

INSPECTION REPORT

MARLOW CE (VA) INFANT SCHOOL

Marlow

LEA area: BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Unique reference number: 110433

Headteacher: Mrs V J Hughes

Lead inspector: Elisabeth de Lancey

Dates of inspection: 12 – 14 January 2004

Inspection number: 256855

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
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	180
School address:	Sandygate Road Marlow Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	SL7 3AZ
Telephone number:	01628 483983
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev Matthew Reed
Date of previous inspection:	11 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Marlow CE (VA) Infant school is a smaller than average infant school for pupils from the ages of four to seven. Children are admitted to the reception class on a part-time basis in the autumn term of the school year in which they become five. Children are admitted to the nursery class in the spring or summer term after their fourth birthday. The school is situated on the north side of Marlow, though some pupils come from further afield. The school is oversubscribed. There were 180 pupils on roll at the time of the inspection. Since the last inspection, the school has been the subject of local authority re-organisation and it is no longer a first school catering for pupils between the ages of four and eight. The school draws on an area where the socio-economic circumstances are relatively favourable. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school but it is average overall. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Almost all pupils are from white English speaking families. There are few pupils from ethnic minority groups and only one is at an early stage of learning English. A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs, and one has a statement. Few pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times. The school gained a DfES achievement award in 2001. It is recognised as an 'Investor in People'; holds the 'Quality Mark Award' for the teaching of basic skills and is accredited as a 'Healthy School'.

There has been a change of leadership since the last inspection and almost all the current staff have joined the school since that time. Two new teachers and one learning support assistant joined the school in January. The school offers a range of community provision which was also inspected. An inspection of religious education and collective worship was also carried out at the same time.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22272	Elisabeth de Lancey	Lead inspector	English Art Design and technology English as an additional language
19436	Michael O'Malley	Lay inspector	
21100	Alan Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs
15690	Janice Allen	Team inspector	Geography History Music Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a very good standard of education for its pupils. Most pupils make very good progress and reach standards that are above, and often well above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well. The school provides an interesting and imaginative curriculum. The leadership of the headteacher and school governance are very good. **The school provides very good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is well supported by governors.
- By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics are above average compared with similar schools and pupils achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Year 2 is very good.
- The partnership with parents is excellent and they play a significant part in pupils' learning.
- Children in the nursery get a very good start to school.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are very well cared for, behave well and work collaboratively, which supports their learning.
- The curriculum provides well for all pupils. It is considerably enriched by a wide range of extra curricular activities and the outdoor environment is used very well to promote pupils' learning.
- The school's very good links with other schools, and the local and wider community enrich the curriculum.
- Writing is not sufficiently well developed in other subjects to raise standards further.
- The provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall however, it could be further developed by a greater consistency of approach across the classes.

Since the school was last inspected in May 1998 improvement has been very good. The school has sustained the high standards reported at the last inspection in reading, mathematics and science, and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved, largely because teachers are now more confident in using ICT and resources have improved. Assessment opportunities are now identified in teachers' planning. Curriculum co-ordinators are now more involved in monitoring the curriculum. Using and applying mathematics are now a strong feature of work in numeracy and there are now more opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity in music and dance. All health and safety issues have been addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	A	B	A	B
Writing	A*	A	B	C
Mathematics	A*	A	A	A

*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 the table A* refers to the highest five per cent nationally.

In the Foundation Stage pupils achieve well and are on course to attain the goals set for them in all areas of learning and a significant minority will exceed them. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, attainment in reading and mathematics was well above average; in writing it was above average. Standards in writing were not so high as in reading and mathematics because fewer more

able pupils reached the higher than expected level (Level 3). **Currently, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well.** The high achievement in Year 2 reflects the very good quality of much of the teaching. Standards in reading and writing are above average. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of pupils' writing, and higher standards are reflected in the work of the more able pupils. Standards in ICT are average, which is an improvement on the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of the early identification of individual needs and the sensitive support they are given. The few pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. The school tracks the progress of each pupil carefully and gives good support to those pupils who are not attaining as well as they should.

The school encourages pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development very well. Assemblies make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The school develops pupils' sense of community very well and the school council is making a significant contribution to this aspect of the school's work. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and form positive relationships with one another. Their behaviour is very good. Attendance is well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. This is because **teaching overall is good** and pupils learn well. The teaching of English in Year 2 is very good and pupils in these lessons achieve very well because the teachers have very high expectations of the pupils, and pupils are interested in their work and do their best. All staff foster very good relationships with their pupils, and those who are new to the school settle in very quickly. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning particularly for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. This enables them to be included in all activities. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to set targets for pupils and to promote their progress. The school plans a broad curriculum which includes a very good programme of additional activities to extend pupils' learning opportunities. Accommodation and resources are good. The school cares very well for its pupils and monitors their progress very well. Parents give the school excellent support and they are kept well informed. Links with the community are very good and successfully extend pupils' understanding of the wider world.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and promotes a constant drive for improvement. The governors fulfil their statutory duties very well and their governance is of a high standard. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led. Subject leadership and management are good. The temporary Foundation Stage leader partnership has made a good start but a permanent leader is due to be appointed. The subject co-ordinators for English, design and technology and science are new to their posts.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high regard for the school. They particularly appreciate the information they receive and the many opportunities they are given to learn about their children's education. Pupils enjoy school and welcome the very good support they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend the opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects.
- Further develop and enhance the provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. They make good progress along the stepping stones; most will reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the start of Year 1 and a significant minority will exceed this. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well overall, and those in Year 2 achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards their individual targets and their achievement is good. Achievement for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are above average.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well in the personal, social and emotional aspect of their development.
- Pupils' achievement in basic skills in literacy and numeracy is good.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, mathematics and science has improved because teaching in Year 2 is very good.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because staff give pupils sensitive care and very good guidance.
- Pupils' writing is not sufficiently well developed in other subjects.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.5 (17.1)	15.7(15.8)
writing	15.6 (15.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.5 (18.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. In the 2003 national tests, the results for seven-year-olds were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing compared to all schools nationally. When compared with schools which take pupils from similar backgrounds, they were well above average in mathematics, above average in reading and average in writing. In mathematics, pupils performed very well because over half the pupils attained the higher than expected level (Level 3). This proportion is well above average. In reading, just over 40 per cent of the pupils attained the higher level which is above average. Standards in writing were as not as high because the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level did not match those in reading and mathematics and were below those of pupils attending similar schools. The school has already identified this factor in the school improvement plan, and has identified ways to effect improvement. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work in science indicated that their performance was well above average in all aspects of science. In life processes, and physical processes it was particularly strong at the higher than expected level.
2. In Year 2, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, achieve well and this reflects the very good standard of teaching in most lessons. Standards in reading and mathematics are currently above average. Standards in writing in the 2003

national tests were average but inspection evidence suggests that more able pupils are doing better this year. The community provision for parents is helping them to support their children and this is having a positive impact on standards.

3. By Year 2, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. Standards in physical education are average. There is not enough evidence to report on standards and achievement in science, art and design, design and technology, geography and history and music.
4. Pupils' achievements in Year 2 are very good because lessons are well planned and the teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils are very clear about what is expected of them, individual targets are used well and they gain confidence in their ability to improve. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, make very good progress towards the appropriate targets set for them. They receive very good support and reach standards consistent with their capabilities and achieve well. The few pupils learning English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully included in all the school has to offer and achieve as well as their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development remains very good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. They arrive punctually at school and their attendance is very good. Community provision for parents is enriching pupils' view of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is well promoted in the nursery and the reception class and developed well throughout the school.
- Pupils do their best and take a pride in their work.
- Pupils have very good relationships with staff and one another.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains very good. It is promoted well through assemblies, the school council and attendance at school clubs and other extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

5. Children and parents agree that pupils like coming to school because the other children are friendly and most lessons are interesting and fun. Pupils report that they are expected to work hard and they are trusted to do things on their own when they are asked.
6. The pupils' very positive attitudes towards their work are evident from the earliest age. Children in the nursery are happy and settled. Staff help them to feel secure, proud of themselves and aware of others. Their independence and enthusiasm for learning are developed well and they become increasingly independent as they move into the reception class. By the time they leave the reception class they are likely to exceed the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development. As they move through the school staff very effectively build on pupils' self esteem and this helps pupils to grow in confidence and become aware of the needs of others. Parents agree that the school helps their children to become mature. Parental involvement in literacy and numeracy workshops sets a very good example to pupils and helps shape their attitudes to learning.
7. Most pupils take a pride in their work and do their best. They respond well to the tasks that require them to take responsibility or work together. For example, older pupils are keen to help the younger ones at playtime as well as helping with more routine tasks in and around the school. In lessons they frequently discuss their work in pairs, before reporting their findings to

the whole class. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good and have a direct impact on learning. The school council offers pupils a formal channel for contributing to school improvement.

8. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to their work and behave well. When working in small groups with a member of staff, they demonstrate a high level of motivation and concentration. In larger class groups, they co-operate well with other pupils, who are ready to support them in settling to their tasks. There is also very good support for the few pupils who do not speak English at home.
9. The school's strong Christian ethos provides a very good basis for the spiritual development of each child. It is very well promoted in assemblies which provide formal occasions for celebration and reflection. All adults value what pupils have to say and encourage them to talk about their feelings and opinions.
10. The school helps pupils to develop their understanding of right and wrong. They discuss a variety of issues that help them to understand more about how human beings should behave towards one another and the impact of people on the natural environment.
11. The school works hard to provide pupils with a wide variety of opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of their own culture and to appreciate the cultural traditions of others through work in art and design, English, music, history and geography. The effective involvement of pupils and parents from a variety of cultural backgrounds, who explain their cultural traditions, helps develop pupils' awareness and prepares them for living in a multi-cultural society.

Attendance

Attendance is much better than that normally found in infant schools. The school follows up all unexplained absences with telephone calls home on the first day of non-attendance where necessary. Unauthorised absence is low. The pupils enjoy school and are punctual. Parents report that their children are keen to come to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.6	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

The school did not exclude any pupils during the last reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good standard of education for its pupils. Teaching is good overall and there are some substantial strengths. The curriculum is very good and is considerably enriched by a very good range of extra activities and the use of the outdoor environment. The school provides very well for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils' personal, social and health education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children's progress is assessed very well in the Foundation Stage and in English, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2. There are sound procedures for assessing pupils' progress in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most of the teaching and learning in Year 2 is very good.
- Teaching in the nursery is consistently good.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and there is some specialist teaching which leads to very good learning,
- Teaching assistants are deployed very well and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and promotes good achievement.
- Pupils are sometimes given independent tasks which do not support or extend their learning because their content is inappropriate.

Commentary

12. There were two new part-time temporary teachers working in a reception class at the time of the inspection because of the resignation of a full-time teacher late in the autumn term. Together with their teaching assistant, they were strongly committed to creating a good working environment but had not had time to establish a confident working team. However, the scrutiny of children's work and teachers' assessments from the previous term indicate that pupils made good progress through the reception year.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	11	11	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.

13. In the Foundation Stage, teaching in the nursery is consistently good; in the reception year it is satisfactory with some strong features. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They plan a good balance of activities, some of which are carefully directed and others which children choose for themselves. Activities are generally well matched to children's needs with sessions of an appropriate length to sustain their interest and concentration. As a result the children achieve well.
14. A strength of the teaching in the school is the very good relationship between pupils and adults. Teachers use questions skilfully to ensure that all pupils are fully involved. They listen carefully to pupils' contributions, acting on the information to plan future work. They praise, encourage and reassure, and the pupils respond by concentrating hard and sustaining a productive pace of work. Teachers have secure subject knowledge in most subjects. A specialist teacher in music, and teaching assistants in art and design and the use of the environment, share their knowledge by working with other classes or supporting colleagues. This leads to very good learning experiences for pupils because these adults have very good expertise and show great enthusiasm for their subjects. As a result, pupils acquire greater knowledge in these subjects and have very good support to improve their skills. Pupils report that lessons are interesting and fun and that they learn new things. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities and given strong but unobtrusive support.

15. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and share with pupils what they want them to learn. As a result, pupils are clear about what they have to do and respond well. Through the individual targets they are set they gain an understanding of how they can improve their work. Weaknesses occur when pupils' individual work does not build on the whole-class work at the beginning of the lesson and independent tasks do not support or extend pupils' learning. On occasion, teachers do not give explicit instructions to help pupils start their work and the pace of learning slows.
16. The best teaching is in Year 2, where the teaching of literacy is particularly strong and ICT is used effectively to support learning. Teaching in these classes is characterised by an appropriate balance of challenge and support which ensures lessons sustain a brisk pace and pupils are consistently engaged. In these lessons, end-of-lesson sessions are used effectively to reinforce learning and assess attainment, and pupils gain good knowledge of their learning.
17. Assessment procedures continue to be very good. Assessment opportunities are identified in teachers' planning and teachers and pupils are now clear how these will be assessed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has collated all the assessment data to form a system for tracking each pupil's progress from year to year. Any pupils making insufficient progress are identified and a support programme put in place to help them catch up. There are good examples of marking which helps pupils to know what they have to do to improve their work. Almost all parents are satisfied with the homework their children are given. Workshops for parents make them more confident in supporting their children's learning. Pupils and parents know what to expect and work done at home helps consolidate what is being learned at school and often extends it.
18. For pupils with special educational needs, teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan effectively for these pupils. Teaching assistants have a wide range of expertise and work effectively with the teachers to provide very good support for the pupils. Assessment procedures for special educational needs are very good. They include diagnostic assessments to identify specific needs, and carefully selected tests and activities to monitor progress and development. These procedures complement general observation and careful tracking by staff as they plot in detail pupils' success in moving to attain their identified targets.

The curriculum

The school provides all pupils with a well-structured curriculum. It is planned to capture the interests of all pupils and to meet their particular needs. There are good opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very well planned curriculum that is significantly enriched by a wide range of additional activities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective.
- The school is strongly committed to meeting the needs of all pupils.
- The school makes good provision for the personal, social and health education of pupils.
- The school's provision of environmental education is innovative and of very good quality.
- Further development of staffing, accommodation and resources in the Foundation Stage is a school priority.

Commentary

19. Since the last inspection the school has significantly improved the provision and effectiveness of ICT and it now meets national standards. Improvements have also been made in the use of mathematical reasoning in other subjects and in promoting creativity through music and dance. Other improvements include the introduction of 'blocked time' in Years 1 and 2, where

teachers and pupils focus on a subject for an extended period of time; this is working particularly well in science, art and design, design and technology, geography and history. Art and design is used well to support learning in other subjects. In addition to 'blocked time' for music pupils have regular opportunities to practise skills in assemblies and during fortnightly sessions with a peripatetic music teacher.

20. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage follows the national guidance. There is a strong focus on developing children's personal, social and emotional skills through an interesting curriculum that includes good opportunities for learning through play. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' planning is securely based in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the school has introduced a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. This is having a beneficial impact on achievements in reading and, more especially, in writing. Literacy and numeracy skills contribute to and are reinforced by work across the curriculum and satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
21. The school is committed to providing an education which meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and effective steps are taken to provide additional support or challenge. For example, there are lessons for gifted and talented pupils and there is very effective provision for pupils with special educational needs. Detailed individual education plans, which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress towards clearly stated targets, are drawn up for all pupils requiring them. Targets are precisely expressed in easily assessed terms and very carefully monitored. For the majority of the time pupils are helped within their classrooms; on occasion, they are appropriately withdrawn for additional activities. Where necessary, they are effectively supported by outside agencies with which the school maintains very good relations. Staff are very sensitive to the personal circumstances and characteristics of each pupil and every child is valued.
22. Ability groupings are used to organise teaching and learning across the curriculum in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 but on occasion, teachers do not use this system flexibly enough to provide the right level of challenge for individual or small groups of pupils.
23. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. This is being developed further through the school's effective participation in the 'Healthy School' initiative. Regular 'circle times', when pupils meet together to discuss their thoughts and feelings, encourage them to see things from others' points of view. Staff respect pupils' views and feelings and the school council gives pupils a voice in the school's decision making.
24. Activities which enrich the curriculum are a strength of the school. Pupils have the opportunity to join a very wide range of clubs and activities which are appropriate to their age and interests. These take place at lunch times, before and after school, There are opportunities for pupils to improve their basic skills, extend their knowledge of the arts and the environment and to participate in sporting activities. Pupils also benefit from visitors to the school and teachers make very good use of the locality in their teaching. School productions, concerts and special assemblies provide rich opportunities for pupils to develop self-confidence and a range of talents.
25. The match of teaching staff to the curriculum is good. The match of support staff to the needs of pupils and the curriculum is good in all parts of the school. Accommodation is good and the resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The provision for support and guidance is very good. The school has maintained the very high standards noted at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of pupils and takes very good account of their views.
- Pupils' achievements are monitored very well and they are given very good support to help their progress.
- There are very good induction arrangements for new pupils.
- Provision of community courses on parenting helps to promote the care and support of pupils.

Commentary

26. The staff know the pupils very well and ensure they are happy, secure, and confident in getting on with their learning. There are good arrangements for health and safety. Staff make sure that pupils learn and play safely. There is good first aid coverage and staff know about any medical conditions pupils may have. Premises are checked systematically for hazards and improvements are made where necessary. There are effective procedures for child protection. The school has received accreditation for promoting healthy and safe living. Pupils are confident that there is someone to turn to if they have problems, and the school takes very good account of their views and concerns through the school council and class discussions.
27. Pupils' achievements are monitored very well through a good tracking system and teachers' records. Extra support is given through additional programmes in language, thinking skills, personal and social development. Pupils have targets which are discussed with them and their parents. All pupils receive full recognition for their achievements.
28. There are very good arrangements to help pupils settle into school. The teachers seek parents' views about their children's development and parents are kept very well informed through meetings and visits to the school. The school continues to work closely with parents to make sure their children are settling in well. There is very good support for pupils who join the school later during term time.
29. For pupils with special educational needs, carefully constructed programmes, to support their learning, are put in place after a thorough review of assessment findings. The school is helped in this through the work of the assistant special educational needs co-ordinator and, when necessary, that of specialist outside agencies.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is excellent. It is even better than reported at the time of the last inspection. Parents make a very strong contribution to the school and to their children's learning. There are very good links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school and think highly of the education provided for their children.
- Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning.
- The school makes very good use of community links and works closely with other schools.

Commentary

30. The school sees a close partnership with parents as fundamental to its work. Parents report that they are made to feel very welcome in the school. They feel confident in approaching the headteacher and speak highly of the school's 'family atmosphere'. They appreciate that their views are also sought through questionnaires.

31. Parents of children with special educational needs are regularly consulted and they are encouraged to work in close partnership with the school to address their children's needs. Their children's individual education plans include appropriate, carefully-selected activities for them to undertake with their children out of school.
32. Parents are very supportive of the school and respond generously to appeals for help. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Frequent newsletters provide up-to-date information on scheduled events and issues and these are much appreciated. Annual written reports clearly outline the progress of individual children. There are regular opportunities for parents to review their children's progress and to discuss the setting of targets. Curriculum information, provided each half term for parents, is highly valued.
33. A number of parents and governors help in the school on a regular basis. Some help in the classroom, others with outdoor activities and visits. This very strong support is a notable feature of the school and has a very good impact on pupils' learning
34. As part of its community provision, the school offers courses in literacy, numeracy, and parenting skills. They give good guidance for parents so they can support their children's education. There have been courses for parents to explain about education websites and internet safety. Parent class representatives organise coffee mornings for parents and keep them well informed about 'Parent and Friends' events.
35. The school makes very good use of community links to broaden pupils' experience, promote their personal development and develop their understanding of citizenship. Many visitors enrich the curriculum, and pupils visit the town, park, church and library. They take part in festivals, concerts, carol singing, and the local 'carnival and fayre'. Lottery grants have been used well to organise a Batik exhibition and produce a musical. Very good links with the local church community support the school's Christian ethos. The children entertain the elderly and deliver harvest gifts. They send parcels to Romania and raise funds for charity. The school works closely with the Warburg reserve and Wycombe rangers on environment and conservation projects. The community newsletter and school website promote the school very well, and keep local residents well informed on such things as the school travel plan. Local groups for activities such as ballet and football hire out the school hall and provide readily accessible extra-curricular activities. The Sandygate pre-school playgroup meets in school every day, and the Marlow day nursery is in the school grounds.
36. There is a very good partnership with Holy Trinity junior school. The schools work closely to ensure good continuity to pupils' education, and help them transfer smoothly. The three Marlow church schools have worked collaboratively to provide good additional learning support teaching. The pupils attend the mathematics fair at Foxes Piece school. They join with other schools for festivals and concerts. 'Praise in the Park' is a particularly successful venture organised by the local church schools. Reception and nursery teachers visit the playgroups and meet regularly with the local playgroup leaders.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's high quality leadership and management, and the effective teamwork of staff and governors have successfully sustained the school's high standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear-sighted vision for the individual development of all pupils.
- School governance is of a high standard.
- The school successfully engages parents as partners in their children's education.
- The school has effective monitoring procedures which are the responsibility of all staff.

Commentary

37. At the centre of this effective school is a headteacher with very good leadership and management skills. Her clear vision of a secure, supportive and enriching learning environment in which all pupils have every opportunity to succeed informs all aspects of the school's work. Placing the individual pupil at the heart of the school is reflected fully in the school's daily practices. The very good relationships between staff and pupils are complemented by those between staff and parents. Through this association staff and parents have secured a working relationship which has proved of immense benefit to each pupil's individual development. The school has assiduously promoted this role for parents through its effective community provision. Parents spoke warmly of their involvement at their pre-inspection meeting and confirmed it in their completed questionnaires. It was also reflected in the unanimous view drawn from the questionnaire, where all of the respondents stated that '*the school is well led and managed*'.
38. The headteacher values the staff and governors and the expertise they bring to the school. She recognises their continued professional development as essential to the school's growth. For all staff, this is secured through the school's successful performance management programme and the promotion of training. The school's gaining of 'Investor in People' status is indicative of this. The success of the school's professional development procedures is reflected in the work of all staff and the effective teamwork through which they carry out their duties. Teachers meet regularly in year groups to plan work, share responsibilities and support each other. This open, co-operative approach informs the work of curriculum co-ordinators, many of whom, because of staff changes, have only recently assumed new responsibilities. For example, a temporary leadership team is in place for the Foundation Stage pending the planned establishment of this post. Co-ordinators are supported in their roles by the school's established and proven monitoring and evaluation procedures for which all staff have some defined level of responsibility. The co-ordinators' detailed annual plans identify clear priorities and the monitoring that will inform their subjects' developments. The leadership and management of the headteacher, as special educational needs co-ordinator, assisted by the specialist teacher for special educational needs are very effective. The headteacher offers a clear focus for this work and ensures all systems and procedures are in place. The teacher brings expertise to the identification of pupils' needs and the development of appropriate programmes to meet them. She makes very good use of her work in linked schools to disseminate successful practice for the pupils' benefit. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and supported effectively. Where appropriate, the headteacher provides useful, specialist curriculum programmes for them.
39. The school's highly effective governors fulfil their statutory duties very well. They have formed a strong team of confident practitioners which has helped them to carry out their responsibilities successfully. On school visits, they liaise closely with staff to review the curriculum and monitor teaching and learning. They are very well informed and hard working. They have a clear overview of the school and are alert to requirements that they have a duty to monitor the school's practices and account for their own stewardship to parents. To these ends governors have established a range of committees to which appropriate delegated powers have been made. They hold an additional termly meeting of the governing body, the sole purpose of which is to monitor the school's performance. Detailed minutes of all governing body and committee meetings highlight the depth and range of their work. These records show that governors adhere to the principles of best value and use them appropriately to shape their effective financial management and governance of the school. Their efficiency in these matters and the quality of their support to the school reflects in part their successful undertaking of a three-year programme of structured self-evaluation. Through careful management of its contingency reserves, the school has accrued a sum of money to develop its site, in particular, to improve outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage.

40. The school has relevant development priorities. The staff have made good use of the work of external assessors in gaining the Quality Mark and the Investor in People awards. As part of their annual management monitoring, staff and governors review the school's strengths and weaknesses, and consider the opportunities for the school's further development and any likely obstacles to it. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. Together, this confirms that the school has a clear capacity for sustained improvement.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	410492
Total expenditure	408774
Expenditure per pupil	2198

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	30318
Balance carried forward to the next	32035

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter the school's nursery on a part-time basis in the spring and summer terms after their fourth birthdays. Children enter the reception classes at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. Initially attendance is part-time, becoming full-time for the oldest children in the spring term and for the youngest children in the summer term. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is generally above that expected for their age, they achieve well in all areas of learning and enter reception at above average levels of attainment. About two-thirds of the school's intake join the school in the reception class. These children have experienced a very wide variety of pre-school provision. They have a much broader range of attainment on entry to the school; many with lower than expected attainment, particularly in the skills linked to the development of writing. Overall attainment on entry to reception is average.

The Foundation Stage has been affected recently by key staff changes, one at short notice, which were outside the school's control. When the inspection took place two teachers had been in post only four days and the school had been unable to appoint a Foundation Stage manager as planned. However, the headteacher and the experienced reception teacher are sharing the leadership and management role and have taken effective action. The pace of implementing the school's improvement plans for the Foundation Stage has inevitably been slowed but determined progress is being made. The new teamwork approach to unite Foundation Stage practice is off to a good start and appropriate development activity is going ahead. Teaching in the nursery is consistently good. Teaching in reception is currently satisfactory overall, with good features.

Since the last inspection the school has consolidated good standards in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and it has improved pupils' standards in personal, social and emotional development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

All children achieve well during the Foundation Stage because:

- There are very good assessment systems in place. Each child's progress is monitored and action is taken to support their learning so that most children attain the expected standards and by the time they leave the reception class, about one third are working in the early stages of the national curriculum.
- There are very good relationships and standards of care, leading to very good standards and achievement in children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Teaching and provision for children of lower ability and those with special educational needs is very good.
- There are good working partnerships between class teachers and support staff to enrich the curriculum and help meet the needs of all children.
- Children make a good start in the school's nursery.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff provide very good role models and offer high levels of care.
- There are very good induction procedures and the partnership with parents is very effective.
- All staff prioritise this area of learning, not just in focused lessons, but in every aspect of their teaching.

Commentary

41. Children enter the Foundation Stage with personal, social and emotional skills that are often above those expected for their age. From this good start they continue to develop rapidly through the provision of a range of play, direct teaching and collaborative activity. They respond very well to the classroom routines and teachers' high expectations. All staff listen to children, monitor their progress and respond sensitively to their needs. They use praise and encouragement very well to reinforce social skills and develop personal confidence. They encourage children to use their initiative and to co-operate sensitively with others. For example, in a class music lesson a child spontaneously offered another child an instrument because she saw that she was upset.
42. In all classes children arrive in the morning keen to learn, they are pleased to see their classmates, teachers and other adults, and greet them enthusiastically. They quickly settle to a range of activities that get the day off to a good start. Children listen well and try to do their best in their tasks and activities. They work very well together when part of large and small groups, under the direction of staff and when working independently; for example, in the 'travel-agent' role-play area. Through their response to school assemblies, in their lessons and activities they learn respect for other people and for different ways of life. The majority are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good gains in their literacy skills because teaching is well planned, the intended learning is clear, and is shared with children in ways they can understand.
- Teachers in reception miss opportunities to become involved in children's self-chosen activities.
- Very good use of experienced and well-qualified support staff, including special educational needs staff, supports and extends children's learning.

Commentary

43. Standards and achievement in this area of learning are good because staff plan a progressive programme of teaching and learning, linked closely to the goals of the National Literacy Strategy that builds on children's starting points and what interests them.
44. Speaking and listening skills are developed through whole-class and small group teaching and through talk as part of imaginative play. For example, when a group of reception children chose to play with model dinosaurs, they developed a story telling 'conversation' between them. Sometimes teachers spend too long teaching a single group, this becomes counter-productive and opportunities to extend child-initiated activity are missed. When staff do join in they provide valuable stimulation by supporting and extending the children's language and ideas. Through the very good quality of relationships children gain the confidence to ask questions and express their ideas. Children enjoy a good range of well-chosen songs, stories and rhymes.
45. In reading and writing there is a good balance between individual, group and whole-class teaching and learning. Children enjoy their books and often choose to read. The partnership with learning at home is strongly promoted and record books/diaries are used well to communicate between home and school. Teachers make effective use of the 'shared' and 'modelled' techniques when teaching reading but do not apply this so well to teaching writing.

46. Nursery children, who had been in school only a few days, had been writing, many using clearly distinguishable letters and numerals. They had been inspired by seeing their teachers write. In one reception class, groups of able children painted bold pictures of animals and, with some adult help, wrote descriptive sentences using their knowledge of words and letter sounds, such as 'the snake is eating fruit' and 'the bat is flying'. Through sensitive questioning one child added a full stop correctly. Although there are opportunities for children to write as part of role-play activity in the reception class, these are not as well organised as they are in the nursery.
47. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1, with a significant minority exceeding them. All children make good progress but they do not attain as highly in writing as they do in speaking, listening and reading.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whole-class teaching is well planned and effective.
- Children understand what it is that they are trying to learn.
- Good links are made with mathematical development in other areas of learning.
- Occasionally the planned activities in reception are over-complicated and do not contribute well to the intended learning.
- Learning is well supported through the use of number line displays and counting equipment.

Commentary

48. Through good assessment practice teachers quickly recognise children's starting points and plan to build upon them, using the programme for learning from the National Numeracy Strategy. In this way children make good progress towards the early learning goals and most are likely to achieve them and many go beyond them by the time they enter Year 1. Children in nursery use numbers in their daily activities, they count the number of cakes they have made and the people in their families. They understand the meaning of one more, for example, one child calculated that her 'playdough' cake, which had been cooking for three minutes, but needed 'a minute more', would be in the oven for four minutes altogether. Children in reception class quickly picked up the idea of counting in twos through the teacher's good use of real situations: 'Did you notice how I counted you into the hall just now?' and counting pairs of gloves. However, such good teaching inputs are not always well supported by the content and timing of follow-up activities. Mathematical development is also promoted by role-play opportunities; for example, a group of reception-age children devised a game of plane-spotting, inspired by the suspended model aeroplane, quoting imagined serial numbers involving two and three digit numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and very good use is made of the expertise of the environmental learning support assistant.
- Very good use is made of the school environment.
- The planned activities capture the children's interest and enthusiasm.

Commentary

49. Most children come into school with expected levels of general knowledge and this is rapidly extended by the series of practical learning experiences provided for the children, many of which use the very well-developed and stimulating external environment of the school. For example, children observe and learn about the creatures that live in the school grounds. They also develop respect for the natural world and learn to protect the environments on which these creatures depend. With adult support they conduct experiments to see which materials protect their dolls best from the rain.
50. Children learn to control the computer through using the mouse. The programs selected support their learning in other areas, for example in shape and colour matching. They design and make models and objects, such as the flamboyantly colourful range of slippers on display. All children make very good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 most are likely to exceed the expected levels, particularly in the scientific, geographic and cultures/beliefs aspects of this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of practical activities to develop hand-eye co-ordination and control of tools and materials.
- Physical education lessons are taught satisfactorily
- Planning for physical development is satisfactory but not as well developed as planning in the other areas of learning.

Commentary

51. Teaching is satisfactory. Children make satisfactory progress and they are likely to meet the national expectations by the time they reach Year 1. There are two physical education lessons each week, using the school hall, as well as outdoor breaks and activities. There are plenty of small-scale practical activities to develop good control of tools and equipment. For example, in a lesson with the school's music co-ordinator reception children were able to play their instruments with great sensitivity. Increasing use is being made of the outdoor space but there needs to be more well-planned opportunities for children to initiate, practise, experiment and develop their ideas through large-scale activity, vigorous movement, imaginative play, music making and dance. The internal space is only just adequate for the number and age-range of the children and the requirements of the curriculum. The recent internal modifications and addition of a partially-covered outdoor area is an improvement and permits more flexible use of space. This requires staff to adapt their organisation but the pace of development in this respect has been affected by the staffing difficulties. Appropriate training and professional development activities are already planned.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Commentary

52. During the inspection, it was possible to see only brief examples of creative development. In painting children show good control over brush strokes. They are able to choose different brushes but do not have enough opportunity to change or experiment with the colour or texture of paint. There is a tendency for adults to over-direct and focus on the finished product rather than to support the development of children's own ideas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening and reading remain above average.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in Year 2.
- Basic skills are taught well and handwriting skills are effectively demonstrated and practised.
- Homework is used well to extend literacy skills and parents are fully involved in their children's learning.
- There is scope for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects.

Commentary

53. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils' attainment is well above average. Last year, in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, almost half the pupils reached the higher than expected level in reading. Pupils make good progress in reading as they move through the school, and their achievement is good. This is largely because there is high quality teaching and learning in particular, in Year 2. Pupils' writing skills are not as good as those reported at the time of the last inspection. Results in the National Curriculum tests indicate that more able pupils are not attaining as well as they should. Inspection evidence indicates that these pupils are attaining higher standards this year.
54. Group reading sessions, when children of a similar ability read and discuss the same book, have helped to improve pupils' comprehension skills. This is because teachers select books at the right level of difficulty and ask questions to promote pupils' comprehension skills and knowledge of books and texts. Pupils read accurately, fluently and with good expression. Their knowledge of letter sounds is good, largely because the school has a systematic approach to the teaching of phonics. Pupils say they enjoy reading and explain their preferences for certain books and authors. Most pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction and how to locate information using the contents and index.
55. Pupils benefit from the opportunities given to them to write for a range of purposes and for different audiences. They use the structure of well-known stories imaginatively to develop their writing and express their own ideas. More able pupils use a varied vocabulary and are beginning to adapt their writing skills to different styles. Pupils of average and above average attainment are writing with increasing accuracy. Their basic spelling and punctuation are usually correct. They are beginning to use dictionaries well to check out their work. Standards of handwriting are good and pupils' work is well presented. Lower ability pupils and those with special educational needs use a narrower vocabulary and their writing is limited in length and content.
56. By Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. They listen attentively in lessons, develop a wide vocabulary and contribute actively to group and class discussions. Staff ensure that pupils have the opportunity to contribute to discussion. They value the answers of pupils and encourage them to use a broader range of words in their oral and written responses.
57. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Strengths in teaching include:
 - Good subject knowledge and very good use of questions to ensure that all pupils contribute fully.

- Lesson objectives are clearly defined and pupils' learning targets are generally used well to improve their work.
 - Very good planning is informed by the effective use of assessment to set the right balance of challenge and support.
 - Very good use of paired work which helps develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
 - Parents make a very strong a strong contribution to pupils learning.
58. Where teaching is satisfactory, there is not enough guidance to ensure that all groups of pupils fully understand the task without the need for more help. This happens when independent work does not build upon whole-class work at the beginning of the lessons or, when worksheets require pupils to complete a piece of text with selected words missing. During these activities pupils are not expected to work together to discuss the possibilities of a choice of words and they gain little benefit from the task
59. The subject co-ordinator has held the post for one term and is beginning to influence the leadership and management of the subject. There is a clear action plan for improvement. The national test results are analysed to identify areas for improvement and the tracking of pupils' progress is used effectively to help raise standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Teachers generally plan sound opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects and their speaking and listening skills are well developed in lessons. Written work in other subjects makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' achievement. However, on occasion, these opportunities are confined to work sheets and writing tasks which are too tightly structured and repetitive and there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length. Good links are made to ICT in lessons; for example, when pupils edit their work to improve their writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good standards identified at the previous inspection have been raised further.
- Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and learning throughout the school.
- In all classes there is effective use of ICT to develop pupils' learning.
- Parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning.
- The leadership and management of the curriculum co-ordinator are very good.

Commentary

61. In the 2003 national tests just over half the pupils attained above the expected standard with the remainder attaining at the standard. This high performance has been sustained over the past three years in comparison to schools with a similar intake. Inspection evidence indicates that equivalent standards are likely to be attained this year. Overall, most pupils make good progress and achieve well, with a significant minority making very good progress and achieving very well. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls, both of whom do better than boys and girls nationally. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and their achievement is good.
62. Pupils enjoy mathematics and respond eagerly to the work set for them. By the time they are seven, they understand the number system and describe carefully the strategies they have used to solve their tasks. They name and describe accurately the properties of two and three-

dimensional shapes. They measure carefully using centimetres and tell the time to the quarter hour. They draw successfully on their mathematical knowledge to solve puzzles, undertake

numerical investigations and support their learning in other subjects. In such instances, they make good use of their understanding of doubles, their recognition of patterns and their facility in calculations.

63. Overall, teaching and learning are good. Strengths include:
- Well-structured lessons with carefully-explained, learning objectives
 - Effective questioning techniques to recall previous work and ensure that all pupils are appropriately engaged and confident participants
 - Inviting and valuing pupils' contributions to motivate them and raise their confidence in tackling problems
 - Clear expectations that pupils explain how they solve tasks, and that they do so using appropriate mathematical language
 - High quality support from very effective teaching assistants
 - Good use of appropriate ICT programs to challenge and consolidate pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts
 - Effective use of end-of-lesson sessions to reinforce learning and assess pupils' attainment.
64. When pupils are uncertain how to begin their work because teacher-explanations are unclear, there is a slowing of lesson pace and pupils' initial progress is not as high as it should be.
65. The curriculum co-ordinator gives very good leadership. She has managed the subject effectively through the operation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the introduction of useful, comprehensive assessment procedures and effective monitoring practices. The school has promoted and resourced a successful role for parents in pupils' learning. This has been realised through numeracy workshops, a mathematics games library and a home-school diary of family mathematical activities. This has made a significant contribution to the school's sustaining of high standards. This has been helped further by good learning resources.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. Teachers successfully promote the use of pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects. This includes measurement in science and design and technology. It extends to science, geography and personal and social education in the tabulation and graphing of survey findings. In physical education, pupils reinforce their understanding of number through counting and grouping activities, and shape and angles through the forms they make.

SCIENCE

67. Because of timetabling arrangements only one science lesson was seen. Therefore, there are no judgements on overall provision, teaching and learning. The observations below are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and staff and an examination of school documentation. The curriculum co-ordinator has been in post for only a short time and it is too early to judge the effectiveness of her leadership and management. She has made a positive start in beginning the monitoring of standards, teaching and learning; and revising assessment procedures. The school's very good use of its environment is designed '*to cause pupils to wonder at the world in which they live*'.
68. In the 2003 teacher assessments, just over half the pupils attained above the standard expected for their age, with the remainder attaining the expected standard. Overall, the school attained standards well above average in comparison to all schools and those with a similar intake. Inspection evidence suggests that equivalent standards may be attained this year. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. In the one lesson seen

pupils studied growth and change using photographs of themselves and their families. Pupils were very involved talking of their own growth since they were babies and of the further changes they saw in their parents and grandparents.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Successful training and continued support have given staff the confidence to make positive use of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Learning resources, in the suite and elsewhere in the school, are good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.
- The leadership and management of the curriculum co-ordinator are good.

Commentary

69. Since the previous inspection the staff have raised pupils' attainment and improved their achievement by the end of Year 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress, and their attainment is now in line with that expected for pupils of their age; their achievement is satisfactory. Around a fifth of the pupils is working towards the next higher level for their age group (level 3). Their progress is good and they achieve well. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs; they make steady progress and their achievement is satisfactory.
70. Lesson observation and scrutiny of pupils' work show that all aspects of the subject are covered appropriately. Pupils talk with interest about their use of ICT and show confidence in using a range of equipment to support their learning. This includes computers, calculators, audio-recorders and programmable toys. They are competent handling a mouse, using a keyboard and controlling movement across the screen. Pupils use appropriate word processing packages effectively to create text and use their familiarity with varying fonts, colours and sizes to display it in different ways. They access appropriate programs to create colourful fantasy pictures and manipulate simple graphics to construct imaginary cities.
71. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Strengths in teaching include:
- Lessons have clear learning intentions for ICT.
 - Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures pupils have an appropriate range of work.
 - Teachers use questions carefully to help pupils think about what they are doing.
 - Staff teach basic techniques well to promote pupils' independent use of equipment.
 - Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards.
 - Staff use ICT successfully to support learning in other subjects.
72. Although there were good examples of staff encouraging pupils to consider the suitability or limitations of ICT, this was not consistent practice across the school.
73. The curriculum co-ordinator's good subject knowledge enables her to lead and manage the subject effectively. Her annual plan identifies key monitoring areas to sustain her useful overview of provision. Assessment is satisfactory. Learning resources are good. The co-ordinator is beginning to compile a portfolio of pupils' work to confirm the range of work covered and assist teachers' assessments; this is at an early stage of development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Pupils use their word processing skills to generate text and edit and amend it where necessary. Using appropriate packages, they create illustrations of living things and label them correctly. Pupils have access to appropriate CD-ROMs to develop their understanding of environmental issues. They use simple programs to tabulate survey results and generate appropriate graphs or pie-charts for further analysis. A distinct feature of the use of ICT is the weekly use of a commercial program to refine pupils' basic skills in mathematics and develop their independent learning. This is used effectively by the school, not least during pre-school sessions which are very well supervised by volunteer parents.

HUMANITIES

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

It was only possible during the inspection to observe one lesson in geography and one in history. Therefore, it is not possible to reach a secure judgement about the school's overall provision, standards of attainment and quality of teaching and learning. The following points are based on the lessons observed, a sample of pupils' recorded work, consideration of teachers' planning, talking with pupils and discussion with the teacher who leads both subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning in these subjects meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides teachers with a progressive programme of work to build pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Very good use is made of the school's environmental learning support assistant and she makes a very effective contribution to pupils' learning.
- A good range of resources, including visitors, the school grounds and the locality, are used well.
- The co-ordinator is providing good subject leadership and management.
- There are good systems for recording and monitoring individual pupil progress, but these are not used to evaluate overall standards of attainment.
- Marking is regular and motivates pupils, but there is a tendency for it to focus on effort and presentation rather than the intended subject knowledge, skills or understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in dance have improved since the last inspection.
- Teachers make good use of pupil performances to demonstrate a variety of responses and to highlight particular features in pupils' work.
- Staff support pupils with special educational needs very well.
- Across the school, there is inconsistency in the use of warm-up and cool-down sessions.
- In some lessons, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to suggest how their own performances and those of others could be improved.

Commentary

75. Across the school, staff provide a balanced programme of activities which meets National Curriculum requirements. However, during the inspection, because of timetabling arrangements, it was possible to see only dance and gymnastics.

76. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils make sound progress, and by the age of seven they attain standards in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs do as well as other pupils because staff sensitively foster their self-confidence by ensuring their contributions are valued.
77. As pupils continue through the school, their movements and agility show increasing control and co-ordination; and they demonstrate due regard for safety. Pupils display a developing awareness of the importance of concentration, balance and continuity when linking their actions. They show good attention to rhythm in building imaginative movement sequences in dance in response to appropriate pieces of music. Most of the pupils plan their actions carefully on their own, and in discussion with other pupils and their teacher.
78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Strengths in teaching include:
- Carefully structured lessons with clear, assessable learning objectives;
 - Clear instructions about what pupils are to do;
 - Effective and informed participation by well-prepared teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs;
 - Opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own performance to identify improvements;
 - Appropriate use of praise to acknowledge pupils' attainments;
 - Patient and effective management of pupils whose behaviour is inappropriate
79. Aspects of different lessons highlight areas for development. These include:
- The need for carefully structured warm-up and cool-down sessions in all lessons;
 - Securing planned opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own activities and those of others to recognise what is good and to raise standards further.
80. The curriculum co-ordinator is new to her post. She has made a positive start but it is too early to judge her leadership and management. The annual action plan identifies monitoring of planning, teaching and learning with an emphasis on ensuring that a variety of activities are offered, reflecting the pupils' range of abilities. Assessment is satisfactory. Accommodation and learning resources are good.
81. The school's physical education programme makes an effective contribution to the '*Healthy Schools*' initiative. Teachers make useful links with other subjects. They provide opportunities for pupils to reinforce their vocabulary through clear explanations of their ideas. Teachers also play music from around the world to which pupils listen and dance. The physical education curriculum is enriched through the school's extra-curricular provision and its good links with outside sports groups.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82. It was not possible during the inspection to observe any lessons in **art and design** and **design and technology**. Inspectors talked to co-ordinators about their work and looked at the available samples of work.
83. Displays of pupils' **art and design** are very good and reflect the way in which the school values the work of its pupils and celebrates their achievements. They show a good range of art techniques and demonstrate pupils' skills in using a very good range of media to express their ideas. Pupils respond very well to these opportunities to be creative; they are proud of their achievements and eager to point out and talk about their work. Planning in art and design and **design and technology** meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

MUSIC

84. It was only possible to observe one lesson in music during the inspection. This was taught by the additional part-time music co-ordinator. During this lesson, Year 1 pupils explored the sound-making properties of instruments and combined them in simple ways to make their own compositions. They understood how written symbols could be used to represent long and short sounds.
85. It is not possible to make a judgement on the school's overall provision, standards or quality of teaching and learning. The following points are based upon observations of this lesson and of assemblies where music was a strong feature, sampling pupils' work books, considering long-term planning, talking with pupils and discussion with the co-ordinator. Standards were satisfactory at the previous inspection but improvements were needed in opportunities for creativity.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Satisfactory progress has been made on the improvement issue from the previous inspection.
- The recently appointed co-ordinator is a very skilful music teacher and her work is already having a beneficial impact on the quality of music education in the school.
- Pupils' singing is rhythmic and tuneful, with an unforced tone.
- All pupils know a good range of songs by heart and Year 1 pupils make good attempts at more complex material; such as, singing a round.
- Pupils join in successfully with rhythmic actions and pitch hand signals.
- They are confident and enjoy performing songs; some accompanied by groups playing simple but effective percussion arrangements.
- The music co-ordinator needs the opportunity to work alongside, be observed by or observe music being taught by class teachers.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. Insufficient lessons were seen to make a judgement about provision. However, it is evident that this is a strong area of the school's work which is underpinned by the school's caring ethos. Effective opportunities are taken throughout the school day to encourage pupils to respect others and to value their contributions. 'Circle time' encourages pupils to consider the views of others. As a result, relationships between pupils are very good. The programme for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is good and includes work on health and safety, sex and relationships and drugs education. All pupils have a good understanding of healthy living. Assemblies foster a strong sense of the school community. The school council enables all pupils to feel that their views are valued and that they have an impact on the work of the school. The school's very good use of its strong links with the community have a positive impact on pupils' developing sense of citizenship.

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	2
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	2
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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