

INSPECTION REPORT

LIGHTWATER VILLAGE SCHOOL

Lightwater

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 124997

Headteacher: Mrs Diane Moffett

Lead inspector: Mrs Joy Richardson

Dates of inspection: 02 - 04 February 2004

Inspection number: 256733

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	172
School address:	Catena Rise Lightwater Surrey
Postcode:	GU18 5RD
Telephone number:	01276 473346
Fax number:	01276 452438
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rebecca Finlay
Date of previous inspection:	16/03/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has 172 pupils in six classes from Reception to Year 2. Children start in Reception in September when they are four, attending full-time, or in the mornings only, depending on their age. Pupils are mainly of white British heritage, but 11 per cent come from a diversity of other ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. A few pupils speak English as an additional language, but none is at an early stage in learning the language. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs. The total number on the special needs register is above the national average, because the school includes any pupil it judges to be at risk of falling behind in literacy and numeracy. Attainment on entry varies widely although children's skills are generally well advanced for their age, particularly in language. The percentage of pupils who have joined the school after the normal start date is similar to that in other schools. The school has gained, and is working to renew, the Charter Mark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Investors in People award. One temporary teacher joined the staff just before the inspection.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6676	Joy Richardson	Lead inspector	Foundation stage Science Art and design Design and technology
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector	
31029	Peter Thrussell	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Information and communication technology Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
22778	Anne Shannon	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Personal, social and health education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school where pupils achieve high standards. Pupils are well taught and they are excited by learning. The school is very well led, with vision and imagination, creating an atmosphere in which pupils thrive. The school gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very good standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Leadership and management are very good, fostering pupils' all-round development.
- Good teaching prompts pupils to think for themselves and to work well with others.
- Pupils develop confidence, independence and a sense of responsibility.
- Special events and activities enrich the curriculum and make learning fun.
- The school has an excellent partnership with parents and pupils benefit from this.
- The use of time in lessons does not always maximise the learning of all pupils.

Since the previous inspection in March 1998, the school has maintained high standards and continued to improve. It has worked effectively to enrich its curriculum, to strengthen links with parents, and to identify where and how it could do even better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve well and standards are very good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. In the Reception year, most children reach and many exceed the early learning goals in each of the required areas of learning. In Years 1 and 2, standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

In recent years, standards overall have risen in line with the national trend. The school monitors how well pupils are doing, and is now working to raise sights further in reading, pinpointing the need to focus on comprehension.

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

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

In information and communication technology, pupils achieve standards broadly in line with those expected nationally.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They behave very well, co-operating with others and readily taking responsibility. Attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**.

Teaching is good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils learn well, showing interest and confidence. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are well taught. The quality of questioning and

discussion is very good, although talking sometimes limits the time for doing. The school provides a very good curriculum, with many special events and activities which enliven learning. Pupils are very well cared for. The support and guidance given to individuals, including those with special educational needs, is very good. The school works extremely well with parents and the community, to achieve the best for all pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher sets the tone of the school, inspiring, enthusing and harnessing the efforts of all members of the school community. The leadership of the deputy headteacher, senior management team and subject leaders is very effective. The school is very well managed so that systems and procedures support its educational ambitions. Governance is good. The governing body supports the school well and monitors its performance thoroughly, ensuring compliance with all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very high opinion of the school. The school consults regularly with parents and works closely with them, and this is appreciated. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and they know that they are listened to. Pupils generally enjoy school and have a strong sense of belonging, taking a lively interest in all aspects of school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Use time to maximum effect in lessons, balancing listening and doing, encouraging the application of skills, and monitoring the quality and quantity of the work which pupils produce.
- Implement plans for the development of resources for reading, and for information and communication technology.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good in Reception, and in Years 1 and 2. Standards are well above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high in speaking, reading and writing.
- Pupils' numeracy skills are very well established.
- Pupils achieve well across a broad curriculum.
- The application of skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is not highly developed.

Commentary

1. The school has maintained high standards since the previous inspection and continued to improve, in line with the national trend. The national test results show improvement in writing and mathematics over the last three years, reflecting the school's focus on raising standards in these areas. In 2003, the results in reading were above average, although not as high as in previous years. The school has identified what it can do to set sights higher in reading, and is taking appropriate action.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (17.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.4 (16.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.9 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

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

2. Pupils make good progress over the course of the Reception year. As a result, most children achieve the early learning goals set nationally for the end of Reception, in all the areas of learning, and many exceed these goals. The curriculum is carefully and imaginatively planned to foster effective learning in each of the required areas, and this leads to very good standards.
3. High standards are sustained and developed in Years 1 and 2. The school 'adds value' over these years because pupils make good progress in building on their prior attainment. Pupils' progress is underpinned by termly assessments to make sure that they are doing as well as they should. This helps the school to reach the targets which it sets each year and contributes to the high standards achieved.
4. Pupils achieve well and reach very good standards in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' confidence in speaking, their skills in reading and writing, and their competence in working practically contribute to good achievement in other subjects. Pupils gain the required knowledge and skills in each subject, while pursuing themes which provide a context for their work. Special events and activities, such as the half-termly 'Focus Weeks', extend pupils' learning and creativity, and result in high standards of work.

5. The school is quick to identify and to provide support for pupils who are in danger of falling behind, or who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils achieve well, meeting the well-focused targets set for them on Individual Education Plans. Pupils from an ethnic minority background, including those who speak English as an additional language, achieve at least as well as their peers.
6. In ICT, standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally and achievement is satisfactory, but the school recognises this subject as an area for development. The tracking of pupils' progress across the school is at an early stage of development. Although ICT is used widely and well, pupils have limited access to computers in order to learn new skills and to build progressively on what they can already do.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance and punctuality are also very good,

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' interest and eagerness to learn helps them to achieve well.
- Relationships are very good between pupils and with adults.
- Pupils are very confident and co-operative, and keen to take responsibility.

Commentary

7. Pupils show very good attitudes to learning in most lessons. They generally listen very attentively, participate readily and undertake tasks enthusiastically. This is the result of good teaching. However, occasional restlessness occurs when pupils sit and listen for too long, particularly in introductory sessions for the whole class.
8. Standards of behaviour are good in the classroom and very good around the school and in the dining room and playground. Pupils play harmoniously together. All pupils are fully aware of the high standards expected, and insisted upon, by all staff. The very caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. Pupils share in the school's values because these are explained and demonstrated in ways which they can understand. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen and both parents and pupils confirmed that bullying does not occur. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
9. Pupils are encouraged to become independent and they willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age. These responsibilities range from finding their own name and self-registering in the Reception classes, to representing their peers on the school council. Pupils take their responsibilities of living in a community very seriously, showing good levels of maturity as they move through the school.
10. Pupils play harmoniously together and collaborate well when working in groups. They take pride in the school and in their own achievements. Staff give a very positive lead in engendering good relationships, giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity, as well as acting as good role models.
11. The very good ethos of the school helps to promote spiritual development. There are many opportunities for pupils to marvel at the wonders of life, and to reflect in assemblies and in 'reflection time'.
12. The school ensures that pupils experience and appreciate the traditions of different cultures. Visitors and special events have included visits by African drummers and dancers, and a range of activities related to pupils' work about India. Displays around the school generate interest in the diversity of languages, customs and beliefs. The experiences of pupils and

families from different ethnic backgrounds are valued and respected. Pupils talk readily about the languages they speak and the other parts of the world which they know about. Subjects such as personal, social and health education, music and religious education, make very good contributions in helping to prepare the pupils for life in a multicultural society.

Attendance

Attendance levels are very good, being well above the national average.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.1	School data	0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the past year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school gives pupils a very good education. Pupils are well taught and are good learners. The school provides a lively and imaginative curriculum and cares very well for pupils.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, although pupils do not always do enough work themselves. Good assessment supports pupils' learning throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are very well taught.
- Teachers encourage interest, independence and enthusiasm for learning.
- Lessons are well prepared and classrooms are well organised.
- Teachers lead discussions and ask questions very well to ensure understanding.
- High expectations do not always extend to the quality and quantity of work in independent tasks.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	12	7	0	0	0

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

13. There has been a significant turnover of teachers since the previous inspection, but the school has inducted new staff effectively and broadly maintained the quality of its teaching. In this, it has been helped by the development of strong schoolwide systems for performance management, curriculum planning and the tracking of pupils' progress.

14. Teachers are knowledgeable and purposeful in their teaching. They have clear aims for pupils' learning, and are very thorough in the teaching of basic skills. Teachers build well on what has gone before and they reinforce learning by making links between subjects.
15. Teachers in parallel classes plan together effectively. They work well with teaching assistants to ensure that pupils are well known and purposefully supported in their learning. Teaching is well directed to support pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants work effectively with individuals and groups, helping to ensure that all pupils are able to participate and to succeed.
16. Teachers ask questions very well, checking that pupils understand, and challenging them to think further and to explain their ideas. This feeds pupils' eagerness to learn, and their confidence in contributing. Classes are well managed so that pupils know what is expected of them.
17. Classrooms are well organised and include displays which pose questions and suggest activities, engaging pupils' interest and involvement. The Reception classrooms, including the shared outdoor area, are richly resourced to stimulate children's imagination and to prompt further investigation. Materials are well prepared so that lessons run smoothly.
18. Teachers introduce lessons interestingly, but the introductions are sometimes too long. This limits the time for doing, and for pupils to apply, at their own level, what they have learned. During the short periods allowed for independent work, teachers and teaching assistants work effectively with groups to guide their work. Other pupils settle readily and get on with the tasks set for them, but sometimes lack specific challenge about the quality and quantity of work expected. Although teachers track pupils' progress over time with great care, the evaluation of what individuals achieve during a lesson is less rigorous. In the best lessons, teaching is well paced and pitched precisely to consolidate and extend learning; pupils are actively involved during introductions and become deeply absorbed in the work which follows, taking delight in what they can achieve.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum provides **very good** learning opportunities for pupils. These are significantly enriched by the school's focus on developing creativity within the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning is greatly enriched by regular 'Focus Weeks' shared by the whole school.
- Innovative use of the school environment and the 'outdoor classroom'.
- The school's focus on creativity contributes to an exciting curriculum.

Commentary

19. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced, giving pupils a very wide range of opportunities. The school, rightly, prides itself on the way it fosters pupils' independence and confidence and promotes pupils' spiritual as well as their intellectual and physical development. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The very good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship contributes substantially to the pupils' personal development.
20. The school places a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy within an interesting and imaginatively structured curriculum. Literacy is supported and extended through links with other subjects. For example, teachers use information texts linked to the science or history topic when teaching about non-fiction books. There is extra provision in literacy for pupils who are behind in their reading skills.

21. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. They are generally well supported by teachers and teaching assistants, especially in literacy and numeracy. Extra support is well targeted in order to help pupils with difficulties to take a full part in the lesson; for example, in science.
22. Teachers work hard to make learning exciting for the pupils, developing themes imaginatively to engage pupils' interest and extend their experience. The regular 'Focus Weeks' are very popular with the pupils and their families. These weeks are very carefully planned with interesting activities, which capture the pupils' imagination and centre on creativity. Such weeks have included activities focused around painting and sculpture, music and health education. One such week made use of the expertise and talents of parents who are professional musicians and came into the school to work alongside pupils and to play music for them. Pupils were also introduced to African drumming, which they thoroughly enjoyed. Theatre and museum visits support learning, and visitors regularly come to talk to the pupils.
23. The staff have planned an exciting programme for the use of the 'outdoor classroom' which was completed last summer. This area has been developed after careful thought about what it could add to the overall curriculum. There are areas for learning about plants and minibeasts and an amphitheatre for performing plays and creating music.
24. Accommodation is good. Resources are very well used to create an attractive environment, which fosters active learning. The library, in a spare classroom, is very well organised to help pupils find and enjoy a wide variety of books. However, resources for the teaching of reading need further development and the school is working on this.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes very good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with very good support and guidance and pupils are very involved in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel very secure and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Children are introduced to school life very well.
- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with the adults in the school.
- School seeks, values and acts on the views of the pupils.
- The progress of the pupils is monitored well.

Commentary

25. The school provides a very happy environment that is conducive to learning. Close attention is paid to health and safety issues. Pupils' healthy and safe living is very well promoted through the personal, social and health education programme, which is enhanced by talks; for example, by the road safety officer on personal safety. First aid provision is very good due to considerable hard work and interest amongst the staff. The school has very good arrangements for looking after pupils who are unwell, using the new medical room. Child protection arrangements are also very good and there is good liaison with other agencies.
26. Teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs, and are thus able to provide very good support and guidance. The very good relationships between pupils and staff, and the use of a 'worry box', encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing they will be dealt with sympathetically. Parents consider the school to be very caring, and pupils describe the staff as 'very nice and very kind'. Good assessment procedures ensure that teachers track the progress and personal development of all pupils and this contributes to the standards attained.

27. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school career, and supported with great care. Pupils with statements receive their full entitlement of support. The help and support of outside agencies is sought as required. Very good links with the junior school help to ensure that good provision is maintained.
28. Induction arrangements are very good and ensure that children settle happily into the Reception classes. These include home visits and opportunities to visit the school. Similarly, pupils are very well prepared for transfer to the junior school.
29. All pupils are valued and are able to contribute to the life of the school. They make their views known through the effective school council, and simple surveys of their opinions. Their views are taken seriously and are acted on whenever possible. For example, on the request of pupils, there is now recognition for packed lunch eaters, as well as for those eating a school dinner, if they completely finish their meal.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has excellent links with parents and very good links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school builds excellent relationships with parents, involving them in school life.
- The headteacher and staff listen and respond to parents' views and concerns.
- The school's communication and provision of information for parents are excellent.
- Parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home.

Commentary

30. Parents are very well informed about the school through the prospectus, newsletters, the governors' annual report and frequent other correspondence. A very small minority of parents do not feel that they are well-informed on how their children are getting on. However, the inspection team considers that parents are well served by the school in this regard. Parents are given excellent information about the curriculum and topics to be studied, in the termly 'Learning Tree'. This provides a very clear picture of what pupils will be learning. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings and annual reports. Parents are also very welcome to talk with staff at any appropriate time. There is a notice board for each class and parents are invited to make notes about any points they may wish to discuss or bring to the notice of the teachers. Parents say that any concerns are acted upon immediately.
31. Parents are extremely satisfied with the school and hold it in very high regard. They feel very comfortable about approaching staff and are very confident that any issues will be taken very seriously. Parents also have great confidence in the leadership and management of the school, and appreciate that the headteacher knows every child personally. They value the interesting, all-round education which the school provides, and the way in which it fosters kindness and good manners.
32. Parents make a very significant contribution to their children's learning by providing very good help in the classroom and on visits. The school makes good use of parents' experience and expertise; for example, in the course of 'Focus Weeks'. The meeting about numeracy held last term was very well supported, and such opportunities help parents to contribute even more effectively to pupils' learning at school and at home. Virtually all parents support their children with their homework. They also raise significant funds for the school through the Parents' Association, which organises social events and contributes strongly to the sense of community.. The school puts great value on the views of the parents and parents are

- consulted about the school improvement plan. There is also an annual questionnaire for parents where they can record their views.
33. Particularly good links are established with parents of children with special educational needs. At consultation meetings, teachers share Individual Education Plans with parents and discuss the progress being made. In addition the headteacher, as special educational needs co-ordinator, holds informal surgeries for parents. These let parents air concerns and seek advice, and the headteacher's contribution is reassuring and helpful.
 34. The very good links with the community include strong association with local businesses and the Church. Parents say that the school is truly part of the community. Pupils take part in local events such as dancing around the maypole in the village on May Day, and the Parents' Association sets up stalls at the Church festival weekend. The school has close links with a local 'Beacon School' for staff training. A very effective partnership is being developed with the local playgroups.
 35. The school is valued by the community and contributes much to it. Some parents commented that involvement with the school has, for them, turned the place where they live into a real community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher and other staff provide very effective leadership. The school is very well managed in pursuit of its educational aims. Governance is good, supporting the school in its planning for improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher inspires and enthuses the whole school community.
- Leadership is broadly based and reflective, generating strong teamwork.
- The school's self evaluation and planning for improvement are very well developed.

Commentary

36. The headteacher sets the tone of the school, creating an ethos where pupils are valued and understood, and an environment where learning is interesting and exciting. The work of the deputy headteacher has also been very significant in helping the school to move forward. The school's inspiring mission statement, agreed by the whole community and prominently displayed, articulates the school's aspirations and guides its work.
37. The senior management team and the subject leaders contribute very effectively in reviewing the school's work and planning how to improve areas for which they are responsible. The small teaching team shares a thoughtful approach and a commitment to professional development, which also extends to the teaching assistants and administrative support staff. As a result, there is a strong sense of teamwork and shared endeavour.
38. Staff, pupils, parents and governors take great pride in the school. The headteacher nurtures this community spirit, and draws on the talents and expertise of others to enrich the education provided for pupils. Parents and pupils are consulted and listened to, and they know that their contribution matters.
39. The headteacher knows each pupil well; for example, she hears a pupil read at each key stage of the reading scheme. She oversees the tracking of each individual's progress, discussing this regularly with the teacher. As special educational needs co-ordinator, she works closely with parents, ensuring that support is well matched to individual needs. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special needs is very good. There are regular meetings with support staff, careful tracking of progress, and checking of the appropriateness of targets on individual plans.

40. Planning for school improvement is thorough and effective, involving staff, governors and parents in helping to set the school's course. The annual plan is monitored by the governors' 'Quality Group', which oversees the school's performance. Governors maintain close links with parents. Communication is very good at all levels.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	414065	Balance from previous year	24257
Total expenditure	416601	Balance carried forward to the next	21721
Expenditure per pupil	2381		

41. The school's financial planning is very good, and finances are very efficiently managed by the school's administrative officer. Last year, expenditure per pupil was lower than the average in infant schools. The school has worked hard to produce a balanced budget while continuing to pursue its educational priorities and seeking best value for money. The Parents' Association gives valuable financial support, and all spending decisions are very carefully considered. The school uses its resources very well and gives very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are very good. The curriculum is very well-planned in all the areas of learning. Children's progress is carefully assessed to monitor how well they are doing and to identify any gaps in learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide a rich environment for children's learning and to give them the support they need. Children achieve well. In each of the six required areas of learning, most children reach, and many exceed, the goals expected by the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs achieve well. Children from ethnic minority heritages, and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve at least as well as their peers. The quality of teaching and learning and the planning of the curriculum are consistently good across each of the six areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to be independent and to look after themselves.
- Children co-operate very well and help each other.
- They take a very keen interest in learning.

Commentary

42. The school is very good at promoting children's personal development and this starts in the Reception year. Children settle in well and enjoy the routines of school such as passing round the daily fruit snack, and staying for school lunch. They take pride in dressing themselves after physical education, washing their hands and putting things away where they belong.
43. Children participate very confidently in large and small groups. They share their ideas; for example, when they check the answer to a simple sum with a 'carpet buddy'. They work well together on practical tasks, for example negotiating who will hold and who will stick when fixing boxes together to make a model.
44. Children concentrate and become absorbed in their activities. They sit quietly when required. They respond well to the good teaching they receive about how to be polite, and considerate of others. They are eager to participate and take a lively interest in the many and varied activities provided, revelling in creating, exploring and investigating.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very good in speaking.
- Children make a very good start in reading.
- Skills in reading and writing are developed imaginatively in the course of many activities.
- Children are not always supported when writing, by resources matched to their ability.

Commentary

45. Children are encouraged to talk and to share ideas and they do so with confidence, often expressing themselves in complete sentences. They contribute readily to class discussion, and use language freely to engage with others in play activities.
46. Early literacy skills are taught very effectively and children make rapid progress as a result. Most children know the sounds of letters, and of some combinations; for example, 'ch' and 'ee'. They use this knowledge well in reading simple words. Most also recognise a number of common words which are practised frequently in lessons. They enjoy books and listen avidly to stories, often contributing their own ideas which show a good level of understanding.
47. Writing is taught well and children use their knowledge of sounds and common words when working with an adult. Some children can write several sentences independently, but others are at an early stage in forming letters. Play activities encourage writing; for example, when children wrote invitations to a party at the 'Bears' Cottage'. Word banks and labels are widely available but, for children working without adult support, tasks and resources are not always well matched to current levels of writing skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children count and use numbers well.
- Mathematical language is well developed.
- Independent activities do not always build purposefully on what children can do.

Commentary

48. Children become very confident in dealing with numbers. They enjoy counting and exploring numbers and have an understanding of simple addition and subtraction. They use this knowledge in working out simple sums with their fingers, and in using pennies to 'buy' things. Children have a good knowledge of shape and pattern, for example using the computer to construct a pattern sequenced by shape and colour.
49. Children are taught well so that learning is reinforced and extended. The teacher checks their understanding, asking them to show answers with their fingers, or with numbers on a number fan. They develop effective strategies, working with their fingers, and using number lines for counting on and counting back.
50. Children practise their skills with interest and enthusiasm in the course of games and other activities. Independent activities do not always provide challenge matched to children's capabilities, nor a goal to work towards. Little of their work is recorded, so children cannot take stock of what they have achieved. However, mathematical vocabulary is developed well in discussion; for example, in using terminology related to subtraction.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to take a lively interest in the world around them.
- They observe, explore and investigate well.

Commentary

51. Teachers and teaching assistants teach and use resources very well to help children explore and make sense of their experiences, stimulating curiosity and interest in the wider world.
52. Regular displays feature aspects of different cultures, focusing on welcoming words in different languages, or objects related to the Chinese New Year. Play activities extend children's knowledge of daily life, as seen when children played in a pretend Post Office, making stamps and sending letters.
53. Children are encouraged to investigate materials, and they become absorbed in play with sand and water. They make models, pursuing their own ideas and finding ways to solve problems. They investigate problems with enthusiasm and seriousness; for example, when exploring which material would be most comfortable for Baby Bear's bed. They use computers confidently, for instance to make pictures, and to practise reading and number skills.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children handle tools and materials with control and skill.
- They gain a good understanding of how their bodies work.

Commentary

54. Children have regular access to a wide range of tools and materials. They are dextrous in cutting and sticking and joining materials. Outdoor play activities develop hand and eye control in the course of activities such as throwing bean bags into buckets. Weekly sessions of physical education in the hall help children's physical co-ordination in running, climbing, rolling, jumping and balancing. Children develop a good awareness of space when they work with others.
55. Children learn about how to be healthy, and how to keep safe. They apply what they have learned, for example in taking a teddy bear home to look after.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent opportunities for role-play encourage children's imagination.
- The learning environment is very well organised to foster creativity and expression.

Commentary

56. The classrooms and outdoor areas are very imaginatively resourced to cultivate children's creative development. During the inspection, each classroom had a role-play area called 'Baby Bear's Cottage', and children were totally absorbed as they acted out the story of 'The Three Bears'. In the outside area, the 'giant's castle', with giant-sized food, captured children's imagination as they constructed a world on a larger scale.

57. Children design and make models and explore 'mini-worlds' in the sand and water trays, imaginatively pursuing their own ideas and sharing them with other children. They enjoy singing and using musical instruments. Children express themselves in pictures made from a wide range of materials and using a variety of techniques

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils speak confidently and well, extending their thinking in the process.
- Basic skills in reading and writing are very well established.
- High standards in literacy support pupils' work in other subjects.
- Resources for reading, to extend comprehension skills, need further development.

Commentary

58. The high standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing reported at the time of the previous inspection have been improved and standards are consistently well above the national average. Pupils' achievement is good, as shown in the progress made over Years 1 and 2. The tracking of progress each term and the setting of targets for every pupil, contribute to this good achievement. There was a relative dip in the school's results in the national tests for reading in 2003, although these were still above average. The school has analysed all the data, identified where improvements can be made and put strategies in place to raise sights further in reading.
59. Throughout the school, staff work hard to ensure that pupils have many opportunities to develop their skills of speaking and listening. Pupils' targets include these skills. Since the last inspection, there has been a focus on improving standards through the use of drama and role-play across the curriculum. Most pupils are confident and articulate speakers. This is evident in their ability to ask and answer questions, often in well constructed sentences, and in the quality of discussion. They talk expressively about their work and things which interest them, with each other and with adults. Teachers encourage pupils to listen carefully and to express themselves clearly.
60. Standards in reading are very good. Strong foundations are laid in the use of phonics so that pupils are confident in tackling unfamiliar words. They progress steadily through the graded reading scheme, also enjoying a wide range of books from the library. By Year 2, pupils read stories with expression, changing their voices for different characters. They look at the pictures inquisitively before reading the text and often stop to predict what they think will happen next in the story. Pupils read non-fiction books and recall the information they have read. However, the school has rightly identified the development of comprehension, particularly in reading non-fiction, as an area for further development. The school is extending the reading of non-fiction books, in work across the curriculum. It is working to re-emphasise, in pupils' reading at school and at home, the importance of reading for meaning, in order to challenge fluent readers further. The school is looking to extend the use of guided reading in groups, in order to pursue this. The very good organisation of the library area contributes significantly to high standards and interest in reading. However, resources for the teaching of reading need further development to widen the range of the reading scheme, to provide more 'big books' for shared reading by the class, and more sets of books for guided group reading. The staff are now working on this. Each pupil has a reading record. Reading at home is logged in it, and it frequently serves as a useful means of communication between parent and school.

61. Because of the concern nationally over the standards of pupils' writing, the school has focused on this aspect of the pupils' learning. As a result, standards have improved. By Year 2, most pupils understand and use simple punctuation, and can use a basic story structure for their own stories. The use of writing for different purposes is evident in interesting work across the curriculum, although this is not always planned to ensure progress in the application of skills. The school emphasises spelling and handwriting and regular handwriting practice occurs, usually at the start of the school day. Handwriting reinforces the learning of the week's spellings as these words provide the text to copy. Pupils become very competent in spelling and develop a fluent joined handwriting style.
62. The school provides good support for the pupils with special educational needs, and is quick to identify pupils who have difficulties with literacy. Class teachers work closely with teaching assistants to provide the necessary support in the classroom. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and their progress is carefully monitored. Teaching assistants provide a literacy support programme effectively to groups in Year 1. Able pupils are challenged successfully but sometimes, when working independently, they are not told how much work is expected and consequently work may not be completed.
63. The leadership and management of English are very good. The co-ordinator for English has been in post for a little over a year and during that time has made significant changes, which are resulting in a sharper focus on planning and on tracking pupils' progress.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Language and literacy are applied well across the school's broad curriculum. Pupils' skills in literacy help their learning in other subjects. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to develop skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing in the course of other work; for example, in religious education and in history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well.
- The subject is very well led and progress is carefully monitored.
- Teachers ask questions well, helping pupils to reason and explain their thinking.
- Pupils become skilled at mental arithmetic.
- Expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' recorded work are not high enough.

Commentary

65. Standards are high and have improved in recent years. Several factors contribute to this. The co-ordinator gives very good leadership, and has closely monitored standards in partnership with the headteacher. Challenging targets are set for each year. Any areas of potential weakness are quickly addressed. Lessons have been regularly observed and written feedback given to teachers, with a view both to maintaining high standards, and to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met. This has been of particular importance when there have been changes of staff, and it has helped to maintain the good quality of teaching and learning. A 'Maths Week', with workshops and challenges, has helped to raise pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject further.
66. A strong feature of lessons is the way that pupils are encouraged to explain their strategies for solving problems, both to a partner known as their 'carpet buddy', and to the teacher. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils had to explain how to subtract eleven. This

helped to reinforce pupils' learning, and enabled the teacher to assess their understanding. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, are confident in discussing their work in this way. Much of this questioning and discussion takes part during the introduction to lessons. In some lessons these introductions are too long and pupils become restless, especially if the work is well within, or well beyond, their current level of competence. Independent activities are well prepared for different ability groups. Lower-attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are helped to participate and to complete tasks through more discussion and demonstration. Pupils settle quickly to activities, concentrating and maintaining their interest. They co-operate well and support each other in their learning. However, teachers give little indication of the quantity or quality of written work they expect from groups working on their own, and so pupils lack specific challenge. Good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning. Programs are chosen that help to reinforce specific learning objectives.

67. Pupils are set individual targets and these are explained to parents. Although most pupils know what their targets are, they are not made sufficiently aware of their progress towards meeting them; for example, through marking. Teachers question pupils at the end of lessons, sometimes helping pupils to evaluate their learning; for example, by asking what they have found easy or difficult. Regular homework, supported by parents, helps to consolidate pupils' learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. The use of numeracy in other subjects is being developed well. For example, in science pupils measure, record and compare results, in geography they compare different locations using a venn diagram, in history they create a time line, and in design and technology they use their measuring skills. Mathematical skills are applied imaginatively and purposefully across the curriculum. However, this is not systematically planned to fit in with the progression of pupils' work in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to think, to ask questions and to investigate.
- Scientific interest is fostered through many activities across the curriculum.
- Pupils sometimes spend too long listening rather than doing.

Commentary

69. Children achieve well and reach very good standards in science. The school has maintained the strength in science which was evident at the time of the previous inspection.
70. The school encourages thinking and active learning and this is very evident in its provision for science. The 'investigation train' displayed in each classroom shows the stages of a scientific enquiry from 'What are we going to do?' to 'What Happened?' Pupils are very familiar with this process, showing particular enthusiasm for the 'Let's do it' stage. Around the school, displays pose questions; for example, asking what needs to be done to care for a pet such as the school hamster. The 'Outdoor Classroom', which opened last summer, provides rich and varied opportunities for the study of life processes. The school environment, and the local country park, are used very well to stimulate interest and to focus observation and enquiry.
71. Teaching is good, drawing on pupils' experience and extending their knowledge and understanding. Scientific questions are set in an everyday context, as when pupils in Year 1 were helped to consider which materials would be best for particular purposes. Teachers ask

supplementary questions well, challenging pupils to explain their reasoning. This reinforces pupils' learning. Resources are well organised and accessible so that pupils can get on. Classes are well managed so that practical tasks are undertaken without fuss and with a good level of co-operation between pupils. Pupils are very confident in working with others in a group, readily taking the lead to get work underway. However, there is not always enough time for extended practical work, or the recording of findings to a high standard, because of the length of time given to introductory discussion.

72. The emphasis on investigation leads pupils to think ahead, to estimate and to predict. Pupils in Year 2 understand the basic principles of a fair test. For example, they recognise the need to control the variables in testing how different surfaces affect the distance travelled down a ramp by a toy car. In work on electricity, they apply their knowledge; for example, in finding different ways to light a Christmas star. Work in science is supported by work in mathematics; for example, when pupils measure accurately. Design and technology provides opportunities for pupils to apply what has been learned in science. A science 'Focus Week' last summer provided many interesting challenges, including the design of a healthy meal, and the creation of a home for minibeasts. Challenges and competitions involve the whole family, generating a high level of interest and enjoyment of science.
73. The subject is very well co-ordinated by the deputy headteacher who has been very active in developing the curriculum and the use of questioning, and placing science at the heart of the school's thematic approach to learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use ICT to support their learning in many areas of the curriculum.
- Resources are limited for group and class teaching.
- The school has a good improvement plan to help move the subject forward.

Commentary

74. Standards in ICT are broadly average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. No lessons were seen during the inspection and therefore no judgement is made on the quality of teaching and learning. Planning shows that all the required aspects of the subject are being taught. Pupils use the computers to word process, to draw and make pictures, to organise data and to find information. They use programs to practise skills in literacy and numeracy, and to reinforce learning in other subjects.
75. New programs, related to current work, are introduced regularly in each class, and pupils take turns to practise during the course of a week. However, the teaching of skills in ICT is restricted because there are only two computers in each class. An ICT assessment record has been introduced recently. But the school is at an early stage in mapping pupils' progress, and identifying those who should be challenged further, and those who require more support to master skills. Most pupils have access to a computer at home, but the skills they bring to school are not closely monitored.
76. The co-ordinator for the subject has clearly identified the need to improve the provision. Improvement plans show a strong vision for using ICT more fully to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Plans are in hand to install a number of computers in the library, to make group teaching easier, and also to introduce the use of interactive whiteboards in classrooms. Staff are keen to develop the use of a digital camera. The school makes good use of ICT for purposes such as planning and communication with parents. Staff are

committed to developing their skills further to extend the use of ICT as a tool for teaching and learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Satisfactory use is being made of ICT to support learning in other subjects. Pupils use ICT to practise skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and to check their learning in science. They use ICT for drawing and designing. Pupils in Year 2 have used the Internet to find pictures and information about India. In religious education they used ICT to make virtual tours of a mosque and of a synagogue.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are well used to enrich and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Planning and pupils' work are monitored to ensure that work is covered in depth.

Commentary

78. Standards exceed the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and have been well maintained since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Pupils' work shows considerable depth. For example, pupils in Year 2 not only find out about the religious teachings, beliefs and practices of Islam, but understand their importance to believers.
79. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Resources and artefacts are used well to enhance learning. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils looked at a Torah scroll before starting to make their own. This encouraged them to take great pride in their own work. In a lesson in Year 2, photographs of the Kaaba in Mecca were used well to help pupils understand the practices associated with the Hajj. Vocabulary is introduced well and teachers' questioning is effective in developing pupils' understanding. Classes are managed well, resulting in very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning.
80. The co-ordinator has reviewed the scheme of work for the subject following the introduction of a new Locally Agreed Syllabus. Teachers' planning has been monitored to see that it covers the scheme, and pupils' work is sampled. Pieces of work are assessed each term against key learning objectives. Good resources, including artefacts and 'big books', help to capture pupils' interest. Visits to local churches, and the use of ICT to find information about other places of worship, further enhance the provision.

Geography and history

81. These subjects were sampled, but it was not possible to make overall judgements.
82. In **geography**, scrutiny of work, and discussion with pupils, indicate that pupils achieve well and standards are above average. The work on India by pupils in Year 2, shows that they are contrasting the physical and human features of different localities. For example, they understand how climate affects how people live and what they wear. Pupils show a keen interest in people and places in other parts of the world, and enjoy using maps. Good cross-curricular links have been developed to make learning more creative, relevant and purposeful. For example, in geography pupils printed material for a sari using Indian images. They also held an Indian cooking day. Links with a Goodwill Children's Home have resulted in pupils writing letters to children in India.

83. In **history**, pupils learn about people who lived long ago. Learning is enlivened when actors take on the roles of historical characters; for example, in Year 2, a visit from 'Florence Nightingale' captured pupils' imagination, and they vividly remembered what they had learned. Pupils in Year 1 looked carefully at the materials that toys were made from when comparing old and new toys, making links with their work in science.
84. Pupils' learning in these subjects is supported by good language and literacy skills. However, pupils are not always challenged sufficiently to apply their writing skills in recording what they have learned.
85. Both subjects are well co-ordinated. Planning is checked for coverage, although lessons have yet to be monitored to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Good use is made of visitors and visits to enhance learning. Pupils make good use of the local environment in geography. Visits to local museums and talks from grandparents help to bring history to life. Teachers make very effective use of displays to stimulate interest and to prompt thinking. This is evident in very good displays about India in Year 2, and about old and new toys in Year 1.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and design and technology

86. No lessons were timetabled in these subjects on the days of the inspection, so it was not possible to reach overall judgements about provision.
87. **Art and design** features strongly within the school's curriculum and within cross-curricular themes. Pupils' work is of a good standard. The quality of the learning environment encourages pupils to be observant and visually aware. Displays foster cultural awareness and appreciation of artistic achievement. Pupils clearly enjoy art and design and are surrounded by it. They learn to draw, and to keep sketchbooks as they move through the school. Time constraints limit the extended application of skills. 'Focus Weeks' in art have resulted in work of very high quality, stimulated by pictures in the National Gallery. More recently, pupils and parents got very involved in a focus on sculpture. The school environment, and the work of artists, are used very effectively to stimulate and inspire pupils' work.
88. In **design and technology**, pupils complete at least one project each half term which involves designing, making and evaluating a product. Pupils are given a clear brief but encouraged to develop ideas and to solve problems in their own way. The work seen is imaginative and well developed, as in the designing of a fruit salad, and plans for the playground in Year 1, and the making of working models using electricity in Year 2. Pupils enjoy the challenges offered and these relate well to work in other subjects such as science. Work in Years 1 and 2 builds well on the foundations laid in Reception, though the planning of projects is not underpinned by a mapping of skills to be developed over pupils' time in school.
89. Both subjects are co-ordinated thoughtfully and effectively, with a clear view of the way forward which is closely related to the school's concern for the fostering of creativity across the curriculum.

Music

90. Two music lessons were observed, and there was music in assemblies. It was not possible to judge the overall quality of provision.
91. Music plays an important part in whole school assemblies. Pupils sing joyfully, if not always tunefully,. They take it in turns to accompany the singing using tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils listen and respond well to music, which is often played in classrooms and before assemblies to set an appropriate atmosphere. In music lessons, the composing and performing of music is linked imaginatively to themes developed within other subjects. Music

has been the subject of a 'Focus Week' during which pupils had the opportunity to work alongside professional musicians. Pupils in Year 2 take part in the local music festival for infant schools each year.

92. The subject co-ordinator, though not a music specialist, manages the subject effectively. She has ensured that there is a scheme of work that all classes follow, and has recently written a policy, which has been accepted by the staff and governors. Her management role includes ensuring that the time allocation for the subject is met, and scrutinising the planning and giving feedback to the staff. Resources for music have been improved and they are better now than at the time of the last inspection.

Physical education

93. Physical education was sampled and two lessons were observed. No overall judgement could be made about the quality of provision.
94. The two lessons observed during the inspection showed that standards are similar to those expected nationally. In a dance lesson, pupils in Year 2 successfully demonstrated an increasing awareness of using the space around them as they created movements for leaves and trees caught in a strong wind. In a very good gymnastics lesson in Year 1, pupils were able to travel, using different parts of the body, across both the floor and low apparatus.
95. Although there is no subject co-ordinator at present, the planning undertaken by the headteacher and staff is good. This provides good coverage of all areas of the subject, including gymnastics, dance and games. Physical education features in the school development plan as part of the priority to develop creativity across the curriculum. As part of this initiative, staff have had training in the teaching of dance, .
96. There is no extra-curricular provision for sports, although many pupils participate in activities outside school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision in personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's ethos contributes substantially to developing pupils' independence.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss feelings and opinions.

Commentary

97. Pupils' personal development is central to the school's work and this is reflected in very good provision for personal, social and health education. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject co-ordinator gives other staff information and support, resulting in a well structured programme of work.
98. Weekly sessions are timetabled when pupils sit in a circle and explore issues that concern them. They cover such topics as taking responsibility and making good choices. Personal, social and health education was the subject selected for a recent 'Focus Week' about 'Keeping Healthy'. Many areas of the school's work contribute to pupils' learning. Traditional games are taught in physical education lessons. At playtime, pupils have fruit rather than other snacks, which raises awareness of a healthy diet. Lunchtime is well organised to promote healthy eating, giving recognition to pupils who eat everything that is provided. A policy for education about the dangers of the misuse of drugs has recently been reviewed and ratified by the governors. Sex education is covered in the science curriculum.

99. The school council gives pupils opportunities to put forward ideas for improvements to school life. Pupils' ideas are taken seriously and acted upon whenever possible. This fosters pupils' self-esteem and sense of responsibility, laying the foundations of good citizenship. Pupils learn to be realistic and to understand how the school works, appreciating their part in making it a good place to be.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
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	3
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	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).