

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGSWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leamington Spa

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 130872

Headteacher: Mr B Lee

Lead inspector: Mrs C A Field

Dates of inspection: 9th-10th September 2003

Inspection number: 256633

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	126
School address:	Baker Avenue Leamington Spa
Postcode:	CV31 3HB
Telephone number:	01926 426896
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Nagra
Date of previous inspection:	12 th November 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school which is smaller than most, serves a community of social and economic disadvantage to the south of Leamington Spa town centre. Most of the 126 pupils who attend Kingsway, live in the locality and are mainly from White European backgrounds with some of Indian, Pakistani and a few from African Caribbean heritage. Around 20 per cent of pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language; most speak Punjabi at home. There is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs for mainly moderate learning difficulties, 5 of whom have statements, some have emotional and social needs too. Around 15 per cent of pupils leaves or joins the school over the course of the year, typically in the junior stage. At the time of the inspection 14 children in the reception class, known as the *Foundation Stage*, were attending mornings only. The profile of children's skills and knowledge when they start in the reception has been well below average but is currently below average. The current children have benefited from early entry to school last term funded by the local education authority. The building of a new nursery under the Sure-start programme is scheduled to commence early next year. The school won a Government Achievement award in 2002 for its improvements in national test results.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
9479	Mrs C A Field	Lead inspector	Community provision
9428	Mrs J Butler	Lay inspector	
25074	Mrs J Cox	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, special educational needs, history, geography, religious education.
22856	Mrs K Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, design and technology.
22421	Mrs V McGrath	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, information and communication technology.

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AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

MATHEMATICS

SCIENCE

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

HUMANITIES

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE INSPECTION REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a sound and improving school with a very supportive, caring ethos that is highly successful in including all pupils in all aspects of school life. Pupils' achievement and the progress they make over their time at school are satisfactory. Teaching is sound overall, but better in the reception class and the juniors. Standards overall are currently well below the national average but show a rising trend due to the school's effective improvement strategies. The school is well led by the headteacher who provides clear educational direction with very good support from the deputy and other key staff. They work effectively with governors to influence and motivate the united staff team to make sustainable improvements. The school has promise for a bright future and provides **satisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, mathematics and information communication technology (ICT) are improving but are not yet high enough. ICT is not used well enough in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language achieve well because of the good support they receive; however higher attainers do not receive a consistently good deal and the school has not identified those pupils with specific gifts or talents.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall but better in the reception and junior classes than the infants.
- Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to their education.
- Pupils have good attitudes to work and their behaviour is good.
- The headteacher supported by all staff and governors provides good leadership and sound management but the systems for checking the work of the school are not yet rigorous enough.
- Attendance is improving but is below average and as such unsatisfactory.

The school has made steady progress since its previous inspection. The serious weaknesses raised then have been eradicated, though not all of the issues have been resolved. Now that the staffing difficulties have been sorted out the pace of change has quickened. The Government's achievement award in 2002 and the significant improvement in the 2003 National Curriculum tests, especially in science, are two key indicators of the school's growing effectiveness.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, based on average points and compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	D	E	C
Mathematics	C	C	E	C
Science	D	E	E*	E

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2

- The children who have just started in the Foundation Stage have made a good start and are well on track to reach the goals set for them. Those in the Foundation Stage last year achieved satisfactorily, but have started in Year 1 with well below average standards across all areas of learning.
- The standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 are well below average overall.
- The standards achieved by pupils in Years 3 and 4, are below average, but show up good achievement both in lessons and in work saved by the school from last year.

- Standards in Years 5 and 6 are well below average overall. To some extent these standards reflect the legacy of the past when the quality of education in the school had many serious weaknesses.

Most boys and girls achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with special education needs and those who learn to speak English as an additional language show good achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good overall. Their satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has strengths in the moral and cultural aspects. Relationships, attitudes and behaviour are all good, though attendance is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is satisfactory overall.

The teaching is satisfactory overall although its quality is variable. Teaching is good in reception and in Years 3 and 4 and satisfactory elsewhere. In Years 1 and 2 current methods are not enabling pupils to work independently or collaboratively. In other year groups, the best teaching makes learning productive, purposeful and fun and engages all pupils to strive for their personal best. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, there is a same-ness about the work set for everyone that fails to stretch the brightest and slows progress. Teaching is not focused enough on pupils' research and enquiry. Teachers make insufficient use of assessment to guide their planning. Teaching in history, science and religious education is good throughout the school and this results in pupils making good gains in their knowledge. However, weak writing skills affect the standards achieved. Specialist music teaching is of consistently high quality. **The curriculum is satisfactory** overall. It is broad and balanced, but the work in ICT, design and technology and geography does not promote skills systematically enough. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences. **Pupils receive good care and support.** Induction arrangements work very effectively in helping the youngest children and those new to school settle well. Those who speak Punjabi are supported in effectively in their home language. Child protection procedures are good. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. Governors have drafted a sex and relationships policy but have yet to formally agree this. **The school has a sound partnership with parents and links with the community and partner schools are good.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is good and the management is satisfactory.

The headteacher and deputy have led the school well through a period of change with a crystal clear plan of action which is showing good impact. The school has begun to look more critically at its work and is making sound use of a range of data to establish how well it is performing but much remains to be done to inject the necessary rigour into on-going assessment and evaluation systems. The governors efficiently manage the school; are supportive and committed but not always challenging enough in their pursuit of best value.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school though a handful are not pleased with aspects of behaviour and a few would like homework to be provided more often. Some have concerns about the lack of follow through when they raise concerns but appreciate that the appointment of a secretary should help communication. **Pupils like school and enjoy having many friends.** They feel that they are learning a lot, as lessons are interesting and fun. If problems arise they know exactly what to do and are confident in the school's ability to sort things out quickly.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do are:

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and ICT and widen the opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning across the curriculum.
- Improve teaching, particularly in the infants to that of the best quality to be found in school.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of planning, teaching and learning.
- Improve the level of attendance.

and, to fully meet statutory requirements, the Governing body need to formally ratify the draft sex and relationships policy

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PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses.

Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory but progress is inconsistent.

Standards in English and mathematics are well below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are below average in design and technology, geography, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and broadly average in history music and religious education.

NB. This inspection did not find sufficient reliable evidence to judge standards in art and design and physical education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving but are not yet as good as they should be.
- The school is working effectively to boost pupils' achievements in the three tested subjects of English, mathematics and science and there are promising signs that standards will continue to rise. Pupils' achievement is best in reception, and Years 3 and 4.
- Standards in ICT are not high enough. The new ICT suite is making a positive difference to skills development but too little attention is paid to using ICT to support pupils' work across the subjects they study.
- The school met its challenging targets in national tests last year and has set equally demanding ones for 2004.
- Standards could be better if more focus was placed on enabling potentially higher attaining pupils to learn to the full of their capabilities across years and in all subjects, particularly mathematics.
- Boys and girls of all capabilities and from different ethnic backgrounds tend to make similar progress over their time in school, those with special educational needs do particularly well because of the good support they receive.
- Pupils who learn to speak English as an additional language achieve well from their various starting points and are present in all ability groups. Punjabi speakers who are at an early stage of learning English do well because of the dual language learning methods used so well by staff.
- The school has yet to make fully effective use of all available data to target good achievement in all years and has yet to make assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes rigorous enough to support further improvements.

Commentary

1. In most subjects, pupils' achieve appropriately from their different starting points, although the higher attainers are not always stretched to the full. Staffing instability in the past has adversely affected the progress of pupils in some years however, the school's positive strategies are enabling most to catch up on things they did not learn well. The standards in national tests in all subjects are rising but still have some way to go. Girls do much better than boys in national tests. School data shows that both groups make similar rates of progress during their time at school. Inspection findings agree with the school's data and inspectors could find no clear reason why the girls do better in the tests. A number of pupils join the school in the junior stage from other schools and this affects the reliability of data that tracks progress from Years 2 to 6 but does not make significant difference to the overall standards being attained.
2. Pupils with special educational needs including those who have statements achieve well and meet the targets that are set for them. They receive good support in lessons, which ensures that they make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well, as they are identified early and receive good support from teachers and class assistants,

who are very aware of their specific learning needs. Pupils who are at early stage of learning English achieve well as several of the staff can converse with them in their home language.

Foundation Stage

3. The children now in Years 1 to 6 have typically started school in the Foundation Stage with well below average skills and knowledge. Their communication and language skills have been weak and this has hampered more speedy learning across the areas they experience. The current children in the Foundation Stage have better developed skills due to good early induction provision and good teaching and they have already settled well into school routines and show strong indications of achieving well.

Key Stage 1

4. Year 2 results in 2002 (as shown below) were very low (lowest 5 per cent) in all tested subjects when compared with the national picture and to that seen in similar schools. There was no significant variation between the performance of boys and girls. Results in 2002 showed an upward trend on those reported in 2001, though the proportion reaching the expected level in reading declined slightly.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 in percentages

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	57 (62)	84 (84)
Writing	57 (50)	86 (86)
Mathematics	57 (58)	90 (91)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

5. Year 6 results in the 2002 national tests (as shown below) were well below average in English and mathematics and low in science (lowest 5 per cent). The results declined in English and mathematics compared with 2001 but rose slightly in science. Girls did significantly better than boys in the tests.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 in percentages

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	56 (68)	75 (75)
Mathematics	56 (84)	73 (71)
Science	70 (68)	86 (87)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. The standards attained by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in the national tests for 2003 indicate good improvement on those shown above in 2002. The performance of higher attainers in Year 2 in reading and mathematics shows very clear improvement. The overall trend is improving significantly. The 2003 results were up on 2002 results in Year 6 with more pupils attaining the expected level than previously, and more reaching the higher level 5. The upward trend shows good promise for raising standards further in the future. Parents view the standards achieved positively.

7. Inspectors judge standards in the work seen in core subjects as well below average in English and mathematics, below average in science and ICT and broadly average in religious education at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school will be introducing a new way of teaching reading from half-term following a period of research and development and the purchase of some good resources. The guided talk project introduced this time last year is having good impact but needs to be widened to target more pupils. Pupils' weak writing holds back better achievement in other subjects, such as history and geography and the school now needs to extend the opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length. The school has rightly identified the urgent need to develop pupils' mental and problem solving skills. These are particularly weak areas. In too many mathematics lessons, pupils' slow mental recall and inability to devise strategies for working out answers was observed to hinder their progress. Standards in science are now better than in English and mathematics. This shows up well the school's effective improvement strategies. A key focus on investigative skills is enabling pupils to develop research skills and is extending their scientific knowledge and understanding well. Other than specific skills development in ICT, there is very limited cross-curricular use of ICT. The school misses opportunities for pupils to use ICT to record their work, for example in enabling slow writers to word-process some of their work.
8. Standards in religious education, history and music are broadly average and below average in geography. Pupils are provided with worthwhile experiences that enable them to learn with confidence about a range of world religions and to gain in their understanding about moral, social and spiritual aspects, for example in the work completed in Year 5 about 'Remembrance Day'. Pupils enjoy learning about history and work in books shows a secure knowledge of key facts and a growing understanding of times past and present. The support for the music curriculum from the specialist who teaches all classes weekly has a very significant impact on learning and the improving standards reflect the enthusiasm and high application of all pupils. Singing in assembly is disappointing however and needs to be worked on. Work in geography is rather mixed. In some classes, for example Year 6 there is depth and breadth to the work studied, for example that on rivers and mountains. In other years, for example 1 and 2 there is too much repetition and little challenge in the tasks set. Throughout the school insufficient attention is being paid to promoting independent research and enquiry skills.
9. The school has yet to make fully effective use of all available data to ensure that pupils make good progress in all years. However, the academic targets set for Year 6 pupils' performance in the national tests next May, show well its determination, to raise standards. The school's action plan identifies the raising of standards as its No 1 priority and aims to develop ICT across the curriculum. The school's next step is to make assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes rigorous enough to target raised standards in all years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good overall. Boys and girls from different backgrounds get along well together. Pupils benefit from the support of play leaders at lunchtimes. Previously, behaviour tended to deteriorate at this time of day and pupils say that this is no longer the case. Although showing improvement, attendance is unsatisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory and lessons begin on time.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception class have started school confidently and have settled well into the routines, some are enjoying working with one another cooperatively.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning; they enjoy school and try hard.
- Behaviour is good overall; the majority being self-controlled, orderly and sensible.
- A few pupils, particularly in the infants, still require a lot of behavioural support.
- There are good relationships between pupils and with staff, and good racial harmony.
- Pupils know right from wrong and become sociable, considerate young people.

- There is room for improvement in their spiritual awareness, their confidence and their opportunities to show initiative.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attendance is below average for primary schools nationally, and the level of unauthorised absence is too high. Although this has improved radically in recent years, there are still too many pupils who have unexplained absence. The school has not yet done enough to promote good attendance by raising its status amongst pupils. Punctuality has improved and is satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.2	School data :	0.9
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

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

11. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are one of the school's strengths. Pupils like school and particularly value their outdoor environment. They say "The best thing about our school is the garden". Older pupils recognise the good qualities in the resources that the headteacher with staff has worked hard to secure.
12. Pupils respond best to the more stimulating lessons when their imagination is captured, but always listen hard and try to do their best. Pupils show pride in their work and juniors work hard to achieve their *pen licence*, which they value. However, teachers do not allow them sufficient opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
13. Behaviour in lessons and about the school is good overall. During the inspection pupils conducted themselves in a self-controlled, orderly fashion, particularly at break and lunchtimes. They responded well to a quiet signal from mid-day supervisors in the lunch hall, and they show respect for property and the school environment. In lessons most pupils follow their class rules conscientiously. A few pupils, particularly in the infants, still require a lot of behavioural support, but they are all included in lessons and rarely disrupt learning. School council representatives say that there has been some name-calling and minor bullying which spoilt things at play and lunchtimes but that pupils know what to do in these situations and are confident that staff will resolve problems. Some parents raised doubts about this too and should be reassured by the pupils' confidence. The school has a very inclusive policy of welcoming all comers and provides behavioural support for pupils whatever their background. However it will not tolerate abusive or anti-social behaviour and uses exclusion as a final resort. The incidence of exclusions was high last year due to very exceptional circumstances and was fully justified.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	44	22	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	21	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	59	0	0

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

14. Relationships are good throughout the school and there is racial harmony. Pupils play well together and particularly enjoy the opportunities for organised games provided by the visiting play leaders. Through assemblies and other special events, pupils learn about and value the cultural differences in their own community and the wider world. The school is successful in providing a multi-cultural approach to everyday life, including a fascinating insight into the Sikh festival which celebrates the friendship of brothers and sisters.
15. Through a varied system of rewards including the weekly tea party with the headteacher, and some very good support for pupils with statements of special educational needs, pupils' personal development is successfully promoted. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of right and wrong, and of the moral dilemmas they will encounter. They become sociable, considerate young people ready for the next stage of their education. The representatives on the school council say that their views are listened to well. Although thoughtful, as for example in the charitable endeavours undertaken, there is room for improvement in their spiritual awareness and in their confidence. Individual pupils demonstrate very caring attitudes to one another, illustrated by the junior girl who tenderly held the hand of a distressed infant and tried to help her overcome her fear of being out in a light shower of rain.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is satisfactory overall with some strengths.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory overall and better than this in the Foundation Stage and lower juniors where expectations are high and learning proceeds at a good pace. It is too variable in the infants. The high level of staff turnover has been a barrier to more effective teaching in the past but the school now has permanent staff that can build for improvement. Some parents would like more involvement with homework.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall with good qualities that drive forward good achievement in reception, Years 3 and 4.
- The school's use of teaching assistants is highly effective in engaging pupils with special educational needs' purposeful learning.

- Teachers manage behaviour to a good standard.
- Teachers plan lessons that are effective in enabling the majority of pupils to make steady progress in their learning, a sharper focus on highlighting what pupils of different capabilities are expected to achieve in lessons is needed to improve pace and challenge.
- Teachers are making reasonable use of the ICT suite to enable pupils to develop their ICT skills, however the use of ICT to support learning across subjects is rather adhoc.
- The teaching of history, science, music and religious education is good throughout the school and this results in pupils making good gains in their knowledge in these subjects. Weak writing skills hold back potentially higher standards in recorded work.
- Most teachers use marking and questioning effectively to assess how well pupils are learning but now need to inject more rigour into how they record pupils' achievements.
- More attention to securing parents' support for regular homework is required.

Commentary

16. The problems associated with a high staff turnover have been sorted out and the school is well on the way to building an effective teaching team who are strongly committed to working in the best interests of the pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 34 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (6%)	18 (53%)	14 (41%)	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.

17. The staff in the Foundation Stage has good command of all areas of learning and are working in successful partnership to enable the children to learn well. Teaching and learning in all lessons observed by inspectors were of consistently good quality. Satisfactory teaching is supporting sound achievement for most pupils across the infants and juniors. However, in Years 1 and 2 current methods are not securing a good enough pace to pupils' learning. The pupils in these years show limited capacity to work independently or collaboratively. Too little attention is being paid to helping develop these aspects. The best teaching, typically in Years 3 and 4 makes learning productive, purposeful and fun and engages pupils of all capabilities to strive for their personal best. Year 6 pupils made good progress in geography work and history projects last year because of good teaching.
18. Pupils with special educational needs receive some good one-to-one support from teaching assistants who are well deployed and effective in role. Teachers set suitable learning challenges in response to pupils' diverse learning needs, as work provided is closely related to targets identified in pupils' individual learning plans. Support assistants and teachers provide the correct blend of help and challenge, so that pupils do not become over-reliant.
19. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are taught effectively, particularly in small groups which are well planned to encourage the development of speaking and listening skills. For instance, Year 1 and 2 pupils learnt the names of different fruits and useful vocabulary to describe a series of events. They learnt to say 'First I will taste the orange and then I will taste the pear.' The practical experience of seeing and tasting the fruit successfully reinforced their learning of new vocabulary. Pupils at an early stage of learning English were especially motivated in this lesson, as other pupils were fascinated to learn the Punjabi words for different fruits.
20. The good skills of a music specialist are helping to raise standards and the regular input from staff from a local Beacon Science School is making a positive difference to pupils' experiences

in ICT and science. Teachers' methods by and large are chosen well to assist pupils in gaining knowledge and developing understanding at a steady rate. They are less successful in enabling pupils to follow their own lines of enquiry where appropriate. The chief weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching are the lack of precision in the objectives set for learning and too little use made of assessment to inform the planning of suitably challenging work to match different pupils' needs and capabilities. There is a same-ness about the work set for everyone that fails to stretch the brightest, particularly in mathematics, and so interest wanes and learning progresses at a pedestrian pace. Pupils are being given some helpful comments when their work is marked; the next step is to set targets that they can work towards and review at timely intervals. Too little use is currently made of homework to support pupils' achievement, for example in learning times tables or reading.

The Curriculum

Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection to the curriculum which now provides a range of worthwhile experiences across subjects and meets statutory requirements. The accommodation is of good quality; it is bright, stimulating and well maintained. The school works soundly with parents and has forged strong links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The deputy headteacher is doing a good job of managing and developing the curriculum and has worked with governors in monitoring its effectiveness.
- The school is very inclusive; equality of access and opportunity is good for boys and girls from different backgrounds and enables those with learning difficulties and emotional needs to achieve well. However, the work planned across the curriculum is not consistently challenging the highest attainers, especially in mathematics.
- The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and broad and reasonably well-balanced for older pupils. Its weakness is the lack of sharp focus on promoting skills systematically and seeking more cohesive cross-curricular opportunities, for example through the use of ICT.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance pupils' experiences.
- Accommodation and resources are good and enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

21. Planning is much improved since the previous inspection and identifies worthwhile experiences across all subjects. A recent innovation that has yet to bear fruit is the identification of speaking and listening opportunities in all subject plans. More tried and tested strategies for improving pupils' literacy skills are having a good impact, through the guided talk project for example. However, the time devoted to teaching literacy limits that available to other subjects such as design and technology and geography. The school has not looked at how language and literacy skills could be extended through such subjects whilst retaining the subject-specific content. The school's numeracy strategy is effective but as with literacy there is lack of cross-curricular focus to accelerating pupils' skills development. Pupils have a range of experiences in the creative and aesthetic and physical aspects of the curriculum. For example, work begun this term on 'The talking textiles' project based on Aesop's fables shows some good quality collages being created by infant pupils. Pastel drawings by Year 6 pupils in the style of various great artists are on display and are of sound quality. The school keeps a range of photographic albums in which it records pupils' sporting successes. All pupils in school have the opportunity to go swimming. For some, this is the only time they learn how to swim. Last year, 90 per cent of pupils in Year 6 met the required standard in swimming.
22. The accommodation is good and provides a bright, airy and attractively presented environment in which to explore the curriculum. Very little of pupils' work was on display during inspectors' time in school but this was to be expected so early in the new school year. The very pleasant courtyard gardens for quiet reflection has a significant impact on the school and represents a

very worthwhile partnership with a local company. The communal areas are well-used for small groups and for creative and practical work. Learning resources are good for most subject areas, and very good in science. The literacy resources have improved a great deal, especially in the two libraries which are a great asset. Reasonable use is made of the ICT suite to enable pupils to build up their computing skills but the opportunities for pupils to use ICT in other subjects are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for care, guidance and support is good overall. Staff are caring and supportive and place pupils' best interests at the centre of their work. Parents are very happy with the care shown to their children.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for health, safety and welfare are good.
- Child protection arrangements are in order.
- Induction procedures are very good.
- Staff know individual pupils well and ensure their needs are met.
- Pupils are respected and treated with patience.
- Personal development and achievements are monitored and supported well.
- The school's approach to seeking the views of pupils and taking appropriate action is satisfactory.

Commentary

23. Induction arrangements work very effectively in helping the youngest children and those new to school settle well. Health and safety aspects are well attended to and child protection procedures are good.
24. This is a strong emphasis on accepting all comers and doing the best for them in the light of their individual needs. The school rightly prides itself on the successes it has had with some pupils with significant emotional and behavioural problems who feel secure here. Pupils are happy with their school and are generally well motivated. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. All pupils are well known by the staff and have good, trusting relationships with them. Pupils are treated with respect, care and patience.
25. The monitoring of pupils' personal development and achievements is good, particularly those many pupils with individual education plans. The progress of individuals is carefully tracked. In their academic development, pupils receive good advice and support which helps most to achieve successfully.
26. The involvement of pupils in the work and development of the school is satisfactory, and the school council representatives for last year have laid the foundation for greater pupil participation in the future. The school seeks pupils' views through various activities, but these are not yet sufficiently formalised to give all pupils a sense of corporate social responsibility.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is satisfactory, and with other schools and the community is good. The school is genuine in its desire to promote a strong partnership with parents but there is more work needed to improve effectiveness to a good level. There is well-focussed attention paid to developing links with other stakeholders in an endeavour to widen the use of the school to support its community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most parents are positive about the quality of education being provided but some would like homework to be provided on a more systematic basis and some have concerns about communication.
- The quality of information for parents is sound overall though pupils' reports are very variable in what they include on standards and progress and this requires attention.
- The school is highly effective in reaching out to, and drawing in from its community to extend the opportunities for pupils.
- Links with other schools and colleges have a positive impact on pupils' achievements.

Commentary

27. The contribution of parents to pupils' learning both at home and school is satisfactory overall. The home visits undertaken by the Foundation Stage staff are successful in establishing a good working relationship between school and parents but this has yet to be fully capitalised upon. The school sends home well presented newsletters that contain helpful information; the prospectus and governors' annual report are useful publications. Some parents feel that other forms of communication do not work as well; particularly the late notice for meetings and the lack of follow through following concerns they raise. The school provides some opportunities for parents to attend events to widen their involvement in education, for example through 'Keeping up with the children' mathematics course and more recently the 'Introduction to ICT' but these attract few participants. The school has more success with community and local schools links. The local Beacon Science school is working actively to support raised standards in science and ICT and the partnership is widening to include design and technology next term. Visits to places such as local churches, temples and mosques help widen pupils' experiences of the ethnically diverse world they belong to and links with the library offer practical support for promoting reading skills. The school is a very active member of the Education Business Partnership. For example, a local project 'Regensis' is geared towards supporting community regeneration and has worked alongside the school in developing the garden area in school and providing play workers. Volunteers from local businesses support pupils' reading skills and the 'Fun with numbers' project. Such initiatives have a tangible impact on the quality of pupils' education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall

The headteacher has led the school through a period of instability with success. He has been effective in appointing key staff, significantly improving the accommodation and resources and ensuring that the school makes steady progress in improving the quality of education for pupils. The drive for raised standards moved up a gear with the appointment of the deputy headteacher twelve months ago. She brings curriculum management and expertise in assessment to the leadership partnership. The building blocks for improvement have been well made, and the school is poised to move forward, in improving its effectiveness at a good pace.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the school are good and are far more effective now than at the time of the previous inspection. The local education authority support has been good in building for this advancement.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a strong, effective partnership that is successful in moving the school forward. They must now inject more rigour in monitoring processes and look more critically at aspects of teaching and learning in pursuit of identifying and sharing best practice.

- The school has a supportive ethos and its commitment towards equality for all is impressively good.
- Strategic planning is good and is well linked to performance management systems and staff's professional development.
- The governing body generally fulfils its statutory duties well and provides sound support: the chair in particular has provided a high level of quality support over a long period of time.

Commentary

28. Overall the quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is good. Both senior managers not only have a clear vision of how they would like to see the school develop but they have put good systems in place to bring about improvement. Although relatively recently appointed, the deputy headteacher has proved to be a strong positive influence in moving the school forward. The senior management team is both dedicated and hard working. It provides good support and is totally committed to open and honest joint decision making. Indeed, all staff and governors have a shared sense of purpose and a genuine commitment towards making things better for pupils. Their successful approach towards promoting equality of opportunity for all individuals is a very good feature of provision. However, the management role of subject leaders is not yet sufficiently developed. Staffing instability has meant that many are new to their post. Despite being eager to improve standards, some do not yet have the skills necessary to fulfil their roles effectively. Leadership and management roles are not well defined in their existing job descriptions and this requires review.
29. Planning for future development is good. The school improvement plan provides a well-structured programme for raising standards. It takes careful account of cost implications within tight budget restrictions and defines clear guidelines for measuring success. The school's monitoring and evaluation systems are not yet of the same high standard, but there are encouraging signs that self-evaluation is moving in the right direction. Improvement in science achievement is a good example of how purposeful monitoring and evaluation is being used effectively to raise standards. The deputy headteacher has made an impressive contribution towards improving the monitoring and assessment of attainment, but knows there is further work to be done. Strong support from the local education authority link adviser has also played an important part in raising standards and is much appreciated by the school.
30. The governors who represent the multi-ethnic composition of the school make a purposeful contribution to the work of the school. The chair of governors has a very good working knowledge of the school and has a positive working relationship with the headteacher. The current governing body is well informed, organised and efficient. Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through regular updates from the headteacher and key subject leaders. However, governors' role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school is not yet sufficiently rigorous or challenging. The governors oversee the management of resources successfully and are alert to the principles of best value in their decision-making about finances. They have usefully considered what problems might arise in the face of the projected budget shortfall for 2003-2004 and have contingency plans in hand to ensure that key priorities are implemented.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	381,577	Balance from previous year	38,869
Total expenditure	361,546	Balance carried forward to the next	20,031
Expenditure per pupil	2620		

31. The headteacher has handled the implementation of performance management well. The staff's positive approach towards using agreed targets to improve provision has played a major part in enabling the school to move forward. The vast majority of teaching and non-teaching staff value highly the way in which they are given every opportunity to develop professionally. The school has good capacity to build for success in the future and provides sound value for money.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

10a The assessment of special educational needs.

The assessment of special educational needs is good overall.

Strengths and weaknesses

- There are good procedures to identify and assess the pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils need to be more involved in their assessments and in the setting of learning targets.

Commentary

32. Pupils' individual education plans contain short, achievable targets that are particularly effective as they build on pupils' strengths. Teachers, in conjunction with the special needs co-ordinator, write the plans, which are used in all lessons to ensure that work provided meets pupils' diverse needs. There are regular reviews for pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with statements. Parents are invited but few attend so the new education plans and targets are sent home. Pupils, who require support from external agencies such as the speech and language service, are identified quickly and the school works hard to ensure that pupils receive all available support.

10a Community Provision

Community provision is good overall.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a strong commitment to extending community provision and has made a good start.

Commentary

33. The school has a strong commitment to promoting the community dimension of education but does not receive any specific funding to support its provision. Good links have been forged with local businesses and community groups to support education. Many of these, for example the play leaders who organise activities at lunchtime, were initiated to have a direct bearing on the

quality of education. The play leader's aim is to support pupils' social skills development through team games and cooperative play and their input is proving positive. Business partnerships have resulted in volunteers supporting reading and mathematics activities and in this way supporting pupils' achievements. A local car manufacturer helped to build the new environmental area that many children use at break and lunchtime to sit in and relax. The school has been successful in securing funding from the 'Surestart' programme to provide a neighbourhood nursery on site by Spring next year. Governors intend to extend their work with the community by drawing up an action plan for the school's community use as part of the school improvement plan.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

At the time of the inspection the 14 children in the reception class that comprises the Foundation Stage were only in their second week of school and attending mornings only. The school currently has no nursery but has received funding to establish one under the *Surestart* programme in the Spring. The children currently in the Reception benefited from a good programme of induction for five weeks last term funded by the local education authority. The inspection found children's attainment on entry to the Reception year has improved, compared to that recorded in previous years. This is partly due to a change in the profile of the year group, and also reflects the positive effects of the part-time attendance mentioned earlier and very good induction since they started in September.

Last year the children's attainment on entry to school was well below expectations in all areas of learning. These children made steady progress during their reception year and have begun Year 1 with well below average attainment overall, particularly in communication, language and personal, social development aspects.

This year, the new children in reception show attainment on entry which is in line with expectations in personal, social, emotional, mathematical, creative and physical development, and attainment below expectations in communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The Foundation Stage staffing and the organisation has been changed this term. The Foundation Stage team are very confident in their role and are working as a cohesive team. The management of the Foundation Stage is good. There is a clear plan for future developments and good capacity for making provision even more effective. There are very strong indications that the children currently in the Foundation Stage are on course to reach the goals set for them.

Inspectors spent time evaluating the work completed last year by the current Year 1 pupils and also observed 8 lessons in the Foundation Stage reception class.

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good and a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision for children of all capabilities and backgrounds is supporting good achievement; particularly effective is the bi-lingual support for children who speak Panjabi at home.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good, with some very good features.
- A very good induction programme has helped the youngest children in school settle well.
- The staff team has secured very good involvement of parents in supporting their children.
- The curriculum is well planned and there is good provision in all areas of learning, however, access to outdoor equipment to further promote physical development is restricted and this requires attention.
- Good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is promoting good improvement.
- The good procedures for assessment are not yet used effectively to plan high levels of challenge for children of all capabilities, particularly in mathematical development and communication, language and literacy.
- The outdoor environment requires enrichment to further promote learning about the living world and to provide stimuli for creative development.

Commentary

Personal, social and emotional Development

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is good.

34. Achievement overall is good. Very good induction arrangements, which include home visits, parent meetings, part-time attendance and good systems for sharing information with parents and making assessments help the children make a confident start in school. Good teaching is promoting independence and co-operation well as children select and engage in meaningful play contexts. The very clear expectations for sharing and being considerate to others was well demonstrated during fruit time when the children chose the fruit they wanted to eat but checked with others first. Clear expectations for behaviour, courtesy and collaboration are calmly explained, and consistently demanded. As a result children demonstrate good self-esteem, even at this early stage in the term, and also show enthusiasm for their learning. Children and staff clearly enjoy each other's company and the positive ethos supports boys and girls of all capabilities very well. This is leading to good achievement in emotional development, independence and behaviour.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision for communication, language and literacy is good.

35. Children's achievement is good as a result of good teaching and learning. They show enthusiasm when sharing books and can talk about main events and characters in stories. They are beginning to read and write their names and recognise initial letters and sounds. Good teaching ensures children regularly engage in speaking, reading and writing activities in taught session and play contexts. They recognise rhyme and rhythm in words as they engage in singing and circle games, and regularly use the computer to create images.
36. Good use of assessment ensures the individual needs of children are well met. Children with English as an additional language are well supported, and consequently they demonstrate good confidence when speaking in English. Very good team work by the classroom assistant and teacher ensures children of all capabilities are individually supported, leading to good provision for children with special needs, and for those who are potentially high achieving.
37. The scrutiny of work completed in the previous year by reception children now in Year 1 and the school's assessment data indicates well below average standards of reading and writing by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning of sounds, letters and commonly used words clearly did not have a good enough impact on children's achievement. The school's assessment data show that reading skills were insufficiently developed. The school is well poised to remedy these shortcomings so that the current reception children benefit from the good teaching observed during the inspection.

Mathematical Development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

38. Children show satisfactory achievement at this stage in the year, and real enthusiasm for mathematical activities. Good teaching is characterised by good planning, assessment and good use of resources. Children use dice and giant dominoes to identify numbers and to count. In play contexts, songs and rhymes children are encourage to count, compare size and name shapes for meaningful purposes. Careful consideration has been given to the potential of play and learning resources for mathematical development in curriculum planning and this is a positive feature that is supporting good progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

39. Achievement is satisfactory at this early stage in the year. Key features of the good teaching and learning are the regular conversations between children and staff, in which children are encouraged to describe their experiences and observations. This promotes learning well, particularly the acquisition of new vocabulary. For example, when describing the journey to school children used words such as 'left, right, near, over and far'
40. There are well-planned opportunities for a regular walk within the school grounds and beyond, for example to the post office and shops that children gain a great deal from. They describe their route to school, and their homes, using photographs taken on home visits as a starting point. Good use is made of ICT to promote learning, and children show confidence as they use computers. Good long term planning ensures effective curriculum coverage of knowledge and understanding of the world, using a range of short topics to promote learning about living things, exploring the world through their senses, places, cultures and beliefs. The outdoor environment is regularly used as an outdoor classroom, but there is potential to enrich this area in order to give pupils the opportunity to enjoy more sensory experiences, observations and exploration.

Physical Development

Provision in physical development is satisfactory

41. Achievement is satisfactory. Children have access to an outdoor area throughout each session. Unfortunately, this outdoor area only offers opportunities for low level balancing, and the development of fine control of tools and materials. Currently children have no frequent access to a designated area for climbing, riding, running, sliding and swinging. Twice a week the hall is used for physical development, and there are plans to share a new outdoor area when the *Surestart* - neighbourhood nursery is built. The school field and playground are regularly used for circle games, led by the nursery nurse, during playtimes. Teaching and learning of physical development is satisfactory, with the potential to improve when better facilities are established.

Creative Development

Provision in creative development is good.

42. Children show satisfactory achievement as they engage in imaginative play in the home corner and with play people and animals in their small world play. They sing very enthusiastically, and are keen to listen independently to song tapes. They are encouraged to choose art materials from a well-organised and accessible range, and they paint with confidence and enjoyment. Regular opportunities to build and construct with malleable materials and construction toys also promotes creativity well. Teaching and learning is good. A particular strength is the range and accessibility of materials for creative responses, and the positive encouragement children receive as they work. This area of learning could be further promoted, however, by offering children more tactile and visual stimuli for creativity. These might include natural materials, photographs, artefacts and living things.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Year 2 pupils attain low results in reading in national tests and this needs attention.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in Year 6 is rising.
- Increased opportunities for speaking and listening activities are having a positive impact on the achievement of some pupils but more pupils need targeting.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who do not have English as their first language, achieve well as they have good support.
- Some teachers are more successful than others at encouraging pupils to develop good oracy skills.
- Assessment information is not used effectively to plan pupils' future learning.
-
- There are insufficient planned opportunities to improve pupils' writing in other subjects or to use ICT to help with presenting work in English.

Commentary

43. Standards in English are well below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have fluctuated since the last inspection, but have improved in recent years, particularly in writing and in the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the higher levels in national tests.
44. From a low starting point on entry to the school, all pupils achieve satisfactorily. The achievement of the pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good because of well organised support in literacy lessons.
45. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well below average. The school has recently introduced good procedures to improve pupils' speaking skills, which include discussions in small groups with an adult. These strategies have yet to have an impact on many pupils, who find communication very difficult and lack confidence when expressing opinions. In addition, some teachers are more successful than others at getting pupils to give thoughtful answers to questions. In a Year 4 literacy lesson the teacher skilfully encouraged all pupils to describe the main character in a text ensuring they understood specific vocabulary such as 'matted hair.'
46. Standards in reading are well below average overall but are improving in the juniors. By the time the pupils leave the infants, standards vary considerably. The higher attainers read reasonably fluently and refer to the text when retelling a story. The lower attainers are more dependent on picture clues when recounting a story. Most pupils are gaining confidence in reading but very few can make simple predictions confidently. A small number of junior pupils are just beginning to make inferences and identify key features in stories, too many others lack enthusiasm for reading, which is consequently hesitant and with little expression. Very few read for pleasure and find it difficult to compare authors and their styles. Whilst some parents listen to their children read regularly, many are not as supportive, which inhibits some pupils' learning.
47. Writing is a key area for development. Standards are well below average in the infants and the juniors. Higher attaining pupils in the juniors are reaching the appropriate level in national tests. Infant pupils have poor spelling and find forming letters neatly difficult. Whilst higher attaining Year 2 pupils use capital letters and full stops correctly, they are not always challenged to create more detailed sentences. In the juniors, the levels of challenge for all pupils, including

those with special educational needs, are higher, especially in Year 6 and Year 4. Whilst many pupils' handwriting shows good progress in handwriting books, these skills are not always transferred to other work, and this often results in poor presentation. The range of writing is good, for instance, pupils write poetry, reports and instructions, but there are too few planned opportunities for writing skills to be developed in other subjects. The use of ICT is rather mixed. Year 6 pupils were observed to use word processing successfully to publish and edit their autobiographies but such experiences are not consistently provided.

48. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Where it is good it is because teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations regarding presentation, spelling, handwriting and content. This is successfully conveyed to the pupils who try even harder with their English work. On the whole, teachers match work appropriately to pupils' different ability levels. This is particularly true of pupils with learning difficulties, and to a lesser extent those capable of high level achievements.
49. The school is fully aware of the shortcomings in English and has amassed a considerable amount of assessment information. This needs to be used more effectively to target groups of pupils to raise their attainment in all aspects of English. The school has taken significant steps to improve pupils' attitudes to learning and are now well placed to improve the quality of reading, speaking and writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. The school has recently introduced strategies to develop pupils' language skills in all subjects. These have yet to impact on pupils' attainment and confidence in communicating. Some staff use questioning effectively, so that pupils have to give thoughtful answers and not merely reply 'yes' or 'no.' Others are not so successful and on some occasions, a few pupils do not speak for the entire lesson. There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects. Some teachers overuse worksheets in subjects such as history and geography

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below the national average.
- Weak problem solving and basic numeracy skills often hinder progress.
- The school exceeded its targets in the 2003 national tests.
- Leadership and management of mathematics are good
- Recent improvements in assessment procedures and performance data analysis have given a more accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses.
- There is an inconsistent approach towards developing pupils' numeracy skills and this requires more attention if pupils are to work both speedily and accurately.
- Teaching assistants provide high quality support to slower learners so that they achieve well.
- Higher attaining pupils do not always make sufficient progress in lessons when work is not demanding enough.

Commentary

51. Despite standards being well below national averages in the 2003 tests, the school exceeded its targets and, overall, both infant and junior pupils achieved satisfactorily. The provision in mathematics is satisfactory but is currently meeting the needs of lower and average attaining pupils better than the higher attaining mathematicians overall. There are encouraging signs that standards are on an upward trend and the school is well placed to achieve greater

success in future years. It has set very challenging targets for Year 6 in 2004 that reflect well on its ambitions to drive forward improvement in the provision for mathematics.

52. The school has rightly identified the urgent need to develop pupils' mental and problem solving skills. These are particularly weak areas. In many lessons, pupils' slow mental recall and inability to devise strategies for working out answers hinder progress. By Year 6, pupils understand how to multiply by partitioning numbers, but they struggle because they do not know their tables and have little confidence when working with large numbers. In Year 3, some higher attaining pupils become confused when they are asked to work out an answer in a different way from the method they have been taught. There are, however, optimistic signs that the school is addressing the problem. In the infants, greater emphasis is starting to be placed on making pupils think for themselves and developing numeracy skills right from the start.
53. Evidence from previous work shows that pupils have made uneven progress in the past. Staffing instability has been a key adverse factor and pupils who have been in classes where teaching has been weak or disrupted have made noticeably less progress. Improved stability is allowing current pupils to achieve more consistently throughout the school.
54. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, in Years 3 and 4, pupils make better progress because they are taught well. In these two year groups, teachers transmit their enthusiasm for the subject and activities capture pupils' interest. Class teachers and teaching assistants work well together as a team. Expectations are high and pupils' work is of a noticeably better standard than in other classes. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were highly motivated by the dart board game. Their addition skills improved swiftly. In the group-work part of a Year 4 lesson, pupils made good progress because both members of staff focused very effectively on improving skills. In some other lessons, however, pupils with special educational needs and those of average capability often make progress at the expense of higher attaining pupils, who do not always receive enough to motivate or challenge them. All too often, pupils of all capabilities sit passively and are reticent to answer or lack confidence when explaining their work.
55. Strong subject leadership has successfully moved the subject forward and there is good capacity for further improvement. Greater precision in the analysis of test results and better evaluation of strengths and weaknesses has started to impact positively. Targets for pupils are developing well and new initiatives give far more precise detail about progress than in the past. Lesson observations by managers have also gone some way towards identifying strengths and weaknesses in teaching, but do not focus with enough rigour on identifying the standards achieved or the rate of progress of different abilities. ICT does not yet make a good enough contribution to pupils' learning. In addition, the school knows it has to develop greater consistency in the quality and quantity of work produced if individual pupils are to make swift progress from a below average academic starting point.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. The basic skills of numeracy are satisfactorily taught in all classes. However, more focus is required on enabling pupils' more opportunities to use their wider mathematical skills. For example, although there is use of bar graphs and tally charts in science topics, such opportunities are not yet developed sufficiently well across the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Science is an improving subject because of influential leadership and good support from specialist teaching from the local Beacon Science School.
- Good teaching is driving good learning in the juniors
- Good guidance has been provided for planning and assessment and this is having a positive impact on supporting more effective teaching.
- The school identifies using the established good assessment procedures to ensure the planned work challenges all pupils to progress further.
- The subject leader has undertaken some monitoring of teaching in order to identify good practice and promote this more widely but more remains to be done.

Commentary

57. At the time of the last inspection, in 2001, national tests showed that standards were well below national expectations for eleven year olds. The trend in standards is rising. The 2003 national tests, and the findings of the inspection, show standards in Year 6 are now below national expectations. Based on the standards attained by these pupils in Year 2, this shows good achievement. In infant years standards have also improved since the last inspection, from well below to below average and pupils show satisfactory achievement in lessons.
58. Teachers in all years have adopted the approach, promoted by the subject leader, of teaching science through practical and investigative activities. This was found to be a weakness at the time of the last inspection, and now has a clear focus in teachers' planning. As a result pupils are developing a secure understanding of living things, materials, electricity, light and sound. They use their knowledge to predict what might happen and to explain why things occur.
59. The observed teaching in Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory. In a Year 2 lesson on the senses pupils responded enthusiastically as they explored their sense of touch, hearing, taste and smell. However, the recording of this activity lacked clarity of purpose and consequently pupils applied little effort when recording. The scrutiny of previously completed work, shows good teaching and learning of all aspects of the science curriculum in the infants.
60. Thorough planning and effective use of learning resources exemplify good teaching in Years 3-6. This provides a stimulating range of experiences. For example, when studying the human skeleton pupils made observations of real bones as they responded to challenging questioning such as *'Why might the bones have bumps? Yes, where the muscles were attached.'* Teachers use meaningful contexts for learning about scientific ideas. For example, during a lesson on solutions pupils devised ways to separate salt, sand and paint from water.
61. The curriculum is totally inclusive of all pupils, including those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils in all ability groups are well supported, and the vast majority show good concentration and positive attitudes to their learning. For example, in Year 6 pupils worked very productively as they planned and implemented their own scientific investigation. However, in all year groups the recording of work and independent research is hampered by weak literacy and numeracy skills. In the completed work and the lessons observed there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support learning in science, including missed opportunities for research, handling data and recording findings
62. The subject leader provides good leadership and management by ensuring each unit of work is well resourced and by giving clear and effective guidance for curriculum planning and assessment. Teachers' subject knowledge has been supported through the involvement of a

specialist teacher from a local beacon school, and whole school science weeks. Currently there are no strategies in place for enabling the monitoring of teaching and learning by observing lessons or by carrying out a scrutiny of pupils' work and this is a shortcoming.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory overall

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The serious weaknesses in ICT reported by the previous inspection have been eradicated.
- A new ICT suite has been provided and standards show improvement although they remain below average.
- Extensive training for teachers and all teaching support staff with support from a local Beacon school is having a good impact on learning in ICT.
- Pupils show respect and enthusiasm for ICT and are willing to apply themselves diligently to making up for lost learning in the past.
- The school, under the leadership of a confident post-holder is now well poised to raise achievement and improve standards in ICT.
- The remaining chief weakness in provision is the patchy use of ICT to support learning across the curriculum.

Commentary

63. Achievement is satisfactory overall, showing good improvement since the last inspection. All pupils have access to a well-equipped ICT suite and the computer in each classroom. The ratio of 1 computer to 6 pupils is above the national recommendation. Some pupils take advantage of extra curricular opportunities, either by attending the school computer club or through home use. Only a quarter of pupils have a computer at home and this is relatively low. Pupils demonstrate confidence and a willingness to explore when using ICT, and their behaviour is consistently very good. Pupils have equal access to ICT experiences in school, and very good levels of support are offered to all groups of pupils in ICT lessons. This is promoted well by teaching assistants, who have been included in the ICT staff training that was completed last term.
64. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Work saved from last year shows the range of work covered and indicates all strands of the subject are being covered. The school has just purchased control resources to enable in house teaching to take place. Last year, pupils spent time at a local technology centre to gain experience in this aspect of ICT. During the inspection pupils in Year 2 responded very confidently and enthusiastically when learning how to log on, open *Textease*, the word-processing software and save their work. In earlier work, infant pupils used ICT to design a coat for Joseph and they have used text and images to record information. These are worthwhile experiences but lack breadth and depth and this limits higher achievement.
65. Pupils in Year 3 have designed posters for a disco and word-processed instructions to make a mask. In Year 4 pupils have set up databases for handling census information as part of their history topic. They have used software to investigate two and three-dimensional shapes and to paint pictures of winter scenes. Pupils in Year 5 have used data logging equipment to investigate variation in light levels over time. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils in Year 5 listened attentively and showed good independence when creating a database of café bills. Work in Year 6 includes word processing, pamphlet design, looking at sensors. There is little evidence of pupils using ICT for research or exchanging information, however. Year 6 work is very heavily reliant on photocopied resources and work presented in pupils' books shows very little sign of either positive or developmental marking.

66. The implementation of the ICT action plan has been well managed by the headteacher. This has involved equipping an ICT room, providing training, and drawing on additional expertise through weekly support from the local beacon school. The beacon school ICT specialist has offered teachers regular opportunities to observe teaching. These initiatives have improved teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. A recently appointed subject leader has acknowledged the need to provide clearer support and guidance for teachers on making regular and accurate assessments, linked to the scheme of work so that teachers can ensure their planning builds on previous learning, and ensures appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The use of ICT to support learning in numeracy, literacy, science and other subjects such as history or geography is very limited and is a weakness.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a clear understanding of the world's major religions.
- Pupils know about the main festivals and celebrations of the major faiths and this helps them appreciate the beliefs and values of those different from their own.
- Teachers have appropriate subject knowledge and make effective use of the agreed syllabus to plan effective lessons.
- Many infant pupils struggle to record work due to weak literacy skills.
- Very little use is made of ICT to support work in religious education.

Commentary

68. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected at ages seven and eleven. They are similar to those reported in the last inspection. The school places due emphasis on teaching and learning about Christianity as well as other major world faiths. Infant pupils learn about the life of Jesus during the festivals of Christmas and Easter. They experience difficulty when recording their work as they have problems with spelling and writing. They enjoy practical experiences such as visits to the local Church. Older pupils have been taught about Sikhism and Judaism and have visited a gurdwara and a synagogue. A Diwali workshop provided a very good opportunity for all pupils to develop an understanding and respect for Hindu beliefs. Pupils enjoyed story telling, making mehndi and rangoli patterns and cooking barfi. Year 6 pupils performed a dandia dance and gained useful insights into a key part of Asian culture.
69. Teaching in the few lessons observed was satisfactory and there was an appropriate range of recorded work in pupils' books. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning in the subject remains unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Religious education is now taught to all year groups, which was not the case at the time of the previous inspection. New books and resources have been purchased and are supporting positively the development of knowledge and understanding. The subject leader is new to the post this term and is beginning to identify priorities for development by auditing the quality of provision, she has usefully started by checking on the effectiveness of teachers' planning.

Geography and History

Provision in geography and history is broadly satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- History work is of a better standard than geography work; more is covered and recorded in pupils' books.
- Pupils in mixed aged classes receive the same work in geography and this caps better achievement, particularly for higher attainers.
- Work provided in history and geography is not always matched to pupils' different abilities and too many worksheets are used.
- Work scrutiny indicates that last year's Year 6 pupils made accelerated progress in geography and history due to good teaching.

Commentary

70. Standards in history are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6 but are below average in geography. This is a similar picture to the standards found at the time of the last inspection. Judgements are based on analysis of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers, examining teachers' planning and a single lesson observation in history.
71. In history, infant pupils have studied the Great Fire of London, whilst junior pupils have a secure understanding of the Tudors, Vikings, and the Greeks. Difficulties with spellings, handwriting and weak presentation impede pupils' written work and detract from the standards being attained. Some use is made of the Internet to research historical events but the use of ICT could be extended further. In a lesson observed, year 3 pupils were enthralled when their teacher entered the class dressed as a Roman soldier! This was a very good introduction to their studies as they were captivated and entirely believed his persona as 'Maximus' The whole class listened with total absorption as he regaled them with full details about his family, career and experiences as an officer in the Roman army. Pupils' questions were pertinent and well thought through as they enquired with curiosity about his life. A scrutiny of last year's Year 6 work indicates that pupils made good progress in history in terms of their knowledge and understanding of the Greeks. Higher attaining pupils produced impressive and carefully presented books describing the 'Labours of Herakles.'
72. Geography planning shows reasonable coverage of the full geography curriculum. The scrutiny of a sample of work provided by the school indicates that infant pupils have completed very little work in geography and Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are given exactly the same work, which limits overall achievement. Year 3 and 4 pupils also have the same curriculum in geography and teachers' marking is cursory and does not show how pupils can improve their work. Work is of higher standard in the Year 5 work sample. Pupils have researched 'rubbish in the classroom' and have recorded their findings in their own words, thereby developing their literacy skills. Pupils told inspectors they enjoy the subject and work shows secure knowledge of physical and human features of different places by Year 6. Older pupils' work on rivers shows that they have carried out effective independent research and their neat and careful presentation indicates high expectations on the part of the teacher. Although the school offers worthwhile experiences in geography, they are not sufficiently planned to ensure that pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills development is systematic and incremental. The status of geography in the school's improvement plan is not strong enough for standards to be raised further without a more concerted effort.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music

Provision in music is good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- By the end of the Year 6 pupils achieve average standards.
- The decision to use high quality music specialist teaching has been a wise move. It has ensured all pupils receive a worthwhile experience.
- Good quality concerts and performances enhance provision well.
- The quality of singing in assemblies is disappointing.

Commentary

73. The school has taken very effective steps to rectify the weaknesses identified in the previous report. Music has a much higher profile than in the past and is regarded as an important part of school life. The part-time music specialist gives pupils an exciting range of enjoyable activities that successfully ensures steady progress and the systematic development of skills. The well-organised curriculum provides balanced coverage.
74. By the time they leave, most Year 6 pupils reach average standards. Every pupil has the opportunity to participate in school concerts and productions. Carol concerts take place in the local church and make a good contribution to the strong community links of the school. Parents enjoy being invited to concerts such as the recent 'First Kid in Space' production. The school rightly regards such occasions as good social events that bring success and instil confidence. Design and technology skills are put to good use before these productions, when pupils are involved in making costumes. Music is well promoted through other interesting initiatives, such as multi-cultural festivals and the local Arts Festival. A small number of pupils receive steel pan and recorder tuition.
75. It is not possible to make a judgement on standards in the infants because no music was observed being taught or learnt. In the juniors, standards have improved because teaching is of a consistently high quality and pupils of all abilities make swift progress. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the specialist teacher used the vocabulary of music very effectively as she tackled an ambitious lesson on building up various rhythmic patterns. Pupils used an interesting range of good quality instruments. They responded with maturity, answered questions knowledgeably and were proud of their success. Higher attaining pupils rose to the challenge of the lesson well.
76. The subject leader, who has recently taken over responsibility for music, has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. She is aware of the need to promote singing more purposefully in order to achieve higher standards. So far she has had limited time to observe teaching and learning in all classes on which to gain deeper insights into provision. The whole school is involved in the 'Feel the Buzz' choral singing initiative later in the term. Currently, there is no pianist to accompany singing in assemblies and its quality has suffered. Many class teachers feel insecure with the subject. They gain greater confidence by observing the good practice of an accomplished specialist practitioner as part of their professional development. They also put the observation time to good use by assessing pupils' progress during the lesson.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The current curriculum meets statutory requirements and provision has improved since the school was last inspected.
- Standards remain below average at the end of Years 2 and 6 because pupils do not make sufficient progress in developing skills, evaluating or refining their work.
- Pupils do not use a wide enough range of tools and materials.

Commentary

77. Based on a small sample of work from the previous academic year, it is possible to judge that, although standards are rising, both infant and junior pupils are not yet achieving average standards. There is greater continuity and many isolated examples of good quality labelled designs and evaluations. Infant pupils demonstrate good skills in designing wheeled vehicles and display a developing grasp of the subject in detailed evaluations of their work. Older junior pupils link their work well to other subjects, such as topics on the Tudors or the Ancient Greeks. However, there is wide variation in the quality and quantity of work produced. A small amount of work is presented with pride and care, but much lacks refinement and maturity. When pupils of different ages complete the same topic, there is very little to distinguish between the work of older and younger pupils. Coverage of some topics is superficial and pupils do not use a wide enough range of tools and materials to develop skills sufficiently. Evaluation is not yet a strong feature of pupils' work in some year groups.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision for personal, social and health education is good.

- The school is a racially harmonious community in which all pupils are given equal status and show tolerance and respect for one another.
- Pupils are making gains in their knowledge about how to keep healthy because of the school's good approaches.
- Governors have yet to formally approve the sex education policy being implemented.

78. Personal, social and health education is well provided for, though the sex and relationships policy being implemented has yet to be formally approved by the governing body. The school is a racially harmonious community in which all pupils are given equal status. This does not come about by chance but because of the very good role-models provided by staff and governors who between them reflect all of the ethnic backgrounds of pupils. The school pays good attention to health awareness aspects. Younger pupils benefit from fruit provided daily and are learning about the need for a good diet to keep them healthy and mentally alert. As well as class discussions and visiting speakers, pupils learn from role-play and benefit from the skilful lead and very good role-models provided by staff. The headteacher's leadership in improving the relationships and behaviour in school can be seen to have good impact on the way in which pupils relate to one another, show tolerance and respect for views different from their own. The problems with unsociable behaviour in the past have all been rectified because of the schools' strong commitment to pupils' personal and social development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
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	3
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	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7) When judging standards- 1 is very high, 2 - well above average; 3 – above average; 4 – average;

5 – below average; 6 – well below average; 7-very low.