

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGSHILL INFANT SCHOOL

Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117319

Headteacher: Mrs J Dunne

Lead inspector: Mr M Thompson

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 February 2004

Inspection number: 256628

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	149 full-time plus 52 part-time in the nursery
School address:	Heath Drive Ware Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG12 0RL
Telephone number:	01920 465349
Fax number:	01920 465657
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Kate Belinis
Date of previous inspection:	14 January 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Kingshill Infant School is situated in an area of mixed housing on the northern outskirts of Ware. Almost all of its pupils are of white British heritage, and those from other cultural backgrounds, who are thinly represented at the school, are fluent in English. The home circumstances of its pupils vary but overall they are generally more favourable than the national average and the proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also below average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. The nature of pupils' special needs includes speech and communication, visual, and autistic difficulties. Pupils enter the nursery on a part-time basis, and move to the Reception classes in three intakes, one at the start of each term. During the course of each year, very few pupils move in to or out of the school at points other than the normal times for entry or transfer. At the end of Year 2, all pupils move to the adjacent junior school, which shares the same site. Over the course of a year, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average.

The school's commitment to developing the potential of its staff was recognised through an 'Investors in People' award in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25372	Mr M Thompson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education
19320	Mrs A Bennett	Lay inspector	
21103	Mrs V Ives	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs English Geography History Music Personal, social and health education Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Kingshill Infant School is an improved and **effective** school. Its success is built on the good leadership provided by the headteacher, its good governance, the quality of its teaching and the curriculum, and its very good partnership with parents. As a result, pupils achieve well. There is a clear commitment to continuous improvement and to raising standards and, overall, the school provides **satisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average in English and music, and pupils produce high-quality work in some aspects of art and design and physical education.
- Children are given a good start to their education in the nursery and Reception classes.
- Pupils are taught well throughout the school.
- The school has made a number of good improvements in its provision for information and communication technology. However, information and communication technology is not promoted and developed consistently in all classes; consequently, achievement overall is unsatisfactory and standards are not high enough.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged well enough in science.
- The headteacher and governors provide clear educational direction for the school.
- The school is good at developing pupils' personal skills. Throughout the school, pupils are keen to learn and are well behaved.
- The assessment of pupils in science and most of the foundation subjects¹ does not focus clearly enough on the quality of their work against national standards.
- All of the staff know the pupils very well and take very good care of them; pupils with special educational needs are given very good quality help and achieve well.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in January 2002 and has worked hard to successfully eliminate the underachievement of higher-attaining pupils, particularly in literacy, which was reported at that time. Inspection evidence shows that higher-attaining pupils now achieve well in English, because of the success of the school's action plan, and standards have risen. In mathematics, a greater focus is being placed on higher-attainers, and these pupils are now also achieving well. Standards have not yet risen, but indications are that they will be higher next year. In science, average and lower-attaining pupils achieve well, but higher-attainers only achieve satisfactorily because teachers do not focus enough on the scientific content of the challenges provided for them.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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*

Overall, pupils **achieve well** and make good progress as they move through the school. Achievement and standards are good in the Foundation Stage, and most children attain or exceed

¹ The foundation subjects are those other than the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science.

the goals expected of them by the end of Reception in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and their physical and creative development. Standards in children's mathematical development are about average. No overall judgement could be made about standards of children's knowledge and understanding of the world because not all elements of this area of learning were seen. By the end of Year 2, inspection judgements broadly reflect the results of the national tests for 2003 reported above. The school is good at ensuring that almost all pupils attain nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science, but in mathematics and science the proportion of pupils who are currently attaining the higher levels is only average. As a result, standards overall are above average in English, but are only average in mathematics and science. Standards are also above average in music, but in information and communication technology not enough pupils reach the standards required of them across the range of the subject and therefore standards are below average. No judgements could be made about standards in other subjects.

Overall, pupils' **personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good**. Their attitudes towards learning are good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good, but some pupils need to be shown how to play sensibly, and therefore, overall, behaviour is good. Attendance is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching is good. In the nursery, it is very good. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour; they plan lessons carefully and explain tasks clearly to pupils. They work very closely with skilled teaching assistants to ensure that pupils' needs are properly met, and so learning is good.

The curriculum is good. Teachers are good at evaluating their planning and adjusting it in the light of their assessments of pupils' needs. The school places a strong emphasis on providing a very good quality of care for its pupils, and works very closely with parents to achieve this aim. Links with the community and with other schools are very good, and enrich the curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the **leadership and management of the school are good**. Through her high expectations, the headteacher provides a good role model for the very good staff team that she has created. Governors show a strong commitment to the school and provide good support to the headteacher. Their good monitoring gives them a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and enables them to make well informed decisions. All legal requirements are properly met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold their school in high regard. Their views are fully justified.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in information and communication technology.
- Provide greater focus and consistency in the challenges provided for higher-attaining pupils in science.
- Ensure that assessment in science and the foundation subjects focuses more clearly on the development of pupils' skills.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in the nursery is very good. Overall, it is good in all other year groups. Boys and girls generally achieve equally well. The small number of pupils identified by the school as being gifted and talented achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Taken as a whole, standards in the Reception year are above average in relation to the goals expected of children of this age. By the end of Year 2, standards are good in English, and average in mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Since the previous inspection, standards have risen significantly in reading and writing, and are set to rise in mathematics; however, they are not as good as they were in science.
- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in developing personal and social skills and in acquiring early skills in speaking and listening, using books, and writing.
- In some classes, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology.
- Standards are above average in music and pupils achieve well.

Commentary

1. Following an inspection in January 2002, in which the school was judged to be underachieving in writing, and underachieving overall in English and mathematics in respect of its higher-attaining pupils, improvements needed to be made in the curriculum, teaching and leadership. In all of these areas, progress has been good, the weaknesses in the school's provision have been fully addressed and underachievement has been eliminated.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.1 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.0 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.6 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In the Year 2 national tests for 2003, standards were well above average in reading, writing and average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science show standards to be about average. When these results are analysed in greater detail, they show that all pupils attained the national target of level 2 in writing, and almost all attained this level in reading, mathematics and science. However, performance at the higher level 3 was not as good. About a third of pupils attained this level in reading, which was above the national average, but the proportions at this level were only average in writing and below average in mathematics and science. The school has focused hard on raising attainment in English, and its success can be seen in its greatly improved performance in its average point scores for reading and writing. Improvement in mathematics has not been as marked, because of the focus placed on English.

3. Most children start school with above average skills overall and firmly consolidate and broaden these as they move through the nursery and Reception classes. This is because of the high quality of teaching and the very good curriculum in the nursery that gives them a very good start. They frequently exceed the goals that they are expected to reach in many areas of learning by the end of the Reception year, although standards in their mathematical development are only average.
4. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are achieving well in English and mathematics because of improvements made in the curriculum and teaching, and because careful assessment of individuals ensures that tasks are well matched to the needs of all pupils. In English, better quality marking of pupils' work gives them a clear idea of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The school has correctly identified that girls generally do better than boys in English, and is attempting to address this issue by focusing on ways to improve boys' interest and concentration. In mathematics, a strong emphasis is placed on teaching the core skills of estimation and the ability to identify patterns in numbers, and greater emphasis is now being placed on developing pupils' skills in problem-solving. In science, a clear emphasis is placed on promoting the core skills of developing hypotheses, and then testing them and drawing conclusions. However, achievement is no better than satisfactory overall because the criteria used for grouping higher-attaining pupils are not always based on their scientific competence, but rather on their ability in numeracy and literacy, and the challenges provided for them are not always of a specifically scientific nature.
5. Standards are above average in music because pupils are taught well and because they are given regular opportunities to practise the skills learned, for example in assemblies. Pupils are not attaining high enough standards in information and communication technology because the quality of provision is uneven between parallel classes, and some pupils have more opportunities to practise and develop their skills than others. Consequently, achievement is unsatisfactory overall.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make progress because their individual education plans give clear targets for them to meet and because they receive good quality help in meeting these targets from their class teachers, skilled teaching assistants, and the coordinator for special educational needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good, and have improved since the last inspection. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is very good, and is well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance rates are high, and pupils arrive punctually.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons, but behaviour at lunchtime is only satisfactory.
- Activities such as the school's good support for a wide range of charities help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

Commentary

7. Almost all parents surveyed felt that their children enjoy school. These views are endorsed by inspection evidence, which shows that pupils are keen to learn and to get involved with the day's activities. They work well together in pairs and small groups. Relationships between pupils and all the adults in the school are good.
8. Standards of behaviour have improved since the last inspection, and are good overall. Pupils behave very well in class because teachers manage their pupils well and are clear about their expectations. In these formal settings pupils' social development is good, but at lunchtime,

their behaviour is only satisfactory because they are not always good at playing together and some need to be shown how to play with the available equipment. This judgement reflects the views of a small representative group of the pupils interviewed, who said that they sometimes disliked playtime and would prefer to be in class. Pupils have confidence in approaching adults when they need help, and teachers use 'Circle Time'² and well-chosen stories effectively to explain and reinforce pupils' understanding of right and wrong, when dealing with issues such as unkind or inappropriate language or behaviour. The very rare incidents of a racial nature are carefully monitored and followed-up. There have been no exclusions.

- Pupils' personal development is good, and is better than it was at the time of the last inspection. The strong emphasis placed on the promotion of children's social skills in the nursery and Reception classes provides a firm foundation for the development of pupils' sense of community in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are given extensive opportunities to consider the world beyond themselves, in class, through topic work, and when supporting a wide variety of charities. These activities make an effective contribution to their spiritual, moral and cultural development. Personal, social and health education lessons are used well to encourage pupils to learn how to make choices, and help to develop pupils' confidence in expressing their own opinions. Lessons in art and music also make a strong contribution towards the development of pupils' awareness of a range of cultural traditions. This is a particularly noteworthy feature of a school which serves a largely mono-cultural area.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	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.

- Attendance in the last school year was well above that of other schools nationally, and has been at a consistently high level for some years. This is because the school monitors attendance well and parents are supportive, so that there is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality to school in the mornings is good; nevertheless, the school takes good care to note any patterns of lateness.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. In the nursery, it is very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and as a result pupils learn well. Assessment is satisfactory overall. It is good overall in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the nursery is never less than good and is usually very good.
- Teachers ensure that all their pupils take a full part in lessons; they are good at encouraging their pupils, and making their lessons interesting.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide good quality help for pupils in lessons.

² Circle Time is an activity in which pupils seated in a circle take turns to speak while others listen to what they have to say.

- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour.
- Assessment in science and the foundation subjects needs to be improved.

Commentary

11. Almost all parents and carers who returned their pre-inspection questionnaires felt that teaching is good, and inspection evidence supports this view. The quality of teaching has improved since the school was previously inspected. There is more teaching that is good or very good and no teaching that is unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10 (32%)	13 (42%)	8 (26%)	0	0	0

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

12. The teaching provided for children in the nursery is a significant strength of the school. The teacher and nursery nurses work very closely together to provide consistently high-quality learning opportunities for the children. They have a very good knowledge of the development of young children, and very good expertise in the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals³. Activities are securely based on very good assessment of each child and, as a result, children are keenly interested in their work and have an appetite for learning.
13. Where teaching is best, teachers make their lessons interesting through their clear explanations and the crisp pace of their dialogue with pupils. Another important feature of these lessons is the way in which the challenge presented to pupils is carefully 'layered' and is gradually increased as the lesson develops. In most lessons, teachers plan thoroughly and are good at ensuring that the wide range of pupils' needs is met. This is generally achieved through the good quality help provided for lower-attaining pupils by skilled teaching assistants and through the additional challenges prepared for higher-attainers. The best challenges are often found in literacy and numeracy sessions, where different tasks are provided for pupils of different ability. Evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work show that the level of challenge provided for higher-attaining pupils in mathematics has not always been consistently high enough, but this situation is now being addressed. However, in science, the challenges presented for higher-attainers still need to be improved.
14. In all lessons, teachers manage their pupils very well and create a good climate for learning. The good learning that takes place is also due to the very good behaviour of the pupils and the high quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils. This occurs because the teachers provide good role models, command the respect of their pupils, and know them very well.
15. The school is an inclusive community. This is particularly evident in lessons. Teachers are very aware of pupils' responses and ensure that everyone is involved in whole-class sessions. Introductions are relevant to all, as are the concluding plenary sessions, in which learning is reviewed at the end of lessons.
16. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good, and all teaching assistants make a significant contribution to this provision. Work is well matched to meet pupils' needs, basic skills are well taught and there are appropriate high expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. Good use is made of individual learning plans to produce short-term

³ The early learning goals are standards for each of the six areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. Most children are expected to have achieved these by the time they start Year 1.

targets which are challenging, but achievable, and these are reviewed regularly. Effective strategies are used to involve special needs pupils in whole-class sessions and to enable them to succeed.

17. The headteacher has recently introduced software designed to track pupils' progress more easily and this is beginning to be used in the core subjects. However, in science and many of the foundation subjects, assessment focuses too much on coverage of topics rather than how well pupils acquire skills.

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum is good. It is inclusive, meets statutory requirements, and provides effective personal, social and health education. Opportunities for enrichment are good, as are the accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for its pupils.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school's curricular provision is enhanced through its close liaison with the adjacent junior school and its very good links with other local schools.

Commentary

18. The ways in which the curriculum is planned and time is used have improved since the previous inspection. There has also been a very good improvement in the curricular provision for English. Teachers regularly evaluate their planning and adjust it in the light of their assessment of pupils' needs, to provide generally good levels of challenge and a relevant and stimulating curriculum.
19. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and, as a result, their needs are well met. They have full access to the curriculum. Class teachers and teaching assistants are very well aware of individual needs, and pupils who need extra help are identified early. The individual education plans for these pupils are well written; the targets are specific and measurable, and pupils' progress in achieving them is closely monitored.
20. Inspection evidence confirms the views expressed by almost all parents surveyed, who felt that the school provides a good range of interesting and enjoyable activities for their children. The school ensures that all pupils have a good quality and range of learning opportunities. It provides them with good opportunities to widen their experiences through additional activities outside the school day and a variety of visitors to the school. For example, before they transfer to the junior school, all pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the ocarina - and all teachers are involved in teaching them. The good accommodation, including the recent development of the outdoor play area, provides the pupils with effective opportunities both inside and outside for practical activities and to promote speaking and listening skills. The outdoor curriculum for children in the nursery and Reception classes is very good and makes a valuable contribution to their learning.
21. There are very good links with the local junior school that enhance the curriculum. For example, the headteachers meet regularly, and the coordinators for pupils with special needs discuss issues arising from the pupils' individual education plans. These and many other close links not only enable the smooth transfer of pupils from the infant to the junior school, but also provide activities to enrich pupils' education. For instance, pupils from the junior school visit to give musical performances in assemblies.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Pupils have good access to support, advice and guidance as they progress through the school, and satisfactory opportunities to shape the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school places a very great priority on ensuring pupils' safety and welfare.
- Better support could be given for play at lunchtimes.

Commentary

22. All the members of staff are trained in first aid and child protection, and arrangements for both are appropriate. Pupils' welfare is a priority evident in all aspects of each school day, beginning with a 'before school club' capably organised by one of the teaching assistants. The school secretary shows very good awareness of wide range of issues relating to care and welfare, and is pro-active and responsive to parental concerns. The governors have an appropriate overview of health and safety matters, and there are good monitoring procedures.
23. The very good induction arrangements for children starting in the nursery and transferring to full-time education in the Reception classes help children to feel confident in school from an early age. Teachers further promote pupils' well-being through personal, social and health education lessons, which effectively encourage healthy and safe living and support other activities, such as pupils' awareness of road safety.
24. The management of pupils' behaviour, which was a weakness identified at the time of the last inspection, is now supervised consistently well throughout the school day. There are plenty of interesting play spaces and a lot of small play equipment available on the playground at lunchtime, but pupils are not always using these creatively, and in this respect the role of the midday supervisors needs to be extended to encourage and teach pupils how to play.
25. The school cares very well for pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special need. Pupils with special needs are quickly identified, and their progress is carefully monitored and supported. Assessment across a wide range of complex needs is detailed and links with outside professional agencies, such as the local education authority specialist advisory service for pupils with visual impairment, are strong. Careful consideration is taken of the needs of all pupils through presenting understandable and practical targets, modifying activities or providing support to meet their needs.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's very good partnership with parents has a significant impact on pupils' learning. Parents continue to be very supportive because they are very satisfied with the care and education their children receive, and they feel valued and listened to. The school makes very good use of other schools and the community to provide opportunities for families to learn together.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept very well informed, especially with regard to the curriculum.
- The school works hard to involve parents in its work.
- Reporting arrangements need to be refined.

Commentary

26. Parents have confidence in the school and are very well satisfied with the care provided. The school keeps them very well informed through high quality written information. It seeks to involve them actively in learning alongside their children as well as supporting them at home.

Parents appreciate the way in which all staff are approachable and take account of their views; the secretary is welcoming, and the headteacher makes herself readily available to them.

27. Termly details of what is to be taught in each year are supplemented by sheets clearly outlining what is to be taught each week, which are attached to classroom windows. Termly consultation meetings with class teachers show parents the work that has been done, and the next areas to be covered in mathematics and English. These targets are highlighted in useful booklets, which also give parents ideas of 'fun' activities to do at home. Targets are not yet set in other subjects, and there are not enough targets pitched at higher levels of attainment. End of year reports contain good detail, but do not always give parents enough information about their child's attainment in relation to their capability.
28. The school is active in getting parents involved in their children's education. 'Story Sacks'⁴ are a useful resource for fun family activities and are proving very popular. The specialist resources of two local secondary schools in art and in science are being used very effectively to promote 'family learning' activities. For example, a workshop on screen-printing took place on a Saturday morning shortly before the inspection began. Pupils all transfer to the adjacent junior school and arrangements are good. Very good use is being made of community and business links and the pupils' horizons are stretched beyond their local area through being introduced to the work of various local and world-wide charities.
29. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly involved in discussions with the class teachers and are kept fully informed of the support that their children are receiving. They are involved in regular reviews of the targets set out in their children's' individual education plans, and 'workshops' are offered to provide help for them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides effective leadership. The leadership provided by subject coordinators is satisfactory, as is the management of the school. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher is good, and has improved since the last inspection.
- Governance has also improved. The governors are knowledgeable, and are fully involved in shaping the direction of the school.
- There is very effective teamwork and a shared sense of purpose among staff.

Commentary

30. A very high proportion of the parents surveyed felt that the school is well led and managed. These views are fully endorsed by inspection judgements.
31. The headteacher has shown vision and determination in responding to the judgements of the previous inspection, and ensuring that the underachievement reported then has now been eliminated. She is totally committed to the school and provides clear educational direction for its work. Together with her deputy, she has a very clear overview of everything that goes on in the school and provides a very good role model for staff. The headteacher knows the pupils and their families very well, and is always available to parents. A very strong staff team has been created, in which all members work well together for the benefit of the pupils. The school's commitment to developing the expertise of its staff has been recognised through an

⁴ These are small sacks containing books and games for pupils and parents to share at home.

'Investors in People' award. Through her careful monitoring, the headteacher has a very good understanding of the strengths to be shared and weaknesses that need to be addressed.

32. The headteacher is also the coordinator for special educational needs, and provides very good leadership and management in this area of the school's provision. She works very well with the teachers, who make good use of her expertise and the materials that she provides to offer good quality support to their pupils. The very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage help to ensure that children are given a good start to their education. In English and mathematics, the leadership and management provided are good and have made a strong contribution to the improvements evident in these subjects. In most other areas of the curriculum, leadership and management are always satisfactory or better. Although coordinators have regular short periods of time for managing their subjects, they feel that this sort of allocation does not allow enough opportunity for monitoring provision in sufficient depth, consequently some of their action plans lack quality. Inspection evidence supports this view.
33. The Chair of Governors provides good leadership and works well with the headteacher and staff. Governors show a strong commitment to the school, and ensure that they properly fulfil their role as its 'critical friends' by asking searching questions and holding it to account for its work in a number of ways:
- they visit the school regularly to monitor and evaluate its work, and report their findings to the governing body;
 - they regularly analyse school performance data;
 - they keep closely in touch with parental views, through their daily contacts and their participation in social and fundraising events.
- They also ensure that legal requirements are properly met. Governors receive termly reports from the headteacher and meet regularly, in committees and as a full governing body, to oversee the work of the school and to evaluate progress made. Governors effectively use information gathered from their monitoring to inform their discussions and apply principles of 'best value' well when making decisions.
34. School administration is efficient. It ensures that teachers are able to focus on their professional duties and are not diverted from their work by administrative tasks. The secretary knows pupils and their families very well, deals competently with day-to-day queries, and contributes strongly to the smooth running of the school.
35. Financial administration is good, as noted in the most recent auditor's report. Governors are provided with regular statements of income and expenditure to help them to fulfil their responsibilities in monitoring the school's finances.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	493,064	Balance from previous year	41,508
Total expenditure	477,152	Balance carried forward to the next	57,420
Expenditure per pupil	2,727		

36. The financial information above shows that the amounts carried forward over the past two years have been very high, and well in excess of the national 'benchmark' of five per cent. While the reasons for this were satisfactorily explained by the chair of the governors' finance committee, this situation is unsatisfactory and needs to be addressed. Nevertheless, the school provides a good quality of education and gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Overall, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is of a similar standard to that reported at the time of the previous inspection, and continues to be one of the strengths of the school. The provision in the nursery is very good.
38. In the nursery, children achieve very well and make very good progress in developing and consolidating their skills in all the areas of learning. This is because the members of staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn, and as a result the curriculum and the quality of teaching is very good. The children are very well prepared for the Reception classes because of the staff's emphasis on the development of their social skills and the promotion of their independence. Children continue to do well in the Reception classes because the teaching is good and activities are well matched to their different needs. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed, members of staff work very well as a team, children are assessed well and their progress is carefully monitored. By the time children move from the Reception year to Year 1, standards are above average overall.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Clearly planned learning opportunities help to develop children's social skills.
- The stimulating, well-organised and managed environment contributes to children's good achievement.

Commentary

39. The children enter the school with average social skills. The school has good strategies to develop these, and by the end of the Reception year standards are above average. Most children attain the expected standards, and many exceed them.
40. The very good teaching in the nursery, and the good teaching in the Reception classes, has a clear impact on the children' learning. All staff, including the nursery nurses and teaching assistants, create a calm, secure and purposeful learning environment in which the children thrive and become confident learners. New children are settled in thoughtfully and successfully, and are happy to come to school. With helpful encouragement and sensitive handling they begin to form positive relationships with one another and with adults. In the nursery, routines to help develop children's independence are very good. For example, at the start of the session the adult bringing them to school takes them to consult a 'planning board', which contains pictures of the activities on offer, so that they can decide what they are going to do before they tell the staff. Very good, securely understood routines enable the children to settle down very quickly to their tasks. Very good levels of independence are evident.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All members of staff ask skilful questions and explain well, helping the children to understand better.

- Resources are well chosen to stimulate interest and motivate learning.

Commentary

41. Children enter the nursery with a reasonable ability to communicate. Most achieve well and are on course to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year because they are well taught. A good emphasis is placed on speaking and listening from an early age, and all staff, including the nursery nurses and teaching assistants, provide ample opportunities for the children in both the nursery and Reception classes to develop these skills. For example, very skilful and clear questioning techniques help the children to think about what they are doing and to talk to each other and to adults. All the other areas of learning benefit from this. Very thoughtful stories are carefully chosen to increase the children's literacy skills. For instance, the children in the nursery and Reception classes enjoyed joining in a story about Goldilocks: they correctly put the elements of the story into the proper order, and understood that if they write stories then they are known as the authors. Informal opportunities in the outdoor area contribute well to the above average standards attained by the children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned, with clear aims that are shared with the children.
- Members of staff work well together.

Commentary

42. Children enter the nursery with adequate early skills in mathematics. They achieve well, and standards are broadly average by the end of the Reception year. Teaching in this area of learning is good. Adults effectively build on what the children know, and provide many well-planned opportunities to enhance children's learning. For example, children learn to sequence correctly the days of the week as they complete the nursery calendar each day. Teaching is clear and precise so that the children know what is expected of them, and work is effectively planned to meet the needs of all the children. Learning is effective because the children have many practical opportunities to enhance their understanding and worthwhile challenges to build on what they have learned. For example, they are usefully introduced to comparisons of weight with practical resources to stimulate their interest and successfully support their learning. Good questioning probes the children's understanding and helps them to discuss what would happen when, for example, comparing two objects. In this instance, one child said, *'I actually think that they would balance.'* The very good collaboration between the teachers, nursery nurses and the teaching assistants effectively reinforce the children's learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

No overall judgement can be made about provision or standards in this area of learning, but teachers' planning, portfolios of work and classroom displays indicate that children are given an appropriate range of experiences.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the outdoor play area and the school hall.
- Carefully planned learning opportunities help to develop the children's skills.
- A wide range of activities is offered daily to encourage good physical development, with effective adult supervision and guidance.

Commentary

43. Standards in this area of learning are above average because most children are on course to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year. Teaching is good overall, and as a result children achieve well. Adults ensure that the children are thoroughly involved in building up their physical skills through practical activities that are provided in the hall and in the outside play area. The daily sessions of outdoor play give all children a variety of opportunities to help them develop an understanding of how their body moves, and to control their movements in the space available. Careful planning, effectively supported by practical activities, helps the children in a Reception class, for example, to recognise the changes that happen when they are active. Songs are well used in the nursery to help the children to identify different movements, such as shaking, wiggling, swinging, kicking and bending. They accurately follow instructions, showing a good understanding of space. All the members of staff interact effectively with the children by, for instance, encouraging them or demonstrating actions when necessary. Adults are acutely aware of ensuring children's safety. The well-chosen resources provide many opportunities for the children to cut, stick and join objects together, such as when using paper and fasteners to make teddy bears in the nursery, and to build on their skills to control and manipulate objects.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many creative and artistic opportunities offered every day, particularly in the nursery.
- The good role-play provision in each class links well to other areas of the curriculum.
- The good adult involvement in all creative activities ensures that children make the best use of these opportunities.

Commentary

44. Children achieve well and, by the end of the Reception year, standards in this area of learning are above average. Art makes a strong contribution to children's learning, and the creative skills of the staff are put to good use in displaying children's work. Teaching is often very good, enabling children to make good progress right from the start. They explore colour, texture, and shape and have plenty of opportunities for personal expression in, for example, painting, printing, collage, colour-mixing, and clay model-making activities. The members of staff clearly support all creative activities and ensure that children make the best use of these opportunities. There are very good links to literacy through the good choice of stories to heighten interest, together with words related to the story that effectively build up the children's vocabulary. Music is effectively used to stimulate interest and appropriately develop the children's listening skills. For example, the children in the nursery accurately identify different animals from a recording by listening carefully to the sound that each makes. Children in a Reception class begin to recognise high and low sounds and enthusiastically join in a 'bear' rap to consolidate their learning. Role-play is used successfully, to nurture imagination and to enable children to act out their own experiences. For example, the house of the three bears makes an important link with the story.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, and pupils achieve well.
- Effective action has been taken to improve spelling, phonics skills and boys' achievement.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The literacy management team provides good leadership.

Commentary

45. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and are above average by the end of Year 2 because of the success of the school's very clear plan of action to raise standards, which has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching.
46. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those of higher attainment, achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported and every effort is made to provide carefully planned work in order to raise their attainment. In response to test data, which suggests that girls do slightly better than boys, the school has worked hard to raise the boys' self-esteem and achievement through introducing a number of initiatives. For example, specific reading materials, 'Story Sacks' and the development of the outdoor play area have been introduced to reinforce their learning and motivate them afresh.
47. Handwriting is improving across the school together with the presentation of the pupils' work. For instance, a scrutiny of work completed by pupils in Year 2 showed that they form letters correctly and most of them are using cursive script. Marking of the pupils' work has a sharper focus and now gives a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.
48. Overall, the quality of the teaching is good, with some very good features. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. An effective feature of each of the four lessons seen was the way teachers shared the learning objective at the start of the lesson. Consequently, the pupils knew what they were expected to learn. The good teaching has a positive impact on the pupils' learning and how well they achieve. For example, in Year 1, teaching of initial sounds of letters and letter combinations is very effective because clear routines have been established, which are understood by the pupils. This leads to a high level of involvement from the pupils. The lessons are very well planned and prepared to meet the learning needs of all the pupils, and there is very effective reinforcement of skills already practised. Another noteworthy feature is the very good level of questioning skills shown by teachers, which challenge and probe the pupils' understanding and provide practical opportunities for them to talk about their work. For example, in Year 2, pupils consider the use of conjunctions in sentences and are encouraged to speak to a 'partner' to consolidate their understanding, while in Year 1, pupils identify the differences between information and storybooks and realise that information books do not start with 'Once upon a time'.
49. In the absence of the coordinator, the subject is well led and efficiently managed by the literacy management team. Successful initiatives and accurate identification of priority areas for improvement ensure that the school moves forward. Assessment in English is good, and as a

result the members of staff have a good knowledge of individuals' strengths and weaknesses, and are able to plan accordingly.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. A scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work showed their growing competence in sentence construction, spelling, and punctuation through the valuable opportunities provided for them to use their writing skills to support work in other subjects. In history, geography, religious education and science, they record the results of their investigations, retell Bible stories, use descriptive writing and write about famous people and how people live in other countries. Opportunities for pupils to use computers for word-processing also enable them to practise their skills in literacy, although these opportunities are not provided regularly enough in some classes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, and pupils learn well.
- The curriculum is good.
- Good subject leadership and management have provided a firm basis for future improvement.

Commentary

51. Overall, the standards of work seen are broadly average. This judgement reflects the outcome of the most recent tests taken by pupils in Year 2, which shows that the school is very effective in ensuring that almost all pupils achieve the standard expected at the end of Year 2, but does not have a high enough proportion of pupils who exceed this level. This situation is beginning to change, and by next year, the impact of improvements being made throughout the school is likely to be seen at the end of Year 2, with better overall results in the national tests being achieved. These improvements, which stem from good leadership and a strong commitment to raise standards, include clear targets set for pupils and an increased focus on the challenge provided for those of higher attainment.
52. Pupils are learning and achieving well because they are well taught, their individual progress is regularly monitored, and good quality help is given whenever they need it.
53. Teaching is good because teachers plan carefully, explain tasks clearly, use skilled teaching assistants effectively, and ensure that their lessons contain a good balance between time for direct instruction, time for pupils to concentrate on their individual tasks, and time for learning to be reviewed and consolidated. They manage their pupils well, and have high expectations of behaviour. As a result, they create a good climate for learning in which pupils are able to concentrate on their work. Learning is good, because pupils have positive attitudes towards their work and work hard in response to their teachers' high expectations. This enthusiasm for the subject was confirmed in interviews with pupils, when many said that mathematics is one of their favourite subjects. The best teaching was seen in one of the Year 2 classes. This lesson was the most effective because of the crisp pace at which it was conducted and because of the very good systems used to assess how well concepts had been understood, such as the use of 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' hand signals from pupils during the teacher's introduction. In response to these signals the teacher managed to provide good quality

challenges at different levels, not only during the introduction but also in the plenary session when learning was reviewed at the end of the lesson.

54. A scrutiny of samples of pupils' previously completed work showed that the level of challenge provided for higher-attaining pupils has not always been consistently high enough, and accounts for the lower than expected performance of these pupils. However, in Year 1, the proportion of pupils working at an above average level is significantly higher than in Year 2 as a result of the school's response to its evaluation of national test results.
55. Noteworthy features of the good curricular provision are the strong emphasis placed on teaching the core skills of estimation and the ability to identify patterns in numbers. The school has evaluated its previous performance in mathematics effectively and is now placing an increased emphasis on problem-solving activities.
56. The quality of leadership and management provided by the subject coordinators and the numeracy management team has been an important factor in the good level of improvement made since the last inspection. A clear plan of action is in place and is being successfully implemented, and governors are kept well informed of progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Mathematics is satisfactorily integrated into other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are given regular opportunities to understand the relevance of their learning by applying the skills learned in lessons as part of their work in other subjects, for instance when producing simple pictograms to illustrate their work in science.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of average and lower-attaining pupils is good, but the achievement of higher-attainers is only satisfactory. This is because these pupils are not always given work which provides a scientific challenge.
- The quality of assessment needs to be improved.
- The new initiative to encourage family learning in science is good.

Commentary

58. Pupils make steady progress as they move through the school, and achieve satisfactorily. Overall, standards of work are average, but are not as high as they were judged to be at the time of the last inspection.
59. Inspection findings confirm the results of teachers' assessments, and show that the school is good at ensuring that almost all pupils in Year 2 achieve the nationally expected level for their age, but not enough pupils exceed this level. This occurs for the following reasons:
 - the same basic tasks are often set for all pupils, regardless of prior attainment;
 - when tasks are differentiated, the different level of challenge provided for higher-attainers does not always provide a scientific test, but instead demands higher attainment in literacy or numeracy.

Evidence from a detailed scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work, which showed a lack of consistently good quality scientific challenges for higher-attaining pupils, was confirmed in the lessons observed. In these lessons, all of which were satisfactory, teachers were good at ensuring that all pupils were fully included in the activities planned. They achieved this aim by setting the same 'core' task for all pupils, so that the introduction to the lesson was relevant to

all, before the class was divided into groups for interesting practical activities, and everyone was able to participate fully in the plenary session when learning was reviewed at the end of the lesson. To help lower-attaining pupils, teaching assistants and other adults were deployed effectively to give extra help to those who needed it. However, the criteria used for grouping higher-attaining pupils were not all based on scientific competence, but rather on pupils' ability in numeracy and literacy, since these pupils were often expected to work more independently. For example, in a Year 2 lesson in which pupils had to test the effects of the height of small wooden ramps on the distances travelled by toy cars, the higher-attainers were given a more complex mathematical measuring task as their challenge. Sometimes, the challenge provided for higher-attainers is of the quantity of work produced. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson, these pupils, unnecessarily, had to complete that same task as everyone else before going on to something more demanding.

60. The school's new initiative to involve parents more actively in their children's learning helps to enhance the school's provision in science by raising the profile of the subject. During the course of the inspection, the first of the 'family learning' sessions in science took place, taken by a teacher from a local secondary school and attended by 13 children, each accompanied by an adult member of their family. As well as providing an enjoyable, shared challenge, the session helped to improve pupils' understanding of the effect of forces, by testing the pneumatic power of different sizes of syringes used to propel a table-tennis ball.
61. The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. The scheme of work provides good breadth and balance to the curriculum, gives good guidance to teachers on the activities to be taught, and places good emphasis on practical work for pupils so that they learn through experience. Scientific methods are promoted consistently by all teachers and, by the end of Year 2, pupils show a reasonable understanding of principles such as the 'fair testing' of their initial hypotheses when conducting investigations. However, the assessments of pupils which are recorded, and which are based on the scheme, tend to reflect coverage of the curriculum rather than focusing more clearly on the quality of the skills developed by individuals. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

62. Little direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection, and, therefore, no firm judgement can be made about all aspects of provision.
63. Standards in Year 2 are below average because of the inconsistent way in which the subject is promoted and developed between classes within the same year groups. Not all pupils use computers regularly enough and there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in some classes; consequently, achievement is unsatisfactory overall. Inspection evidence gained through observations is borne out by the contradictory views expressed by pupils from different classes when access to computers was discussed with them.
64. Although the school has made good progress in improving many aspects of its information and communication technology provision, including investment in a number of good quality computers, some of the weaknesses reported at the time of the previous inspection still exist. These relate to the lack of opportunities for pupils in some classes to regularly practise and develop their skills and to the variable quality of help provided. The lack of progress in fully addressing these weaknesses detracts from the otherwise good leadership shared by two committed and enthusiastic coordinators; nevertheless, the subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The coordinators have worked hard to improve the subject knowledge and confidence of staff and satisfactory progress is being made in collating a portfolio of samples of pupils' work, which is to be used as a reference point for teachers' judgements. A more systematic approach to assessment is also being developed, but this needs further refinement to ensure that the recording of pupils' progress focuses more on the quality of their work against national standards' criteria rather than coverage of activities.

65. Only one lesson was seen in which information and communication technology skills were directly taught to a whole class group. Teaching and learning were satisfactory, with good features being the teacher's clear explanation of how to use software for research and the clear links made between this lesson and previous learning, which helped to develop pupils' confidence. Following the introduction, two-thirds of the pupils were able to practise the skills taught in the school's two 'mini-suites' of computers, while the remainder carried out book-based research in the classroom. However, this approach is not consistently used in all other classes. During the period of the inspection, all other sessions observed were of small groups of pupils, supervised by teaching assistants or adult helpers within the two information and communication technology areas, during the course of other lessons. The support provided tended to be more of a supervisory nature, with any problems encountered being solved by the adults rather than the pupils being taught the necessary skills.
66. The scheme of work adopted by the school ensures that all the required elements of the subject are covered. However, many of the pupils observed were unfamiliar with the keyboard, and some did not know how to 'sign on' to use the school's network.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. Evidence from pupils' previously completed work showed, for example, the use of graphics software to produce samples of art in the style of Piet Mondrian and Jackson Pollock, data processing as part of topics in mathematics, and word-processing of science work. However, all of these items involved the use of computers, and no evidence was found of pupils' use of other forms of information and communication technology hardware, such as digital cameras, tape recorders or calculators.

HUMANITIES

68. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, no judgement about the quality of provision or standards of work can be made in either **geography** or **history**. No lessons in geography were observed and only one lesson in history was observed in Year 2. This was of good quality. The teacher's skilful questioning and good use of photographs and books enabled pupils to find out about, for example, how papyrus was made in the past. Lists of key words were effectively used to support the pupils' learning and provided a good cross-curricular link to language and literacy. The good provision of an overnight camp on the school site for Year 2 pupils makes a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and enhances the curriculum in geography. Currently there are no effective systems in place to systematically record pupils' progress in the development of key learning in these subjects.

Religious education

No judgement can be made about the quality of the provision in this subject as no lessons were observed.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' development in religious education.
- Assessment is not systematic enough.

Commentary

69. There was insufficient evidence available for a judgement to be made about the standards attained.

70. The school places emphasis on caring for others and helping pupils to recognise the importance of relationships. This has a positive impact on their learning. Assemblies, and visits to a local church, help to develop pupils' emerging understanding of faith, and visits from people such as a local church minister and a representative from the 'Save the Children' organisation enrich this element of pupils' learning.
71. The subject is satisfactorily led and planning takes appropriate account of the locally agreed syllabus for Hertfordshire schools. Currently there is no effective system in place to record pupils' progress in the development of key learning in this subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. Music and physical education were inspected in full and are reported below. Art and design, and design and technology, were sampled.
73. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only one lesson was observed in art and design and one in design and technology. It is not, therefore, possible to make a firm judgement about standards or the quality of provision in these subjects.
74. One of the noteworthy features of the school is the attractive presentation of pupils' **art and design** work, some of which results from the good range of activities provided to enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 produced high quality clay flowers when working with a visiting artist, and pupils from all classes contributed to a colourful display of fabric design and clay work on an African theme. Other works, of the very highest quality, are the interpretations of Claude Monet's paintings, such as 'Impression: Sunrise', 'The Water Lily Pond' and 'Cap d'Antibes', by pupils in one of the Year 2 classes. In the single lesson seen, a group of pupils were well taught and busily used a variety of tools to re-create 'impressionist' effects such as shadow through subtle blending of colours.
75. The school's approach to teaching these subjects is inconsistent. In the Year 2 art and design lesson seen, other groups of pupils were engaged in **design and technology** activities such as sewing and cooking, as well as working on computers in one of the information and communication technology areas. This form of organisation, in which the groups of pupils move from activity to activity over a period of weeks, is only possible because of the good level of support provided by parents and the skills of teaching assistants. However, the quality of direct teaching provided varies considerably and depends greatly on the skills of the adults involved. In contrast, the design and technology lesson observed in Year 1, on the theme of 'homes', was taken by the class teacher and focused solely on the subject. Basic skills were satisfactorily taught, as pupils learned the key features required in their designs and showed an emerging understanding of the reasons for the use of different materials. Further evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work shows that all of the key elements of the design and technology curriculum are being covered satisfactorily.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good.
- There is no formal assessment system.

Commentary

74. Standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils gain a valuable number of positive experiences in music as they move through the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All the pupils in Year 2 learn to play the ocarina and are encouraged to perform in assemblies. This has a positive influence on the pupils' attainment and means that, by the end of Year 2, they all read musical notation. At a lunchtime ocarina club Year 2 pupils were skilful, competent and confident performers. For example, after a short period of rehearsal they practised the tune, harmony and descant of the song 'Kumbaya' and then, divided into three groups, played these parts together. Pupils are given good opportunities to perform publicly through concerts and festivals. For example, a group of pupils participated in an ocarina festival in Kettering.
75. The teaching provided has a significant, positive impact on the pupils' learning and achievement. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher's clear exposition and skilful questioning ensured that the pupils made very good progress in their understanding of pitch. This understanding was effectively reinforced through well-chosen activities and their practical application on xylophones. In a Year 1 class, pupils benefited from a clear explanation of the difference between beat and rhythm, so that by the end of the lesson they sustained a regular beat and clapped out rhythms with a good degree of precision. The pupils sing enthusiastically and keep a tune well. They enjoy weekly singing assemblies, when they use tuned and untuned percussion instruments to accompany the singing.
76. The subject is well led and managed. The commercially-produced scheme of work which has been introduced helps teachers to plan well and non-specialists to lead lessons with confidence. The school takes every opportunity to invite members of the community to enrich its provision. For example, pupils from the adjacent junior school perform in assemblies. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
77. Currently there is no effective system in place to record pupils' progress in the development of key learning in this subject. The pupils' progress is identified through some end of unit assessments. However, there is no evidence to show that these assessments help the pupils to know how they can improve or feed into the teachers' future planning.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to good quality teaching.
- The curriculum is well structured and provides a good range of experiences for pupils.

Commentary

78. No judgement can be made about standards overall, because only a limited range of curricular activities were observed. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards vary between classes in the same year group, and this reflects the variations in the quality of teaching. In some classes pupils' performance is good because of the quality of teaching provided. For example, in one of the Year 2 classes, most pupils show good control of movements such as balances and have a good awareness of space as they move around the hall. They are developing good skills in critically evaluating the work of others, and make useful suggestions as to how their classmates' performance can be improved.
79. Overall, the quality of teaching seen was good. Teaching and learning were very good in two of the three lessons seen, and satisfactory in the other. The common features of the very good lessons were that teachers had high expectations of what their pupils could achieve and were very good at developing pupils' confidence through the effective use of praise. As a result, pupils became really focused on what they had to do and worked hard to improve.

Teachers helped them to do this through their very good use of assessment, by picking out particularly good work of individuals and using these pupils to demonstrate their movements. The effect of this was that other pupils then focused more clearly on the extra quality and detail required to raise the standard of their own performance. Where teaching was not of this standard, assessment was not effective enough in showing pupils precisely what they needed to do to improve. Where teachers themselves played an active part and modelled movements for pupils, as seen in a Year 1 lesson, pupils learned at a rapid pace as they emulated the teacher's performance. In this lesson, a similar level of participation by the teaching assistant resulted in very good achievement by a pupil with special educational needs, who was working closely with her.

80. The curriculum provided is good, and develops a range of skills in a progressive and well thought-out way. It also makes a good contribution to pupils' social development through the opportunities provided for them to work together in pairs, small groups and in team games. Teachers are helped in delivering the curriculum by the good quality of accommodation and resources available. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator has a small, regular share of the total time available for monitoring, but feels that she would be more effective in this role if the small blocks of time allocated to her were combined. Such an arrangement would help her to become more effective in raising standards by identifying and sharing existing good practice. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. The caring school ethos supports pupils' personal development well, and the teachers' planned use of 'Circle Time' provides good opportunities to share feelings and to discuss different topics. For example, pupils in Year 2 confidently discuss likes and dislikes and consider the choices they have and whether it is right for children to like different things. This helps to build confidence and to help pupils realise that choices have an effect on each of them, and their relationships.
82. There is a well-planned programme of weekly lessons and other opportunities for personal development, such as class discussion times. The topics taught provide a good vehicle for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills as well as their social development in terms of working in pairs. For example, pupils have been provided with useful opportunities to consider feelings, class rules, helping others and belonging. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their environment, and for what happens to them, for instance pupils are involved in re-cycling waste.

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	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

