

INSPECTION REPORT

MERROW COFE CONTROLLED INFANT SCHOOL

Guildford

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125160

Headteacher: Mrs C S Martin

Lead inspector: Roger Brown

Dates of inspection: 23 - 25 February 2004

Inspection number: 256898

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	146
School address:	Kingfisher Drive Merrow Guildford Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R Bond
Date of previous inspection:	18/05/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small urban school, to the east of Guildford. There are currently 146 pupils on roll aged four to seven. At present there more boys (55 per cent) than girls (45 per cent) in the school. A small number of pupils (nine per cent) come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. There are six pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The mobility of pupils entering and leaving the school during the course of each year is below average, with eight per cent of the current school population joining the school after the normal starting point. The school roll had declined since the last inspection in 1998, but it has now started to rise again. The school takes pupils from the housing immediately surrounding the school as well as from a number of estates further away. A lower than average percentage of pupils have free school meals; currently eight per cent, though this number fluctuates significantly. Twelve per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs and one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. This is below the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies significantly and forms an unusual profile. The baseline assessments for the last three years show that many children start above average, a few are average and many are below. We therefore judged the overall level to be in line with that found nationally.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22229	Roger Brown	Lead inspector	Science Geography History Information and communication technology Religious education English as an additional language
32670	Graham Saltmarsh	Lay inspector	
32021	Andrew McClean	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs
32475	Nick Butt	Team inspector	Art and design English Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The **overall effectiveness of the school is good**. As a result of good teaching and learning, most pupils attain the expected standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, one third attaining well above the expected levels in reading, mathematics and science. A strongly inclusive approach combined with excellent care of the pupils and high-quality links with parents, results in pupils' attitudes to school and relationships with each other that are excellent. The management of the school is efficient and the new headteacher already provides good leadership for the school. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The team of adults in the school constantly strives to provide the very best care and guidance for all pupils.
- Very good links with parents and the community it serves reinforce the excellent standard of care.
- Children get a very good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work and each other are excellent.
- The effective involvement of the governors in the leadership of the staff team has ensured that the school has a very good environment and high quality resources to reinforce the teaching.
- The school has not yet established a policy for supporting and developing the achievements of the gifted and talented pupils in the school.

Despite a prolonged period of unsettling change in the leadership of the school, the improvement since the last inspection over five years ago is good. The provision for special educational needs is now very good, as is the outdoor environment of the school. The high quality play in the well developed Foundation Stage area makes a significant contribution to the very good start children get in the school. Assessment is now thorough, although the teachers do not yet make the best use of the information they gather.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Pupils' **achievement is good** throughout the school. Children starting in the Foundation Stage achieve standards in line with those expected for their age. However, most children in the reception classes are already achieving the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception just halfway through the year and many are achieving standards above these. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have good levels of achievement. Standards in reading and science are well above the national averages. Standards in writing and mathematics are good. Overall standards are usually better than those in similar schools, but this is not consistent in every cohort.

This is a school where pupils' care and welfare are seen to be of paramount importance. Pupils care for each other very well and show very good respect for their environment. Pupils' **moral and social development are very good**, and their **spiritual and cultural development are good**. Pupils' attitudes are excellent, they really enjoy school, they want to learn and their behaviour is excellent. The levels of attendance at the school are also very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is good. The overall quality of teaching in the school is good.** In the best lessons, pupils show a real degree of excitement about their work and as a result pupils' learning is good overall. A notable feature of the teaching is the excellent use of teaching assistants to support learning. Throughout the school the teamwork between teachers and assistants adds significantly to all pupils' learning. Pupils speak with particular enthusiasm about their work in science and art and how they can use computers to help to discover new facts.

The curriculum provided by the school is good. The school has expended a good deal of effort to make it as inclusive as possible and as a result pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language learn very well. The excellent levels of care, guidance and support provided for the pupils, combined with very good partnership with parents and the community make the pupils feel very secure and happy. As a result they enjoy coming to school and their learning clearly benefits from this. However, pupils do not show a great deal of initiative. They are surrounded by caring adults who either tell them what to do, or do things for them. They have few opportunities to learn for themselves or experience difficulties they need to overcome; the gifted and talented pupils are insufficiently challenged in their work.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The new headteacher is already beginning to take the school forward. There is a new sense of direction emerging, and her leadership is effectively building on the work of the previous headteacher. All staff manage their responsibilities well and management throughout the school is good. However, there are few examples of staff innovating, perhaps because of the recent hiatus in the changes to the leadership. The work of the governing body is very good. Governors take their responsibilities very seriously and fully comply with all statutory requirements. Their links with the community are very strong and their work supports the school well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in high regard. A small number would like the school to tell them more about how their children are progressing, and more about how they can help their children at home. However, everyone talked enthusiastically about the family atmosphere and the great care the school takes in guiding and supporting the pupils. Several expressed regret that their children would be leaving the school in the summer to go on to the next phase of their education. It would break what was for some a long and happy partnership. Pupils also really like the school, although they are more critical than their parents and the inspection team of their friends' standards of behaviour. They think that this is a good school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the strategic planning for the whole school;
 - By empowering subject leaders to develop innovative practice.
- Focus the use of assessment data at Key Stage 1;
 - To analyse and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning; further improving pupils' achievements.
- Identify the gifted and talented pupils in the school;
 - Develop imaginative programmes to challenge and support these pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' overall achievement is good; it is good at both stages in the school. Standards are at least good in all core subjects. Standards in reception are good, most of the children are already achieving the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception and many are achieving standards above these. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls or between any other groups of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception classes have a good start to their education, making good progress in their time in these classes
- The progress of the majority of the pupils at Key Stage 1 is good, especially in the core subjects
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve standards in speaking and listening, reading and scientific enquiry that are well above those expected. These make a significant contribution to their success in other subjects

Commentary

1. The standards achieved in the school are usually above those of schools nationally and at least equal to those in similar schools. However, the trend is not always consistent. Two years ago the school achieved results in the end of Key Stage 1 assessments that were well above the average. Last year the results fell to a level below those of similar schools. The main reason for this is the wide variation in the individual cohorts of pupils. The attainment of children starting at the school has an unusual profile. A substantial group has levels of achievement above average, a smaller group is in line with the average and a further large group is below. The inspection team interpreted the overall standard at the start of children's education as being in line with that expected. All children in the school make good progress in the reception classes, standards are good, and by the time they are five nearly all children have attained the Early Learning Goals¹.

Attainment at age five

	Attainment in 1998 as measured against the desirable outcomes	Current judgements for 2004 as measured against the early learning goals	Children's achievement in relation to their prior attainment	Comments
Personal and social development	Close to the expected level	On course to exceed the expectations for the majority of children	Children make very good progress from the time they start at the school, achieving better than expected standards by the time they enter Year 1	High quality language experiences give rise to very good opportunities for children to talk to talk about their experiences

¹ The Early Learning Goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal and social development.

Communication, language and literacy	Above the expected level	Above expectations	For many children progress is good and at times very good	A rigorous daily phonics programme makes a very good contribution to early reading skills
Mathematical development	At the expected level	Above expectations	Children make good progress and their achievements are good	Varied and imaginative experiences enhance children's learning
Knowledge and understanding of the world	At the expected level	Well above expectations in most respects, but only above expectations for ICT	Rich and varied experiences enhance the achievements of the children, and they make good progress in this area	High quality support from staff develops children's understanding well
Physical development	At the expected level	No overall judgement made	The enhanced outdoor provision is clearly benefiting the children's achievements	A good variety of experiences lets children develop their confidence well
Creative development	Above the expected level	Likely to exceed the expected level	Children are encouraged to participate, as a result they achieve well and they make good progress	Staff develop high quality role-play activities to stimulate the children

2. Standards of work seen at Key Stage 1 are good. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are achieving standards above those expected nationally and the results they achieve in the end of key stage assessments² are usually better than those in similar schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (18.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.6 (15.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.3 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The results of the 2003 national assessments for pupils in Year 2 show a weaker picture than standards noted at the time of the last inspection. The results in this year were out of line with those normally found in the school. The results were also well down on the previous year, (2002) when the school had received an "Achievement Award" in recognition of the high standards pupils had attained. Among the reasons for this decline were higher than normal numbers of pupils with special educational needs, significant movement of pupils into the year group from other schools, and major, but temporary, changes to the teachers taking the classes.
4. The achievement of pupils in reading and speaking and listening skills is a particular strength in the school. Standards in these two aspects of literacy are well above average. This gives good support to pupils' learning in other subjects and helps to improve their achievements overall.

² All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a point score. The average for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age seven is 15. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

Pupils' achievement in writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are at least good and often better in specific elements. For instance, pupils achieve standards in experimental science that are well above those expected.

Achievement and standards at age seven

	Attainment in 1998 measured in national assessments	Current judgements for standards in 2004	Pupils' achievement in relation to prior attainment	Comments
Reading	Above average	Well above average	Pupils make good progress from the time they start compulsory education. Pupils' achievement is very good	Teachers and support staff are enthusiastic about reading and this is reflected in the pupils' attitudes
Writing	Above average	Above average	Progress is good, and achievement in the basic skills is good, but few pupils write with great enthusiasm yet	There is an appropriate emphasis on developing accurate writing skills, spelling and punctuation
Mathematics	Above average	Above average	Progress is good and pupils' achievement is good	Teachers make good use of resources such as games to make this subject enjoyable
Science	No judgement teacher assessment only, and these give pupils in line with national expectations	Well above national expectations	Pupils have made good progress since starting compulsory schooling and their achievement is good	Teachers make good use of scientific enquiry to stimulate and excite pupils' interest
Information and communication technology	No national assessments but attainment judged to be above national expectations	Above national expectations	Pupil progress is good and their achievement is good, especially in specific lessons in the subject	The improvement since the last inspection is in part due to increased staff confidence in the subject and high quality support
Religious education	No national assessment, but attainment judged to be well above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus	Standards are above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus	Pupils make good progress in this subject, their achievement is good	Pupils respond thoughtfully to ideas and have a very good understanding of moral points

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

This aspect is an outstanding feature of the school. Pupils' attitudes to their school, their relationships with each other and with adults, their behaviour in class and around school are always excellent. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good overall. Pupils levels of attendance at the school are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a school where everybody is respected; a very good ethos of mutual trust and respect underpins the development of excellent attitudes

- Pupils like their school, they want to be at school and they are excited about the subjects they study
- Pupils are very keen to do well, but are not overtly competitive; they choose instead to help and support each other
- The playtimes are safe and interesting, and pupils are calm and friendly
- Most pupils have very good patterns of attendance
- Pupils are surrounded by caring adults whom they willingly follow and obey, but the pupils are unsure, and at times unwilling, to take initiatives or do things without being told what to do and how to do it
- Pupils' moral and social understanding very good, and their cultural and spiritual understanding good

Commentary

Attendance

5. The very good levels of attendance reflect the pupils' excellent attitudes to school and the effectiveness of the school's policies to promote high attendance. They also reflect the parents' positive view of the school and their support for it. Parents make strenuous efforts to ensure that their children attend well and arrive for school punctually. This mirrors the picture at the time of the last inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003

Authorised absence	
School data	5.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions from the school.

6. Pupils' behaviour is excellent; there were no instances of misbehaviour of any kind seen by the inspection team. Parents at the school also view the behaviour in school very positively. The pupils were the most critical group. Most could talk of very minor infringements by themselves or their friends, a few talked about instances where somebody had been unkind to them and bullied them, but they were positive about how these instances had been resolved. The school's environment is free from all forms of oppressive behaviour. Breaks are safe and interesting for the pupils who play in a friendly and calm fashion. They trust all the adults and know what to do and who to turn to if they feel they are in difficulty. Although at times they do not appear to be willing to take initiatives or to make decisions for themselves, relying instead on the many caring and thoughtful adults to direct and guide them.
7. Pupils like their school, parents told the inspectors their children want to be at school. Talking to the pupils it is clear that they are excited about some of the subjects they study, particularly art and science. Pupils are very keen to do well, but are not overtly competitive; they choose instead to help and support each other. This was seen in many lessons, for instance, in a Year 2 science lesson; one pupil who had quickly grasped and completed the challenge to get a bulb connected generously helped and explained to his peers what they needed to do before he went on to the second part of the challenge.
8. Provision for pupils' **spiritual development is good**. All pupils are encouraged to think about sensitive issues such as how they can care for others and to express their opinions

thoughtfully. They do so confidently. Teachers actively encourage pupils' self-esteem by valuing their ideas and viewpoints. Pupils enjoy school, and show this by revelling in the opportunity to share their enthusiasm with adults. Pupils in Year 2 talked animatedly about the experiences they had in the previous year, fondly describing special experiences, such as the visits they had been on and what they had learned. There are good opportunities planned for pupils to learn about and share in the celebrations of other faiths. From their conversations it is clear that they listened carefully to an assembly led by the rector who had talked about special places. They delighted in identifying their own special places and had good reasons for choosing them. Their ideas were thoughtful and reflective.

9. Provision for pupils' **moral development is very good**. All staff, actively teach the difference between right and wrong. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently excellent. Pupils show care for each other on the playground and have a very good understanding about the rules that they have helped to develop. Staff are constantly seen to be reinforcing values of honesty, fairness and respect for others.
10. Provision for pupils' **social development is very good**. All adults in and around the school are very good role models. Pupils see adults caring for each other and the school environment. Pupils have limited responsibilities, but carry these out effectively. Boys and girls all play together well and care for one another. All year groups take pupils out to visit places of interest at appropriate times during the school year. Sporting activities and other after school clubs are encouraged. The parents view the school as having "a family atmosphere" and many take part in the events that take place after school and at the weekends. Pupils clearly view these as important and are proud of their school and its place in the community.
11. Provision for pupils' **cultural development is good**. Pupils happily learn about and appreciate their own and other cultures. Pupils readily accept new pupils who speak another language and realise that whilst they might have difficulties communicating, they can be helped and supported. Parents recognise their children are going to be part of a multicultural society and welcome the school's efforts to widen their children's understanding. Local culture is celebrated, with planned visits to places of special interest. Groups from within and around the local community come and talk to the pupils to reinforce relevant aspects of the curriculum. The school actively welcomes visitors from the community who have no obvious links with it, and is the proud adopter of the roundabout adjacent to the area it serves; a contribution that is greatly appreciated by local residents. The school has successfully extended the cultural awareness of the pupils into a greater appreciation of the arts, particularly through their experiences in music and dance.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

12. The school provides a good quality of education. Most aspects of teaching and learning are good, some elements are very good. The management of the school is good and the leadership of the new headteacher is already beginning to have an effective impact on the future direction of the school. The development of the curriculum is not as strong. The teachers have experienced a hiatus in the development process due to the changeover in the leadership of the school. As a result they have been reluctant to make changes or develop new initiatives other than those from outside agencies they have had to respond to. The assessment of pupils is thorough, but little use is made of the information gathered other than to record and report it. Thorough analysis would allow teachers to make informed decisions about their teaching and the impact it has on their pupils' learning. The care, guidance and support of pupils along with the school's partnership with the parents and the community are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in school is good. The assessment of pupils' work is good. Data is collected effectively and reported on properly. However, the use of assessment data to ensure pupils understand how to achieve their next steps is only satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' high quality planning ensures the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum, with very good teaching and learning in English, and good teaching and learning in mathematics, science and ICT
- Very good use is made of all support assistants to ensure inclusion of all pupils
- Teachers' use of questioning draws out pupils' knowledge and understanding
- Pupils' enthusiasm and very good behaviour helps them all to learn effectively
- Teachers' subject knowledge and respect for all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language, provide a good whole-school climate for learning
- Independent learning opportunities for all pupils are not fully developed
- Teachers fail to make the best use of assessment opportunities at the end of lessons to plan for next steps in pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not make use of the assessment data they have to analyse what has gone well or less well

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (37%)	13 (43%)	6 (20 %)	0 (0%)	0 (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. Pupils' learning is good, this is a result of very good planning of teaching. This is particularly noticeable in English where reading is taught in a very structured way ensuring good learning outcomes. Good teaching and learning in mathematics, science and ICT also ensure pupils' success in these subjects. All staff, including support staff, are aware of the need to give positive support to all pupils, particularly the less able. Strong emphasis upon the questioning of different abilities of pupils is a regular feature of the best teaching seen in school. Clear and positive direction for very good behaviour is a regular facet of all teaching. This creates a happy and secure learning environment in all classes. This is enhanced by the great care and attention that is given to the display of pupils' work, both in classrooms and around the school.
14. As a result of teachers' attention to the pupils' domestic needs, pupils, in return, are eager to show teachers what they know and can do, enabling the majority of pupils to make good progress in their time in school. Pupil behaviour is exemplary. This is a result of the very good liaison between teachers and support staff, plus the respect that the latter receive and pupils treat all with equal respect and perform at their best for both. A particularly good example of this is seen in less able pupils in a Year 1 literacy group receiving very good extra support from a fully trained and enthusiastic teaching assistant.
15. Assessments are carried out regularly and the results recorded and reported. However, whilst the school possesses a great deal of data on pupils' attainments for their time in school, (which is an improvement since the last inspection) the uses of this data are limited. In particular, the teachers have not established a dialogue with those pupils who are able to understand what it is necessary for them to do next to make progress. The use of information on pupils' progress and potential from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 has yet to make a

significant impact on improving the learning of pupils, particularly those of average ability. Too little use of assessment data combined with the fact that pupils are very reliant upon the adults in the school limits pupils' independent learning.

16. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well provided for. Very good liaison between special needs staff and class teachers, with clear plans and targets for these pupils, which are regularly reviewed and updated, ensures that these pupils make very good progress and have every opportunity to access a full curriculum.
17. There are examples of very good teaching in school; although not all staff are aware of the factors that produce this high standard. The best teaching occurs when the teachers take time to analyse their teaching and the impact this has on the pupils' learning. The quality and support offered by specialist special needs staff is very good. Early identification of pupils' needs is evident, close liaison and assessment of progress is to be seen and regular discussions about what pupils do when they are extracted from classes takes place between staff.
18. Throughout the school, teachers provide very good role models to pupils in their mutual respect for each other, pupils, parents and other members of the school community. This results in all pupils wanting to learn, whilst at the same time enjoying all the experiences presented to them in school.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is very good in the Foundation Stage, where high quality resources and accommodation enhance a very inclusive and broad based provision. It is good in Key Stage 1, where a range of good extra-curricular activities enrich the pupils' experiences. The quality of the accommodation, particularly the outdoor learning environment, is very good. The well-designed and thoughtful provision of materials, activities and structures has created interesting areas for learning and play; these enhance the pupils' learning experiences. The resources within the school are very good, they meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum they are taught well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support staff have a significant impact and enhance all pupils' learning
- Curriculum innovation is satisfactory and staff have responded to all outside initiatives imposed upon the school, but they have not consistently developed their own teaching practice to enhance pupils' experiences even further
- There is insufficient integration of the pupils' learning skills across the curriculum
- Staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Everyone has clear responsibilities which they manage well

Commentary

19. The curriculum is inclusive in design and it is taught thoughtfully by teachers who respond well to the differing and diverse needs of the pupils. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements. Subject co-ordinators manage their individual subject responsibilities well. The core subjects are well planned and the high standards pupils achieve in reading allow them to explore other subject areas in some depth. For instance, one of the most popular sections in the library is that for science. Pupils enjoy reading about the subject and are excited by their discoveries.
20. The involvement of support staff in the planning of the curriculum is another notable strength. Not only does this give good direction to the work of the support staff, but it also allows teachers to get feedback on what has worked well. The relatively high number of support staff employed ensures an extra breadth of expertise is brought into the school and this benefits both the pupils' learning and their enjoyment of their lessons.

21. The very good use of support staff in all lessons makes a major contribution to the pupils' learning. Teaching assistants follow their planned tasks thoughtfully, but not slavishly, modifying the process to meet the needs of the groups and the individuals. The high quality curriculum support they provide is particularly evident in English and mathematics. However, the good practices from the literacy and numeracy strategies are not consistently applied to other curriculum subjects. Learning skills are not mapped across the curriculum and subjects are to a degree treated as separate entities. ICT for instance is being developed well in some respects, but during the course of the inspection it was only infrequently used to support the work in other subjects.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for. They are fully integrated into the life of the school. Teaching assistants give very good support to these pupils in all aspects of school life, and the planning for this is evident in all lessons. Pupils' specific needs are identified in individual education plans and these are regularly updated and reviewed. Parental support is welcomed and pupils themselves benefit from this close liaison between home and school. Parents are kept fully informed of their children's progress and regularly attend review meetings. Those with statements of special needs are given additional support.
23. There is good equality of access across all areas of the curriculum; staff are thoughtful in planning their teaching to give all pupils interesting activities for learning. Programmes such as 'ELS' (Early Literacy Support) are successful in helping to raise the standards in literacy for the identified groups of pupils. There is a very strong emphasis in the curriculum on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. This has been successful and particularly effective in relation to reading, where pupils have very good standards. Writing skills are less well developed and opportunities for writing in other subjects are limited.
24. The planning of the curriculum was judged to be a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection. This continues to be the case. The planning of each subject does allow for sensible and incremental progression of pupils' learning in the individual subjects and in some subjects, notably science and art the outcomes are strong because of this. However, teachers have not taken the opportunity to innovate and build in cross-curricular aspects of learning.
25. A range of after-school activities are run: short tennis, football and French. These are well attended and clearly popular with the pupils. Visits to places of interest are organised for all year groups and these too are very popular with the pupils, who talk about them with enthusiasm. From time to time the school invites in a range of visitors who talk to the pupils about particular topics of interest such as local history, the local environment, or specific roles in the community, for instance the work of firemen. Teachers plan these activities well, ensuring that pupils gain good insights into the information the visitors bring.
26. The accommodation is safe, attractive and thoughtfully designed to enhance the learning of the pupils. The school is well resourced. Parents and the community make a major contribution to the resources, raising funds and working together to improve the school environment. Creative play activities do much to support the peaceful and enjoyable playtimes, whilst equipment such as the trim trail gives good support to pupils' understanding of concepts in physical education and health education. There is a good library space in the school. This is well stocked and used well. ICT materials are adequate although those in the reception classes are in need of replacement; the number of computers for the pupils is below the level normally found in schools, but new equipment is due to be installed shortly. Attractive displays throughout the school create a positive learning environment for the pupils, parents and staff. The outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage, which was criticised at the time of the last inspection, has been significantly improved and now gives good support to the children's development.

Care, guidance and support

The overall quality of guidance and support for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for care and the health and safety of pupils are excellent.
- The school has a reputation for being a safe place for children.
- The whole school has an ethos of community, trust and care.
- The Early years' induction programme is comprehensive and reassuring for pupils and parents.

Commentary

27. The children are provided with a very caring and supportive environment. All staff know the pupils very well. Assessment is consistent; teachers plan work to meet the needs of their class and this is good, but pupils' capacity to work independently is less well cared for. Although child protection procedures are comprehensive and effective there is scope for developing further staff training in this area and this has been identified by the school.
28. Induction procedures are very good; they are particularly comprehensive and reassuring for both parents and children. The entire process lasts for six weeks, starting with initial meetings with the Early Years teachers, graduating to morning and lunchtime school visits by the children. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to participate in the process and the school welcomes the opportunity to discuss and resolve any problems.
29. Staff are particularly vigilant to ensure that children in the Foundation Stage, together with all other pupils, are carefully supervised and safe at all times. Good attention is paid to the health and dietary needs of individual children. This in turn heightens pupils' awareness and understanding of healthy living and personal safety. Accidents are rare, and any problems or difficulties relating to safety in the school are immediately addressed analysed and effective steps are taken to overcome them.
30. As a consequence of this high level of care, teachers and support staff know and respect their pupils well. They are very good at responding to individual needs as they are presented. Every pupil knows and trusts the adults in the school and they are very confident in their relationships with the staff. They know who to turn to and what to do if they have any problems or difficulties. Children are very ready to confide these issues to the staff.
31. Thorough maintenance ensures that the building and school equipment are safe. Physical security of the building, environs and perimeters are excellent. There is a plan to install a digital CCTV system to monitor the school site, which is intended to further enhance safety and security.
32. Of particular note was the outstanding condition and enhanced maintenance of the school grounds and outside equipment. The recently appointed caretaker has commenced a programme of repainting and reorganising many of the site play areas. At playtimes pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are well supervised and the children have good relationships with midday supervisors.
33. The school is considering whether a school council could be developed to ensure that the views of all children can be considered equally. However, pupils already know that their views matter, and that they are carefully listened to. Pupils are already involved in devising and agreeing school and class rules and are encouraged to think of ways to improve school routines, such as those for outdoor play.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents and the local community are very good. This has a positive impact on the achievement of the pupils. Improved links with other local schools are being developed as one of the priorities of the new headteacher. These links are now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school and appreciate the dialogue and support it offers them as well as their children.
- Links with the community enhance and enrich the school's curriculum, and provide valued support for some local initiatives. Parents are actively encouraged to approach the school and discuss any matter causing concern.
- The school is strengthening its links with other local schools
- School reports are bland and formulaic.

Commentary

34. Parents are very satisfied with the school. Those who attended the meeting before the inspection were very supportive of the school. They have confidence in the staff and believe the teaching to be good. They are appreciative of the support the school gives to them as well as their children. Staff work very hard to engage parents into the life of the school and in supporting their children's learning. Parents are actively involved in helping the school, on visits and various school functions and activities. There is a well attended parents association which has assumed an ongoing role to enhance resources and support the whole school community.
35. The school has an open door policy for parents at all times to discuss any matters of concern. There are also individual parent consultations by appointment every term. New parents are invited to coffee mornings to meet the staff and other new parents. All parents, including those whose children have English as an additional language and those whose children have special needs expressed their satisfaction with the school. School newsletters are regular and informative. Parents have expressed their satisfaction with the high level of information provided by the school.
36. The school's links with the church and local community enhance and enrich the curriculum. Examples include the planting of the roundabout adjacent to the school winning an award from the "Guildford in Bloom" initiative. Elderly residents from local flats are invited and welcomed to school productions and also receive visits from the children at Harvest Festival. The children make regular visits to St John the Evangelist church, where they meet other members of the community.
37. A priority for the headteacher was to develop closer links with local junior schools to co-ordinate pupil transfer. This has been successfully achieved. Year 3, teachers from the junior school to which pupils transfer now visit Merrow Infants throughout the year. Induction days and joint parents evenings have ensured a smooth transition for pupils. Teachers from both schools now share some in-service training days. Additionally, pupils from both schools attend each other's Christmas productions.
38. The school's reports to parents, although detailed and informative, tend to be rather bland, unadventurous, wordy and formulaic. However, parents do seem to be satisfied with them. There is as yet no opportunity for pupils to discuss and set their own targets with teachers and write them on the report or for parents to add their comments on the document itself.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are good. Governance is very good because governors are fully involved in the life of the school and take their responsibilities seriously. The leadership of the headteacher and the effectiveness of management are good. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body makes a major contribution to the success of the school
- The leadership of the recently established headteacher is giving new momentum to the school
- Leaders collaborate well together as a team and manage effectively
- Subject leaders are not yet developing innovative practice

Commentary

39. The governing body has provided very effective support to the school through a period of change. Governors know their school very well, and monitor and guide its work conscientiously. They are fully involved in strategic planning and in formulating policies. The pattern of the governing body's work meshes well with the school's development cycle, so that both are very influential. This is a conscientious governing body, they recognise that they must not only validate policies such as those for race equality, but monitor them as well. They ensure that all pupils get a fair deal and that no groups or individuals are discriminated against. This governing body fulfils all its statutory duties. Governors take a close interest in performance management procedures and monitor them very well.
40. The headteacher is successfully introducing measures to raise standards. Since her appointment her inclusive and consultative approach has harnessed staff's commitment and enthusiasm to do their best for pupils. This has led to a very happy but purposeful atmosphere in the school. Staff provide an excellent role model for pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is systematically evaluated, and feedback and support given sensitively. The school's commitment to its staff is clear from its renewal of Investor in People status, and its very good procedures for the induction of new staff. As a consequence the school has managed to retain experienced teachers against the current trend.
41. The effectiveness of the school's management is good. Tight procedures are in place, and all staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Relevant information about pupils' performance is gathered and analysed, although the school accepts this could be refined further. Areas for improvement have been correctly identified and actions drawn up. At present the school has not made clear how it will know whether these measures have been successful. For example, the school plans to buy and install interactive whiteboards, but does not state what impact it would expect these to have on children's learning. All areas are reliably managed, with particular strengths in the Foundation Stage, special educational needs and art and design. In many subjects there is little innovative practice and few opportunities for pupils who are gifted and talented to be challenged and supported.
42. Finances are managed efficiently, and governors are fully involved in spending decisions and monitoring the school's budget. The limited funds they receive in additional funds and for specific grants are carefully accounted for. They ensure that principles of best value are applied in using resources. The finance officer keeps governors and senior management well informed about developments. The school does not know until late in the year how many pupils to expect nor the size of its budget. This has led to a cautious approach in the past, with large sums carried forward each year. Over the past three years this balance has been reduced and the aim is to get it to around five per cent of the total budget by the end of the financial year.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	439,538	Balance from previous year	37,415
Total expenditure	412,518	Balance carried forward to the next	27,020
Expenditure per pupil	2.845		

43. The new headteacher is making a positive impact on the future direction of the school. She has established clear priorities for herself. These include improving relationships with neighbouring schools and ensuring that the good practice already in the school is not lost in the change-over that has taken place, but is reinforced and built upon. The school governors and the acting headteacher managed the prolonged transition between the previous substantive head leaving and the current head taking up her post very well. This was a fact that was commented on very positively by several parents.
44. The management of all staff is good and they carry out their roles and responsibilities dutifully. However, staff have not felt that they have been in a position where they can innovate or lead new strategies. They were uncertain as to the direction that the school would take under new leadership. This can now be addressed.
45. The governors' strong commitment to the school has provided very effective support during the interval between substantive heads. They have a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and carry out their duties conscientiously, acting as a critical friend in alerting the school to issues where it can improve. In particular, they ensure that the school is not in breach of any of its statutory duties.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the reception classes is **very good**. This has improved since the last inspection. The teaching is good overall with some very good elements. The curriculum is well planned and the Foundation Stage is very skilfully led and managed by the co-ordinator. Meticulous assessment procedures ensure that staff have a deep-shared understanding of children's progress and needs. This enables them to plan relevant and interesting work to move children's learning on. The intake of children is unusual in that there are high proportions of children with standards well above and well below the average, but not so many who are working at expectations. Overall, this is broadly average, but presents a challenge to teaching staff to meet all children's needs effectively. As most children are likely to exceed the learning goals for the end of the reception year, achievement is good. Indeed, children develop excellent attitudes to learning, are happy and secure. The accommodation is spacious and well resourced, with a securely fenced play area. It lacks only a safe surface for climbing apparatus. Children with special educational needs are well catered for.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are very responsive to children's needs and create a rich learning environment for them
- High expectations are made clear and classroom routines well established
- Support staff enable all children to benefit fully from lessons

Commentary

46. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is a high priority for all staff, as they know some children enter the reception classes with skills that are well below average. The children make very rapid progress because work is planned to take account of their differing needs, and clear routines are set in place from the beginning. They are on course to exceed the early learning goals in this area by the time they enter Year 1. All children achieve well, and some very well, considering their starting point.
47. Adults provide excellent role models for children, giving them plenty of praise. This builds strong, caring relationships, and children are happy and secure. Teaching is very good. There are high expectations of behaviour and teachers manage their classes very well. Children are encouraged to co-operate together and become independent, for example in putting away apparatus after a physical education (PE) lesson, or in forming a human number chain. They are beginning to concentrate on tasks in a more sustained way, and make careful choices when directing their own learning. Opportunities for social interaction are built into their day. During the inspection, for example, children sat down together to eat pancakes and compare toppings.
48. Sharing times, when the children sit around in circle, are well established. They can explore their feelings and begin to understand others' points of view. Asked the question 'what do you care for and how' one girl responded when it was her turn, "I care for my mummy by cuddling her!" There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily lessons teaching children about letter sounds, (phonics) build a firm foundation for reading
- Activities are planned to be interesting and fun
- Informal opportunities to write harness children's enthusiasm
- Speaking and listening skills develop rapidly because of good teaching

Commentary

49. Most children are on course to exceed the expectations in this area of learning by the end of the reception year and this is above average. They achieve well because teaching is always good and is lively and imaginative. An emphasis on early reading skills by learning and practising sounds enables children to make a confident beginning. They are also encouraged to go over these with their parents at home. Support staff make a valuable contribution to this work through their very good knowledge, and ensure that children with special educational needs also achieve well. Teachers devise work that is exciting and challenging, often around stories and nursery rhymes that involve the children, for example in re-enacting them.
50. Children are introduced to writing through informal activities in play, as when they make their own books, or write notes to the teacher. They are able to "read" their marks even if nobody else can at this early stage! Language is nurtured and encouraged through sensitive questioning and making the most of every opportunity as it arises. The children who come into the reception class with some ability in this area provide good role models for those whose skills are less well developed. Adults and children working co-operatively together ensure that by the end of the reception year almost all children are confident and articulate.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because teaching is good
- Planning is imaginative and sometimes innovative
- High expectations and consistent adult support result in a high level of challenge for all pupils

Commentary

51. Most children are in line to exceed the national goals for learning by the end of the reception year. Teaching is good and is often creative and lively. Strong links are made to the class topic, as when children had to put numbered flowers in order, or "grow" sufficient plants to match the number on the pot. Children were asked to count out the correct number of plates and forks so that every child could have a pancake. Afterwards they compiled a chart of favourite toppings. Puppets are used in one reception class very effectively to tell children what they are going to learn, and to make "mistakes" in counting, which children are desperate to correct. These innovative and exciting methods make learning fun and ensure rapid progress.
52. Teachers have high expectations of children. Together with support staff they ensure all children are working to capacity. Computers are used in the classroom to reinforce learning, with some useful self-correcting number programs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's natural curiosity is fired through exciting first-hand experiences
- Activities emphasise speaking and listening
- Children do not have enough access to modern computers

Commentary

53. Standards are well above expectations because very good teaching introduces children to a wide range of experiences. They achieve very well. In one class they were asked to design a face on a flowerpot and plant cress, so that it would grow a head of hair! They will record its progress and decide when it is time for a trim. There is a good mixture of adult-directed activities and opportunities for children to find things out for themselves. Language of a high quality is a feature of lessons, with all adults probing children's understanding, and expecting them to reason aloud.
54. Computers in the classroom are used effectively, as when children searched the Internet for information about pancake day. However, these machines are very old and unreliable, and it is difficult for children to access the more modern machines in the main school building.
55. Children have visited the local church and looked at the materials it is made of, as well as considering their own homes. This has led to impressive work making models and designing materials of their own. A "season tree" on the wall is decked out quarterly. At this time of year its branches are bare, but snowdrops are growing up beneath them (see Creative Development below).

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

56. This area of learning was not a main focus of the inspection. Children were observed for one half period using the small apparatus. They listened attentively to the teacher and followed instructions well. Activities were well planned to develop their skills in throwing and catching. Arctic conditions pre-empted any observation of outdoor play, but photographic evidence suggests the outside play areas are used well, with all six areas of learning represented. A practical picket fence has addressed the criticism of the previous inspection report about security. A recently erected canopy means children can play with the sand when it is raining. Now the facility only lacks a safe surface for the hard play area where climbing apparatus could be placed.
57. Inside, there are many opportunities for developing manipulative skills, and some children have mastery of these. One boy was observed to cut a perfect circle of foil to fit a flower head exactly whilst making a model. Other children need more practice, and this is regularly provided.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Purposeful role-play is a strong feature of the provision
- Children learn a range of techniques and skills and produce work of a high quality

- Music and singing form a backdrop to the daily activities

Commentary

58. Most children are likely to exceed the national goals for learning by the end of the reception year. Teaching is very good. Children achieve well because they are taught specific skills and given a variety of ways to use them. The walls of the reception classes abound with paintings, drawings, collages and three-dimensional models created by the children. In particular, the snowdrops drawn under the “season tree” (see Knowledge and Understanding of the World above) are in pastel and capture the character of these flowers delightfully with their delicate shades. Another display has careful observational drawings of Victorian objects. Children have depicted the rhythm of their names with handprints to denote claps. Music is a constant feature of the reception classes, to the extent that it sometimes feels like a living opera complete with dash, colour and drama! Many routines are sung, or done to music, such as changing for PE or taking the register.
59. The role-play areas are regularly changed and renewed to maintain interest. As the new topic is growth “Mary, Mary’s Quite Contrary Garden Centre” has appeared and is galvanising the children. On pancake day they had frying pans and pancakes to toss. Much rich language emerges through role-play as the children immerse themselves in their imaginary worlds, but worlds carefully constructed for them by the staff.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are a strength throughout the school
- Teachers are enthusiastic and entertaining and teaching is very good
- Support staff make an excellent contribution to pupils’ learning
- Standards in reading have improved since the last inspection
- The library is well stocked and attractive

Commentary

60. Standards of work are well above average in speaking and listening and reading, and above average in writing. The present Year 2 are on course to exceed national expectations, an improvement on last year’s results, when there was a disproportionately high number of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils’ achievement is very good in speaking and listening and reading, and good in writing. This is because much of the teaching is very good, with high expectations of pupils. Pupils achieve better in writing in Year 2 than they do in Year 1 because the work in Year 2 is well matched to pupils’ abilities, and the work is made interesting. All pupils including those with special needs and English as a additional language make above average progress.
61. Pupils make rapid progress in developing their speaking skills. Teachers build well on the good start pupils receive in the Foundation Stage. They are articulate and keen, and listen carefully to their teachers. They are given good opportunities to discuss work with one another, and to ask and answer questions. A particularly effective method used by the Year 2 teachers is to impersonate a book character (dressing up for the occasion!) and to allow pupils to strike up a dialogue. In one lesson the classroom assistant and teacher became very distinctive “grannies”, one elegant and sophisticated from the mainland, the other dishevelled and rudimentary from the island. Pupils were delighted with the transformation and entered into the spirit of the discussion with verve. This then stimulated their use of adjectives later in the lesson to describe the different characters. In other lessons, pupils were so in tune with

the teacher's train of thought that they could anticipate what was coming next, and make connections.

62. Reading standards have improved considerably since the last inspection, with all Year 1 pupils working ahead of expectations, and some of the more able Year 2 pupils reading at levels expected of nine or ten-year-olds. They read with clear diction and intonation, and can predict likely outcomes to stories. The school emphasises phonics from the earliest stages, and children are encouraged to read at home. Pupils make good use of the well-stocked library, they get good support from the school librarian. The introduction of the literacy hour since the last inspection has given a welcome structure to lessons, especially with the use of big books in whole class sessions. Teachers find a range of uses for them, and highlight particular features of reading to pupils.
63. Standards in writing are above average overall, with a good variety of styles and types used, including letters, poetry, stories and information. Pupils are encouraged to make their work interesting and to use more unusual words. There is appropriate emphasis on correct spelling and punctuation. By Year 2, pupils are producing a pleasing volume of work, with some very good examples of imaginative and expressive writing. Often pupils are inspired and motivated by the stimulating introduction to the lesson and are eager to work. In a minority of lessons the task set is a little dull or repetitive, or not challenging enough, and this is reflected in the quality of work produced, especially at Year 1. Pupils are encouraged to read out their writing to one another, and show sensitivity, as when they wrote about their wishes in very personal ways. Standards of presentation are well above average, with pupils joining their letters in Year 1, and developing a neat cursive style by the time they leave Year 2.
64. Of the seven lessons observed five were judged to be of very good quality. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are confident in the way they present new information to pupils. Mostly lessons are exciting and fun, and move at a brisk pace. Support staff have great skill in encouraging less confident pupils and boosting their self-esteem, and work in close partnership with teachers. Their contribution is highly valued. Pupils who received additional support with their writing in Year 1 made considerable progress by the time they reached Year 2. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Weekly targets are given and pupils know what they have to do to achieve them. In the best lessons, teachers find time at the end to sum up the main learning point and assess how far pupils have grasped it.
65. The school has made a start to track pupils' progress through regular assessments, although there is room for refinement. The subject leader monitors planning and aspects of teaching, giving useful feedback. This has been effective in improving practice. Resources are plentiful and used creatively.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. Literacy skills are used adequately to support learning in other subjects. Computers are not used sufficiently to write accounts. The library is a very good resource and well sited for pupils to find out information for themselves.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently good teachers' planning ensures continuity of teaching
- Use of correct mathematical vocabulary from an early age is effective
- Support from adult helpers for less able pupils is very good
- Pupils' enjoyment of and enthusiasm for mathematics
- Variety of questioning challenges all abilities
- Management of the subject is good

- Use of assessment opportunities at the end of lessons requires extension
- Use of ICT as a means to support learning is not consistent
- Too little use is made of mathematical investigations in the context of pupils' own lives
- Leadership of a whole school dialogue into the future of teaching mathematics in school is needed to ensure innovation and further development

Commentary

67. The level of improvement since the last inspection is good. Curriculum continuity provided by all classes following the format of the National Numeracy Strategy linked with good planning, has resulted in improvements in teachers' confidence when teaching mathematics.
68. Pupils' standards are above national expectations in Year 1 and 2. Pupils of all abilities particularly those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, receive very good support from teaching assistants. This leads to all pupils making good progress. All lessons follow a three part structure, with lively mental tasks being set at the start which engage pupils' interest and attention. In Year 2, all pupils show great enthusiasm in their first activity of a lesson by counting backwards and forwards in number patterns to show odd and even sequences. More able pupils in Year 2 demonstrate their understanding of movements, following instructions to turn through quarter and half turns. Most pupils have a good understanding of addition and subtraction of numbers to 100. A particularly strong feature of lessons is pupils' confident use of the correct mathematical language and their ability to explain their methods for arriving at specific answers.
69. Good questioning by teachers to all pupils enables effective participation. Linked with good teachers' subject knowledge and support from teaching assistants, pupils enjoy their mathematics. Girls and boys receive equal opportunities to make progress in lessons. Assessment opportunities at the end of lessons are less well used to determine pupil progress or to plan for the next steps they will need to take.
70. Within mathematics lessons little use is made of computers and calculators to aid learning. Whilst pupils receive a good grounding in the basics of number, space, shape and measurement, and simple data handling, there is a lack of opportunities for pupils to apply these skills in investigations that have relevance to their lives. This aspect has been identified for improvement in the school development plan.
71. The quality of teaching across the school is good. Where teaching is better than satisfactory, pupils of all abilities are given searching questions, are asked to explain their reasoning and are given a variety of tasks to challenge them. Good co-operation between staff, including support assistants, at the planning stage, results in all adults having a very clear framework for each lesson. The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs through direct questioning and targeted work is a particular strength of teaching. Where teaching is weaker, pupils carry out the same tasks and more able pupils are given work that they can already do and understand.
72. Management of the subject is good. Resources are good and well-managed. Assessments of pupils' abilities are made regularly during the their time in school, resulting in specific support being given to those pupils with less ability. As yet, no comparable support is outlined for those pupils who are gifted in mathematics.
73. Leadership of mathematics is satisfactory. A vision of how to use the current good, and some very good, practice in the teaching and learning of mathematics, has yet to be formulated and discussed by all staff.

Mathematics across the curriculum.

74. Numeracy across the curriculum is evident in many other subjects, such as the production of graphs and pie charts on healthy eating in science, pattern and counting rhythms in Maypole dancing, the measurement of vehicles in design and technology and playing number games with bean bags in PE lessons. A particularly effective use of mathematical skills is the use of measurement of different materials from Victorian times in pupils' history lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and have very positive attitudes towards their work
- The emphasis on experimental science rather than simply learning facts is very effective at promoting pupils' knowledge and understanding
- There is very good support for the teaching from the teaching assistants, who guide pupils' learning very well
- Insufficient use is made of ICT as a tool for promoting learning
- Some key skills, such as writing a simple explanation, are insufficiently developed in the subject

Commentary

75. Standards of work are well above average for the subject. The achievements of the present Year 2 cohort place them on course to exceed national expectations. This will be an improvement on last year's results, when there were a significant number of pupils with special needs. Pupils' achievement is very good in experimental science, and good overall. Much of the teaching is very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and the work they do is interesting. Standards have improved since the last inspection, with nearly all pupils working ahead of expectations in most respects. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be in line with those expected.
76. The very good start children get in the Foundation Stage sets the scene for pupils' work in this subject. Pupils talk with enthusiasm and confidence about the work they have done, what they have learned and what they understand as a consequence of doing the work. When asked to name their favourite subject, several agreed that science was top of their list. They are particularly enthusiastic about the visits they have made which have a scientific basis. Bug hunting and pond dipping figure strongly in their list of the best activities. In two Year 2 science lessons on the topic of electricity there were genuine levels of excitement amongst the pupils as they experimented with the tasks they had been set. Pupils using a balloon to show the effects of static electricity accurately used vocabulary they had learned earlier in the year when experimenting with magnets. They explained that when the balloon was rubbed against a cloth it created static electricity which attracted the shapes or pulled people's hair on end. They sought in vain to create a way to show that static electricity could repel, as they were convinced that the two concepts of magnetism and electricity must be linked. In the second class, pupils co-operated thoughtfully in the task of getting first one then several bulbs to light up. They made astute observations about the positive and minus symbols on the batteries and gave logical reasons as to why the lights dimmed when they added more bulbs to their simple circuits.
77. The quality of teaching in the subject is good and at times very good. Teachers clearly enjoy teaching the subject and have appropriate levels of subject knowledge. They plan lessons very effectively and in the best lessons make very good use of the lesson models from the literacy and numeracy strategies to set the pupils clear objectives, then carry out relevant activities and

finally summarise what they have done with the pupils at the end of the session. Teachers place great emphasis on experimental science and this is very good for pupils' scientific understanding, but no opportunities are used to develop pupils' writing skills. This would strengthen the satisfactory cross-curricular links teachers already make with other subjects. The high quality planning ensures that pupils learn and apply appropriately basic facts, concepts and key words. The result is that all pupils, including those with special needs and English as an additional language, make good progress. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour are very important. Teachers know that they can trust their pupils to be sensible and keep themselves and others safe when they are carrying out exciting tasks. Some opportunities are missed to offer the gifted and talented pupils really difficult challenges. The resources they provide are good and pupils show proper care and respect for the materials they use. It is almost taken for granted that they will tidy everything away in a proper fashion, but teachers and teaching assistants are very quick to pick up on those who fall below their exacting standards.

78. Teaching assistants work very closely with the teachers and provide very good support for all pupils in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. The questioning strategies they use are particularly effective. Rather than simply tell the pupils what to do, both teachers and teaching assistants make very good use of open-ended questions and accurate praise to tease out answers from the pupils and then confirm this when they are right. When pupils are unsure, or wrong, the staff do not use negative language. Instead they reword questions or offer a different model to lead the pupils forward.
79. The management of the subject is good. Events and activities are planned well; this summer the school will be hosting a science week in conjunction with the local authority. Visits in the summer term will once again be used to stimulate pupils' awareness of the environment. The grounds, with the well-tended pond area, provide good reinforcement for the learning on these visits. However, the co-ordinator is insufficiently involved in the development planning process and this limits the leadership that can be developed in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching and support from teaching assistants leads to good learning experiences for the pupils
- Pupils enjoy the subject
- The resources for the subject have been extended, more are planned and staff expertise and confidence are growing
- Opportunities to reinforce and develop learning in other subjects are missed and at times the equipment is underused
- The subject is well managed

Commentary

80. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards in ICT that are above the national expectations. Their achievements are good and the tasks they do cover the whole range of the ICT curriculum, including the use of control technology and quizzing the Internet to find information. Pupils' skills are good in most respects. They usually carry out most tasks without support from an adult. Pupils readily explain what they are doing and why they are doing it in a specific way. A significant number of pupils have limited keyboard skills and this is clearly a disadvantage for them as there are few opportunities for pupils to work for any length time on the computers. Almost all know how to save their work, how to print it out, change font, style, and size, but opportunities to do so are not very frequent. This is more of a disadvantage to those pupils who do not have ready access to computers at home. Their lack of familiarity with the keyboard

does tend to slow down their activities and at times they are distracted from the task in hand by the need to search for the correct key.

81. The success of the school's approach in the subject is that it ensures teachers cover the full curriculum and do not limit the pupils to word-processing or other mundane tasks. There are strong links to art and design. Pupils use the computer art programs very well. They have studied artists such as Mondrian and have used the computer to imitate his style. They have produced their own firework pictures both on computer and by hand. In discussions with pupils it was clear that this approach is teaching them to begin to develop an understanding of when it is appropriate to use a computer and when there are better alternatives. They are beginning to make good use of a digital camera. Pupils have produced work contrasting their own sketches of the local church with the pictures they took of it with the camera. From this work it is clear that they understand some of the advantages and disadvantages of both methods. When word processing is used the tasks are interesting and creative. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote some of their own poetry on the computer. They did so imaginatively, paying particular attention to the way it was presented on the page. Others have produced a menu and illustrated it. Pupils appreciate the freedom they are given. "We can make it funny if we want, as long as we do it well". Other links with mathematics allow the pupils to contrast the block graphs they produce for themselves with those produced on a data program using the same results. However, there are opportunities for the more able pupils to develop their work independently that are missed.
82. Only one ICT lesson was seen during the course of the inspection and the teaching in this lesson was good. Limited use of ICT was seen in other lessons, usually with the pupils supported by a teaching assistant. Where it was used the support was again good. Teachers and teaching assistants allow pupils to make mistakes and encourage them to find their own solutions to putting things right. The teachers' planning is very good. Teaching assistants know what is required of them and are able to give good feedback to the teacher at the end of the session on what the pupils have found hard or easy and the next steps are discussed.
83. In the lesson seen, all pupils were involved despite limited access to equipment. Pupils with special needs were involved well and given very good support and encouragement by the teaching assistant. The teacher had gone to some lengths to choose real examples of different forms of picture. By careful question and answer she drew out and developed pupils' own knowledge. Then, with a combination of explanation and modelling on the computer by the pupils, she extended and developed their learning and understanding. Everyone was fully involved. A pupil who has English as his second language was encouraged to be adventurous in his statements by carefully targeted praise for thoughtful responses.
84. The co-ordinator is new to the role, but is managing the subject well. She is receiving good support for her own development with access to a subject leaders' course. She has a limited time during each week to monitor the subject, and a portfolio of work is in the process of being established. New equipment is on order and the prospects for the subject are good. However, as with other subject leaders in the school, the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to build a strategic picture of what is needed to promote even better learning for the pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

85. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. It is planned to be used in most lessons. There are good examples in the school of ICT being used in a wide variety of ways. However, during the inspection teachers only made limited use of it. Sometimes, even in the lessons where it was planned, pupils did not get around to using it and where they did it was often for a limited time. Teachers' confidence in ICT is growing, but some are still unsure if they can rely on the equipment or what to do if it goes wrong. The lack of technical support is inhibiting the positive development of the subject to support all aspects of learning.

HUMANITIES

The subjects of geography and history were not a focus for the inspection, but observations of work on display and discussions with pupils suggest that standards in both subjects are in line with those expected.

86. Inspectors did not see any lessons in **geography**. They looked at the work children had already done in this subject and talked to a number of them about it. The curriculum covers all aspects of the subject, but the evidence was too limited to come to a firm conclusion on the overall quality of teaching and learning. Year 2 pupils know about the compass; they can locate eight compass points with reasonable accuracy. They are able to draw simple maps and plans, for instance of their journey to school. They have an appropriate knowledge of map symbols and how to locate places and features on a map or in an atlas. All the pupils questioned recognised features in their own locality from photographs, and could explain seasonal differences. When asked about local places of interest they talked enthusiastically about the school's visit to Witley Common and the features that make this a distinctive environment.
87. No lessons were seen in **history** and there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the standards or the quality of teaching and learning. However, the planning documents indicate that there is appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum requirements in the subject. Samples of current and previous written work show that teachers give pupils good opportunities to foster their interest in people and events from the past. They are beginning to develop a sense of chronology, talking about events over a hundred years ago when the school was first built, or when their grandparents were born, and even the changes in their own short lifetimes. They clearly enjoy asking questions. "What happened when?" "Why did it happen?" and they understand that the Internet can be a good starting point for research, (a key skill in the subject) but that the really interesting facts come from talking to real people. Every pupil questioned about the subject could list a number of people who had visited the school to talk about a historical context, and places they had visited which had a historical setting.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **at least satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has good links with the local church and makes regular use of visits to the church to develop pupils' understanding of Christianity.
- The pupils develop a good understanding of some of the different faiths and religions in the world.

Commentary

88. There were only limited opportunities to observe religious education lessons during the inspection and only a part lesson was seen. Pupils talked knowledgeably about their local church. They enjoy the visits to it and understood clearly that it was a place of worship. They knew of other places where people could worship and named other churches and a mosque. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of Christian ideas such as self-sacrifice. They related this to Lent. They knew that pancake day that they had just celebrated was more than just an opportunity to eat something different, but marked the start of an opportunity to give up a favourite thing and in doing so they explained that it would help them think about how they might help others. "We have lots of food, it does not hurt us to give up one little thing we like. Some people are hungry all the time and at Lent we should think how we can help them."
89. Other Year 2 children talked knowledgeably about a range of Muslim artefacts on display in their classroom. They knew the Qu'ran was a holy book. "It is like the Bible, but written in

another language.” They knew that Mohammed was a prophet and again they explained that this was like Jesus. They also talked about how it was important to respect the objects on display and to respect other people’s beliefs.

90. Standards at the time of the last inspection were judged to be well above expectations although it was only possible to come to a provisional judgement this time that the standards were above expectations. It is clear from the evidence in the teachers’ planning that the school is adapting its work to the new agreed syllabus well. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The subjects of art and design, design and technology were not a focus for the inspection, but observations of work on display and discussions with pupils suggest that standards in art are above average and those in design and technology are in line with those expected.

91. Work in **art and design** is of a high quality. Pupils use an interesting and diverse range of techniques and materials. Of particular note are batik fabric patterns to a Bangladeshi design, and clay tiles embossed and painted in the Islamic style. This work also supports pupils’ cultural development.
92. Examples of work inspired by famous artists such as cubes by Mondrian and splatterings by Jackson Pollock enliven classrooms. Pupils are enthusiastic about their work and explain how they created it. The school’s learning environment is enhanced by the colourful and attractive displays.
93. No teaching was seen in **design and technology**. Comments are based upon examination of pupils’ work, discussion with pupils and staff and displays around the school. From the limited evidence seen and discussed, standards are judged to be in line with national expectations. Scrutiny of the work displayed in school provided evidence of a wide and varied curriculum in the subject. In Year 1, pupils design and make their own models of what they believe their school playground should look like. They also design stained glass windows and use food materials to design religious artefacts. In Year 2, clay tiles in an Islamic style are designed and made from suggestions obtained through research on the Internet. Pupils also make cloths in batik from a Bangladeshi design and miniature windsurfing models when testing forces in their science lessons.
94. Resources are good. Links with other subjects are good. Design and technology is an integral part of the school curriculum which pupils enjoy, and they are proud to display the results of their work. Good examples of this are models of houses to portray the Great Fire of London, musical instruments, and models of houses seen around the school itself.

Music

Provision for music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils’ enthusiasm for the subject.
- Active involvement of pupils in musical activities.

Commentary

95. During the inspection, only one lesson was seen. Comments are based upon this lesson, discussions with staff and pupils and examination of musical opportunities in school. The level of improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. In the one lesson seen teaching was good; pupils’ musical skills and knowledge met national expectations for their age. Good use

is made of a variety of percussion instruments, which pupils are asked to match with a musical excerpt from "The Flight of the Bumblebee." Music is present in the support of many religious activities in school and to support the celebration of Christian festivals throughout the year such as Christmas and Easter. Links with other subjects include pupils preparing Maypole dancing for a display for parents, the design and making of simple percussion instruments and the display of African music by outside performers. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Continuity in teachers' planning ensures that all aspects are covered.
- Pupils' behaviour and enthusiasm for the subject are good.
- Use of support assistants in lessons to ensure inclusion of less able pupils is a strength.

Commentary

96. The level of improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The standards and achievements of the pupils in the lessons seen are sound. The quality of teaching in school is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and show continuity throughout the school. Teachers insist on good behaviour and there is an emphasis on health and safety at all times. Pupils are encouraged to participate and try to improve their experience and performances. The quality and range of experiences is satisfactory, with an emphasis upon gymnastics and dance. Limited opportunities are made to use the cultural backgrounds of pupils; this is an area for development in such activities as dance. Resources are satisfactory, and are being regularly monitored and upgraded. Good use is made of the school hall for most lessons.
97. Leadership and management of the subject by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator are satisfactory. Planning has been monitored to measure continuity in teaching and learning. In-service training has been provided recently in an attempt to boost teachers' subject knowledge and confidence to teach a wider variety of games skills.
98. Whilst health and safety for all pupils are well addressed, all staff need to have greater awareness of the rationale for the safety procedures that are in place.

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

99. Only one lesson was seen during the course of the inspection and in this lesson the teaching and learning were good. Pupils' understood why it is necessary to have rules for keeping safe. In their discussions, pupils of all abilities showed high levels of perception and a good understanding of what they needed to do to avoid putting themselves and others into danger when dealing with electrical appliances. They were able to use the knowledge they had gained in their science work to explain some of the safety features incorporated into a standard plug.
100. The planned programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good and incorporates work on a healthy life style including issues of diet, drugs and personal safety. Sex and relationship education is discussed when it is raised by the pupils in the context of the subject and at a level appropriate to the pupils' understanding. The school has not developed a school council yet, but pupils are consulted about issues in school. They fully understand that they are a part of a community and that this involves rules and procedures they need to follow.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
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	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	1
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).