need help', or during church visits.
12. The school promotes an awareness of pupils' own and others' cultures effectively. This is celebrated through displays around the school, through visits and visitors, and participation in local country dancing competitions. Musicians, storytellers and trips to the sculpture park help provide a broader perspective to the curriculum. Older pupils learn the recorder and perform successfully in the end of year concert. Awareness of life in a culturally diverse society is increasingly being addressed through outside contacts.
13. Pupils are happy to come to school and are eager to learn. However, attendance is unsatisfactory overall because a number of parents are taking their children on holiday in term time. This results in them missing significant parts of the curriculum. The school is monitoring attendance patterns closely and encourages parents not to take their children away in school time. Most parents bring their children to school punctually in the mornings and lessons start on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced, although the range of activities offered to younger children is less than that seen in many schools. Not enough planned use is made of ICT in many curriculum areas. The quality of care shown to pupils is very high. Links with parents and the community are a particular strength.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, with particular strengths in the Year 1/2 class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn effectively because they know what they have to do to improve, acquire new skills quickly and enjoy working hard.
- Teachers plan very thoroughly and know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses very well. The quality of marking is high.
- All pupils are fully involved in all class activities and have work set at the correct level for their individual abilities.
- The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science in the Year 1/2 class is good.
- Pupils sit for too long on the carpet in some lessons.
- Younger children do not have a wide enough range of practical activities in some lessons.

Commentary

15. Only two of the four teachers were observed teaching during the inspection as both classes are taught as 'job-shares' and the inspection took place at the start of the week. Overall judgements about the quality of teaching and learning have been made on evidence from the limited number of lesson observations, less than 10, and additional information obtained from all four teachers' planning, a scrutiny of pupils' books, discussions with pupils, and the school's records of the progress pupils make over time.
16. **The overall quality of teaching is good**, and has improved since the previous inspection when approximately one in five lessons were unsatisfactory. Teachers plan very carefully together so that both 'partners' in each of the job-shares understand what her colleague is seeking to achieve and records how much progress pupils make in each lesson. Teachers know their pupils very well, and take great care to set work that matches their ability. This ensures that those with special educational needs or a particular strength in any subject are given work that challenges them at the correct level of difficulty. English, mathematics and science are well taught in Year 1/2 because teachers have a good understanding of their subjects, teach basic skills effectively and set work that is interesting as well as challenging. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively in other areas of the curriculum, but not enough planned use is made of ICT. The teaching assistant plays an important part in supporting individual pupils during whole class sessions, and when working with small groups. Good use is made of homework in both classes so that parents are fully involved in their children's learning and the pupils can consolidate what they have learned during the day. A weakness in planning occurs in both classes if pupils are expected to sit, listen and discuss what they are doing for too long before starting their activities. This leads to occasional fidgeting or lack of concentration, and reduces the overall quality of learning.
17. **Pupils learn effectively.** Their positive attitudes and very good behaviour mean that they are keen to learn, and enjoy acquiring new skills and developing their ideas. One or two of the older pupils are in too much of a hurry and can be careless in their keenness to finish reading a text or writing a story. Pupils in both classes approach their work maturely, and work together effectively on group tasks, or concentrate hard when completing a piece of work on their own. The range of practical activities available to the younger children is less than is usually seen in similar schools. This limits the progress they make in some lessons.
18. **The arrangements for assessing pupils' work are very good.** Each pupil is very well known to the staff, and careful records and accurate targets ensure that each pupil is given a challenging goal to achieve by the end of each term. Parents and the pupil concerned sign the target with the teacher, ensuring the understanding and commitment of all concerned. Teachers are equally skilled in assessing how well pupils do in individual lessons, and make changes in their planning when the work proves harder or more easy than had been anticipated. High quality marking and detailed individual comments help pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The new headteacher has introduced an effective programme of monitoring and evaluation in order to raise standards of teaching further.

The curriculum

19. The school provides a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum, which takes careful account of the ages and needs of individual pupils. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils take part in every aspect of the curriculum, and are set work at the correct level of difficulty.
- Pupils in Year 2 are well prepared for the Junior school phase.
- The youngest children do not have enough opportunities to use the outside area.
- There is no extra support in the reception class.
- The planned curriculum does not include enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for their personal, health, social and citizenship education, is good.

Commentary

20. **The school is very “inclusive”** in all its policies and practices. All pupils have a wide range of appropriate opportunities to study the full range of National Curriculum subjects. Whole school approaches to teaching and planning are consistent across the curriculum. The school willingly evaluates and adopts new strategies, and seeks and accepts guidance on re-formulating the curriculum. This has been particularly successful in recent times, notably in literacy and numeracy, where information gained from the results of statutory testing has been used effectively to modify the curriculum. The headteacher has identified the development and enrichment of the wider curriculum as an important area for future development. Appropriate arrangements are made for pupils’ personal, social and health education.
21. The school provides pupils with an appropriate and satisfactory range of interesting and relevant activities, such as the school’s visit to and involvement in the Red Kite Project. Participation in the arts, with such examples as the recent visit to the ‘Sculpture Park’ and the high profile of dance in the curriculum, is a particular strength of the school’s extra-curricular provision. A satisfactory range of sporting and cultural visits linked to the curriculum is organised to extend pupils’ experiences and an appropriate range of visitors work in the school during the year. Pupils used their ICT skills effectively in several lessons during the inspection, but not enough opportunities are planned into the work in most subjects. The extension of the use of ICT is a priority in the school’s improvement plan.
22. There is an appropriate match of teachers to the curriculum, with two teachers sharing responsibility for the reception class and two teachers, one of whom is the headteacher, teaching Year 1/2. Although the match of support staff overall is satisfactory, the lack of a learning support assistant in the reception class is a disadvantage – despite the very small number of pupils, as there are times when a second professional pair of hands would be of benefit to both the class teacher and the children, especially in developing the use of the outdoor classroom. The school building has been improved since the previous inspection, classes are all taught within the same building but a ‘cost’ has been the separation of the reception class from the fenced outside area. These two factors limit the school’s ability to offer the full depth of the foundation stage curriculum. A great benefit has been the conversion of the ‘mobile’ into an empty room for assemblies, physical education and for use at lunchtime. The overall level of resources is appropriate for the age of the pupils.
23. **Provision for pupils with special educational needs** is good. The school works hard to give all its pupils equal access to the full curriculum. Class teachers ensure in their lesson plans that appropriate provision is made for those with particular learning needs. Sensitive arrangements ensure that pupils with particular gifts or talents are given work that is appropriate and

intellectually challenging. The learning support assistant works well with class teachers and provides an appropriate blend of help and challenge. The positive atmosphere of the school promotes the effective inclusion of all pupils into every aspect of the school's life.

Care, guidance and support

Standards of care are very high. Systems to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are very effective and pupils are very well supported during their time at school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures to support pupils' personal development and monitor their progress have improved and are now very good, helping to promote good achievement.
- The school provides a caring and supportive environment where pupils can grow into confident and happy individuals.
- Pupils think the school supports and consults with them effectively.

Commentary

24. This is a very caring school where teachers and support staff provide a safe environment in which pupils can learn and thrive. The overall provision for pupils' health, welfare and protection is very good and has improved since the previous inspection. Parents are very pleased that their children are so well cared for and supported. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are securely in place. Governors carry out their responsibilities for health and safety issues very conscientiously. The induction process for children starting school is well thought out and effectively implemented, although home visits are not currently part of the programme. Children settle into school happily because of the small numbers, and the kind and caring way they are introduced to their teacher and classmates. The transition process to junior school is also well managed to ensure that pupils progress to the next stage of education as smoothly as possible.
25. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development and progress are carefully developed and have improved since the previous inspection. Clearer marking and target setting help pupils to be aware of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The school supports pupils with special education needs effectively and involves the various outside agencies as necessary. Parents spoke very positively about the school and feel it treats pupils fairly.
26. Pupils are very happy, and feel that the school is very safe and secure. The small number of pupils in the school means that they are well known to each other and have formed trusting relationships. They are confident that they can turn to a member of staff if they have a problem or are unhappy, and that issues will be dealt with swiftly. Opportunities to consult with pupils and to take their views into consideration are developed satisfactorily. Pupils contribute to deciding class rules, and share their ideas and views during 'circle time' when feelings and concerns are discussed confidentially within the class.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents, the local community, church and other schools is outstanding and continues to be one of the major strengths of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a very strong and supportive parent body, and actively consults with them.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.

- There are excellent links with the church and local community.
- Parents offer valuable assistance to the school through financial support and the Friends Association.

Commentary

27. The school's very close **liaison with parents** keeps them fully informed and provides them with many opportunities to become involved in their child's education. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' learning and their levels of achievement. The attractive school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents now include all the relevant information about the school. Parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school. They particularly like the small family atmosphere. They find the headteacher and staff very approachable, and report that any concerns will be followed through. The school consults actively with parents through informal discussions and parental surveys, and the reading diary provides a very good channel for daily contact. Curriculum information is shared with parents each term so they know what is going on and can help their children at home. Information evenings keep parents apprised of new developments. Parents are kept fully informed about the progress of their child through regular consultation and review meetings. The annual report to parents clearly identifies what their child has covered and how well they are doing, identifying targets for improvement in the core subjects.
28. **Links with the local community are excellent.** The school is central to village life with many local people involved in school activities and the school involved in the village fete. The very strong links with the church are fostered through church services and the weekly assemblies taken by the local vicar. The children have been closely involved in the Red Kite Project and have studied the results of their re-introduction into the locality. Parents offer a great deal of support by listening to reading and helping in school. The Friends of Ibstone School Association is run by an enthusiastic group of parents who organise a large number of social and successful fund-raising activities each year. Governors are equally passionate about the school and have also run a number of fund-raising events to supplement school funds. Links with other local schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

29. The overall quality of governance, leadership and management is very good. **The governing body is extremely efficient**, especially in the way it conducts its work and manages the budget so that teachers can work to achieve the school's educational priorities. **The quality of leadership is very good** because the headteacher and governing body have a very clear picture of how the school should develop and grow. **The standard of management is good** and the school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body is dedicated to the school's future success, and works actively to help shape its future.
- Governors have a very detailed understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The headteacher is a very effective leader.
- Co-ordinators have good plans for the development of their subjects but have not yet had the time to put them fully into action.
- Co-ordinators are not yet responsible for analysing test data or fully involved in monitoring standards.
- Staff and governors are totally committed to the promotion of equality, and to ensuring that each individual pupil has the best possible chance to reach their potential.
- The budget is managed extremely carefully. The headteacher and governors are rigorous in applying the principles of best value.

Commentary

30. **The governing body** is a particular strength of the school. It is closely involved with all aspects of the school's work, and has developed a very effective committee structure so that its full meetings can concentrate on major decision-making. It meets all its statutory duties. Individual governors take their particular responsibilities very seriously and are very well informed about the different areas of the curriculum or aspects of the school's life and work. They are proactive in fund-raising so that the school can maintain two classes. They work very closely with the headteacher, challenging as 'critical friends', but giving her full respect and authority as head of the school. They are fully involved in setting the school's agenda through its improvement plan, and have effective systems that ensure that the budget is used to the best effect and in line with educational priorities. Performance management procedures are in their second year, and are closely monitored by the governing body.
31. **The headteacher is a very effective leader**. She has been in post for just over a year, and has effected many improvements in consultation with staff and governors. She is calm and reflective, but very determined to achieve excellence. She has a very realistic understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses, and leads by example, as headteacher, class teacher, and as a subject co-ordinator. She has a very clear view of how the school must develop, and is very effective as a team leader in working through colleagues to achieve the school's aims. This is particularly evident in her development of **subject co-ordinators**. The part-time staff have taken on a considerable range of responsibilities and are gaining the skills and confidence they need to raise standards. They have a clear understanding of how standards in the different subjects are to be strengthened. The headteacher's ambition to create a more vibrant curriculum in the humanities and creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects is being achieved through her personal example and encouragement of innovative thinking.
32. **The quality of management is good**. The school has very good systems that enable it to take stock of its current position, and to plan effectively for improvement. These are set out in a practical and tightly focused improvement plan that is a shared working document for staff and governors. The relatively new implementation of arrangements for staff's performance management is proving effective and is evident in rising standards. The headteacher is rigorous in her analysis of performance data, and has already implemented changes to strengthen areas of weakness. Subject co-ordinators are not yet involved in processing the analysis, but are being supported by the headteacher in understanding this addition to their role. Plans also include their involvement in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Target setting and the monitoring of individual pupils' progress are proving very effective in raising standards. The budget is managed extremely carefully, and the headteacher and governors are rigorous in applying the principles of best value. Grants and additional funding are used very carefully to meet their allotted priorities.
33. The school is well placed for continuing improvement. It is very well led, guided and supported by the new headteacher and a highly effective governing body who have contingency plans for a range of eventualities. Parents and friends of the school are very supportive and have raised considerable sums of money to maintain the number of staff and provide a range of resources.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	123,702	Balance from previous year	-1,277
Total expenditure	121,283	Balance carried forward to the next	1,142
Expenditure per pupil	4,576.71		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school's provision for the foundation stage is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers know the children and their needs very well.
- Both teachers plan together very well, and in great detail.
- There are very strong links with parents, making them active partners in their children's learning.
- The ethos is very caring and supportive.
- The range of 'free choice' activities is limited.
- Children do not have ready access to a secure outdoor area.
- There is no learning support assistant.

Commentary

34. The overall attainment on entry to the school varies widely year on year because of the very small number of children involved. The attainment of the current group of six children, very near the start of the school year, is above the expected levels for most of the early learning goals, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in personal, social and emotional development. As the inspection was held at the start of the school year, only the autumn-born children had started school, and it is important to note that judgements on children's attainment on entry to the school are based on observations of this small group. No significant special educational needs had been identified. More children will join the class in January and after the Easter break.
35. Two teachers share the role of foundation stage teacher and co-ordinator, one working for the first two days of the week and the other for the remaining three. They share planning after meeting to 'block out' each half term's topic coverage together. The short nature of the inspection meant that it was only possible to observe the first of the two teachers. Unusually, there is no additional adult support in the foundation stage and, although this is understandable given the very small cohort of pupils and severe budget constraints, it causes some organisational and curriculum planning difficulties. When organising outdoor activities, children have to be either 'in' or 'out' because there is only one adult to supervise them. This limits the teachers' opportunities to develop an 'outdoor classroom' and a wider range of activities. Children make good progress, particularly in language and number skills because their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good, and careful attention is given to developing reading, writing and number skills.
36. Due to some extent, but not entirely, to the lack of additional adult support, teaching staff provide a more limited range of activities that is usually found to encourage children to share, co-operate and develop their skills and independence. A number of observations were made where rather 'formal' teaching methods resulted in children spending too much time sitting on the carpet, and some minor misbehaviour. The week's timetable focuses largely on a literacy/numeracy morning rather than being a linked programme of activities. This limits opportunities for individual experimentation, exploration and progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

37. Most children are on course to exceed the goals expected for their age due to their above-average attainment on entry to the school. They work and play together well, helping each other, learning happily and taking pride in their work. The class teacher has developed good relationships with the children, teaches basic skills well, and works consistently to ensure good relationships between children.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

38. Most children are on course to exceed the goals expected for their age due to their above-average attainment on entry to the school. They learn to enjoy books, picking out their favourite characters, pictures and rhymes, and enjoy listening to stories. They are beginning to pick out some basic words, and to recognise and write their names. In the lessons observed, the teacher provided good opportunities for speaking and listening – children who had been encouraged to talk to the class about their imaginary pictures did so confidently and used a wide range of advanced vocabulary for their age – for example: Teacher: 'What's your fairy doing?' – child: 'Fluttering in the sky.'

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**

39. Children are on course to exceed the goals expected for their age. They are able to count together to 10 and are beginning to represent numbers using fingers, marks on paper and as pictures. In an observed activity, children were measuring their height, identifying the tallest and shortest, and building towers of plastic bricks and making comparisons. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. The teacher introduced and used appropriate mathematical terminology and provided and used resources effectively to interest and motivate the children – for example, the introduction of a set of 'Russian Dolls' captured children's interest and reinforced the concepts of larger/bigger, smaller/shorter very well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

40. Children are on course to exceed the goals expected for their age due to their above-average attainment on entry to the school. Their skills are developed through such activities as designing and making musical instruments and, when using information and communication technology to 'send a postcard from Teddy', developing mouse control and clicking on icons and labels to make things happen. Other children were observed making appropriate use of a computer program to develop their mathematical thinking.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

41. Children make satisfactory progress and are on course to meet the expected goals. When playing outside they move with control and co-ordination, and experiment with different ways of moving, adjusting speed and changing direction to avoid obstacles. They use simple tools to effect changes to materials such as plasticene and play dough. The teacher provides a

satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills – beginning a language lesson with a ‘warm-up’ activity, jumping up and down whilst counting to ten, for example.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is satisfactory

42. Children are on course to meet the expectations for their age. Children recognise colours and show awareness of detail in their pictures. They play well alongside other children who are engaged in the same role-play activity – in the class ‘Post Office’, for example - and play co-operatively as part of a group. Although the current outdoor area is not ideal, as it is not adjacent to the classroom or easily accessible, it is secure and is appropriately utilised to provide a limited range of ‘free choice’ and teacher-directed activities.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and standards have risen since the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Standards have risen in writing and have been maintained at high levels in reading.
- Pupils make very good progress over time.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Teachers’ use their knowledge of how well pupils are doing very effectively.
- Some pupils are too careless with their reading, spelling and punctuation.

Commentary

43. Pupils in Year 2 have higher standards of **speaking and listening** than is typical of their age. They talk confidently and enjoy exploring ideas in discussion. Most listen very carefully and think about what the speaker has said before replying. Pupils talk naturally in sentences rather than in single words or phrases. They use a wide vocabulary, which helps them to use a more extensive range of words in their writing.
44. **Standards in reading** are well above average, and have been for some years. Individual progress over time has been much faster than is normally seen. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting expressed concern that standards had dropped when teachers followed the recommendations in the National Literacy Strategy for group rather than individual reading. Inspectors found no evidence for this. Pupils read individually in a number of contexts, and staff are very aware of any shortcomings that need to be re-addressed. Some pupils are impatient when tackling new words, and guess rather than sounding the word out and checking whether the word they read makes sense within the sentence. Staff are giving pupils more opportunities to practise blending sounds together so that their reading is more accurate. Pupils enjoy reading a range of fiction and non-fiction books, and use indices and the contents pages to find their way through reference books. Parents play an important part in helping their children to make good progress by helping them at home. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress but find it harder to tackle new words.
45. **Standards in writing** are also well above average, and have improved over recent years. Pupils are very aware of language and how words can be used to paint a vivid picture. They develop their ideas succinctly in sentences. Progress over time has been very good, and pupils’ books indicate that they are well on course to achieve high standards by the end of the school year. The books belonging to pupils with special educational needs demonstrate very good

progress over the past year. Some of the written work completed by the higher attaining pupils contains errors in punctuation and spelling which are well within the pupils' capacity to correct. Work is marked in detail. Good work is praised, and pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve. This contributes positively to the progress they make. Handwriting is legible, some is joined, but several pupils do not form their letters in a consistent size.

46. **The quality of teaching** is good. Teachers have a very good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy, and use its ideas very effectively in planning lessons. They are aware of pupils' individual and collective needs, and set work at appropriate levels of difficulty. Pupils maintain high levels of concentration throughout their lessons, despite some sessions 'on the carpet' being too long. The teachers' very good understanding of how well the pupils are doing at all stages of the lessons keeps the tasks challenging and enables pupils to learn more effectively. Questions are asked at different levels of difficulty according to the pupil concerned. This keeps pupils alert, and challenges them intellectually so that they learn quicker. Pupils do not learn as fast as they might if the purpose of the lesson is explained as a series of tasks, rather than as a target in terms of "By the end of the lesson you will be better at..." which would give a focus for the activities.
47. **The subject is very well managed** by the headteacher, who makes a detailed analysis of test and other data so that planning can be changed to give more time to areas of work that pupils find difficult. Assessment files are maintained very carefully, and parents welcome their involvement in individual target setting and in reviewing progress each term. Planning is monitored especially carefully as the class is shared between two teachers, and is of very effective. The co-ordinator has raised standards considerably since the previous inspection. The rate of progress is better, and the high percentage of unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. Appropriate use is made of ICT for word-processing completed pieces of work or completing work sheets on screen.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented effectively and adapted to meet the needs of the school. Guided reading sessions take place separately so that pupils have more time for extended writing. Pupils take their reading books home on a regular basis and many read every day. Appropriate use is made of pupils' skills in reading and writing in science, history, geography and other lessons.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good** and, coupled with good teaching, results in pupils achieving very well in the subject from an average level of attainment on entry to the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average.
- Pupils make very good progress over time.
- The subject is well led and taught.
- Good use is made of assessment to modify the curriculum, to track individual pupils' progress, and to set individual targets.
- Not enough use is made of pupils' white boards to ensure all are actively engaged throughout the 'carpet' activities.

Commentary

49. Pupils make very good progress as they move through the school, and, since the majority of pupils in Year 2 are likely to achieve the higher 'Level 3' in the National Curriculum tests at the end of the school year, standards are well-above national expectations. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Although only one lesson was observed, this, in conjunction with

a scrutiny of pupils' work undertaken during the previous few weeks of the new school year and the previous twelve months, demonstrates clearly that teaching in mathematics is good overall. In the lesson observed, the teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge and good classroom and behaviour-management skills, allowing the learning to progress at a good pace. Tasks, in this mixed-age class, were matched well to pupils' ages, abilities and learning needs. As a result of good planning, and the good pace maintained throughout most of the lesson, pupils maintained a good focus on their work and made good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and make good progress.

50. The subject-co-ordinator provides good leadership. School test results are analysed in detail and amendments to the curriculum are made in the light of what is revealed. Assessment in the subject is very good. In addition to the detailed analysis of test results and trends noted above, pupils are tracked individually as they grow older and are set regular, individual mathematics targets.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in subjects such as science and design technology and, for example, in the English lesson where pupils were forming a block graph of the number of 2-, 3- and 4-syllable words in a text. Appropriate use is made of ICT – as in the observed mathematics lesson where pupils were working at a numeracy 'Toy Shop' program, reinforcing the learning objectives for the lesson.

SCIENCE

The school's provision in science is **good** and this, coupled with good teaching, enables pupils to make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils sit for too long on the carpet and become restless.

Commentary

52. Teaching in the one lesson observed was satisfactory. However, a close scrutiny of the work produced by the current pupils and the pupils in the previous full year, demonstrates that teaching overall is good. In the observed lesson, where pupils were learning about the senses which give humans and other animals an awareness of the world, the teacher had planned and resourced the lesson well, ensured a good level of support – the teacher working with Year 2 pupils and the learning support assistant with the Year 1 pupils - and an appropriate level of challenge for pupils of different age and ability in the class. Good provision was made in planning and resourcing the lesson for the development of scientific enquiry, which was a weakness noted at the time of the previous inspection. However, both the teacher and the learning support assistant had to repeatedly remind pupils about appropriate behaviour, due to some extent to the amount of time spent on the carpet at the start of the lesson.
53. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. The subject-co-ordinator provides good leadership. National Curriculum test results are analysed in detail and amendments made to the curriculum in the light of what is revealed. No evidence was obtained of the use of ICT in science lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY [ICT]

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory** and has improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen since the previous inspection.
- Not enough planned use is made of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects.

Commentary

54. No complete ICT lessons were observed during the inspection, although pupils were seen working with computers. Basic keyboard and 'mouse' skills were satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' attainment by the age of seven was judged to be 'unsatisfactory'.
55. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching, although pupils were supervised satisfactorily when working at the computers and their tasks were appropriate to their age and ability. Teachers have undergone recent training in the subject and anecdotal evidence suggests most teachers now have a good level of confidence and appropriate subject knowledge. Leadership and management of the subject are good. A record of achievement for the subject has been recently introduced and the co-ordinator uses a checklist for cross-curricular use of ICT, indicating that the school is aware of the need to improve provision in this area.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum.

56. Teachers make some use of ICT in other subjects, word-processing finished work in English for example. Design and technology linked computer-drawn designs for 'Jacob's Coat of Many Colours', and symmetrical patterns made using 'paint' and 'draw' packages on the computer, were on display around the school and were of an appropriate standard. The planned use of ICT is not yet a regular and consistent feature of teaching.

HUMANITIES

57. It was not possible to make a judgement about the quality of provision in the humanities because no history or geography lessons were seen during the inspection. History is taught in the second half of the term. However, inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and discussed this term's geography lessons with a group of Year 2 pupils.

Commentary

58. There is every indication that **standards in geography** are in line with expected levels and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have enjoyed learning about a very different environment to their own through lessons about an imaginary Scottish island. They explained the difference between human and physical geography accurately by explaining that houses are 'man made' and that the sea 'has always been there.' They have a basic understanding of maps, and recognise that symbols represent real places and distances on the ground.
59. Pupils recalled previous lessons in **history**, and knew that familiar household objects evolved and changed over time. They explained how homes were very different in Victorian times, especially before the introduction of electricity. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in history.

60. Subject management is satisfactory. Work in both subjects is planned on a 'rolling cycle' so that pupils do not repeat the same topic twice, but skills are taught on a regular basis so that pupils' learning in Year 1 is extended in Year 2. The school makes appropriate use of national guidance for the teaching of both subjects.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

61. No music or art and design lessons were seen during the inspection, but inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work and teachers' photographic records, and talked to pupils and the co-ordinators. Although no overall judgement can be made about provision, standards are generally similar to those expected nationally.

Design and technology; art and design

62. Only one lesson was observed, a **design and technology** lesson where pupils were continuing to sew together materials to make hand-puppets. In previous lessons pupils had looked at a range of puppets, designed their own, and selected and cut out the materials using paper templates. The quality of teaching in this one lesson was satisfactory. Pupils were well-supported, with three adults – the class teacher, the learning support assistant and one volunteer parent – working with and supporting pupils in small groups of four and five. Due to the timing of the inspection, close to the start of a new school year, limited work was available for scrutiny, however, an examination of the work on display around the school and in pupils' books indicates that standards in **art and design** and in design and technology are broadly in line with national expectations. This judgement is the same as that made at the time of the previous inspection.
63. Schemes of work for the creative arts are based on government-recommended schemes of work followed on a 'rolling programme' of two years to take account of the mixed-age classes. Resources for both subjects are broadly satisfactory.

Music

64. The high standard of singing observed in an assembly, teachers' planning, the quality of performances for parents, and the inclusion of recorder playing for pupils in Year 2, all indicate that standards are in line with nationally expected levels. The co-ordinator has been successful in addressing weaknesses identified in the previous report, including the inclusion of composition in the scheme of work. Pupils are more aware of music making in other cultures, including aborigine music from Australia. No judgement could be made about the standard of teaching or the progress pupils make over time.

Physical education

65. Standards in physical education are in line with expected levels and are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Progress is satisfactory overall.
66. The standard of teaching seen in a gymnastics lesson was good. The lesson was well planned and managed. Instructions were clear and the teacher's high expectations encouraged pupils to give of their best. They were enthusiastic, highly motivated and collaborated well in paired work. Pupils made good progress in the lesson because they made effective use of their evaluations of each other's work, and a well-structured final session drew together what pupils had learned, and encouraged them to improve in a later lesson.
67. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching have improved. Staff make good use of the converted mobile classroom for indoor lessons. Full attention is paid to health and safety. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has been strongly supported by parents, the governing body and Friends. This has enabled staff to purchase a wider range of apparatus for use in and outdoors.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

68. No overall judgement of provision is possible because no lessons were seen during the inspection. However, pupils' personal development is a very high priority within the school, and they are given a range of opportunities to discuss ideas, feelings and matters of importance within a context of trust and mutual respect. They are made aware of issues appropriate to their ages and levels of understanding, and are actively encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle. Involvement in the wider community and the allocation of responsibility has given them an early awareness of the principles of citizenship.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	2
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).