

INSPECTION REPORT

KATHERINES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harlow

LEA area: Essex County Council

Unique reference number: 115245

Headteacher: Suzanne Ryan

Lead inspector: David Tytler

Dates of inspection: 17th – 19th May 2004

Inspection number: 256578

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	321
School address:	Brookside Harlow Essex
Postcode:	CM19 5NJ
Telephone number:	01279 421495
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mike Richards
Date of previous inspection:	4 th March 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Katherines Primary School is on the outskirts of Harlow, Essex, and caters for 321 pupils aged 3 to 11. Most of them come from the immediate area, although some families from outside the catchment area have chosen to send their children to the school. Most of the pupils come from a white British background with a few from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds. The largest of these is Black or Black British African, which consists of six children. There are 42 children in the Nursery, attending part-time either in the morning or afternoon, and 36 in Reception. A small number of the pupils speak English as an additional language, some of them at an early stage of learning English. The languages spoken are Ndebela, Cantonese, Shona and Turkish. The proportion of pupils having special educational needs is below the national average, as is the proportion having a statement of special educational needs. These children have moderate or severe learning difficulties. In recent years the school has suffered from significant instability in the senior management team and the teaching staff, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Whilst staffing is now more secure, the school still finds difficulty in attracting experienced staff to fill key positions. The school is part of the Harlow Came Project, which promotes mathematics' skills and the Harlow School Sport Co-ordinators (SSCO) partnership to improve physical education. It is a teacher-training partner school with Homerton College, Cambridge, and is working on school improvement with the Harlow excellence cluster. Twelve Year 1 pupils are learning French for half an hour a week. A few pupils come from a local refuge. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of ability, but overall attainment on entry into the school is below that expected nationally for children of their age. The school's socio economic circumstances are broadly in line with the national average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8990	David Tytler	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Personal, social and health education
17315	David Holroyd	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
22147	Anne Holland	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design technology Music
10668	David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics Design technology History Physical education Religious education
17852	Lawrence Moscrop	<i>Team inspector</i>	English as an additional language English Information and communication technology Geography

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	3
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	10
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	13
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Katherines Primary School provides a good quality of education and has many strengths.

Standards in Year 6 are rising and now match the national average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well in their lessons as a result of the predominantly good teaching throughout the school. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher. **The school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The predominantly good teaching throughout the school enables pupils of all needs and abilities to achieve well in their lessons, although the overall achievement of older pupils has been adversely affected by past deficiencies in teaching.
- Consistently very good teaching in the Nursery gives children a very good start to their education.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher underpins the successful drive to raise standards throughout the school. The lack of experienced senior staff, however, results in a heavy workload on her and her deputy.
- Whilst there has been rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior management team and local education authority (LEA) advisers, the role of co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom is underdeveloped.
- The good level of care, support, advice and guidance provided to pupils enables them to take full advantage of all the learning opportunities available to them.
- The good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils underpins their good attitudes and behaviour.
- The school is very well governed and governors play an important role in planning the school's future.
- Support staff are skilled and work very well with teachers, making an important contribution to the quality of learning through well planned activities.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and no longer has serious weaknesses. All the key issues have been tackled successfully, although more remains to be done in recruiting experienced high quality teachers to support the senior management team. Teaching has improved significantly and standards in the current Years 2 and 6 now match the national expectations in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Sound use is made of the information on what pupils know and can do to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for pupils of all abilities.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average; E - very low.*

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' overall achievement is now satisfactory. Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes, and in Years 1 and 2, as a result of the predominantly good teaching. Nearly all will meet the expected learning goals.

Pupils in the current Year 6 achieve satisfactorily as a result of the good teaching, which is very successfully addressing past gaps in teaching and their learning. Standards match the national expectations in English, mathematics and science. This represents a considerable improvement in all three subjects since the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2003, particularly in mathematics when results were in the bottom five per cent nationally, and in comparison with similar schools. Standards in the current Year 2 match the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. Good relationships throughout the school underpin the genuine sense of shared purpose within the whole school community. Pupils have positive attitudes and behave well as a result of the good care provided for them. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The overall good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes, together with a good curriculum, enables children to achieve well in all areas of learning. Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 are good overall, with some very good teaching seen, enabling pupils to achieve well in their lessons. The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced and well enhanced by a wide range of visits and visitors and a good range of after-school activities. The school ensures that all pupils are able to take advantage of the many learning opportunities available to them. The good support, advice and guidance, together with the good partnership with parents and the sound links with the community, make an important contribution to pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher's very good leadership sets the focus in raising standards and seeking improvement in all aspects of the school's work. She is very well supported in the drive to raise performance by her deputy and governors. Whilst the management of all the subjects inspected was satisfactory, and sometimes good, the co-ordinators' role in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in the classroom is an area for further development. The governance of the school is very good and governors play an important role in planning for the school's future. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents value all aspects of the school's work and support their children's learning well at home and at school. They are particularly enthusiastic about the quality of teaching and the many ways in which teachers support their children. No significant concerns were raised, either at the pre-inspection parents' meeting or in the parental survey. Pupils are equally enthusiastic about their school and have no real concerns. They appreciate the support offered to them and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Recruit and retain experienced staff to assume some of the responsibilities presently undertaken by the head and the deputy head.

- Further develop the role of the co-ordinators to include the monitoring of teaching and learning after appropriate training as part of the drive to raise standards throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in English, mathematics and science in the current Years 2 and 6 match the national expectations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well but the achievement of older pupils has been adversely affected by deficiencies in teaching in the past. Nevertheless, the current good teaching has resulted in satisfactory achievement overall. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well and the vast majority will meet all the nationally expected early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising throughout the school as a result of the predominantly good teaching and greater stability of teaching staff.
- Good use is made of assessment information to ensure an appropriate level of challenge for all pupils in English, mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (26.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	22.7 (24.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.0 (24.0)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in the current Year 6 now match the national expectations. This is a considerable improvement since the national tests in 2003, when standards in mathematics, both nationally and in comparison with similar schools, were in the bottom five per cent of schools. Standards in English and science were well below the national average. The current Year 6 standards in the core subjects are also considerably better than was found at the last Inspection.

2. Standards in Year 6 have been adversely affected by considerable instability in staffing over recent years, which has led to gaps in pupils' learning. The headteacher has ensured a greater stability in staffing and professional support to ensure that pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving satisfactorily.

3. The school has introduced a range of strategies to raise standards in English, which, together with the improved teaching, have already had a significant impact on standards, particularly for older pupils. The improved teaching is underpinned by good arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The information is well used to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.8 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (15.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.1 (17.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Pupils in the current Year 2 started school with attainment below that expected for children of their age. The generally good teaching enables them to achieve well and they now attain standards that match the national expectations in reading and writing and exceed them in mathematics. This represents a sustained improvement since the last inspection. Standards in science match the national average.

5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, geography and physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6: standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Timetabling arrangements during the inspection meant that it was not possible to make judgements on standards in design technology, history and music in either Year 2 or Year 6.

6. Children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment below those expected nationally for children of their age. As a result of the overall good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes, children achieve well and the vast majority will meet the expected goals in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. A few children will exceed goals in communication, language and literacy and in some aspects of mathematical development.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards meeting the targets set for them in their individual education plans. Learning Support Assistants, particularly those with the Specialist Teachers' Assistant Certificate, support these pupils well. Pupils speaking English as an additional language also achieve well as the work planned for them is generally well matched to their needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are well behaved in classes and around the school. Their personal development is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong sense of community, with pupils and teachers working together as a team, underpins pupils' good personal development.
- Pupils respond well to their teachers' obvious desire for them to do well and, as a result, pupils have positive attitudes to their work and behave well.
- Assemblies and religious education lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to think about their own feelings and the feelings of others.
- Music, and in particular the many opportunities for pupils to sing as a school and in the choir and to learn an instrument, supports their cultural development.
- Class councils enable pupils to take on responsibilities for school planning and make an important contribution to their social development.
- There are many opportunities in all subjects and in out-of-school activities for pupils to work together and reinforce their understanding of the need for teamwork.

Commentary

8. All adults in the school set good examples of tolerance and understanding, showing how more can be achieved if all concerned work together as a team. Pupils are naturally enthusiastic and keen to contribute to their lessons, but, in some, a few find it difficult to take turns in answering questions and there is some shouting out. Generally, however, teachers are able to channel this natural exuberance into a productive partnership to promote a positive learning climate.

9. Religious education lessons are adapted to the needs of the pupils and make an important contribution to their spiritual and multi-cultural development. Pupils discuss a range of sometimes difficult issues tolerantly and sensitively as they learn about the traditions and customs of world

faiths, their similarities and differences. Many opportunities are provided outside religious education lessons in, for example, food technology, geography and music, for pupils to learn about other cultures and increase their understanding as they move through the school.

10. Spiritual development is also well supported in assemblies. Pupils responded very well in an assembly on the miracle of Jairus' daughter when Jesus raised her from the dead. All the pupils, from Years 3 to 6, were spellbound as the teacher performed a poem in the role of Jairus. They were able to relate the Bible story to their own lives when they were confronting difficulties and needed help.

11. Cultural development is well supported in extra-curricular music. Many pupils arrive at school early to take part in the choir, and many learn to play an instrument. The school as a whole sings well and with expression in assemblies, which encourages a sense of community and joint purpose.

12. Pupils' social development is well supported in the many good opportunities provided in all subjects observed during the inspection for pupils to appreciate the need to work together. They treat each other, and their teachers, with tolerance and courtesy. Pupils also learn the need to work together and support each other in physical education lessons and in out of school activities such as the before school athletics club.

13. Pupils carry out a number of tasks to support the school's day-to-day running. They take responsibility for their own learning when, for example, carrying out investigations in science and mathematics. Pupils are responding well to the school's careful introduction of a school council. Class councils are already working well in Years 1 to 6, with elected chairs and secretaries, who take their responsibilities seriously. They meet once a month to discuss aspects of school life and how these might be improved. Class representatives, a boy and a girl from each class, will form the school council when it starts in September.

14. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well in personal, social and emotional development. They quickly settle into school routines and work well together in small and large groups. They are happy and confident and take a full part in their learning.

15. Pupils with special educational needs, or speaking English as an additional language, are generally well motivated and keen to make progress. Their attitude to learning is usually good. They have very good relationships with the learning support assistants and generally value the assistance they receive.

Exclusions

16. There were no exclusions in the last academic year.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

17. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. School records show that it is continuing to improve. The school has good systems to promote attendance, although the overall picture is affected by a small number of long-term school refusers or pupils with illnesses. There is also the need to retain on the register pupils who have no likelihood of returning or those for whom there is a requirement for them to remain on the register.

18. The school works well with parents and carers to secure the attendance of children. Measures used include a dedicated Absence Line, a call home by 09.30 on the first day of absence for any child not accounted for and a firm but fair approach to term time holiday requests.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils. This is supported by predominantly good teaching from the Nursery to Year 6, enabling pupils to achieve satisfactorily and often well. Work is well matched to the needs of pupils as a result of the good use made of information on what pupils know and can do in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and satisfactorily broad and balanced in Years 1 to 6. A good range of high quality out-of-school activities and sound links with the community enhance the curriculum. The good support, advice and guidance provided for pupils, together with the good partnership with parents make an important contribution to the quality of education provided.

Teaching and learning

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	10 (20%)	29 (59%)	10 (20%)	0	0	0

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes enables pupils to achieve well by the time they enter Year 1.
- The predominantly good teaching in Years 1 to 6 enables pupils to achieve well, although the overall achievement of older pupils has been impeded because of deficiencies in teaching in the past.
- Work in English, mathematics and science offers an appropriate level of challenge to pupils of all abilities as a result of the good use of assessment information to plan for their needs.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy and literacy skills in other lessons.
- Teachers work very successfully with skilled classroom assistants to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

19. The overall good teaching and learning throughout the school enables pupils to make good gains in their learning and achieve well up to Year 4. Achievement in the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2003 was adversely affected by disruptions in the staffing for older pupils in recent years: the residual effects of these disruptions continue to impede the overall achievement of older pupils.

20. The headteacher has made the establishment of a stable, quality staff a key priority, which has led to the current good teaching in Year 6. This has plugged the gaps in pupils' learning caused by the disruption in staffing. As a result, these older children are now achieving well in their lessons, and satisfactorily overall.

21. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Good teaching was seen in all year groups, and in all subjects observed, with some very good examples seen. Staffing is now more secure and the headteacher, her deputy and local authority advisers closely monitor teaching and learning in the classroom.

22. The very best lessons were characterised by high expectations of behaviour and of what pupils could achieve. In a good Year 3 science lesson on how to carry out a fair test to find the best

material for a nappy, pupils responded very well to the high level of challenge and tried hard to do well. Conversely, where teachers' expectations were not high enough, pupils could only achieve satisfactorily, as was seen in a physical education lesson in Years 3 to 6, which did not challenge pupils enough.

23. Teachers engage and hold their pupils' interests through a variety of interesting activities. Most are skilled at channelling the pupils' natural enthusiasm into positive learning, so that pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave very well. In a very good Year 6 English lesson on how authors choose the language they use, a good question and answer session stimulated discussion amongst the pupils. Most worked hard throughout the lesson, which provided them with many very good opportunities to think about their own choice of language. As a result, pupils of all abilities achieved well.

24. Strong cross-curricular links were a feature of the best lessons, which provided many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and artistic skills in other lessons. Good use of literacy skills was seen in a good Year 2 science lesson, as pupils recorded and explained their results in an experiment to find different ways of thawing butter taken straight from a freezer. In a good Year 6 religious education lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to think for themselves and as a result gain a good understanding of sacred art. The use of ICT in other subjects is generally good. In a good Year 6 geography lesson, for example, more able pupils worked with a teaching assistant using the Internet to research evidence about life in York. However, its use to support learning in mathematics is limited.

25. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers explain the aims of the lesson clearly so that pupils know what they are expected to do and to learn. However, in some lessons otherwise judged to be satisfactory, pupils were not clear about what was expected of them and they lost interest in the activity, as they did in a physical education dance lesson in Years 3 to 6. As a result, their achievement was limited.

26. Teaching is consistently very good in the Nursery and good in the Reception classes. In the Nursery, children gain in confidence as a result of the imaginative teaching, which engages their attention through a variety of fast-moving activities covering a number of areas of learning. The good teaching in the Reception classes ensures that all pupils are involved in their learning and able to discuss their ideas. The overall good teaching in this age group ensures that children achieve well. As a result, although the vast majority of children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment below that expected nationally for children of their age, they will achieve the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are aware of the individual needs of pupils and plan suitable tasks, with a range of appropriate activities, in line with their individual education plans. The learning support assistants work with individuals or small groups, generally in the classroom in collaboration with the teacher, and support teaching very effectively. The headteacher, as special educational needs co-ordinator, provides a very effective link between all staff for pupils with special educational needs. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in learning, as they did at the time of the last inspection. The support provided by teaching assistants for pupils working in classes, individually and in small groups makes a significant contribution to the pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy skills. Their achievement matches that of their peers.

28. Work is well planned for pupils speaking English as an additional language. Their levels of achievement are carefully monitored, and their progress tracked, so that appropriate work can be planned for them. These pupils achieve similarly to their peers.

29. A significant factor in the improvement of teaching since the last inspection has been the improvement in arrangements for gathering information on what pupils know and can do in English, mathematics and science. The information is well used in these subjects to ensure that work is set to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities so that they can build on their prior attainment.

30. A good example was seen in a good Year 1 mathematics lesson. In this, work was very carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities so that all gained a better understanding of different ways to calculate the amount of change they should be given when shopping.

31. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are assessed daily and the information is very well used to plan the next steps in learning and to build up profiles on each child. These arrangements are a key plank in the overall good achievement of pupils by the time they enter Year 1.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good in the Nursery and Reception classes and is satisfactorily broad and balanced in Years 1 to 6. It is well enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors and out-of-school activities and is well supported by the school's accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned to make good use of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, but more use could be made of ICT in mathematics.
- Pupils' experience is widened through a range of visits and visitors and a good range of out-of-school activities.
- The good curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes provides a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to pupils' needs.
- The skilled support staff are a strength of the school.

Commentary

32. The curriculum is planned carefully to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and to build on their learning as they move up the school. All statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education are met and the school ensures that all pupils, whatever their needs or backgrounds, are fully involved in their learning.

33. Cross-curricular planning is a strength of the curriculum, and planning ensures that pupils are able to make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Whilst many examples were seen of pupils making good use of their ICT skills in many other subjects to support their learning, it is not used enough to support learning in mathematics.

34. In order to raise standards, the school has reviewed its approaches to the teaching and learning of English and mathematics and has made changes as a result in order to meet the needs of its pupils more closely. This has already had an impact on raising standards in these two subjects. Similarly, the religious education curriculum has also been adjusted to be more relevant to the pupils.

35. The good curriculum in the Nursery and Reception classes is carefully designed to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities which are well matched to children's needs and ensure good coverage of all areas of the curriculum. All adults are very good role models for the children and manage them well. The accommodation is good. Planning is very good and in line with the recommended curriculum for children of this age.

36. There are very few pupils with a statement of special educational needs and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average. Curriculum planning ensures that these pupils are well supported and encouraged to participate in all school activities. The curriculum is also planned to cater for the needs of the relatively few pupils who speak English as an additional language.

37. Learning opportunities are well extended through a good range of visits and visitors to school and a broad range of high quality, well-attended out-of-school activities. The good quality accommodation, which has many stimulating displays which support learning and celebrate pupils' achievements, provides a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment. The school is well resourced to teach the National Curriculum and religious education.

Care, guidance and support

The school guides, cares for and supports children well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships throughout the school are based on mutual trust.
- Excellent induction arrangements in the nursery enable pupils to settle in quickly and to be ready to learn.
- Pupils are fully involved in the day-to-day life of the school and are beginning to play a part in planning for its future.

Commentary

38. Good arrangements for child protection are reinforced when teachers join the school and at support staff meetings. These arrangements are also explained as part of the good induction material provided for temporary or supply staff. The head teacher, who has good experience in this area, is the designated person for child protection. There has not, however, been recent whole school training on the subject. The school makes great efforts to ensure good practices and methods so that children work in a healthy and safe environment. These include a termly health and safety review, with any concerns records in a faults book, and regular reports to the Governors.

39. Lesson observations and discussions with pupils show that children have a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school. Teachers, midday assistants and other support staff have good relationships with children and offer them help and guidance. The school records pupils' development and makes sensitive use of the information so that teachers and support staff are better able to meet the needs of individual pupils. The pupil survey and discussions during the inspection indicate that pupils value their relationship with all adults in the school. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, confirmed that they had access to well-informed support, advice and guidance as they moved through the school.

40. The school has excellent induction arrangements for entry into the nursery and very good arrangements overall. Many of the children transfer to Reception from the Nursery and thus know the building and many of the people involved. There is a good range of pre-entry material, including *How to Help your Child at School*, a newly published guide for parents of pupils at all stages. Pre-admission meetings for parents and children are held with teachers, the catering manager and the school nurse.

41. The school has good arrangements for involving children in its work and development: the planned development of an elected school council is very good, building on the existing class councils. Members of class councils regard this as a positive development. Topics discussed in class councils include a possible 'jungle gym', and bullying. The elected secretary and chairperson from each class will form the whole school council planned for the next academic year.

42. The school uses the views from the class councils and others expressed in 'circle time' discussions to plan developments. The introduction and continual review of how much *Golden Time* pupils have earned during the week so that they can make their own choice of activities is one example of how the school acts on pupils' views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links and relationships with parents are good and make an important contribution to children's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents value all aspects of the school's work and make a good contribution to school life and to their children's education.
- The information parents receive about the school and their children's progress is very good.

Commentary

43. Parents are provided with very good, relevant and clearly expressed information about the school and how well their children are doing. The school's satisfactory arrangements for involving parents in their children's education include consultation evenings, a very open dialogue between teachers and parents and an open door policy for parents to see the head teacher and other staff. Parents make a sound contribution to children's learning at school and at home, particularly through the useful home/school reading records, which show a good exchange of views between teachers and parents.

44. Many parents give valuable and valued help in the school on a regular basis, particularly in the Nursery and Reception and in Years 1 and 2. They are involved in the wide range of school trips and outings and, when possible, attend briefings with teachers and support staff. The pre-inspection parental questionnaire and parents' meetings showed that parents had no real concerns about the school. The school does all it can to ensure any concerns from parents and carers are dealt with effectively.

45. The school has some useful links with the community, including the regular participation in science fairs by a local pharmaceutical company and sponsorship and equipment from local industry. The Katherines School Association, consisting of staff and parents, raises funds which are used to improve the school's resources. There are sound links with secondary schools, although developing them is an increasingly complex task, given the growing number of receiving schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher's very good leadership underpins the drive to raise standards and has been crucial in establishing a more stable staff. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. As a result, the school is well managed. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership underpins the school's determination to raise standards for all pupils.
- A key focus has been on the creation of a stable staff, and the head has encouraged the professional development of staff new to the school.
- Regular, rigorous but careful monitoring by the head, deputy and local authority advisors has led to a significant improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The school is still finding it difficult to recruit and retain experienced staff to take on senior management roles.
- The role of co-ordinators needs to be developed further, particularly in monitoring the quality of teaching in the classroom.
- Governors play an important role in planning for the school's future and provide a good level of challenge to the senior management team.

Commentary

46. The headteacher has successfully overseen a number of much needed but carefully managed changes to ensure that the school no longer has serious weaknesses, as it did at the time of the last inspection. The improvement since then has been good, particularly in raising standards and in ensuring a more stable and capable staff. The headteacher has been very well supported by her deputy headteacher who was appointed 18 months ago. However, the lack of other senior, experienced staff has resulted in a heavy workload on the headteacher and deputy.

47. The role of co-ordinators is being developed as staff gain the necessary skills to manage subjects and take over responsibilities previously held by the head and deputy. They are beginning to monitor planning and review work but do not yet have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. One of the head's key successes has been to unite a relatively new and inexperienced staff into a cohesive team, committed to providing the best for the children in their care.

48. She has been very successful in providing training for overseas staff so that they can achieve qualified teacher status and it is largely as a result of this determined approach to solving staffing difficulties that the staff is now more stable. The headteacher, the deputy and the local authority adviser have ensured an adequate level of support to ensure the effective professional development of staff.

49. The performance management of teachers is now well established. Clearly linked with the drive to raise standards, individual staff targets are linked to the school improvement plan, their professional development and the needs of particular cohorts or classes. The team of skilled learning support assistants, which includes some who hold the Specialist Teachers' Assistant Certificate (STAC), support pupils well.

50. Staff and governors are involved in writing a five-year rolling school improvement plan, which clearly identifies priorities and puts them in order of importance. Progress towards meeting targets is monitored by the school and governors, and adjustments are made where necessary.

51. The Nursery and Reception classes are managed very well by a very effective co-ordinator, who is developing a strong team and has a clear focus on continually raising standards and improving provision for the children of this age group. Support staff are used particularly well and make a significant contribution to the children's learning.

52. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed very well by the headteacher, who is very committed to this aspect of the school. She has a clear picture of the needs within the school and is well supported by teachers and learning support assistants. Similarly, the named governor makes an important contribution to this aspect of the school. The policy, procedures and provision that are now in place, together with the progress made by the pupils, demonstrate that the school has continued to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs since the last inspection and that, overall, provision for this aspect is good. The head is also responsible for the management of English as an additional language, which she does equally effectively.

53. The governance of the school is very good. The cohesive governing body, well led by the chair and vice chair, has had to take difficult decisions in the past to ensure the continued development of the school. Governors have clear roles and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas for development. The good relationships between the school and governors are based on mutual respect and clear understanding of the governing body's role as a critical friend. As a result, the governing body has played, and continues to play, an important role in planning for the future of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	896,579
Total expenditure	894,852
Expenditure per pupil	2,982

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,942
Balance carried forward to the next	35,000

54. Governors have a good oversight of the budget and work closely with the headteacher to ensure that all resources are used to meet clearly identified educational priorities. The school applies the principles of best value in all aspects of its work.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE (Nursery and Reception classes)

55. The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. The co-ordinator's clear sense of purpose and vision ensures that every effort is put into delivering a curriculum that is appropriate for these young children. The curriculum is planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to their needs. Planning is very good and in line with the recommended curriculum for children of this age. All adults working in the Foundation Stage are very good role models for the children and manage them well. Teachers and support staff work closely together to provide a supportive environment that ensures children are respected and become confident. Accommodation and resources are good.

56. The induction programme provided by the school and the local education authority is exemplary and includes home visits and pre-school support. Children enter school with levels of attainment that are below those expected of children of similar age in all areas of learning; this is slightly higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Children are assessed on a day-to-day basis and this information is used very well to support future learning and to build up individual profiles on all the children. As a result of the overall good teaching in all areas, the vast majority of children will reach the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. A few will exceed the goals in communication, language and literacy and some aspects of mathematical development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The joint LEA and school induction programme is outstanding and prepares children well for the start of their education.
- Teachers treat children with respect, so they become confident.
- Opportunities for this curriculum area are well planned.

Commentary

57. The whole curriculum provides many opportunities for this area of development. As a result, children achieve very well, with the majority reaching the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. The exemplary induction and pre-school support programme enables children to make a smooth transition to school. Parents and children already know the school well and feel confident to come and talk to the staff. Children soon adapt to the systems and routines of school. They feel safe and able to work with a variety of adults. They learn to work in small and large groups with other children, and to share and take turns. They are able to concentrate for increasing lengths of time without adult intervention, especially when experiencing creative activities. They are happy, confident and active learners.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and phonic skills are especially well taught.
- Some children exceed the early learning goals for reading and writing.

Commentary

59. Children achieve well in communication, language and literacy and the majority will reach the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. They make a good start to reading because they are taught to recognise the words they need before they read a book. They are, therefore, confident that they can read a new book and are sure they know all the words. They listen well to stories, enjoying new tales and old favourites alike. Phonic skills are taught in small ability groups and this enables all children to make very good progress. The staff plan interesting activities that challenge children and make them keen to learn. The more able can write such words as *chick* and then write a word that rhymes with it. These children are already working within the English National Curriculum. During the inspection, other children were learning the sounds *th*, *sh* and *ch*. The teacher's use of visual props for each sound kept the children interested and, by the end of the lesson, many children could correctly match objects to the initial sound. These children are working at an appropriate level for their age. Most children write recognisable letters and identify the initial sounds in the words they want to write. Adults provide children with well-planned opportunities throughout the school day for speaking and listening.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Number skills are developed through everyday activities.
- Children enjoy their lessons.

Commentary

60. Children achieve well in their mathematical development and most will reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. The introductory activities are well matched to the children's abilities and capture their interest. The initial learning is reinforced by the practical tasks later in the lesson. Children enjoy these and work hard to complete them. They are well supported by adults who allow them time to think out the answer for themselves. Opportunities are used during the day to reinforce mathematical concepts. For example, after taking the register children work out how many are present in the class. They do this sometimes by counting the children and sometimes by being told how many are absent. Many children can work out that in a class of 24 children only 22 are there if two are away.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and staff provide a vibrant, exciting environment for this area of the curriculum.
- Children have good access to computers.
- The outdoor classroom is very well used to promote this curriculum area.

Commentary

61. In the area of knowledge and understanding of the world, children achieve well and the majority will reach the expected learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. During the inspection the children were studying minibests. The many varied activities provided by the staff, such as the different outdoor minibest environments and the role play *Safari camp* inspired the children to experiment and to learn. They learnt what they had to take for a safari in the jungle and the similarities and differences between the various types of minibests. Children are eager and confident to explore new situations and are proud of what they know.

62. There are many opportunities for children to use a computer throughout the day. They develop good mouse control and can complete many programs independently. They also use the interactive whiteboard with confidence.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good access to a high quality outdoor environment.
- Indoor lessons are well planned.
- Good teaching enables children to achieve well.

Commentary

63. Children achieve well in the area of physical development because there are opportunities for most of the day for them to work outside the classroom. The majority will reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. They have a chance to ride tricycles and scooters and are careful to keep to the designated track. They can use a variety of spades to dig in the sand and fill buckets carefully. In physical education lessons they learn to balance a small ball on a bat and to hit a ball through goalposts. A few children exceeded the expected learning goals in these activities. Most children use pencils, crayons, glue and scissors accurately and safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables children to achieve well.
- Children benefit from the systematic teaching of such skills as cutting with scissors.

Commentary

64. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills through planned tasks such as colour mixing and working with clay and dough, and through tasks of their own choosing, such as painting. They enjoy cutting and sticking, making books and finger painting. They have a wide range of songs that they sing with enthusiasm. They play untuned musical instruments well, keeping in time to the music. Their ability to play in parts is very good. The majority will reach the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved throughout the school.
- Pupils achieve well in lessons.
- Pupils have many good opportunities for speaking and listening.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Literacy skills are developed well in other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

65. Pupils currently in Year 2 started school with below average attainment. They achieve well and, by the end of Year 2, their attainment is in line with national expectations in reading and writing. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be well below average.

66. By the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining average standards in English, also an improvement since the last inspection. Their achievement in Years 3 to 6 has been hindered by considerable disruption to staffing, which has led to some deficiencies in teaching in the past. Currently, pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in lessons and their literacy skills are showing signs of considerable improvement.

67. The school has placed great emphasis on raising standards in English and, through a combination of initiatives, the opportunities now provided for pupils are of high quality. A high emphasis on the presentation of work by pupils, a strong focus on spelling and an aim to hear every child read each day have all played their part in raising standards.

68. Teaching overall is good, again showing improvement. High expectations of pupils' behaviour, and of their work, promote classrooms with a positive working atmosphere where pupils can listen, share their ideas and concentrate on their work. There is a consistency of practice throughout the school.

69. Teachers share learning objectives with the pupils so that lessons have a clear purpose. Work is well matched to pupils' learning needs and capabilities so that all make good progress and achieve well, whatever their starting point. Teachers' knowledge of pupils is good and they monitor their progress well. They ensure that pupils know what they have to do to improve their work and pupils are keen to do well. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their constructive comments help pupils to improve.

70. There is some good achievement on the part of pupils who find learning more difficult than others, so that they are able to play a full part in lessons and are eager to present their work to the whole class. Such pupils are well supported by being taught in ability groups and through the effective deployment of teaching assistants. Similarly, pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported. Their levels of attainment are closely monitored. Higher attaining pupils are identified and they are provided with appropriately challenging work.
71. During lessons, pupils have plenty of opportunities for listening and speaking. Teachers encourage pupils to contribute their ideas to the whole class or, on occasions, to share their ideas with a partner. This is having a very positive effect on pupils' confidence.
72. Daily reading practice, either as a group or individually, has had a very positive impact on standards. Pupils are keen to read and to talk about their favourite books and the characters in them. They read with confidence and use their knowledge of phonics to help them with unfamiliar words.
73. Pupils' written work is generally well presented and their handwriting shows a well-formed style. Pupils' descriptive writing is currently an area of focus and teachers are encouraging pupils to be more imaginative and adventurous with their vocabulary by the use of adjectives, adverbs and similes.
74. The management of the subject is good, although the current co-ordinator has only had responsibility for English since September 2003. Monitoring of teaching throughout the school has played a significant role in improving the quality and consistency of teaching. Any weaknesses have been addressed and there have been whole staff discussions on specific issues. As a result of all these improvements, standards are beginning to rise.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

75. Pupils make good use of their reading and writing skills in other subjects, and they practise their speaking and listening skills in lessons and in assemblies. In Year 1, pupils have written letters to a local councillor requesting a safe way to cross the road. Pupils write accounts of visits, and write up their scientific investigations. They use ICT to word-process some of their creative writing. They read non-fiction texts to research topics, and write their own accounts of events from history. A further initiative links literacy to music, drama and dance, providing pupils with an opportunity to express their responses to stories which they have read.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2.
- There is a positive learning atmosphere in lessons because pupils are managed well.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support pupils' independent learning.

Commentary

76. Results of national tests at the end of Year 2 have shown improvement in each of the last two years and in 2003 they were well above the national average for schools nationally and for similar schools. At the end of Year 6, standards have declined over the same period and, in the tests for 2003, they were well below the national average in each category. The school did not reach its aspirational target for Level 4 or above in 2003. Currently, standards are above expected levels at the end of Year 2 and close to expected levels at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements are

satisfactory overall, but they do better in Years 1 to 3, where teaching is always at least good, and Year 6, where good teaching is supported by greater attention being given to what pupils need to learn to bridge the gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, with targeted support from both the class teacher and learning support assistants, particularly those with the STAC. There is no significant difference between the progress made by boys and girls, or by pupils from minority ethnic groups.

77. Teaching and learning in mathematics are usually good. Teachers share the objectives with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and generally ask the pupils for an evaluation of their understanding during the final review session. Teachers are secure in subject knowledge and the support staff know the difficulties that particular pupils may have so that extra attention can be given when it is required. Most pupils find the work stimulating and interesting. This motivates them and they respond by working hard and showing high levels of enjoyment.

78. Relationships are good and play a positive role in maintaining good behaviour and the quality of learning in mathematics. All adults take every opportunity to praise and encourage success. Pupils respond positively and are very keen to participate and show what they know, understand and can do. They take care over the presentation of their work, which is nearly always good. As a result, achievement in lessons is often good, but the difficulties the school experiences in recruiting and retaining staff have a detrimental effect on progress so that, over time, achievement is satisfactory.

79. Information and communication technology is used as a teaching resource to engage and motivate the pupils, but insufficient use is made of it to support pupils in their independent learning.

80. The headteacher is the acting co-ordinator and her robust leadership is positively influencing the improvements in mathematics. A review of mathematics has been completed and an appropriate subject improvement plan is being implemented. Lesson observations by the senior management team have been undertaken and demonstration lessons have been observed by staff. Resources have been improved and a greater variety of software is available for use both in classrooms and in the computer suite. Detailed analyses of the national test results in Years 2 and 6 and the results of the non-statutory tests in other years have been carried out. The conclusions drawn from these and the resultant changes made are good indicators that the subject is being very well led. Overall, the subject has made good improvement since the last inspection.

Numeracy across the curriculum

81. There are sound opportunities for pupils to extend their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, a Year 6 ICT lesson used data from an earlier mathematics lesson to complete a spreadsheet and illustrate the findings in various graphical forms. In a Year 3 history lesson, calculation was used to discover the age of Henry VIII at various times in his life and the time he was married to each of his wives, and in science pupils were measuring capacity in millilitres.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and well matched to the needs of the pupils.
- The curriculum is well organised so that scientific skills are developed effectively.
- Pupils are encouraged to write clearly and accurately, using their own words to record results.
- A careful analysis of results is leading to improved levels of attainment.

Commentary

82. In the Year 6 national tests in 2003, pupil results remained well below the national average. They did, however, show considerable improvement since 2002. Inspection findings suggest that standards in the current Year 6 have risen significantly since September 2003 and are now broadly in line with the national average. This improvement reflects the improvements in teaching and a greater stability of staff.

83. There have been significant improvements in standards at the end of Year 2 since the last inspection. This improvement is also due to improved teaching. With increased stability of staffing in Years 3 to 6, the school hopes to sustain these improvements and raise attainment in the subject.

84. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and their achievement is now satisfactory. Teachers provide a good range of experiences across all aspects of the science curriculum. This ensures that pupils develop a broad range of knowledge and understanding in the subject. Lessons are well planned, with a wide range of activities, many of which involve practical work and direct observations. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils were experimenting to find out which was the most effective way to soften butter straight from the freezer in order to spread it easily. They understood the requirements of a fair test and the importance of maintaining consistency in their experiment. Group activities are well chosen and pupils work very well together, particularly when measuring and recording their findings.

85. All teachers explain learning objectives at the beginning of lessons so that pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve. In the three mixed age classes, great care is taken to plan work to meet the needs of the varying ages and abilities within each class. Language skills are promoted throughout the school through the use of discussion and writing up of their findings. Work is clearly written and well presented, and includes pupils' interpretation of their findings. Mathematical skills are well developed and ICT skills are used effectively. A good lesson was observed in Year 6 where pupils used ICT to collect and interpret data and, in a good lesson in Year 3, pupils used the interactive white board linked to a microscope in the final review session to check the pupils' findings.

86. Subject leadership is sound, with a clear commitment to improvement. Good use has been made of support from the local authority. A national scheme of work supports planning and ensures that there is a consistent approach to teaching the subject. This has a positive effect on the development of scientific skills. The 2003 results have been analysed carefully and a strategy introduced to raise standards in Year 6. Pupils at the end of Year 5 are now given the Year 6 national tests in science so that any individual weaknesses can be identified and tackled when pupils enter Year 6. The impact of this strategy can be seen in the improved standards noted in Year 6 during the inspection. Assessment procedures are effective and are used well to track pupils' progress. However, more use of this information could be made to set individual targets to raise pupil attainment further. The subject leader has little opportunity to monitor work in classrooms. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The ICT manager provides very good support to teachers.
- There is a good ratio of computers to the number of pupils in the school.
- There is a good range of software to support teaching and learning.
- Information and communication technology is used well throughout the curriculum.

Commentary

87. Standards in ICT are average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards throughout the school were below average. The improvements are largely as a result of the purchase of new resources, staff training and the appointment of an ICT manager. Full coverage of the National Curriculum is now provided for all pupils.

88. As a result of training and support, teachers are more confident in their use of the resources, both in the ICT suite and in their classrooms. With the invaluable support of the ICT manager, teachers are able to plan for and demonstrate specific skills to pupils by using the projector and then give individual support when it is required. Pupils work well in pairs, taking turns and generally behaving well. Pupils enjoy the lessons that they have in the ICT suite and welcome the additional opportunities provided for them when using the class-based computers or the laptops.

89. Teachers identify effective cross-curricular links so that ICT skills can be used in a range of contexts. For example, pupils are using word processing skills in different subjects and they develop their mathematical skills and understanding when controlling a robot to move forward and backwards, or to turn angles of a particular size. They also create graphs using data which they have collected and older pupils are able to select and explain the most appropriate way of presenting their data. Access to the Internet enables them to research information to support their learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, used the Internet to research facts about the city of York. Information and communication technology is used in science to record the results of investigations using sensing equipment to measure temperature, sound and light. Pupils can present their work in a variety of formats using text, art and multi-media presentations. Year 1 pupils use ICT to record their musical compositions.

90. Teaching overall is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. The improvements are largely as a result of staff training and the additional support provided in lessons by the ICT manager. Working in partnership, the teachers and the ICT manager teach lessons in the ICT suite, which ensure that pupils understand how ICT can support their learning. They also demonstrate specific skills to pupils using the interactive whiteboard. At the time of the inspection the ICT suite was used by each class in blocks of time. This provided opportunities for extended learning and the practice of skills. When not timetabled to use the ICT suite, teachers can plan for opportunities using class-based computers or the laptops.

91. The management of ICT is very good. The recently appointed ICT manager is well qualified in ICT and has willingly taken on responsibility for the subject. She is enthusiastic to extend the use of ICT and has effectively reorganised the procedures in the ICT suite. She is developing her knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum and, together with teachers, identifies the most appropriate software to support pupils' learning. Resources are well organised and readily accessible to staff and pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

92. Pupils in all year groups have a wide range of opportunities to use ICT to support their learning. Word processing is used, for example, to create pieces of writing in English or to add text to multi-media presentations. In mathematics and science, pupils are familiar with creating and interpreting information in a database. Spreadsheets are used to display information and formulae are created for calculations. Pupils create pictures using a range of techniques or they import illustrations from the Internet or from a databank to enhance their work in different curriculum areas. The digital camera is used in a variety of ways and, during a residential visit, pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 had access to web cameras in order to produce animated presentations with music.

HUMANITIES

93. Due to timetabling arrangements, only one lesson each in geography and history was observed during the inspection. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement of the quality of teaching and judgements are based on a scrutiny of planning, pupils' work and classroom displays.

94. In **geography**, standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are satisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Through a series of topics organised on a two year rolling programme, pupils cover the requirements of the National Curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about their local environment. They use maps of the local area and draw their own. They use photographs to identify local features. They also observe seasonal changes in the weather and think about how these changes affect their environment.

95. In Years 3 to 6, more detailed studies are made of the local environment. Pupils use their knowledge of the local environment and of the country to make comparisons with other localities such as a village in Sudan or the city of York. By Year 6, pupils have an understanding of world climates and of the water cycle. They consider how human activity affects the environment and what impact this may have on the quality of peoples' lives. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and the two-year rolling programme ensures appropriate coverage of the curriculum for all pupils.

96. Leadership of the subject is sound. The computers in the suite provide access to a good range of software for pupils to research aspects of geography, and there is also access to the Internet. A range of atlases and other resources are stored centrally and are easily accessible for staff. A residential visit arranged for Year 6 pupils provides opportunities for the further development of geographical skills and knowledge and whole-school visits to rural or coastal locations include a focus on some geographical aspect.

97. Insufficient evidence was gathered to be able to make secure judgements about provision in **history**. Only one lesson was observed, but pupils' work in books and on display, and teachers' planning, were scrutinised. Pupils in Year 3, studying Henry VIII, have a good basic knowledge of his character and his wives and children. Higher-attaining pupils have a sound grasp of the chronology of the period. Pupils read and interpret written sources, including using information technology, in order to find out about the past. Planning indicates that the national guidance is used and the time allocated is in line with that recommended.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from a relevant and enriching religious education curriculum.
- Pupils learn respect and appreciation for the beliefs and values of others.
- Religious education and assemblies make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Assessment is not rigorous enough to ensure pupils' progress can be securely determined.

Commentary

98. Pupils attain standards that broadly meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and achievement is mostly good throughout the school.

99. Overall, teaching and learning are good in both Years 1 to 6. The religious education curriculum is based on national guidelines and the locally Agreed Syllabus, which are adapted to

meet the needs of the pupils. It ensures that during their time in school pupils are able to experience and think about a wide range of issues and learn about Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Much of the work of the lessons revolves around discussion and activities, although recording is not forgotten. The richness of these experiences and the skilful way teachers introduce difficult ideas to pupils underpin the good attitudes of tolerance and concern for others displayed by the pupils. Skilful questioning by the teacher and support staff enables pupils to recall what they had learned previously and build on this in the lesson. Pupils' work shows they are interested in the subject and present their work well. Support staff provide good assistance to the lower attaining pupils.

100. Assemblies develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. Most include a quiet time when they can reflect on the theme of the assembly. In one, a charismatic, compelling dramatic presentation recaptured for the pupils the story of the 'Raising of Jairus' Daughter'. The performance gripped the pupils' attention. Some Year 2 pupils re-enacted the story of 'The Good Samaritan' for a lower school assembly. When asked for its meaning, one pupil replied: 'Don't judge a book by its cover.'

101. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the subject. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the religious education curriculum. However, assessment procedures are not securely in place and are insufficient to measure pupils' progress confidently. Resources are much improved and effective use is made of artefacts. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

102. These subjects were not a focus for the inspection. It was only possible to observe one lesson **in art and design** and part of one in **design and technology**. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on the quality of teaching in these subjects. There are examples of artwork around the school that reflect the importance that the school places on creativity and the need for pupils to have hands on practical experiences. The standard of work on display for art and design was above that expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. A strength of the subject is the way in which pupils have been introduced to the work of a wide range of famous artists and have created works in the style of such artists as Warhol, Miro and Munch. The work is, however, biased towards that of European artists.

103. Standards in **design and technology** are in line with those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils spend the minimum of time on this subject and so do not have sufficient opportunities fully to develop all the necessary skills. Curriculum areas such as the humanities, science and, especially, drama afford opportunities for pupils to use their design and technology skills. However, these opportunities are not set in the important format of *design, make and evaluate* that is the basis of the subject. There are too few resources for a school of this size and the annual budget is too small to pay for consumables, to build up permanent resources of tools and to buy teacher resources to support the delivery of lessons. This adversely affects the standards that the pupils attain.

104. Time-tabling arrangements meant that it was only possible to see one lesson in National Curriculum **music** so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision in music. Other evidence gathered during the inspection, however, suggests the provision for extra-curricular music is **very good**. The one lesson seen, in Year 2, was satisfactory.

105. There were, however, opportunities to listen to the school choirs rehearsing their contribution to a national concert later in the summer. The standard of singing was very high and by the time they reach Year 6, standards in this aspect of the music curriculum are well above those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils are supported and encouraged by teachers who participate. One conducts, one plays the piano and two others play wind instruments. Pupils are enthusiastic and very keen to participate, coming to school early in order to rehearse and showing a high level of commitment to the activity. Pupils throughout the school, including the Nursery, sing very well in assemblies.

106. Pupils have opportunities to learn to play the keyboard, the flute, the clarinet, the trumpet, violin and the piano. One day a week, music lessons are supported by the local authority music service and the Music for Schools service. Many trips are organised. For example, the choir sing to old age pensioners at Christmas, they perform concerts with other local schools and they have strong contacts with their local secondary school to enhance learning opportunities in the subject.

107. At the time of the last inspection, music was identified as a strength of the school but there was criticism of the accommodation offered for individual music lessons. This issue has been successfully tackled. Although only one lesson was seen, it is clear that music enriches the life of the school, that it makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual and cultural education and that pupils make very good progress in the subject as they pass through the school.

108. Co-ordination of the subject is shared between two members of staff, both of whom have musical qualifications. They are very committed to sustaining the school's high standards in the subject. Teaching in the classrooms is supported by a commercial scheme and assessment procedures are in place.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is good.
- Effective leadership is directing improvement in the subject.
- Not enough care is always exercised in choosing activities that will engage all pupils.

Commentary

109. Standards in physical education throughout the school are in line with national expectations. Pupils generally achieve satisfactorily. Health and safety are given good consideration.

110. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In all lessons, the planning is good and linked to clear learning outcomes, which are explained to pupils. All lessons begin with warm-up exercises. In the best lessons, good behaviour management and lesson organisation, coupled with motivating activities, keep the pupils engaged throughout. Teachers use explanation, instruction and demonstration appropriately to support pupils' learning and assist them to improve their skills. Pupils obviously enjoy these lessons. They listen to instructions and show good levels of independence. They are generally enthusiastic and well behaved. Relationships are good between pupils, resulting in high levels of co-operation. Pupils are taught to observe the rules and to be good sports. A large number of pupils arrived at school for 8 a.m. in order to participate in an athletics club.

111. However, not all teachers are completely confident in their approach to the subject and this has the effect of reducing the effectiveness of their lessons. Two lessons were seen in dance. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 interpreted music through movement as they enacted the story of *The Mexican day of the Dead*, drawn from their literacy reader. The idea did not fully engage many of the pupils and their movements and use of space were restrained, while their behaviour became troublesome.

112. The co-ordinator is managing good improvement in the subject. A thorough audit of the subject has been undertaken and a subject improvement plan is in place. Timetabled time has been increased so that the recommended time for physical education lessons is met. A whole school subject curriculum has been developed which ensures that all aspects are given good coverage. Alongside this is a computerised recording system, which will support staff in their assessment of progress. Staff development is being planned in order to increase their confidence. Extra-curricular clubs are in place. Overall, the leadership of this curriculum area is good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)

113. Timetabling arrangements during the inspection meant that it was not possible to see any lessons in PSHE. Judgements are based, therefore, on a discussion with the co-ordinator and a review of school documents. The headteacher was responsible for this area of the school's work until September 2003 and the new co-ordinator maintains its high priority within the school. The PSHE programme begins in the Nursery and Reception class to ensure a coherent programme throughout the school. There are clear lesson plans for Years 1 and 2 and for Years 3 to 6 to ensure that pupils' personal development is based on a clear structure as they move through the school. Each class has timetabled weekly 30-minute lessons with additional 'circle time' discussions introduced to deal with specific concerns. The new scheme, with its focus on involving all children in discussions, has only recently been introduced after a review of the original plan which teachers felt did not contain sufficient guidance. The co-ordinator, who has given demonstration lessons in each class, manages the subject well and has a clear vision for its future development. The school promotes healthy living through teaching in subjects such as science and physical education, and by providing water dispensers. Sex and drugs education begins formally in Year 3 with good use being made of the school nurse in providing sex education for Year 6.

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

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