

INSPECTION REPORT

LEA CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lea, Ross-on-Wye

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116892

Headteacher: Mr C Howard

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th March 2004

Inspection number: 256712

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	72
School address:	Lea Ross-on-Wye Herefordshire
Postcode:	HR9 7JY
Telephone number:	01989 750296
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Watson
Date of previous inspection:	1 st June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

There are 72 pupils on roll. They are taught in four classes. All are of white British origin except one child who is from a mixed background. All of the pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Two pupils have statements.

The school is set in a rural location, with pupils coming from very diverse backgrounds. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is above the national average at almost a third. The school population is stable with little inward mobility. When they start school the pupils' attainment is wide ranging but taken overall it is well below average.

The school has Investor in People status, an Artsmark Gold, an Activemark, and the FA Charter standard for schools. It received an achievement award for 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Christopher Parker	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education, special educational needs
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	English, art and design, history, geography, music, Foundation Stage

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good and effective school**. The pupils do well because the teaching is good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and manages the school very effectively. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher leads the school very effectively
- The teaching is generally good, and very good in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6
- The pupils achieve well and make good progress
- The curriculum is very rich, well planned, lively and interesting
- There are strong links with the parents, the community and other schools
- The school's ethos is caring and inclusive
- The teaching assistants provide very good support, particularly for the pupils with special educational needs.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The provision for, and standards in, ICT have improved significantly and are now above average, assessment is used effectively and the pupils with special educational needs are now very well supported. The school has succeeded in making improvements in standards in writing, but they are not yet as high as they should be.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	B	C	A
mathematics	D	A*	C	A
science	D	B	C	A

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.

Overall, **the pupils are achieving well**. The numbers are small in most year groups and, consequently, the data should be viewed with some caution. However, it illustrates very well the particularly good progress made by the pupils between Year 2 and Year 6. When the pupils first start school their attainment, although diverse, is well below average overall and many pupils have quite poor communication skills. They do very well and make very good progress, but fewer children than usual reach the goals set for the end of the reception year.

At the end of Year 2, standards are below, and sometimes well below, average. In 2003, the results were below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. When compared to similar schools, they were average in reading and mathematics, but well below average in writing. Currently, standards in Year 2 are below average in both English and mathematics. Although the pupils listen carefully, many do not reach the expected level in speaking. The rate of improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend at the end of Year 2.

The results at the end of Year 6 have improved at a rate that is above the national average. In 2003, the results in all subjects were average. This was a fall on the previous year, but an analysis of the results in comparison with the pupils' prior attainment shows that they have achieved very well. This is further borne out by the fact that the results were well above average in comparison with schools where pupils had similar results at the end of Year 2. Furthermore, the value added measures are well above average. This is reflected in the pupils' work and in lessons. The solid foundations laid in Years 1 and 2 is built on effectively in Years 3 and 4 and exploited fully in Years 5 and 6 so that the

pupils' progress accelerates as their range of skills and knowledge grows. Currently, standards are average in English, but above average in mathematics and science.

The **pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural attributes, are extended effectively.** The pupils respond well to the interesting range of activities the school offers. Most of them behave well and those who have behavioural difficulties are managed effectively by their teachers and well supported by the teaching assistants. Relationships are good throughout the school. The attendance rates are below the national average because of the poor attendance patterns of children from a small number of families.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is good.** The teaching in the Foundation Stage is imaginative and very effective and in Years 5 and 6 it is stimulating, lively and purposeful. The more able pupils are challenged and those with special educational needs well supported. Overall, **the quality of teaching is good.** The teaching assistants provide very good support for learning. Pupils' work is thoroughly marked and their progress is assessed effectively.

The curriculum is very broad, well planned and presented through a programme of interesting activities. The use of first hand experiences effectively stimulates pupils' learning and the range of extra-curricular activities considerably enriches their experiences. The school's resources are satisfactory overall, but the present accommodation is poor.

The school has a very caring and inclusive ethos. The provision for the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The very good support, advice and guidance given to the pupils are based on close monitoring of their achievement. The school's links with parents, the local community and schools are very good. The parents receive very good information about the curriculum and excellent newsletters. There are very good links with other schools and the pupils are very well prepared for transition to secondary education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The governors shape the work of the school very effectively. The headteacher's very effective leadership coupled with his enthusiasm and commitment to engaging the pupils in productive activities are the key to the school's success. He not only manages the school effectively, with the aid of very efficient administrative support, but also leads the teaching team by providing a very good example of classroom practice.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are highly satisfied with the work of the school and are pleased with the progress their children are making. The pupils like school and feel that members of the staff value their views. Their say in the life of the school is demonstrated well in the contribution that the school council makes. The pupils' feel their views are represented very well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school should continue to implement its comprehensive development plan paying particular attention to:

- raising further the standards in speaking and writing

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The pupils are achieving well. Standards are below average at the end of Year 2, but above average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The oldest are making particularly good progress
- Standards in mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6
- Standards in speaking and writing are average but not as high as they should be

Commentary

1. The cohorts are small in most year groups and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. The data should be viewed with some caution, but over time it shows improvements both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. It also illustrates very well the particularly good achievement made by the pupils between Year 2 and Year 6.
2. When the pupils first start school, their attainment is diverse, but well below average overall and many pupils have quite poor communication skills. They make very good progress, but fewer children than usual reach the goals set for the end of the reception year.
3. At the end of Year 2, standards are below, and sometimes well below, average. In 2003, the results were below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. However, they were an improvement on 2002. When compared to similar schools, they were average in reading and mathematics, but well below average in writing. Currently, standards in Year 2 are below average in both English and mathematics, but the pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Although the pupils listen carefully, many do not reach the expected level in speaking. The school has rightly identified weaknesses in speaking and writing as areas for improvement and is continuing to work to raise standards.
4. The boys have done better than girls over the last few years. They have attained broadly similar results to the national average for boys whereas girls' results have been somewhat below the national average for girls. This is a reflection of the small and sometimes uneven numbers of boys and girls rather than any variation in the provision made for the pupils. The rate of improvement has been broadly in line with the national trend at the end of Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8(14.4)	15.7(15.8)
writing	12.5(13.0)	14.6(14.4)
mathematics	15.6(13.3)	16.3(16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. The results at the end of Year 6 have improved at a rate that is above the national average. In 2003, the results in all subjects were average. This was a fall on the previous year, but an analysis of the results in comparison with the pupils' prior attainment shows that they have achieved very well. The results were well above average in comparison with schools where pupils had similar results at the end of Year 2. The value-added measures are also well above

average. This is reflected in the pupils' work and in lessons. The solid foundations that are laid in Years 1 and 2 are built on effectively in Years 3 and 4 and exploited fully in Years 5 and 6 so that the pupils' progress accelerates as their range of skills and knowledge grows. Currently, standards are average in English, but above average in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0(28.2)	26.8(27.0)
mathematics	26.5(30.0)	26.8(26.7)
science	29.0(29.2)	28.6(28.3)

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

6. In response to the last inspection report, improvements have been achieved in writing, but standards are not yet as high as they should be. However, in information and communication technology (ICT) improvements have resulted in widespread use of ICT across the curriculum and above average standards being attained by the end of Year 6.
7. The parents are very happy with the progress the pupils are making. They consider that their children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and that all age groups are acquiring a wide range of skills. They identified the work that children do in art as particularly pleasing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good. However, the attendance rate is below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils respond well to the interesting range of activities the school offers
- Relationships are good
- Most of the pupils behave well, and those who have behavioural difficulties are managed effectively.

Commentary

8. The pupils enjoy their time in school and the older pupils, in particular, involve themselves enthusiastically because of the good level of challenge and interest in the activities planned for them. They settle quickly into productive work at the start of the day and are eager to please and help their teachers because of the very positive relationships that all members of the staff establish with them. Almost all parents answering the pre-inspection questionnaire reported that their children like school, are expected to work hard and are encouraged to become mature and independent. The effectiveness and success of the school's provision are evident in the maturity and confidence of many of the older pupils.
9. The pupils behave well in school because all members of the staff have high expectations of them and the routines are clear and very well understood. The older pupils feel trusted to do things on their own and are given many opportunities to take responsibility. The school procedures are based on positive relationships with members of staff and are very successful. They are applied consistently so that the pupils feel encouraged to be helpful and supportive. They particularly enjoy being awarded a brick to add to the "wall of successes" displayed in the entrance hall. There have been no exclusions.

10. The school has well established procedures for dealing with pupils who start school with behavioural problems. Although some younger pupils can be unsettled and restless the older pupils concentrate well on their work. A few parents expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying, but in discussions the pupils said that they have no concerns about the behaviour of others and feel safe in school. The teachers deal promptly with any misbehaviour and the teaching assistants give the pupils very good support to ensure they remain engaged purposefully in their work.
11. The provision for the pupils' personal development is good. The pupils are involved in the life of the school through the school council, which functions very effectively. There is also peer support at break times and a designated friendship bench that ensures that everyone is involved in games at playtimes. The assemblies and the lessons on personal, social and health education equip the pupils with positive personal values of right and wrong and help them to establish good social relationships. The teachers also take good opportunities to raise the pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness during various lessons. This is particularly the case in art and design where the pupils learn to appreciate the work of famous artists, such as, Kandinsky.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

12. The attendance rates are below the national average because of the poor attendance patterns of children from a small number of families. These parents do not recognise the importance of regular and prompt attendance for their children. The good monitoring systems employed by the school ensure the identification of these families, thereby enabling good follow up and support to be provided. Good promotion of attendance results in the majority of pupils attending school regularly and promptly. There are virtually no cases of unauthorised absences.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

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

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good and assessment is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in the Foundation Stage is imaginative and very effective
- The teaching of the oldest pupils is stimulating, lively and purposeful
- The pupils' progress is assessed effectively and the results are used well to set targets
- The teaching assistants provide very good support for learning.

Commentary

13. The teaching is effective in ensuring that the pupils continue to progress and achieve well as they move through the school. They make a very good start in the Foundation Stage where the teacher and the teaching assistant support their personal and social development very well. They make very good progress because of the extensive range of well-planned activities, some directed by the teacher and others chosen by the children themselves.

14. The children continue to make steady progress through Years 1 and 2 where they learn and achieve satisfactorily. They make gains in their numeracy and literacy skills because the teaching is well focussed on these key areas. The teaching in Years 3 and 4 builds effectively on the pupils' skills and knowledge. Here the lessons are consistently well planned, the approach is rigorous and the pupils gain confidence and engage fully in their tasks. This was evident, for example, as they discussed an experiment to find out what effect a range of drinks might have on calcium.
15. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching is consistently very good. The lessons are stimulating and interesting often drawing on issues which the pupils are keen to investigate, such as the use of mobile telephones or the production of a presentation on the events in school on world book day. The lessons have relevance and good pace, and the pupils are continually involved. The tasks are very carefully modified to suit the diverse abilities with the class so that the most able pupils are stretched and those with special educational needs are fully supported.
16. The teaching assistants play a very effective role in all classes. They show considerable commitment and skill in supporting the learning in lessons. For example, in a design and technology lesson in Years 5 and 6, the teaching assistant had prepared a series of examples of different stitches that the pupils might use in making the slippers they had designed.
17. The pupils' work is thoroughly marked and their knowledge and skills assessed. The teachers use the information they gain from assessment to plan tasks with the right amount of challenge for the pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	7	7	3			

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is very broad, balanced and interesting for the pupils. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very well planned and implemented. Overall, the school's resources are satisfactory, but the present accommodation is poor.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned and presented through a programme of interesting activities.
- The use of first hand experiences is very relevant to the pupils' learning.
- The range of extracurricular activities considerably enriches the pupils' experiences.

Commentary

18. The curriculum has continued to improve on the good position found at the previous inspection. The range of very interesting, enquiry-based activities has continued to grow, and the provision for the arts has gone from strength to strength. This is because the approach to curriculum planning has been critically evaluated to ensure that comparatively recent national guidance has a strong influence on the topics taught. The topics themselves have a good influence on the pupils' learning because they are delivered in a lively way.
19. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very well planned and ensures that the children make very good progress. During a cooking activity, for example, the children learned a range

of new vocabulary. They shared equipment and helped each other, showing that they were developing good social as well as language and scientific skills through a very well chosen activity. The pupils with special educational needs are well catered for because the teachers and teaching assistants know them very well and plan appropriate levels of work. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are comprehensively implemented so that over time, the pupils acquire a firm foundation in these basic skills.

20. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support many areas of learning is now very effective. For example, the younger pupils use ICT to support work in language and numeracy, and the older pupils use the Internet to increase their knowledge in art, history and geography.
21. One of the strengths of the curriculum is the use of the community and local area to enrich the pupils' experiences. A survey of traffic patterns in a local town was very skilfully used to provide the pupils with practice in developing their interview skills and then in collating and presenting their findings. The local church has been a resource in many different ways and has inspired the production of a beautiful wall hanging. There is a French club run by 'Le Club Francais' and members of the community participate in sewing activities with the pupils.
22. The teachers and support staff are well qualified. The classrooms are attractively presented and used well to celebrate the pupils' work. However, the accommodation is poor, albeit well organised. This is soon to be rectified by the move to the new building, together with the additional resources the school have budgeted for.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The school's close monitoring of the pupils' achievements enables the staff to provide the children with very good support, advice and guidance

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a very caring and inclusive ethos
- The pupils are very well supported by the teaching assistants
- The school involves the pupils well by seeking and acting on their views
- The pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, are very well supported

Commentary

23. All members of the staff provide care that ensures that every pupil feels valued. The parents agree that the school takes very good care of their children. The school has very thorough Child protection procedures and very good supervision of pupils at break and lunchtimes. It makes very good evaluations of health and safety risks and provides good first aid facilities. All these measures help to ensure that the pupils feel safe and work in confidence. The school's very caring and inclusive approach is very well demonstrated by the attendance on a part-time basis of a pupil with severe learning difficulties from a local special school. Unobtrusive help and guidance has, in the opinion of the child's headteacher, helped her to progress from strength to strength in language and communication skills and enabled her to acquire the confidence to work in a large group.
24. The pupils' personal development is promoted very well with the headteacher setting a fine role model. All members of staff know the pupils and backgrounds very well. The teachers' very good knowledge and monitoring enable them to make very perceptive comments in the pupils' annual reports. The academic support and advice that the pupils receive are also very good. In Year 6, the pupils say they are confident about their move to secondary education. The very strong teamwork involving all members of staff is a key strength in this aspect of the school's work.

25. The pupils feel that all members of the staff value their views and this gives them confidence to raise questions and discuss issues. Their say in the life of the school is demonstrated well in the contribution that the school council makes. The members consider that pupils' views are represented very well. They talk very keenly about how they have influenced the choice of the facilities in the new school building, for example, ensuring there are mirrors in the toilets. The very effective use of pupil questionnaires has also led to improvements, for instance, in the range of hot meals at lunchtimes.
26. Very good induction arrangements and continuing care and support ensure that the youngest pupils quickly settle into school and make good progress in their personal development. The children joining the school later, often with unsettled backgrounds, are made very welcome and are soon settled and happy. Standards of care and guidance have improved well on those described in the previous inspection report.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with the parents, the local community and schools are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information for parents is very good; the newsletters are excellent
- There is very good use of the local community to support the pupils' learning
- The school seeks the parents' views and acts upon them very well
- The pupils are very well prepared for transition to secondary education

Commentary

27. The parents receive very good information about how to help their children further in their learning. The annual reports give very good information about the pupils' progress and achievements and their future targets. The related consultation sessions are valued and attended well by the parents. Newsletters provide an excellent range of information about the school and how the parents can contribute towards their children's education. Outstanding features are the topic grids that give parents details of work to be covered by each class every term and the pictorial newsletters celebrating successes and achievements, such as the residential visit to Malvern. The school is open to parents and the teachers are available regularly. They deal with issues promptly and to high levels of satisfaction of the parents. The very good access parents have in the Foundation Stage helps the pupils to settle quickly. The great majority of the parents support their children's learning very well, and many provide very good, regular help in the classroom. The parents' association gives valuable support, especially in organising fundraising and social events.
28. The school seeks the parents' views by various means. They include the very good relationships between members of staff and individual parents, the very close involvement of the parent governor and the use of surveys by the governing body. For example, the parents' views have been sought on issues such as school security and the accessibility of the governors. The parents are well satisfied by the ways in which they are involved, and this was clearly demonstrated by their very positive responses in the pre-inspection survey.
29. The school uses its very good links with the local community and other local schools very effectively to provide rich and stimulating learning opportunities for the pupils. The local church, for instance, is used regularly as a spiritual setting for assemblies and celebrations, and the vicar teaches regularly in the school. The school nurse also offers very good care for the pupils and provides a drop-in session for their parents. The very wide range and use of visits to local facilities provide excellent opportunities for the pupils and contribute significantly towards their achievement and personal development. Links with local schools are used very effectively to develop the pupils' skills in relation to a wide range of sports and personal education in relation

to areas such as drugs awareness, road safety and 'stranger danger'. Liaison with the local secondary school not only adds to the rich curriculum, for example in art, but also ensures that the pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education through a very extensive transition programme.

30. The quality of these partnerships has improved well on those described in the previous inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. Governors shape the work of the school very effectively.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a very good role model and leads the teaching team very purposefully
- The curriculum leadership is very strong
- Good strategic planning leads to very effective school improvement

Commentary

31. The headteacher's very effective leadership coupled with his enthusiasm and commitment to engaging the pupils in productive activities are the key to the school's success. He not only manages the school effectively, with the aid of very efficient administrative support, but also leads the teaching team by providing a very good example of classroom practice. The imminent move to a new building creates a tangible air of excitement within the school that is shared by parents and governors. All members of the school community have been kept well informed about the progress and development of the new building and the children have visited it periodically. The participation and involvement of all connected with the school is a reflection of the caring and inclusive ethos fostered by the headteacher.
32. The headteacher and governors work together very well to shape their vision for the school and the direction of its work. The governing body supports the school very effectively. It compares the school's performance with that of others, considers the views of parents and allocates the resources at its disposal to improve the provision made for the pupils. For instance, it has been heavily involved in decisions and discussions about the new building of late. The governors also have a good level of involvement in the work of the school; they make regular visits to lessons and report their observations to their colleagues. Consequently, they see at first hand how the school operates, know what it does well and understand where further improvements can be made.
33. The governors ensure that the school meets all requirements, for example, in respect of the curriculum and health and safety. Their attention to all aspects of governance is very thorough, and they have considerable commitment to training to ensure that they are fully conversant with their roles and responsibilities.
34. The school development plan gives a clear outline not only of the areas for improvement, but also the context within which the plan is to be implemented. The plan is strategic and based on the evaluation of progress made during the previous year. It takes full account of an analysis of the pupils' progress. The headteacher works with all staff and governors to identify issues and areas for improvement. This process has helped, for example, to raise standards in information and communication technology. There is a strong commitment to maintain and extend the improvements made in the last few years.
35. The curriculum is very strong because the co-ordinators monitor the provision made for the pupils, assess its effects and manage improvements through the school development plan.

This process is pivotal in the management of the curriculum. Although the plan is not particularly precise in the criteria it sets for success it is, nevertheless, very effective in practice. It results in very good provision for the pupils and a clear upward trend in the standards at the end of Year 6.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	252 474
Total expenditure	253 904
Expenditure per pupil	3 135

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21 652
Balance carried forward to the next	20 222

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and is now very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well
- The planned activities are interesting and purposeful
- The adults work very well together to support the children
- Relationships are very good all round

Commentary

36. The 14 children in the Foundation Stage are taught in one class where very well planned lessons ensure comprehensive coverage of the curriculum. As a result, the children develop the appropriate personal and social skills to become effective learners. They are also achieving very well in important areas such as communication, language and literacy because the teaching is very good. Generally, the children start school with skills that are well below average in many areas but they make very good progress towards achieving the early learning goals.
37. The children are making very good progress in **personal, social and emotional development**. They respond very well to the very clear routines of the classroom and most are on course to meet the age-related expectations. They listen well, are thoughtful towards each other and generally relate very well to the adults and to each other. They cooperate well during classroom activities, such as playing in the role-play corner or taking turns to fill in the daily calendar. The very good adult role models are having a very beneficial effect on the way that the children relate to one another. The adults are very encouraging and positive, for example, in developing the confidence of the children who have a low level of language skills that impede their participation in whole-class or group activities. The promotion of the children's personal development is viewed as essential for other learning to take place.
38. Many children begin school with very low speaking skills, but make very good progress in **communication, language and literacy** because the adults structure their language experiences very skilfully. In particular, they ensure that the level and range of speaking activities is very wide, and that the children are encouraged to talk. While the register is taken, for example, each child has the opportunity to share a thought or a comment with the whole group. Other children are encouraged to respond and often the teacher will expand on what each child has said. The children are acquiring an increasing understanding of how sounds and letters are linked. They use this knowledge to read simple words and a few read short sentences comprising familiar words. Many children find this a difficult skill to acquire and rely heavily on adult help. However, they have a very positive attitude to books and enjoy hearing the adults read. The classroom offers a very good environment for reading practice, as there are many labels and notices that the children are systematically learning to understand. The teaching of early writing skills is of high quality. The children are learning to copy letter shapes and some are successfully writing some simple sentences independently. A few children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, but others will not and will need continuing skilful support.
39. In **mathematical development**, the children are becoming increasingly familiar with the use of numerals in real life. Many can point to the date on a calendar and talk about the sequence of the days of the week. They successfully use computer programs to match numerals to

quantities of fruit, animals or cakes. Most count backwards from ten and some from twenty or beyond, but their confidence in relating addition or subtraction to operations with two groups of objects and their ability to solve problems, for example when using money, are still at an early stage. The teacher is successfully developing the children's confidence in using the language of position and the names of some familiar two-dimensional shapes. The children respond well to number work and benefit from the way it permeates much of their work. A good example was a cooking activity where the children talked about the quantities of the ingredients. Several children are on course to meet the early learning goals identified for this stage.

40. The underdeveloped language skills of the children somewhat restrict their ability to make sense of various aspects of their world. However, the very good teaching and learning opportunities in **knowledge and understanding of the world** enable them to develop good investigative skills, and they are making very good progress. For example, with the help of the adults, they have planted and observed the way that beans grow. They now understand that roots grow downwards to anchor plants in the soil and that the plants need water and light in order to develop. A good range of outside visits enables the children to sharpen their observation skills and their senses. For example, they have crunched their way through the dead leaves of a deciduous wood in winter and gazed awestruck at the frost laden branches of a stand of fir trees. They are using the computer to help their work in numeracy and literacy and understand that the mouse is used to move objects on the screen. Their manipulative skills are developing well as they cut and stick a variety of re-cycled materials, for example, to make models. The adults are very skilfully using these practical activities to develop the children's ability to speculate and to ask questions about a variety of situations. However, many children attain below the expected level for their age as they are heavily reliant upon the adults to help them to articulate their observations.
41. In **physical development**, the children enjoy a wide range of opportunities to engage in cutting, sticking, using malleable materials and play with a variety of construction apparatus. This helps them to develop a range of physical skills in order to meet the expectations of this stage of learning. The inclement weather did not allow observations of children using the outdoor equipment and wheeled vehicles, but at break times many were seen to be moving about energetically chasing and dodging and using small play equipment such as hoops, balls and skipping ropes. Most of the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area of the curriculum.
42. The children achieve well in many aspects of **creative development** such as music, painting, and the use of a variety of materials to create collages. The planning for this area of learning is very imaginative and involves the children in using a wide range of materials with which they can exercise their creativity. There are very good opportunities for role-play, such as the current one based on a garden centre. However, this particular aspect of the children's creative development depends heavily on the frequency and quality of adult interaction to promote the language the children need for various transactions.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and well focussed on raising standards
- Standards are not yet as high as they should be by Year 6

Commentary

43. Standards are currently below average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6 but are not yet as high as they should be. From a low starting point, many of the pupils are achieving and progressing well because the activities to promote language are interesting and help to raise the standards of their writing. The pupils listen well in class, but the school rightly identifies the need to continue to develop the range and quality of the pupils' speaking in order to provide them with a more effective basis for their written work. Reasonable progress has been made in improving standards since the last inspection but standards in writing are not yet as high as they should be.
44. The school's literacy strategy is well led by the co-ordinator. Very good teamwork between the teachers and classroom assistants ensures that the literacy policy is consistently implemented. The teachers are systematically ensuring that opportunities for talk are maximised and they model essential writing skills with the pupils. This was done very effectively with the oldest pupils as the teacher taught them how to highlight key points in a factual text so that they could then write their own reasoned account of a traffic problem. The pace and range of the teachers' questioning are often very sharp and challenge the pupils to raise the level of their responses. The pupils concentrate well because they enjoy their work. The assessment of their work, together with the targets set by their teachers help them to strive for improvements.
45. The teaching of reading is well structured and, therefore, the pupils achieve average standards by the time they leave Year 6. This represents good progress. They are encouraged to read a variety of texts including fiction, non-fiction, comics and newspaper reports, some of which they encounter through using the computers. The parents are encouraged to promote reading at home and this also has a very beneficial effect on the pupils' progress. The classroom assistants play a key role in supporting individual pupils, who are making very good progress as a result. The weekly exchange of their library books also promotes the pupils' enjoyment of reading.
46. The quality of the pupils' writing is a major focus of the school development plan. The teachers and assistants have energetically and conscientiously sought to analyse their approach to writing and are consistently implementing a range of effective practices for improving this aspect of the subject. In Year 2, the emphasis is placed appropriately on consolidating the pupils' confidence in structuring sentences, using basic punctuation and spelling common words correctly. The range of the pupils' language is still very restricted and they have not yet developed sufficient awareness of how to fashion their writing, for example, by carefully selecting vocabulary. However, the teaching is well organised. A newly acquired spelling scheme is beginning to improve the pupils' spelling and the consistency of handwriting is receiving appropriate attention.
47. The pupils in Year 6 are developing a satisfactory awareness of the features of different types of writing. They can distinguish between the characteristics of factual texts and narrative. A few are beginning to understand how authors such as Clive King or J K Rowling achieve various effects and carefully select words for dramatic effect. Very good teaching ensures that the oldest pupils acquire a range of specialist vocabulary. For instance, describing a dramatic performance, some pupils wrote about audience, scenery, slapstick comedy and realistic devices. They also draft and re-draft their work with attention to the assessment of earlier written work and comments made by the adults as they work. The range of their written language and the accuracy of their spelling are still average, but the pupils' most recent writing is more lively and better structured.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Consistent with the school's strong literacy policy, writing activities permeate several curriculum areas such as history and science. However, this is a stronger feature of the work of some classes than of others where the writing tasks are sometimes very brief.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and are above average by the end of Year 6
- Pupils of all abilities are being appropriately challenged and, as a result, are achieving well
- The teaching is generally good and particularly strong in Years 5 and 6

Commentary

49. The pupils are achieving well and making good progress. In Years 1 and 2, they develop the basic skills and lay the solid foundation they need for later learning although the standards they attain are below average. In Years 3 and 4 they build on and extend their skills effectively. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils have every opportunity to use and apply what they know and extend their skills further. As a result of their good progress, the pupils achieve standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection brought about by strong teamwork and good teaching.
50. An analysis of the national test results over the last two years shows that, although the cohorts are very small, the pupils are making well above average gains between Year 2 and Year 6. Good achievement is also evident in the pupils' work, showing that they are being challenged and supported very well. Much of the work, particularly in Year 6, is set in interesting contexts giving the pupils good opportunities to use and apply their skills.
51. The same pattern of development is evident in Years 1 and 2, for example, where the teacher is developing the pupils' understanding of the use of arrays to represent 2×5 or 6×2 . In the lesson seen, the teacher made particularly good use of the interactive whiteboard to involve the pupils. In Years 3 and 4 the teaching is lively and again engages the pupils in activities that extend their ability to estimate and approximate. In Years 5 and 6, the lessons have a rapid pace and the teacher consistently questions and challenges the pupils. The work is carefully modified for different groups, and those with special educational needs are well supported by the teaching assistant, thereby enabling them to play a full and active part in the lesson. More demanding tasks are set for the most able pupil, who can discuss confidently the strategies he uses to solve problems.
52. The teachers are knowledgeable and confident in their presentation of mathematics. They plan in detail, structure the lessons very well, manage the work of different year groups effectively, mark the pupils' work thoroughly and assess and record the pupils' progress. They use lively mental warm-up activities, good direct teaching, appropriately challenging tasks, good support for all groups and whole-class sessions where they assess how well the pupils have learned. Furthermore, in Years 5 and 6 the pupils are given good opportunities to assess the extent of their own learning. The pupils have clear targets that provide a focus for improvement and a reference point for the teachers during lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

53. The pupils utilise their mathematical skills well in various other contexts, for example science, geography and design and technology lessons. A telling example of good cross-curricular links is evident in geography in Years 5 and 6 where a local study gave the pupils a very good opportunity to extend their data handling skills. In science, the pupils have recorded their observations in tables, used spreadsheets and presented their findings in graphs.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6
- The teaching is good overall

Commentary

54. Three science lessons were observed and a sample of the pupils' work was scrutinised. Standards in Year 2 are currently below average but the pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Their achievement is good during Years 3 to 6 and they attain above average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection. In all of the lessons seen, the teaching was good and pupils were making good progress.
55. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils are learning about electrical circuits. They worked well when asked to explore how a simple circuit works and some of the Year 2 pupils said whether or not materials such as wood, plastic and a range of metals would conduct electricity and could, therefore, complete a circuit. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils had set up an experiment to discover the effects of a range of popular drinks on calcium in the form of an egg, and to ascertain if toothpaste might provide some protection. The pupils made predictions as to the outcomes because they have learned that sugar and plaque create an acid that attacks teeth and leads to decay. In a lesson in Years 5 and 6, the pupils made good gains in their learning about sound by varying the length of a column of air to change the pitch of a note. The teacher made very good links between a selection of test tubes containing different amounts of water and the musical instruments played by some of the pupils. The interactive whiteboard was used very effectively to illustrate teaching points throughout the lesson. In all of the lessons seen, the pupils collaborated well and shared their ideas.
56. A scrutiny of work from last year supports the view that standards improve as the pupils move through the schools. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 most pupils are attaining the expected level and a good proportion exceeding it. The work sample also shows that pupils are involved in a good deal of investigative activity, that they record their observations and findings well and have a secure knowledge of a range of topics.
57. In the three lessons seen, the teachers were very clear about their aims, made the objectives plain to the pupils and returned to them repeatedly to maintain the focus for learning. They questioned the pupils and challenged them to think, to draw on what they already knew and to have the confidence to try an answer even if they were unsure. The support for the pupils with special educational needs provided by the teaching assistants was good in all lessons, thereby enabling them to play a full part in the lesson and make good progress. The resources were easily and readily available although the work on circuits in Years 1 and 2 was interrupted by 'dead' bulbs and tangled wires. The teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6
- Good use is made of ICT across the curriculum

Commentary

58. The provision for and standards in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection. The older pupils are confident and very competent users of a range of software applications. For example, some have produced presentations to inform the pupils, parents and visitors about "World Book Day". To do so, the pupils used digital photographs they had taken of the activities that took place in each class, with explanations in different fonts and a range of effects as each page opens and closes. The presentations are on continuous display in the entrance hall to the school.
59. Discussions with the older pupils illustrate the considerable confidence they have developed through their use of a range of applications. For instance, they talk about how they constructed a questionnaire pro forma, collected data, organised and search it for information and created graphs. They also demonstrated not only how they used icons to create simple musical compositions, but also selected the instruments to give a variety of sounds.
60. The younger pupils use word banks and pictures and show good levels of confidence when asked to use the interactive white board. For example, the Year 1 and 2 pupils used it to create arrays of 5x3 and 2x6 with considerable enthusiasm and growing confidence.
61. Although no direct teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection, it is clear that the teachers are making effective use of a range of software to develop the pupils' skills and support learning across the curriculum.
62. Discussion with the headteacher confirms that ICT now plays a central role in both teaching and learning in the school and has been a major feature in planning the new school building. Currently, only two classrooms have interactive whiteboards, but they will be a feature of all classrooms in the new building. The location of ICT facilities in the centre of the new building illustrates well the intention to continue to develop its use across the curriculum

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Scrutiny of the pupils' work provides ample evidence of the increasing and widespread use of ICT across the curriculum. For example, some of the older pupils have used spreadsheets to record their observations in science and a more able pupil calculated interest on savings in different bank accounts in a mathematical investigation. The older pupils have also used the Internet to collect information about the Aztecs. In a recent geography activity, these pupils also looked at the issue of pedestrianisation of the High Street. They carried out a survey of the views of both shoppers and shopkeepers before making good use of a database to organise and present their work.

HUMANITIES

No **history** lessons were seen, but from a scrutiny of the teachers' planning, the pupils' recorded work and photographic evidence it is evident that the pupils are doing well. Their work in this subject includes studies of both recent times and the distant past. The older pupils have made an

interesting comparison of some features of the Tudor period with the society and culture of the Aztecs.

In the one **geography** lesson seen in Years 5 and 6, the teaching was very good and the pupils achieved particularly well. The teacher set very challenging tasks related to an investigation of traffic problems in Ross-on-Wye. He used his strong subject knowledge and understanding of environmental issues to interest and motivate the pupils, who responded very well and made considerable gains in their learning. Information and communication technology is used effectively to extend the range of opportunities provided for the pupils in the humanities.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No music lessons were seen, but one lesson of design and technology and one of physical education were observed. In addition, two lessons in art and design were seen, and the pupils' work on display and in their sketchbooks was scrutinised together with a good range of photographic evidence.

Although no lessons in **music** were seen, musical activities feature prominently in the photographic record of all the classes. The pupils clearly enjoy playing a range of musical instruments including violins and cellos. There are regular music and drama productions as well as opportunities for the pupils to sing in locations such as Hereford Cathedral. The younger pupils have also enjoyed musical workshops. All the pupils sang well and with considerable enthusiasm during school assembly in the local church.

The pupils have a good range of opportunities to develop their designing and making skills and are working at the expected level. In Years 3 and 4, they have investigated packaging and containers before designing and making their own eggcups. They have also used simple circuits to create models at Christmas time. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils have explored how structures can be made stable using triangles, completed detailed designs for shelters and used cams in the production of moving toys. Currently they are designing and making slippers. In one very good **design and technology** lesson seen on Years 5 and 6, the pupils explored a number of stitching techniques. The teaching assistant provided expert tuition that led the pupils to consider very carefully the best techniques for their product. Visits to the secondary school enrich and enhance the design and technology curriculum through access to very good facilities and activity days where, for example, they construct large model bridges.

The school's facilities and accommodation for **physical education** are poor so the pupils have to use the village hall. In one lesson observed, the Year 1 and 2 pupils developed their dance sequences to Peer Gynt very well. Most were fully engaged in the task and worked with considerable expression and flair to interpret the music. They introduced improvements to their work in pairs but many found it difficult to judge the performance of others and to suggest how they might improve their work. Nevertheless, only a small minority failed to maintain their interest and concentration throughout the lesson. The pupils have weekly swimming and games lessons. There are well attended netball, hockey and football clubs and the pupils participate in local tournaments and competitions.

ART AND DESIGN

The provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is interesting and motivates the pupils
- Good curriculum planning ensures that the pupils' skills are systematically developed

Commentary

64. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made paintings of local buildings showing evidence of careful observation and good colour mixing to represent different building materials. The local area has also been a valuable resource for some very accurate and detailed paintings of steam trains. In one lesson observed, the year 3-4 teacher used an interesting set of photographs of various doorknockers, thereby providing the pupils with an unusual opportunity to discuss the work of craftspeople and the relationship between the design and the purpose of an object. In this lesson, the pupils with special education needs were very well supported and absorbed in the task for a considerable period of time.
65. The younger pupils are beginning to use their sketchbooks effectively for colour mixing, to sketch natural objects such as plants and to record observations made through a viewfinder. They are now moving to the stage where they need to develop their critical faculties in order to modify their sketches.
66. Art is highly regarded in the school because it stimulates the pupils' imagination and has the potential for developing the spiritual aspect of their growth. Accordingly, the teachers plan the lessons well and use effective questioning to develop the pupils' aesthetic awareness. The activities are imaginative, well resourced and result in lively, carefully produced work.
67. The school has been awarded an "Artsmark Gold" for the quality of its provision in art and design. The standards produced represent a marked improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons were taught during the inspection. However, the teachers and the teaching assistants continually seek to encourage and support the pupils' personal and social education. In many lessons the pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, and frequently they discuss in pairs the points raised by the teacher. Discussion with the teachers shows that considerable importance is placed on developing social skills, particularly with the younger pupils. Collaborative effort is encouraged and good examples were seen of pupils working well together on a range of tasks.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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