

INSPECTION REPORT

MALIN BRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sheffield

LEA area: Sheffield

Unique reference number: 107100

Headteacher: Mrs Ann England

Lead inspector: Mrs J. Ann Sharpe

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th January 2004

Inspection number: 256820

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 501

School address: Dykes Lane
Sheffield

Postcode: S6 4RH

Telephone number: 0114 2341379

Fax number: 0114 2315679

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Rob Burns

Date of previous inspection: 27th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in an urban district a few miles from the centre of Sheffield. It serves a community that has had to adjust to the loss of its traditional industrial roots. Most pupils walk to school. Although the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average, this does not reflect accurately pupils' average socio-economic backgrounds. Almost all pupils are white British, and the school very rarely takes pupils who speak English as an additional language. When children start school, their attainment is below what is typical for children of their age. Although many children have already attended one of the range of pre-school provision in the area, there is no local education authority nursery, and only about one third of the children have attended the privately managed pre-school provision that operates in the building in the school yard. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including statements, is above average. Pupils' difficulties are wide-ranging, although most are moderate learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. The school consists of two separate Victorian buildings about 20 metres apart. It is taking part in national initiatives to improve provision for gifted and talented pupils, and received a national award for improved achievement in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18101	J. Ann Sharpe	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, art and design, design and technology, music, English as an additional language
19365	Gordon Stockley	Lay inspector	
2759	Derek Sleightholme	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history
1678	David Peckett	Team inspector	English, religious education
33236	Kevin Dodd	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, physical education, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Malin Bridge is a good school that has improved a lot since the last inspection. It is very well led and managed. Pupils come happily and are well cared for. Good teaching enables most pupils to achieve well, especially in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and gives **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Most pupils achieve well because they are well taught.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors are determined to raise standards.
- Pupils' personal development, including their behaviour and attitudes, is good.
- Children in reception classes do not learn enough from their play activities.
- Pupils achieve high or very high standards in information and communication technology (ICT).
- The most capable pupils in Years 1 and 2 should do better in mathematics and science.

The school is better than when it was inspected in April 1998. It has retained several important strengths, and improved in a lot of other areas, despite significant staff changes and accommodation difficulties. Leadership, management and governance are much better than they were in 1998. The school has tackled the previous key issues, and improved the quality of pupils' education. Governors have reported many other improvements in the last two years or so. National test results at Year 6 have improved, because of better teaching, and standards in several subjects are higher than they were, notably in ICT. Improvements to the accommodation are evident.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Pupils' achievement is good. The standard of work is average in Year 2, although the more capable pupils in Years 1 and 2 could sometimes do better in mathematics and science. The standard of work is above average in Year 6, where pupils are on track to do better in English and mathematics tests than the pupils tested in 2003. Children in reception classes achieve satisfactory standards, although their work is below average. They do much better when they work directly with adults than when they select their own play activities and have too few chances to extend their thinking and talking skills. Most pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve good standards in English and mathematics, and their writing has improved recently. They achieve good standards in ICT, and very good standards in Years 5 and 6. The most capable pupils and pupils with special educational needs mainly achieve as well as they can. In Years 5 and 6, the most capable pupils achieve very well because of the school's involvement with national projects to help them to become independent thinkers and learners. Year 6 national test results in science improved significantly in 2003, because more pupils than the national average reached a level higher than expected for their age.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are developed well. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. This is because of the emphasis that

the school places upon all these aspects of its work, such as the school council. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. The school could do more to improve pupils' spiritual development in assemblies, and their cultural development by providing more opportunities for them to learn about cultures other than their own. Attendance figures have dipped in the last few years, but the school is working hard to improve matters. Children in the reception classes make satisfactory progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Some January starters are finding it very difficult to adjust to working with different adults in the afternoons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Good teaching, learning and assessment in Years 1 to 6, and also when reception children work directly with adults, ensure that pupils learn the basic skills of literacy and numeracy fairly quickly. The school puts a lot of emphasis on pupils' academic achievement and lifting standards, whilst giving equal attention to their welfare, safety and personal development. As a result, pupils become happy, interested, confident and thoughtful individuals, who enjoy school and want to play a full part in activities. The good quality curriculum is enriched well by extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors. The good links with parents and the community play an important part in pupils' education. The accommodation and resources, while satisfactory overall, need improving for reception children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and the work of the governing body are very good, and this is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher gives a strong lead, by making sure that everyone works together as a team. Her clear vision for the school is seen in the improvements she has initiated so far and in the plans for the future. Governors make sure that the school meets legal requirements. They have a very good knowledge of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, and these are already reflected in their plans for improving provision and lifting standards. The deputy headteacher and senior leadership team play a successful part in improving the school. Assessment and tracking pupils' progress over time, for example, are now much better than they were because of the united, informed and determined approach.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and their parents express a good level of satisfaction with the school. Parents are pleased with most aspects of the school's work, particularly that their children like coming to school. Pupils confirm this, saying that an adult will always be there for them if they are upset or worried. The school has already taken seriously the concerns of parents and pupils about the behaviour of a few pupils, and the efforts to improve matters have had a lot of effect. There was little sign of unacceptable behaviour or bullying during the inspection.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of children's play in the reception classes, so that they learn more from it.
- Make sure that the most capable pupils in Years 1 and 2 do as well as they can in mathematics and science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Achievement is good in Years 1 to 6. Pupils make good progress, as seen in the average standard of their work in Year 2 and the above average standard of work in Year 6. Children in the reception classes achieve about as well as pupils in similar schools, although the standard of their work is still below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well, especially in the basic skills of English and mathematics.
- Children in the reception classes could sometimes achieve better standards.
- Higher attaining pupils could achieve better standards in mathematics and science in Year 2.
- The standard of pupils' writing in Years 1 to 6 has improved.
- Standards are well above national expectation in ICT in Year 6.
- National test results for pupils in Year 6 have improved faster than the national trend.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well.

Commentary

1. When children start school, their attainment, although variable, is below what is typical for children of their age. They make good progress in their reception classes when they work directly with their teachers, especially in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Their achievement in lessons and overall, however, is sometimes held back by lack of opportunities to take their learning forward through good quality play and interactions with adults about it. This means that when they transfer to Year 1, their attainment in all areas of learning, other than in physical and creative development where no judgements were made, is still below average. Staff have been working very hard to raise achievement by having higher expectations of children, and they have made a lot of progress. They are still short of good quality resources and trained support staff.

Key Stage 1

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

Most pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point above the national, the pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.4 (13.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.4 (15.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 74 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Although test results in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 2 have dipped in recent years, and have fallen behind the national trend of improvement, the school's detailed assessment information shows a clear pattern of improving and good achievement over time in all the areas tested. The 2003 results were below or well below the national average, and average or below average when compared with similar schools. The inspection found the standard of work of the current Year 2 pupils to be average. From below average attainment when children started school, this represents good progress. The weaker writing test results, especially the performance of boys, have been tackled, and standards have improved. The poorer performance of higher attaining pupils in mathematics and the teacher assessments in science are still to be addressed. The school expects that the new arrangements for assessing pupils and matching work more closely to their needs will help to improve the 2004 results.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (26.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.7 (26.6)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.2 (27.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 71 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Since 1999, test results have improved beyond the national trend in English and mathematics and significantly so in science in 2003. The improvement in science results was largely due to the fact that the school had a lot more pupils reaching a National Curriculum level higher than expected for their age than the national average. The 2003 results in English and mathematics were in line with the national average and similar schools, while science results were well above both the national average and similar schools. The school largely met its 2003 targets for test results and exceeded them for the proportion of higher attaining pupils. The standard of work of pupils in Year 6 is above average in English, science and religious education, and average (although improving) in mathematics.
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well, owing to skilled teaching and to the school's involvement in national projects designed for gifted and talented pupils. They do exceptionally well in ICT, where pupils' competence is very good. This has a positive impact on their achievement in other subjects, because of the innovative ways that teachers plan the curriculum to enable pupils to apply their ICT skills. The standards achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are good and in Years 3 to 6 they are very good. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection, owing to very good leadership and staff training, and this has had a strong effect on pupils' attainment.
- The setting (grouping in classes according to capability) of pupils for literacy and numeracy lessons in Years 3 to 6 helps them to achieve as well as they can in the basic skills of English and mathematics. Teaching and learning are very clearly focused upon what different pupils need to learn next, and this means that extra support for pupils with special educational needs usually helps them to make good progress and to take a full part in lessons in all subjects. All pupils now write in a wide range of styles and in most subjects of the curriculum, and their handwriting and presentation are good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. The school makes very good provision for their moral and social development and satisfactory provision for spiritual and cultural development. Attendance is satisfactory, and punctuality is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very interested in the good range of activities provided for them.
- High quality relationships are evident throughout the school.
- Most pupils distinguish right from wrong very well, and have a strong sense of living in a community.
- More could be done to further pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural nature of our society.
- Assemblies provide few opportunities for pupils to reflect on the deeper meanings of their lives.
- There are good procedures for encouraging and improving attendance.
- January starters in the reception classes find it difficult to cope with current staffing arrangements.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.8
National data	0.4

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

6. Although the level of attendance has fallen over the last three years, the school, supported by the local education authority, is taking strong action to try to reverse the trend. Punctuality is very good.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Black or Black British – Caribbean
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
474
3
8
1
7
4
3
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
31	0

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

7. The number of fixed term exclusions is very high, but it represents a small number of pupils, and most no longer attend the school. The school has tackled previous unacceptable behaviour appropriately, including making sure that any difficulties still remaining are dealt with by supporting pupils to improve their behaviour. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. They

enjoy their work in lessons and the activities provided for them at extra-curricular clubs. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils were keen to learn how to use 10 gram weights to measure more precisely the weight of everyday objects. Such enthusiasm for learning is reflected in the good and very good standards achieved by pupils and in the neat and careful presentation of their work and illustrations.

8. The school promotes moral development very well through the well-established systems and routines that are known and understood by pupils. They understand very well what is right and wrong and their behaviour is good. They have been encouraged to draw up their own class rules, and these link well with the school's expectations and routines. Consequently, when lessons end, pupils know what is expected of them as they are supervised to and from the dining hall and on the playground. Most pupils behave well in lessons, settling quickly when sessions begin and listening carefully to their teachers' instructions and explanations. In a minority of lessons, a few pupils become restless. This sometimes occurs when they have to listen to teachers for too long when they are eager to start their work.
9. The very good provision for pupils' social development extends to activities outside normal lessons, such as residential visits. In lessons, there are many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or small groups, and they respond positively when given the chance to work with other pupils. The theme of 'learning partners' is strongly promoted throughout the curriculum, as seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 5 and a history lesson in Year 4 when pupils enjoyed working in pairs to find answers to their teachers' challenging questions. In assemblies, pupils spontaneously applaud the achievements of other pupils. Older pupils planned and performed a short dramatic sequence about bullying. It captured the interest of the audience, who applauded the performance enthusiastically.
10. Pupils of all ages enjoy taking responsibilities and their personal development is good. There are well-organised rotas for class duties, such as tidying up equipment, delivering registers and being class messengers. Most pupils think that teachers listen to their ideas and treat them fairly. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to represent the views of others. The councillors are elected for a relatively short term so that more pupils have a chance to learn to be closely involved.
11. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There are areas, such as the garden of remembrance, where pupils can sit quietly alone or with other pupils. The curriculum includes personal, social and health education lessons, covering themes likely to encourage pupils to think more deeply about issues that affect themselves and others. Assemblies, however, do not always have a strong sense of occasion that could be created through such things as music and objects to focus thinking on. More could be done to help pupils to benefit fully from their experiences in assemblies. Currently, older pupils often sit with their coats on in a cramped space, and some take only a passive interest in what is happening.
12. Cultural development is promoted well through art and design, drama and music. Work on display shows that pupils respond thoughtfully to studying the style of work of famous artists. Musicians and theatre groups perform for the pupils. Teachers use lessons in food technology and religious education to help pupils to learn about cultures other than their own. Similarly, there are good links with the local church, but no formal links with people and places representing other world religions. The school is aware that the multi-cultural dimension of the curriculum generally is under-represented, and recognises the importance of improving provision.
13. Staff do a lot to help children in the reception classes to settle into school life and routines, and are often very successful. Not all children are not on track to reach the goals set nationally for their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception year. This is partly because their attainment on entry to school is below average, and partly because the current organisation of teaching for the 28 new children means that they do not always have enough help from adults.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Good teaching, a good quality curriculum and a very good standard of care help most pupils to enjoy school and to do as well as they can.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good, overall. They are satisfactory in the reception classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning in the reception classes are not always effective enough when children select play activities.
- Very good teaching in ICT in Years 3 to 6 helps pupils to achieve very well.
- There is not enough challenge for higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics and science.
- Teaching for older gifted and talented pupils, through participation in national projects, results in very good learning.
- Teachers are good at motivating pupils to want to learn.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	6 (14%)	18 (42%)	17 (39%)	0	0	0

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

14. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection, when nine per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory or poor. There is now a greater proportion of very good and excellent teaching than in 1998, and no unsatisfactory or poor lessons were seen. This is because of the determination of the headteacher and senior leadership team to improve teaching throughout the school, partly by taking part in the Sheffield 'Assessment for Learning' pilot project. Alongside this, observing lessons and identifying strengths and weaknesses in the teaching have helped to improve more specific areas, such as teachers' skills in questioning their pupils and the teaching of writing.
15. The weak teaching in 1998 was mainly the teaching of children in the reception year. Teaching for reception age children is now satisfactory, although it is always good in those parts of lessons when teachers work directly with whole classes or with groups of children. Children's learning slows down, however, across all areas of their work, when they select from a limited range of play activities and have little or no interaction with adults to improve the quality of their play. Teachers in the three reception classes have successfully introduced the national scheme for assessing children when they start school. They have also developed their own systems for finding out what the strengths and weaknesses in children's attainment are through regular observations. Although they work hard to gather and record helpful information about children's progress, they often miss very valuable opportunities for collecting assessment information when they focus heavily, and sometimes too soon, on helping children to record their ideas formally. Groups of children very new to school, for example, cut out and pasted pictures of imaginary children learning to share toys. Some were still finding it

difficult to play co-operatively in real settings, however, and adults would have been more usefully deployed helping them to learn to do so.

16. All teachers are good at motivating pupils to want to learn, and most pupils are pleased that their teachers expect them to work hard. Teachers inspire confidence because they know the subjects they teach well. They give clear explanations, question pupils skilfully with a strong focus on learning to use the vocabulary specific to each subject and are very clear about what they expect pupils to learn. They involve pupils in their own learning and progress by setting clear targets for them to aim to achieve. Teachers usually deploy support staff carefully to make sure that pupils with special educational needs have the help they need to learn as much as they can. These strong features of much of the teaching mean that teaching and learning in English are good in Years 1 to 6. Teaching and learning are sometimes better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2. Although teachers in all classes work equally hard, a few younger pupils take more time to respond to teachers' good classroom management strategies, and the learning of the class as a whole sometimes suffers.
17. Following the last inspection, matters relating to assessment became a key issue. There has been a lot of improvement, particularly in the last two years or so, and assessment procedures are now good. The work of the senior leadership team is having a considerable impact on how well the school is pushing forward with further improvements. The fairly new systems are beginning to strongly influence the work of teachers, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 use assessment information well to group pupils into literacy and numeracy sets (*classes of pupils of a similar ability*), and to make sure that all are challenged according to their needs. There are still a few occasions when assessment information is not used as well as it could be to raise achievement, and the senior leadership team are well aware of this. There are not as many higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 as there might be in mathematics and science, for example, and this is because teachers have not previously used the good assessment information to plan what brighter pupils need to do to move on to the next National Curriculum level. This relative weakness makes teaching and learning satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 in mathematics and science, while they are good in Years 3 to 6.
18. Teaching of gifted and talented pupils in Years 5 and 6 is often very good. This is mainly because of teachers' strong commitment to taking a full part in national projects designed to help pupils to increase their thinking skills and to become independent learners. The impact of teachers' efforts and pupils' enhanced learning skills is evident in several subjects, but especially in ICT, where, owing to very good teaching, standards are now improving quickly.

The curriculum

The good quality curriculum includes a good range of activities outside normal school time to enhance the quality of pupils' education. Resources and the accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities within the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities for pupils to extend their learning into other areas.
- There are too few good quality resources and trained support staff in the reception classes, and the outdoor curriculum is under-developed.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for gifted and talented pupils is good.
- Good links between the subjects of the curriculum encourage pupils' understanding of their learning.
- Pupils' achievement is often improved by working with support staff.
- Good curriculum development, including innovation, supports higher attaining pupils well.

Commentary

19. Teachers apply their good subject expertise well when planning a wide range of work that covers the National Curriculum subjects and religious education well. Statutory requirements are met fully, and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. During the year, the good range of clubs and activities outside the school day are well attended by pupils. They add significantly to pupils' learning and to the standards they achieve. Pupils enjoy a good programme of sport and take part in both cultural and residential educational visits. Provision for sex education and relationships and for drugs' misuse awareness also contributes to the personal and social education curriculum.
20. The curriculum for reception age children has improved since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory because it did not take enough account of the national guidance available at that time. It is now satisfactory and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage of their education. Although the school, under the good leadership of the co-ordinator, has done a lot to improve resources and the accommodation in reception classes, both indoors and outdoors, there are still too few good quality resources for learning. The accommodation does not lend itself easily to a regular outdoor curriculum. Teachers provide a few opportunities for children to learn from their outdoor experiences, such as an option to choose to play with equipment at playtimes. The lack of regular chances to respond to increasingly demanding challenges across all the areas of learning, however, restricts children's progress.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for gifted and talented pupils is good. This is because these areas of school life have high priority and provision is led and managed well. Classroom assistants play an important part in supporting pupils to do as well as they can, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons and when pupils need help to improve their behaviour. Pupils who are gifted and talented achieve well because of the school's determination to make sure that they continue to have regular new challenges to respond to. The curriculum innovation projects, currently involving pupils in Years 5 and 6, are exciting and interesting for higher attaining pupils.
22. There are a satisfactory number of teachers and a good number of support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Subjects have two leaders who make sure that curriculum planning has a good impact on pupils' achievements. Although most subjects are taught separately, very useful links between them lead to purposeful activities for the pupils. The good opportunities for pupils to apply their speaking, listening, literacy (especially writing) and numeracy skills to work in other subjects contribute well to their achievement in Years 3 to 6. During the inspection, innovative links between English and ICT in Year 4 and between mathematics and ICT in Year 6 resulted in two excellent lessons.
23. The accommodation is over 100 years old and presents a lot of problems for governors and staff to overcome. They have done a lot recently to improve the buildings and outdoor premises, and the accommodation now provides a satisfactory place for pupils to learn. It is more attractive than previously, and teachers use the space as efficiently and effectively as they can, for example by creating ICT suites and special rooms where small groups of pupils can work with support staff. Resources are satisfactory, overall, but they are good in English, ICT and religious education. There are important shortages of resources and suitably trained support staff in the reception classes, and this sometimes limits children's achievement in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for pupils' welfare, health and safety very well. It provides good support and guidance for pupils and involves them well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new assessment procedures enable teachers to watch carefully over pupils' academic and social progress.
- All pupils benefit from the very good relationships they have with their teachers.

Commentary

24. Staff give high priority to caring for pupils' physical, social, and emotional needs. They pay very good attention to ensuring pupils' safety in lessons, around the school and on educational visits. Governors are actively involved, and a governor with specialist knowledge oversees provision. Teachers and support staff pay particular attention to pupils' well-being. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and learning, and they create a calm and pleasant atmosphere, where pupils can thrive academically and socially. Teachers talk with pupils – not down to them – and successfully achieve the right balance in their relationships. This makes lessons enjoyable and pupils attentive and enthusiastic. The school has done a lot of work recently to improve arrangements for assessing pupils and charting their progress over time. The new arrangements ensure that teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well. They also improve teaching, thus helping pupils to achieve more. Almost all pupils who completed the inspection questionnaire said that they would talk to an adult if they were worried at school. The vast majority of pupils enjoy being at school and think that their teachers are fair.
25. All pupils have opportunities to be involved in making some decisions about the running of their school. The pupils themselves elect school council members. They meet regularly under the guidance of two teachers. The council is currently looking at ways to improve playground activities by purchasing more toys and equipment. A council meeting was held during the inspection, and members were clearly enjoying their responsibilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are good, and there are good links with other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning at school and at home.
- The school provides very good information to parents.
- The school provides placements and work opportunities for students from several branches of the community.
- Links with local pre-school providers need strengthening.
- Curriculum events are only attended by a small number of parents.

Commentary

26. The school warmly welcomes parents, and they respond well by getting involved in their children's education. They help out at school and support the various fund-raising and social events organised by the Friends Association (FOMB). During the inspection, a good number of parents provided valuable help to teachers during lessons. Teachers report that the majority of parents support their children's education well by listening to them reading and by ensuring that they complete their homework on time. The school also provides curriculum evenings so that parents can find out more about what their children learn at school, but these have tended to be poorly attended. The school has plans to seek parents' views about the types of events they would find most useful.

27. The school provides a detailed and informative package of information to new parents to help them to get the most out of their children's education. There are three parents' evenings a year, and pupils' annual written reports are very thorough and helpful – much more so than usually found in other schools. They give parents a great deal of information about their child's attainment and level of effort, and set targets for their future learning. The school's arrangements mean that any problems encountered can be sorted out early, rather than coming to light when it is too late to address them.
28. The good links with the community enhance the quality of pupils' education, as well as providing valuable work experiences for adults and young people who are working towards national qualifications. The local church is used for assemblies and for the annual Christingle service. Pupils perform at the Sheffield Children's Festival, and the school choir raises money for charity by singing in Sheffield city centre. A local pre-school organisation uses the grounds and some of the outdoor facilities, and pupils have benefited from the computers donated by members of the local community. Governors have demonstrated their commitment to working closely with the community by setting up a Parents and Community Committee.
29. The good and sometimes very good links with other schools and educational establishments support pupils' learning well. Staff have extended their expertise, for example in literacy and record-keeping, by working with other professionals. Working with staff from a local secondary school on a government funded sports project has had a direct impact on provision for pupils' physical and social development. Very close links with the main partner secondary school ensure a smooth transfer to the next stage of pupils' education. Very good links with teacher training establishments ensure that the school benefits from having successful student teachers in the school, who are often later appointed to the staff.
30. As there is no local education authority nursery in the area, children attend many different kinds of pre-school provision before they start school. Although there are links with the adjacent pre-school establishment, links with other forms of pre-school providers need strengthening in order to make the transfer to school even smoother. This is an area for improvement that is already recognised by the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Standards of achievement are improving because of the very good leadership and management of the headteacher and the senior leadership team. Very good governance, leadership and management ensure a good quality of education for the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is a strong driving force in improving the quality of pupils' education.
- The school is good at finding out how well it is performing and acting upon information.
- Senior staff work together as a strong team dedicated to driving up standards.
- Governors know their school very well and play a major part in its improvement.
- Teachers with special responsibilities lead and manage improvements successfully.
- The effects of leadership and management in English, mathematics and science are stronger in Years 3 to 6 than they are in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

31. At the time of the last inspection, standards were requiring substantial improvement. Since that time, the school has done a lot to address its weaknesses, and governors report significant improvements, especially in the last two years or so. This is because of the headteacher's clear vision for the future, high expectations and her determination to involve everyone in raising standards. She works very closely with the deputy headteacher, who shares the vision

and strives to help to achieve it. Together, the headteacher and deputy headteacher inspire and motivate staff, governors and parents with their positive approach, and with their ability to make sure that planned improvements are seen through successfully. The senior leadership team, for example, have worked hard together to improve arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment, setting targets for teachers and pupils to aim towards and tracking pupils' progress over time. Although the procedures are still fairly new and not yet always applied consistently, this is a much better position than in 1998, when related weaknesses became key issues.

32. A strong sense of teamwork between governors and staff permeates the life of the school. The very good relationships are evident in the smooth day-to-day running of this large school, with premises that present a lot of potential managerial problems. Governors take a keen interest in everything, either as individuals, in committees or as a whole governing body. They are very knowledgeable about their school and active in securing improvements. Their close involvement in the school improvement plan is evident in the careful financial planning, regular checks on how well things are progressing and the detailed records of governors' activities and observations. Governors are not afraid to tackle difficult problems in order to improve the quality of pupils' education. The premises have improved significantly recently, for example, because of planned changes to arrangements for managing the site. This has also led to securing better value for money from spending. Governors meet the statutory requirements very well, including making sure that this is an inclusive school. They apply best value principles well to their work.
33. Many teachers have special responsibilities that they take very seriously. The co-ordinator of provision for children in the reception classes, for example, has worked very hard to tackle a remaining weakness from the last inspection, when provision was unsatisfactory. Although there is still further work to do, teaching and the curriculum are much better than previously, and the co-ordinator has a good understanding of what still needs to be done. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for gifted and talented pupils is managed very well, and is having a good impact on raising achievement. Examples are the increased numbers of pupils attaining high National Curriculum levels in science and ICT. Although the inspection did not focus on the leadership and management of all subjects, there is clear evidence that co-ordinators for English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education are helping all other teachers to lift the standard of pupils' work. The impact of good co-ordination is not yet as evident in results in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 2, however, where there is room for further improvement, especially in the achievements of higher attaining pupils. Co-ordinators watch over general provision well, and the headteacher has observed teachers in lessons, but opportunities for co-ordinators to see other teachers at work in lessons are still at the planning stage. This means that they do not see at first hand how well teachers are stretching the more capable pupils.
34. The headteacher, governors and staff make very good use of the information available to them in order to find out how well the school is performing. They seek the views of parents and pupils across a range of issues and act upon the findings. They collect a very good range of data, analyse it thoroughly and make sure that weaknesses are reflected in the school improvement plan. They are not complacent, and show concern where national data suggests underachievement. Although the school's evidence suggests that comparisons with schools with a similar proportion of free school meals are unreliable indicators, governors do not use this as an excuse not to try harder. Instead, they build improvements into the school improvement plan, making sure that they have their own data to demonstrate the progress that pupils are making over time. The school does not benefit from any significant national financial aids to raising achievement, and has the disadvantage of premises that present many additional barriers. Governors and staff have to work very hard to minimise the effects of these disadvantages on pupils' education and on the standards they achieve.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,045,230
Total expenditure	1,017,143
Expenditure per pupil	2,022

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	28,223
Balance carried forward to the next	56,310

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children start school in either September or January, depending on their dates of birth. During the inspection, the 28 children who started school in January had only just begun to attend full-time. Many children do not reach the age of five until late in the summer term, and there is no local education authority nursery for them to attend prior to starting school. Children's attainment when they start school is below average, overall. This partly explains why, although children's achievement is satisfactory, not all are not on track to attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world – many children have a lot of catching up to do in a relatively short time. The standards attained by children are below average in each of the areas of learning reported below.

National changes and revised guidance about provision for children in reception classes mean that comparisons between 1998 and this inspection are unreliable. Nevertheless, because of good leadership and management, it is clear that there has been a lot of improvement recently, and the school has gone a long way towards addressing the previous key issue relating to weak teaching and an unsatisfactory curriculum. Satisfactory provision now enables children to achieve at least as well as children in similar schools and to make satisfactory progress. In the areas of learning where judgements were made, teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, were good at times when children worked directly with teachers, either as a whole class or in small groups. Teaching was not as good during some fairly lengthy periods when children selected from a limited variety of play activities and resources and worked with little direct involvement of adults. At these times, children's achievement suffered across all areas of learning, and they did not learn as much as they were capable of.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff put a lot of emphasis on helping children to settle into school life and to know what is expected of them.
- The current organisational arrangements for the new children are unsettling and hinder their progress.

Commentary

35. Teachers and classroom assistants focus a lot of attention, rightly, on helping children to know the differences between right and wrong, to get along with other children and adults, and to enjoy taking part in all the activities in the classroom and beyond. Classrooms have a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, where children can feel secure, and where adults provide very good role models for them. As a result, children quickly learn the routines, as when the youngest children already sit quietly in a circle and listen for their names being called for registration. When teachers notice problems, such as children finding it difficult to share toys, they plan activities to help children to understand what kind of behaviour is expected of them and why. As a result, the older children are happy, well behaved, confident and interested children, who can select activities, work with different adults and try hard when they take part in formal lessons, such as literacy and numeracy work.

36. The very good intentions of staff, however, are sometimes hampered by the current provision for the new starters. The teacher and children are finding it hard to build on the good work done in settling children into school life because of the unusual staffing situation this year. One teacher works with the children in the mornings and other teachers and temporary adults oversee their activities in the afternoons. This makes maintaining a consistent approach and the sense of continuity that the children need as a first priority hard to achieve. Although the class teacher is doing a good job in the challenging circumstances, not all children are benefiting as fully as they could from their first few weeks of school attendance. Also, the teacher has the demanding task of assessing the new children's attainment. While she is spending a great deal of time doing this, many children are not having enough help from adults to give them the best start possible to their education. A classroom assistant often provides good support for groups of children, but opportunities to improve children's personal, social and emotional development through good quality play are too limited.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well when working directly with their teachers.
- Teachers put a lot of emphasis on helping children to learn about the letters of the alphabet and to know how to use them to read and write simple words.
- Teachers involve parents well in their children's reading.
- There are few opportunities for children to improve their listening, talking, reading and writing through good quality play.

Commentary

37. Teachers are good role models of speech and introduce children to new words all the time as part of work across the areas of learning. During their topic work on 'Food from the Sea', for example, children were introduced to words, such as 'scales' and 'fins'. Most children listened carefully to the teacher when the whole class were discussing the fish in the tank, and the teacher's clear explanations and good questioning helped them to improve their own listening and talking skills. In literacy lessons, teachers show that they understand the importance of teaching children to recognise and use letters of the alphabet (*phonics*) when reading and writing. They often do this in meaningful ways; for example, when learning about rhyming words the teacher used a real book that interested the children and encouraged them to join in with trying to read it. Children achieve well when they work directly with teachers in this way. Teachers involve parents well in their children's reading. The two-way home and school reading records show how teachers help parents to know what to look for and how to help their children at home. Other opportunities for talking and listening, however, including when children work outdoors, are not as successful. This is because children do not have many interactions with adults who know how to challenge their thinking and talking skills during play. Children enjoy playing in the pretend fish and chip shop, for example, but there is often no adult available to listen to their talk and to develop it further. Reading and talking about books with adults in an informal way were a rare occurrence during the inspection, and there was little sense of encouragement of children to want to do so.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well when working directly with teachers.
- There are many opportunities for children to learn to count.
- Teachers put emphasis on helping children to understand the words associated with mathematics.
- There are few opportunities for children to practise counting and using mathematical vocabulary and ideas during play activities.

Commentary

38. Teachers take advantage of many opportunities to help children to learn to count, such as asking how many fins the orange fish has got, and counting how many children are present. Even the youngest children try to join in counting up to ten, and some of them up to 20. Teachers plan work that helps children to understand the words associated with mathematics. In one lesson, children improved their understanding of terms such as 'in the middle of' and 'next to', and the higher attaining children were introduced to learning about 'left' and 'right'. This strong focus on the vocabulary of mathematics when children work as a whole class or in groups with an adult helps them to achieve well. Children's achievement is not as good, however, at other times. This is because they have few opportunities to take part in play with adults who extend their learning, for example beginning to count coins and understand money when they play in the shop or the café.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a good range of topics throughout the year to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Children are not very good at talking about the world around them, such as their families, where they live and the toys they play with.

Commentary

39. The cycle of topics is planned to introduce children to a good range of interesting ideas throughout the year and also to take account of seasonal factors. The current topic 'Food from the Sea', for example, stimulates children's interest and their ability to talk about the fish in the tank. When asked about their families and where they live, however, children found it very difficult to express their ideas. There is not enough stimulation in classrooms to encourage excitement and asking questions about how and why things work. Children very much enjoyed finding out what magnifiers do to pictures and some were confident to perform simple tasks on the computer. The benefits of other play activities, however, such as playing in the sand and building with bricks and constructions kits, were limited by fairly poor resources and by lack of involvement of adults in their play to challenge their thinking and talking skills, both indoors and outdoors. There are very few resources to help children to learn about people from other cultures.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It was not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or standards. Children have many satisfactory opportunities to practise handling basic equipment, such as scissors, glue sticks and construction toys. They move around the classrooms and to other areas of the school safely and with awareness of others. When children play outside on the large equipment, they ride bikes, push and pull trucks, climb, slide and move around energetically. Some of this provision is optional for children, however, and it was not possible to see them working in their formal physical education lessons.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

It was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision or standards. Children have regular opportunities to learn to sing songs together, take part in imaginative role-play and to dance in the hall as part of their physical education lessons. The work on display suggests that they use several basic art materials at times. Opportunities for children to express their own creative ideas, for example through painting, working with clay, experimenting with sounds and instruments and exploring natural materials, were little in evidence during the inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable and committed to raising standards.
- The standard of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection and it is now above average in Year 6 in writing.
- Teachers' good knowledge of the subject helps pupils to achieve well.
- The standard of pupils' writing in Year 2 is beginning to show real improvement, when compared with the well below average test results in 2003.
- Reading is taught systematically.
- Teachers do a lot to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The standard of pupils' handwriting is good throughout the school.

Commentary

40. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well and the standard of work is above average in Year 6. This significant improvement from the last inspection is the result of improved teaching and better use of assessment information to guide planning, as well as to track pupils' progress over time. Higher attaining pupils are doing very well. The setting arrangements enable teachers to match work more closely to the pupils' needs and to keep a challenging pace throughout lessons. The innovative projects that encourage higher attaining pupils to undertake research and to organise and present their work independently are contributing very well to raising standards. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well, although the standard of work in Year 2 is average. The focus on improving writing is beginning to show the improvements expected by the teachers. Pupils' work is planned well and teachers expect the most from all their pupils. Writing test results in 2003, although a little better than in 2002, were well below the national average and below similar schools. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to do better than this, owing to the school's concerted efforts to tackle the weakness, including improving the writing of boys.

41. Reading is taught thoroughly so that pupils build on the skills learned in the reception classes. Most pupils enjoy reading and know several different ways of finding out what the unfamiliar words they encounter are and what they mean. A discussion with older pupils shows that they can read independently, have access to a wide choice of appropriate literature and can talk with knowledge and enthusiasm about their favourite authors. Pupils' handwriting in the older classes is neat, joined, fluid and legible, with nearly all pupils taking great care about presentation. Teachers are good at helping pupils to learn to use correct grammar and spelling.
42. Pupils are fully involved in their lessons because teachers have high expectations that all pupils will contribute. They use questions and comments well to probe pupils' understanding, to draw in different groups within their class, and to give pupils opportunities to talk and to develop their own ideas. In an atmosphere of mutual respect, pupils discuss ideas in pairs or small groups before offering extended answers that show a good standard of speaking and listening.
43. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The examples of very good teaching and excellent teaching occur because of the high motivation of pupils who are fully engaged in improving their writing skills. Lessons are planned carefully with clear purposes, and teachers make sure that pupils understand what they are going to learn. Support staff know what is expected of them and they make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra help they receive to do as well as they can. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well within classrooms that are presented to encourage pupils to try their best. The good use of assessment information helps to make sure that teachers focus strongly on the targets they have set for individual pupils and for groups of pupils. This makes teaching more effective and is helping to push up the standards achieved.
44. Subject co-ordinators provide very good leadership. They are well trained and have led all the recent developments and improvements successfully, such as improved lesson planning. They use assessment information well to pinpoint what needs to be done to raise standards. By carefully analysing the attainment of pupils, for example, they can now track pupils' progress from year to year. This is helping to raise expectations of all pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2. Co-ordinators watch over the work of other teachers with a keen eye, and give them helpful pointers for continuing to improve their teaching. Although the headteacher has watched all teachers teaching, opportunities for subject co-ordinators to learn how to do so are still at the planning stage.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and there are many well-planned and exciting activities in which pupils use their reading and writing skills in other subjects, including using computers. Pupils write from their own experiences in stories and poems. Teachers often encourage them to make their own choices about how they present their work in subjects, such as science, history, geography and religious education. Pupils express themselves well and teachers consistently use good questioning across the subjects to encourage pupils to discuss ideas and to extend their answers. This also helps to improve the standard of pupils' writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Some Year 2 pupils do not achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Most pupils enjoy mathematics and are now achieving well.
- Teaching and learning are good, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Subject co-ordinators give a good lead to other teachers.
- ICT is making a positive contribution to teaching and learning in mathematics.

Commentary

46. The standards achieved by pupils throughout the school are good, although pupils' attainment is about the same as the national average. At the beginning of Year 1, pupils' attainment is below average, but they make good progress that continues from year to year, so that by Year 6, they have caught up with most other pupils nationally. In Year 2, most pupils confidently calculate using numbers up to 100, and they use these skills when working out answers to simple money problems. They can name simple shapes and cut them carefully into halves and quarters. Most can use rulers to measure in centimetres. Teaching in Years 1 and 2, however, has given priority to ensuring that as many pupils as possible reach the national average standards, with the result that too few pupils reached a National Curriculum level higher than that expected for their age in the 2003 national tests. Those pupils who recognise numbers to 1,000 can work out doubles and are confident when using coins. They have started to calculate answers to simple multiplication sums.
47. In Year 6, most pupils know how to change fractions to decimals, can calculate the area of a triangle in square centimetres and understand the idea of negative numbers. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy the lively and engaging discussions that are a feature of many lessons. They respond very well to tasks that are sometimes set to time targets and push them to think quickly and improve their mental agility. The setting arrangements help teachers to focus on narrower bands of prior attainment. This means that pupils' work is tightly matched and appropriately challenging to meet their current needs, such as the differing needs of the highest attaining pupils. A class of Year 6 average ability pupils achieved well because the teacher challenged them through effective questioning to explain how they would sort shapes according to different criteria. Similarly, a class of lower ability pupils, including some with special educational needs, achieved well when they learned how to read the time on a clock face accurately. The good achievement was directly related to the small teacher and pupil ratio, good use of resources, clear explanations and the sensitive help given to pupils with special educational needs by support staff. The positive ethos and good organisation and management of most mathematics lessons encourage pupils to try hard and to produce well-presented work.
48. The two subject co-ordinators work closely as a team to provide good leadership to other teachers, and standards are improving. They have been particularly successful in analysing information about pupils' attainment, looking at pupils' work to spot strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, improving arrangements for assessing pupils and supporting a programme of training for staff. The headteacher has already observed all teachers teaching, and has given them pointers for improving their work. Mathematics is a priority area for focus in the school improvement plan, and the two co-ordinators are to have opportunities to undertake this monitoring role themselves.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. Teachers make good use of ICT as a means of teaching mathematics and raising standards. Pupils enjoy working with computers as they improve their mathematical knowledge and understanding during sessions in the ICT suite. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher effectively used the visual display facilities of a class-based interactive board to help pupils to practise mental calculations about money. Later in the same lesson, pupils used the wireless electronic palette to 'drag' the cursor precisely to co-ordinate locations on a grid. Pupils' good achievement in this area is also evident in their investigative science work. A Year 3 lesson, for example, provided good opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills when conducting a fair test on dissolving different types of sugar.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well, and standards are above national average in Year 6.
- There was a good amount of improvement in the 2003 test results for pupils in Year 6, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Clear learning objectives for lessons are shared with pupils so that they focus well on their learning.
- Teachers question pupils skilfully and help them to learn scientific vocabulary that deepens their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' good subject expertise enables them to explain scientific concepts well.
- Lack of challenge and feedback for higher attaining pupils in lessons in Years 1 and 2 hinders their achievement.

Commentary

50. The standard of pupils' work is in line with the national average in Year 2 and above national average in Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good achievement for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 6 attain similar standards in their knowledge and understanding as they do in their practical work. They have a lot of opportunities for investigating science in practical ways. The interesting work they do enthuses them and helps them to make links between the knowledge they gain and their understanding of how science can be applied to real situations. Pupils also have good opportunities to practise their English, mathematics and ICT skills through work in science. In Years 1 and 2 there are fewer opportunities for pupils to collect data, answer questions and explain what is happening in investigations. They spend time completing worksheets that ask little of them in terms of applying scientific ideas and finding things out by themselves. This sometimes restricts their achievement.
51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. They are good in Years 3 to 6 because teachers encourage pupils to investigate and to think about science in an enquiring way. As a result of good teaching, the 2003 national test results for pupils in Year 6 improved a lot on the previous year, and the school had a larger proportion of higher attaining pupils than the national average or similar schools. Teachers are clear which knowledge, skills and understanding they want pupils to learn and to practise, and they involve the pupils themselves in making sure that they do. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the skills of enquiry were very well taught, mostly through a question and answer approach about an experiment on dissolving that pupils had started the previous week. The teacher drew out ideas from the pupils, so that they made great progress in their understanding of how to control variables and of the nature of

scientific investigation. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 share a vision about the importance of enquiry in science work, and this is due to the good leadership and management by co-ordinators.

52. Teachers follow a clear scheme of work, and year groups are taught separately, ensuring that the curriculum is covered without repeating work or omissions. Formal checks on the quality of teaching have not yet taken place, however, and this means that the very best practice in the school has not been identified and shared with all other teachers. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment are being introduced, but pupils are not yet clear about how well they are doing or what they need to be aiming to achieve in the longer term. Teachers and support staff work hard to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities by asking probing questions and providing helpful support where it is needed, including for pupils with special educational needs. In Years 1 and 2, however, teachers do not always give enough attention to planning different work for pupils of differing abilities within each class. This sometimes means that the higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently, and their achievement suffers.
53. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, particularly in terms of teaching, pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 and national test results for pupils in Year 6. Improvement in assessing pupils and in monitoring the quality of provision, however, has been satisfactory. The school has more to do in terms of ensuring that there are enough higher attaining pupils by the end of Year 2.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards achieved by pupils are good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6.
- There has been a lot of improvement since the last inspection, because of very good leadership.
- Careful planning and sharing clear learning objectives with pupils enable them to focus on their learning.
- Skilful questioning and using technical vocabulary deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' good subject expertise helps them to explain things and to develop pupils' skills well.
- The very good links with other subjects enhance pupils' understanding.

Commentary

54. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of good teaching and learning. The standard of work is above average in Year 2 because pupils have a wide range of ICT skills, and use computers purposefully and very competently for their ages. They use object tools in a drawing program, for example, to design repeating patterns, using several different tools and sometimes going beyond carrying out their teachers' instructions. They are keen to demonstrate what they can find out using CD-ROM. They are eager to make their word-processed work look good, so they change the font, size and colour in order to do so. Pupils have an awareness of the uses of computers outside school, for example to find things out using the Internet, to send letters (e-mail) and for entertainment (games). Pupils have not yet experienced control applications, but teachers expect that they will do so before the end of the school year.
55. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6, and the standard of work is well above average in Year 6. This is because teaching and learning are very good. Pupils in Year 6 are moving on to making links between what they are learning and how their work might usefully be applied to other subjects, for example creating a database and using it to identify two-dimensional

shapes in mathematics. Another good example is creating a variety of graphs from spreadsheets to help to interpret results from science investigations. They use a word-processing package to design a postcard incorporating text boxes and clip art. They have not yet used the Internet or control programs, but teachers expect that they will do so before the end of the school year. Pupils' good and very good achievement in all classes is one of the school's main strengths. It is due to careful planning by teachers that ensures that pupils learn skills in a way that builds on what they already know, understand and can do. They give strong consideration to helping pupils to become increasingly aware of the 'audience' for their work. Consequently, pupils learn to draft and re-draft work and design and re-design work in other subjects. The school's enthusiastic involvement in national projects has secured very high standards for the older higher attaining pupils.

56. Teachers give pupils clear and careful explanations of the learning objectives for lessons. They question pupils skilfully, for example to find out how much they have learned. They manage lessons and equipment very well to make sure that pupils use computers sensibly. Support staff are on hand to provide extra help when needed, and this keeps pupils engrossed in their work. In a Year 6 lesson for higher attaining pupils, the teacher challenged them to create a formula to convert currency from one denomination to another, using a spreadsheet. The teacher's excellent explanation, and use of technical vocabulary and the interactive board, ensured that all pupils made excellent progress. By the end of the lesson, they were able to develop a simple formula, use the 'auto' and 'sum' functions, drag formulae from other cells, construct and express simple formulae using symbols, and adjust answers to two decimal places.
57. The two subject co-ordinators have achieved a great deal since the last inspection, and their leadership and management are very good. They have considered the last report and addressed the issues raised in it very well. The new ICT suites have been developed, arising from a national initiative to help pupils to develop thinking skills and to become independent learners. Other improvements include extending staff expertise, improving the curriculum and resources for teaching, and also collecting a portfolio of assessed pupils' work to demonstrate standards in the school. The standards achieved have improved considerably, therefore improvement since the last inspection is very good. There are further plans for improvement by continuing to check the quality of provision, including teaching.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. The carefully timetabled computer suites and detailed lesson planning ensure a very good curriculum that is characterised by strong links between subjects. This has a very good impact on the standards achieved by all pupils. The number of computers in the school is about the same as the national average, and the school is planning a further suite for children in the reception classes and pupils in Years 1 and 2.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected fully and is reported below. Inspectors also saw a lesson in history and a lesson in geography, but there was too little evidence to make judgements on the standards achieved or teaching.

Teachers' planning and pupils' previous work in **HISTORY** and **GEOGRAPHY** suggest a satisfactory curriculum, with regular educational visits and visitors to the school to improve their understanding of the subjects. When planning topics, teachers make sure that they avoid repetition for those pupils who are taught in mixed-age classes. Photographic evidence suggests that pupils have enjoyed their work on Victorians, when they dressed up in Victorian clothes and attended a 'mock' classroom. As part of their topic about the work of the fire service, fire personnel brought an appliance to school. Teachers use such resources well to bring history and geography 'alive' for the

pupils. In a history lesson in Year 4, for example, good provision of carefully selected artefacts helped pupils to learn how to look for clues about the past, and this prompted a lively discussion.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standard of pupils' work by Year 6 is above that expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well in Years 3 to 6.
- Completing worksheets sometimes impedes pupils' learning and their achievement.
- Pupils use their literacy skills very well to record their ideas and to show that they recall important facts about different religions.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons.

Commentary

59. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education meet the standard expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and since the last inspection, the school has done well to improve the range of work that pupils cover. In Years 1 and 2, pupils recall important facts about Judaism and Christianity, including the sacred texts, customs and celebrations. The standard of pupils' work is above average in Year 6. This is because teachers' planning is well organised and because their subject expertise is strong. Pupils have a good understanding of different places of worship. They are developing a good understanding of Islam, its sacred text and the important rituals that guide Muslims in their faith.
60. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are good at questioning pupils to encourage them to think and to express their own ideas. They select and use resources thoughtfully to assist pupils' understanding. In some lessons, however, pupils' learning is restricted when they complete worksheets that prevent them from recording their ideas in their own ways. The worksheets are sometimes too difficult for pupils to read, and this limits their achievement. In Years 3 to 6, teaching and learning are good, with some very good features that help to interest the pupils and raise standards. A teacher in Year 6 planned a high quality lesson and questioned pupils skilfully to pursue the difficult concept of 'faith' and why people value it and behave as they do. In response, the pupils thought deeply and discussed their own ideas at length, showing a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are also developing a good understanding of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They are building up a vocabulary and have good understanding of faith and religious symbolism.
61. Good leadership by subject co-ordinators has ensured a good amount of improvement since the last inspection. The standard of pupils' work in Year 6, the quality of teaching and the curriculum are better than in 1998. Teachers use the good quality resources for learning well, including picture books, videos and artefacts, to foster an interest in the subject. Pupils use their speaking, listening and literacy skills well to discuss, research and record their learning in a range of interesting ways.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There was too little evidence to make judgements in any of these subjects. One lesson was seen and work was sampled in art and design and in design and technology. Older pupils were heard singing in their weekly singing assembly.

ART AND DESIGN

Pupils throughout the school record their ideas about art and design using a good range of materials, including computer programs. They have opportunities to respond to the work of famous artists and to visit places of interest, such as a local art gallery. Such work makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development and an occasional contribution to their multi-cultural understanding. Older pupils use sketchbooks to experiment with ideas and materials. Previous lesson planning suggests that teachers take good account of the National Curriculum and make sure that lessons have a clear focus on learning skills and techniques. Teachers value pupils' work and display it carefully around the school. Some of this work is of a good standard, such as the pictures in the style of Lowry in Year 2 and the three-dimensional sculptures in Year 6. The portfolios of previous work from all classes also contain some pieces that are of a good standard.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

As in art and design, work planned in design and technology also takes good account of the National Curriculum, including food technology. Pupils learn to design things, make them and then evaluate their finished products. Planning suggests that teachers pay a lot of attention to teaching specific skills and to teaching the vocabulary of the subject. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, the teacher taught pupils how to fold strong card by scoring it first – safely with scissors. She emphasised the vocabulary of the subject and provided a good role model of speech for the pupils with her clear explanations. The skilful questioning drew out pupils' understanding of the need to consider the future use of products before starting to make them. Pupils in Year 6 have designed, made and evaluated wheeled vehicles, showing at least average skills for their age. They have completed written evaluations from their bread making and tasting, and recorded their findings across a good range of criteria. They rarely have opportunities yet to record and develop their ideas using ICT.

MUSIC

Pupils do not sing or listen to music in assemblies on a regular basis. During the weekly singing assembly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, the standard of singing was broadly in line with national expectation for pupils in Year 6. About 50 pupils have weekly instrumental lessons with visiting specialist teachers, when they learn to play clarinet, violin, piano, trumpet or guitar. The school is keen for pupils to have these musical opportunities, and the teaching and learning programme is organised and managed successfully.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Lessons were timetabled in most classes during the inspection, covering dance, gymnastics and outdoor games, and pupils in Year 3 went swimming. Owing to the planned priorities for the inspection, it was not possible to see any of these lessons. The school believes that pupils' sporting achievements through extra-curricular sport are strong, but inspectors were unable to confirm this, owing to lack of direct evidence.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There was not enough evidence to report on this area individually, but one lesson for Year 5 and 6 pupils was seen. Pupils considered how peer pressure might affect them. They created a play script about bullying from a real life story. Their task was to work in pairs to re-write it in a way likely to lead to a good conclusion. In the discussion about 'perpetrators' and 'victims', the teacher questioned pupils thoughtfully to check their understanding. As well as the formal curriculum, pupils have a lot of incidental opportunities to improve their personal and social skills. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to learn how to take their place and play their part in the school community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

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	3

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