

INSPECTION REPORT

MERSEY DRIVE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bury

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105299

Headteacher: Mr Chris Riley

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th January 2004

Inspection number: 256899

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	198
School address:	Mersey Drive Whitefield Manchester Lancashire
Postcode:	M45 8LN
Telephone number:	0161 7666298
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ann Audin
Date of previous inspection:	24 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average size primary school with 198 pupils aged from three to eleven, including 29 children in the Nursery. The area the school serves is one of considerable social deprivation. The take-up of free school meals is above the national average and the attainment of many children is well below that expected for their age when they enter the Nursery class. Most pupils come from white English speaking families but 10 per cent are from other races. Two per cent of the pupils speak English as an additional language, but very few of them are at an early stage of English language acquisition. There is an above average percentage of pupils with special educational needs, mostly moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural problems. In addition, this school is a designated resourced provision school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and also has a unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, which means that there is a well above average number of pupils with statements of specific need. In 2003, the school received a School's Achievement Award and its third Investors in People Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22261	Mrs Barbara E Doughty	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Information and communication technology Personal, social and health education and citizenship
14141	Mr Ernie Marshall	Lay inspector	
32337	Mrs Christine Haddock	Team inspector	English History Geography Religious education
17681	Mr Roger Sharples	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	16
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school provides a **satisfactory** education. Standards are below average but have improved over time because of satisfactory leadership and management. Pupils achieve as well as could reasonably be expected from their attainment on entry because of sound teaching and learning. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils do well in science and physical education to reach the nationally expected level.
- The work is tailored well to pupils' needs in the Reception class and Year 2, but not in the other classes where the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged for too much of the time.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils achieve well in the main school and in the unit for autistic pupils, within a caring and supportive environment.
- Pupils enjoy school, reflected in their good attendance. This is because teachers listen to and value their opinions, provide well for their personal needs, and are sensitive to their feelings.
- There is a good team spirit; staff work well together and morale is high.
- The procedures for keeping a check on teaching and learning are in their infancy and not yet fully effective in supporting staff development and finding out in which years and subjects pupils make the most and least progress.
- Writing, mathematics and computer skills are not used well enough to support other subjects.
- When approached by parents, the school listens to them well, but does not do enough to find out how parents feel about what the school provides for their children.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen at a greater rate than nationally. Good improvements have been made to information and communication technology (ICT) and pupils' attendance is much better than it was, reflecting the improved provision for pupils' personal development. Assessment procedures are now in place, but teachers do not use the information to tailor the work for different attaining pupils. Teachers' marking is still inconsistent, and the arrangements for finding out and improving teaching and learning are still not as effective as they could be.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Achievement is **satisfactory**. From the table above, test results remain well below average, and in mathematics in 2001 the school was amongst the lowest scoring five per cent of schools nationally. However, these results have risen over time at a greater rate than nationally. In lessons, by the end of the Reception class, children do not achieve the goals they are expected to reach and standards are below those expected for this age group in all areas of areas of learning except personal, social, emotional and creative development. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics and by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics; pupils are particularly weak at speaking and writing. Pupils do well in science and physical education to reach the nationally expected standards for Year 2 and Year 6. The number of pupils at this school

with special educational needs is high and although these pupils do well given their difficulties, they are slow at retaining knowledge, learning skills, and developing understanding. They are supported effectively and do well to attain even below the expected level. However, the achievement of the most able pupils is too slow. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and emotional development, is **good**. Pupils' enjoyment in school is reflected in their good attendance, positive attitudes towards work, and good behaviour. The few pupils who find it difficult to behave well all of the time, are dealt with effectively so as to cause minimal disruption to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **sound**; it is good in the Reception class and Year 2 because the work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Teaching is good in science and physical education because a practical approach enthuses pupils and holds their interest well. In all subjects, teachers make good use of the national teaching guidelines and work well with support staff to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. However, teachers do not make enough use of what they know the most able pupils can do to set them suitably challenging work, slowing their achievement. Teachers promote speaking skills well, but do not expect pupils to write in other subjects, or to use their mathematics and ICT skills to support other work. They do not insist pupils present their work neatly and their comments in pupils' workbooks do little to show pupils how to improve standards. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in activities outside lessons, which give a good boost to their learning in social and physical education skills in particular. The school gives pupils, but not parents, good opportunities to say what they like or dislike about school and to influence change.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Governance is good and governors meet their statutory duties fully. This school is fully committed to including all pupils whatever their background, learning difficulties or behaviour problems. Staff work hard and the head teacher gives them good support through praise and encouragement; staff are happy and morale is high because of this. However, the guidance teachers and support staff get about how to improve their teaching is not effective enough.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very happy with this school. Parents are particularly happy with the progress their children make and the approachability of all of the staff. Pupils appreciate in particular the help that teachers give them when they are struggling to do their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that teachers make better use of assessment information to tailor the work to pupils' needs and do more to promote writing, mathematics and ICT skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that senior staff and subject leaders check on teaching and learning more effectively so that teachers and pupils have clearer direction about what they can do to improve their work.
- Do more to seek the views of parents and give them the opportunity to influence change in school routines and procedures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are below average; achievement is satisfactory. Pupils do well in science and physical education to reach average standards by the time they leave the school. Although standards in English, mathematics, ICT, and religious education are below average, pupils do as well as could reasonably be expected given the high number with special educational needs and the difficulties many have learning and retaining new knowledge and understanding. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily; pupils in the unit for children with autism reach well below average standards, but nevertheless do well given their learning difficulties.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English and mathematics are rising at a greater rate than nationally.
- Pupils do well in physical education and science so that most are working at the nationally expected level.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes get off to a good start in personal, social, emotional and creative development to reach the goals identified for children of their age by the time they start in Year 1.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those in the unit for pupils with autism, do well.
- Pupils achieve well in the Reception class and in Year 2, but achievement in other years is slowed when work is not matched well enough to pupils' ability and pupils are not engaged enough in practical work.
- Standards in writing are well below average and pupils' speaking skills are weak.

Commentary

1. By the end of the Reception class, children reach the early learning goals in personal, social, emotional and creative development, but not in any of the other areas of learning, where standards are below those expected for their age. The 2003 Year 2 test results were below the national average in reading and mathematics and well below it in writing; the Year 6 results were well below the national average in English and mathematics and below it in science. However, results have risen over time at a greater rate than they have nationally. This is due to the school's increased focus on implementing the national teaching guidelines for literacy and numeracy and the practical way in which science is taught, making it more meaningful and interesting to pupils. Although the school is working hard to deal with this, standards in writing are well below average and pupils' speaking skills are poor. Standards in ICT and religious education are below the nationally expected level by the time the pupils leave the school but pupils achieve well enough in both subjects given their attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.8 (13.7)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	11.6 (11.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.7 (14.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.4 (24.4)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	24.4 (24.4)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.2 (26.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Pupils start school with impoverished speaking skills. In the Nursery and Reception classes they struggle to make their needs known other than by gestures or one-word responses to questions. Although talk is promoted throughout the school, pupils in Years 1 to 6 still struggle to articulate their thoughts. The quality of their writing is hampered by this, as pupils find putting their thoughts down on paper as difficult as speaking them. Their explanations lack clarity because of this and it is difficult at times to measure how well they have understood an idea.
3. Nevertheless, given their attainment on entry to school, pupils do as well as could reasonably be expected in English, mathematics, ICT and religious education; they do better than expected in science and physical education. This is because the practical way in which these two subjects are taught holds the interest of the pupils well. Similarly, Foundation Stage children achieve most success when their learning is based on exploration and observation, as it is nearly always in personal, social, emotional and creative development. However, in other areas of learning in the Nursery and subjects in Years 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6, achievement is sometimes less than it could be because the work is not always suitably adapted for pupils of different abilities and teachers expect pupils to sit and listen for longer than necessary instead of getting on with the practical part of their work. This has the most detrimental impact on the learning of the most able pupils who are often insufficiently challenged.
4. The achievement of pupils with moderate and specific learning difficulties is good. This is because the work is tailored to their needs more successfully than it is for their average and more able attaining schoolmates. Pupils with autism gradually learn to work with other pupils, co-operate and follow directions. They become increasingly able to focus on learning and make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and numeracy. The management of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is very effective and the impact of their sometimes disruptive behaviour on the achievement and standards of their schoolmates is minimised by teachers' effective handling of potentially confrontational and disruptive situations.
5. Pupils from different races do as well as each other because they are treated equally. Teachers are aware of those pupils who are in the early stages of English language acquisition and check constantly on their understanding. Historically, boys do not do as well as girls, but the school is working hard to deal with this. However, most of the pupils with special educational needs are boys and this impacts greatly on the amount of repetition and consolidation that they need and the way that they perform in the tests.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal development is good. The attendance rate is above the national average. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, reflected in pupils' good behaviour and attitudes towards school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most of the pupils behave well and work together effectively because staff encourage them to do so.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and enjoy coming because they feel liked and valued by the teachers and support staff.
- Pupils with special educational needs, including those with specific difficulties, have very good attitudes and get on very well when they are working with a teacher on their own or in small groups outside the lessons.
- Careless presentation due to weak handwriting skills in particular means that pupils do not always take enough pride in their work.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.1
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

6. Pupils like coming to school; their good attendance and positive attitudes to work reflect how they feel. Many of them say that they are treated fairly and that there is someone to whom they can go if and when they are stuck with their work or worried about anything. Pupils find their schoolmates friendly and mostly well enough behaved, although recognise that some pupils find conforming to school rules difficult. Pupils of all ages willingly help each other when they have problems and work together well on computers or, for example, in a mathematics lesson when Year 2 pupils worked well together as they matched amounts of money to the number of letters in their names. Pupils take an interest in school life and in the activities provided, usually only losing interest when the work is either ill matched to their capability or when it involves sitting still for a long time.
7. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning and very good attitudes when they are taught on their own or in small groups outside the classroom. During these sessions, they make very good progress because their concentration is very good and they thoroughly enjoy the attention they get from the teachers and support staff.
8. Part of the reason why pupils enjoy school so much is because teachers make them feel important and special by listening to them and taking notice of what they have to say. Teachers and support staff take time to praise pupils for what they are doing well and this raises pupils' self-esteem and builds their confidence well. Pupils show good respect for and awareness of the personal qualities of other people. For example, when writing about peoples' special skills one pupil showed a real awareness of the handicaps others have to live with when he put, "I know someone who can't walk or talk. He's different but he can do everything I can do." This perceptive comment reflects the good relationships and the social harmony that exist throughout the school.
9. Equally as effective is the way in which pupils, especially those in Year 6, are taught the responsibilities of living in a community. They are reminded for example by notices on the classroom wall that, as the oldest in the school, they are responsible for "setting a good example, being kind and caring to others, listening to what people have to say, and always doing our best". Their work in religious education gives pupils an appreciation of the cultural traditions of others and their discussions in personal and social education lessons develop well

their understanding that everyone has the right to make their choice and, providing it is within the law, live their life in the way they want.

10. Most of the pupils behave well for most of the time. However, there are a number, particularly in Years 5 and 6, who find it hard to conform to class and school routines. The patience teachers show these pupils is outstanding and the support given them by classroom and learning support assistants helps them to come to terms with their feelings and reflect on their behaviour and the effect it has on their learning and that of their classmates. However, last year, so severe was the behaviour of two pupils that the school had no alternative but to exclude them for a short period of time. All of the correct procedures were followed.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	155	2	
White – any other White background	1		
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2		
Black or Black British – African	1		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5		
Chinese	2		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory, with some strengths. The learning opportunities in the Reception class and Year 2 are good because they are matched well to pupils' learning needs and based on learning through doing. Throughout the school, inclusion is good, reflected in the school's willingness to provide up to 15 places for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and eight places for pupils with autism who would normally attend other schools in the authority.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory; it is good in the Reception class and Year 2. The assessment of how well pupils are doing is thorough and the information used well to tailor the work for those pupils with special educational needs. However, most teachers do not use the information well enough to adapt the work for the most able pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is most successful in Reception and Year 2 because it is based on learning through doing and the work matches pupils' needs. Teaching is effective in science and physical education because it is mostly of a practical nature.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and most of the time pupils rise to the challenge, work hard, sustain concentration, and behave well.
- Teachers use subject vocabulary well and talk in sentences so that pupils might learn from their example.

- Teaching makes good use of the national teaching guidelines and, because of this, lessons are well structured and prepared and teachers are clear about what to teach and when to teach it.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs because the work is tailored to their needs. However, this is not the case for the average and most able pupils in Year 1, and Years 3 to 6, where the provision is satisfactory.
- Teachers, nursery nurses, learning and classroom support assistants work together well, which means that all staff know what to do.
- Teachers do not encourage pupils to use the handwriting skills, taught and practised in isolation, to present their work neatly.
- Whilst they praise what pupils do well, teachers' comments in pupils' workbooks do not tell them what to do to improve.
- There is insufficient promotion or use of ICT, writing and mathematics to help pupils' learning in other subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	5 (10%)	23 (47%)	20 (41%)	1 (2%)	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.

- Teaching is satisfactory overall. From the table shown, nearly half the lessons seen were good, with a few that were very good. This is because teachers have a good understanding of how to organise lessons and their effective preparation means that most lessons run smoothly. Staff work together well, planning and preparing lessons in partnership so that they each know what they are doing, informed by what the teacher intends pupils to know and be able to do by the end of the lesson. They also show pupils, from their relationships with each other, how to relate to others by giving them a good example on which to base their relationships with each other.
- However, the good teaching seen in the lessons is not reflected in the quality of work pupils completed over the year and some weaknesses slow progress and mean that pupils do not do as well as they could. This is because teachers have detailed information about what pupils already know, understand and can do, and use it well to adapt the work for those pupils with special educational needs. However, not all of them use it to tailor the work to suit the most able pupils who are too often asked to do tasks that are too easy, slowing their progress.
- However, this is not always the case. Teaching and learning are consistently good and sometimes very good in science and physical education lessons. It is good in the Reception and Year 2 classes due to teachers' good use of assessment to inform teaching and learning, and work that is of a practical nature. For example, the reason for pupils doing so well in science is because much of the work enables pupils to find out things for themselves through investigating and experimenting. This means that they are interested and want to learn. Similarly in physical education, the very practical nature of the subject generates interest and excitement. Whilst teaching in ICT is satisfactory, the most successful lessons were those where pupils used the computers for the whole session, practising how to search the Internet for information, following the teacher's moves on the large computer screen, and learning from their successes and failures. The least successful lessons were those where the pupils sat for up to 20 minutes listening to teachers telling them what they were going to do when all they wanted was to do it. They became restless and disruptive and learnt very little until they started using the machines.

14. Pupils with autism are taught well. Lessons are well planned and learning activities are practical and relevant to pupils' lives and their understanding. Good use is made of specialist teaching and effective procedures are in place to help these pupils to understand what they need to do and how to behave.
15. Throughout the school, behaviour management is effective and because of this most pupils behave well most of the time. Teaching and support staff deal effectively with any anti-social behaviour and consequently little disruption to learning takes place. On the rare occasion when it did during the inspection, there was little else teachers could have done to resolve the situation, so challenging are some of the pupils.
16. To try to improve pupils' speaking skills and so raise standards in writing by giving pupils clarity in organising and presenting their thoughts, teachers and support staff work hard to show pupils how to speak in sentences and how to communicate with others. They use precise subject vocabulary so that pupils can talk and write more clearly about what they are doing. However, pupils have too few opportunities for writing in subjects other than English and this hampers their progress and prevents them from showing how well they understand what they have been taught, for example, in history and geography. In addition, mathematics and ICT is not taught or used well enough in other subjects.
17. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but, although a new marking policy has recently been implemented, it is inconsistently applied across the school. In most classes, the comments in pupils' books do not tell pupils how to improve their work and have little impact therefore on raising standards. In addition, although pupils practise handwriting skills, they do not apply what they have learnt to present their work neatly and too often workbooks are littered with badly formed script and careless mistakes that pupils have scribbled over.

The curriculum

The school provides its pupils with a satisfactory curriculum that caters for the interests of, and ensures learning for, most of the pupils. There is a good range of extra activities that boost pupils' skills in sports and personal and social development. The accommodation and resources for learning are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good.
- Pupils of all ages achieve well in their personal development because the school provides a varied range of carefully planned experiences for them.
- The learning of the most able pupils is not always appropriately extended.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because their learning opportunities are relevant to their needs.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take part in additional activities outside the classroom that successfully give a boost to the development of their social and physical education skills.

Commentary

18. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes because the activities are planned so that children learn through observation and exploration and talk is valued and encouraged by the adults in both classes. There is a vast range of interesting things for the children to do that excites them, and makes them eager to start work and want to learn.
19. Good provision, throughout the school, for pupil's personal, social and health education helps pupils of all ages to develop positive attitudes to their own well-being and that of others. The school sees this as an important priority because many of the pupils lack self-esteem and confidence in their ability to succeed. Staff work hard because of this to provide a wide range of effective experiences to show pupils that they are valued and that they can achieve if they

work hard. Pupils are taught sex education and about the dangers of drugs misuse, mainly through science and the involvement in the Healthy Schools Project, which helps them to develop a good appreciation of the need for a safe and healthy lifestyle.

20. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning because of the clearly defined learning targets in their individual education plans and the good support they receive in class, small groups and as individuals. However, in contrast, the few most able pupils in Years 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are not always given work that challenges them well enough and this slows their learning unnecessarily.
21. The school makes good use of visits to places of educational interest and of visitors to the school to extend pupils' learning. Effective use is made of sporting links with local secondary schools to improve pupils' performance in netball, football and climbing. Pupils also have access to instrumental tuition such as recorder and brass lessons and the opportunity to join the school choir, which promotes learning in music well.

Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all pupils, including child protection arrangements and the procedures to safeguard the use of the Internet, are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' support and guidance based on the monitoring of their progress is also satisfactory. The extent of pupils' involvement in the work and routines of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction procedures ensure children entering the Nursery and Reception classes settle in quickly and begin to make progress.
- Pupils form trusting relationships with adults when in need of help or advice, helping them to feel secure.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress as a result.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to offer their own suggestions for improvement in the life of the school.
- Teachers' use of assessment information to tailor the work for different attaining pupils is not always good enough and because of this the most able pupils do not do as well as they could.

Commentary

22. Staff in the Reception and Nursery classes maintain frequent contact and often teach lessons or supervise activities in each other's classroom. On occasion, children exchange classrooms; Reception class children particularly enjoy the chance to return to the Nursery. The Nursery children come into school daily for meals and also attend whole-school celebration assemblies. This regular contact ensures that the Nursery children become very familiar with the routines and staff in the Reception class, and when they start in this class they quickly gain confidence and begin to make progress.
23. Relationships between pupils and staff are good. Staff know and care for the pupils well. Teachers recently asked each pupil to complete a questionnaire in order to seek their views about what is going on in school. The results show that the great majority of pupils can easily relate to an adult in school if they feel worried or need to seek advice or support. In addition, the school council meets regularly to identify and discuss problems they have noted themselves or that have been raised by classmates. They have recently discussed playground safety, behaviour, vandalism and graffiti, adequacy of cloakroom space and library problems and have obtained competitive prices and organised the purchase and issue of play equipment for each class, using funds allocated by the parent-teacher association. A particularly good example of the group's keenness to influence change and bring about improvement to school routines and

- procedures was demonstrated at their last meeting when the pupils involved reviewed what they had achieved as a school council and considered whether they could have done better.
24. Pupils with English as an additional language are given the same good support as their schoolmates and those with special educational needs are particularly well supported, both by the staff and also by the expert attention provided by the good range of visiting specialists. These pupils have individual learning plans and parents are consulted and involved in the periodic reviews. They achieve well as a result.
 25. Whilst teachers and support staff regularly discuss and record pupils' achievement and progress in lessons, the use of the information gained is not consistently applied across the school. This means that future lesson plans do not always provide appropriate challenge or targets for individual pupils, particular the most able, and they do not achieve as well as they could.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has satisfactory links with parents and with the community. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with other schools and colleges provide training and additional support for staff and pupils in classrooms and also help in the transfer of pupils to secondary education.
- Links with parents of the pupils in the autistic unit help these pupils to make good progress.
- The school is not active enough in seeking parents' views about what is going on in school.

Commentary

26. The school has developed effective links with the local high school and pupils enjoy the use of its excellent physical education facilities; specialist tuition by high school staff enables pupils in Year 6 to make good progress. Visiting high school staff also teach a lesson in the Year 6 classroom. Their early contact with pupils helps to give confidence to the leavers. These links also ensure a smooth transfer for Year 6 pupils who spend a full day working in the high school during the term before leaving primary school.
27. Good links with the local college mean that the school gets additional help from students and nursery nurse trainees who are gaining work experience. The school works closely with other local primary schools on joint training activities and to discuss how to solve similar problems. The unit for autistic pupils enjoys close co-operation with the school and pupils attending this unit are provided with very effective support to enable them to make good progress. The local education authority has provided training for seven parents to enable them to support some pupils with reading difficulties and this has resulted in improved standards in reading.
28. Parents have a good regard for the school and the staff. They are confident that the staff will listen to any complaint or concern they have and will do what they can to help. Whilst the school meets statutory requirements for providing parents with written information about the school and the standards and progress their children are making, some parents would like more. Parents have suggested an additional parent consultation evening and advice or guidance on what is to be taught each term to assist them to plan the type and extent of help they will be able to give at home. The school has no regular or formal procedure in place for seeking parents' views and cannot be sure therefore that they are happy with everything that is going on in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both satisfactory; governance is good. The head teacher provides sound leadership, and senior managers and subject leaders make a satisfactory contribution to the work of the school. The governing body meets fully its statutory duties.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher's commitment and hard work have led to the development of a secure and caring environment in which pupils increase their self-esteem and confidence through success.
- Staff work together and support each other very well.
- Governors have a good idea about what is going on and challenge and support the head teacher and senior managers well.
- The school includes all pupils well, especially those with special educational needs, through resource provision places and the unit for autistic pupils.
- The head teacher and subject leaders do not check on pupils' learning in sufficient depth and therefore, although standards have risen over time, senior managers are not secure enough about what is happening in lessons. This slows their influence on bringing about improvements to the quality of the teaching and learning.

Commentary

29. The good efforts of the head teacher have led to a caring, fully inclusive school; staff and pupils value his guidance and support. The encouragement of the development of positive relationships between staff and pupils has resulted in a secure learning environment where everybody feels valued. There is an effective team of staff who work extremely hard and are committed to providing learning activities that meet the needs of the pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Morale is high and team spirit is very good.
30. Standards have risen over time, but this is mainly due to the effective implementation of the national teaching guidelines giving teachers good ideas about how to organise teaching and learning. The head teacher and the deputy head teacher have identified the need to provide a more formal and organised structure to enable them, the senior management team, and subject leaders to develop more effective ways in which they can review the quality of teaching and the rate at which pupils learn. The head teacher has developed a system of recording how well pupils perform in tests in English and mathematics but he does not use this information to identify where the most and least progress is made, which pupils need a boost to their learning, and those teachers who need support. Though teachers are familiar with National Curriculum test data, they are not fully conversant with how to analyse and interpret it. The head teacher, deputy head and representatives of the local authority sometimes observe lessons, and give feedback to the teachers about what worked and did not work in their lessons. However, these observations are infrequent and this means that teachers are not supported well enough in bringing about improvements to their work or deciding which training courses they need to attend. The subject leaders are not involved in the process, limiting their knowledge of what works well and not so well in their subject and what needs improving.
31. The management of the provision for special educational needs is very good. The teacher in charge of the unit for autistic pupils is very knowledgeable and skilled at working with pupils with autism. She provides a very good example for other staff by successfully leading a team that provides good education for the pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator, who leads and manages the provision for pupils with special educational needs in the rest of the school, is very effective at her job. She has established an inclusive approach to meeting the needs of these pupils and put in place effective systems to identify and meet the special learning needs of identified pupils.
32. The governing body are very supportive of the school and all of them are fully committed to improving the provision. A number of governors visit the school on a regular basis and because of this have a good understanding of what is going on. They are well trained in order to keep up to date with current national initiatives and to be more effective in their role. They are willing to ask for clarification from the head teacher on any issue that they do not fully understand. The governors ensure that all the statutory requirements are met.

33. The way that the school development plan is presented has been recently changed and is now more forward looking, giving a clearer picture of what needs doing and, most importantly, how to do it. This is supported by a three-year forecast for financial planning, ensuring that money is set aside to finance the improvements. However, the school is currently carrying forward an unusually large amount into next year, but this has been ear-marked to support improvements to the building and maintain the current staffing structure.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	631469
Total expenditure	554881
Expenditure per pupil	2522

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	43783
Balance carried forward to the next	76588

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children start school with attainment that is well below that expected for three year olds. The quality of teaching is sound in the Nursery, resulting in satisfactory achievement. It has improved since the last inspection in the Reception class, where it is now good and, because of this, children achieve well. In both classes, children's learning opportunities are good because they are based on learning through observation and exploration and so children understand what they are doing and enjoy coming to school. Particularly effective is the support for those children with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Teachers and nursery nurses are extremely sensitive towards these children, ensuring that they are always fully involved in what is going on and checking constantly that they know what to do.

Teaching and learning in the Reception class are particularly effective because whilst the adults in both classes record what children know, understand and can do, teaching in the Reception class makes better use of the information to adapt the work to suit different attaining children. Comments written by the teacher on children's work give a clear indication of how well children have managed and what each child needs to concentrate on learning next. These personal learning targets for individual children give purpose to the learning and direction to the teaching. In addition, the classroom is well organised, bright and inviting with lots of exciting things around for children to look at and touch.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have lots of opportunities to play and work together.
- The teachers and nursery nurses show children how to get on with others by talking and laughing together with the children.
- Adults make children feel special through praise and encouragement.

Commentary

34. Children achieve well in this area of learning to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception class because of good teaching and learning. Children confidently leave their parents and carers at the start of the school day; they quickly settle into class routines and become secure in a very short period of time because they want to get on with the activities set up in the classrooms. Role-play areas are well laid out and inviting, encouraging children to use them and play together. Other activities, such as making models and baking, encourage children to work and play together and result in them learning how to get along with others.
35. Children are supported well by the adults in both classes, who work together to show children how to form good relationships with others. They encourage children to become independent from an early age – getting their own drink at snack time and choosing which activities they will do next. Constant praise and encouragement from the teachers and nursery nurses raise children's self-esteem and make them want to have a go at activities set up around the room.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in the Reception class because the classroom is full of exciting things to talk, read and write about and the work is tailored to meet the needs of individual children.
- Speaking is promoted well in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Commentary

36. Children do not reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class and standards are below those expected for their age. Nevertheless their learning is satisfactory and they achieve as well as could be expected given their attainment on entry to Nursery. This is because of satisfactory teaching in the Nursery class and good teaching in the Reception class, where there are lots of exciting things around the room for children to look at and talk about, such as the coloured sand in which to 'draw' and Chinese artefacts that they can pick up and look at. There are many things around the room to encourage children to learn to write, for example when taking orders in the 'Chinese restaurant' and making labels for the models they have made in the construction area. The book area is used well because it is inviting for children to sit and look through books together. In contrast the Nursery class is not as bright and inviting. There are too few words around the room and not so much set up for children to look at, talk about, and touch. Scrap paper for children to write on does little to give value to drawing and writing although the work children produce is made into books, which does.
37. In both classes, letter formation is taught well and children quickly learn the sounds individual letters make in words. In the Reception class the most able children already recognise some words on sight because they use their knowledge of letter sounds to work out what they say. However, children's speaking skills are poor and although children are encouraged in both classes to communicate, they struggle to talk in sentences. Teaching does much to improve this when teachers and nursery nurses model speaking, but too often the questions they ask children require only one-word responses.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Reception classroom is full of things for children to count, and numbers displayed around the room help children with their mathematics work.
- The least able children, especially those with special educational needs, are supported well.

Commentary

38. This area of learning is taught satisfactorily in the Nursery and well in the Reception class. Although standards are below those expected for this age group and children do not reach the goals expected for their age by the end of the Reception class they do well enough given their below average attainment at the start of Nursery. In contrast to the Nursery class, the Reception classroom is mathematically stimulating. There are numbers everywhere and lots of things around that children are asked to count, sort and put in order of size. Number lines in different places such as on walls and along cupboard tops, and especially those taped to tables in the mathematics area, mean that children are constantly looking at numbers. Paying for meals in the 'Chinese restaurant' means that children get used to handling money.

Activities with real money mean that children get an understanding of how to make up different amounts. Computer games extend their knowledge further when children are asked to 'drag and drop' pennies into purses to make up given amounts. There are similar activities in the Nursery but there are few numbers around and those that are displayed are high up on the wall and difficult for children to see.

39. In both classes, children with special educational needs are supported well. For example, in a Nursery session, when children were gathered together on the carpet putting numbers in the correct order on a number line, the nursery nurse made sure that the least able children understood what was going on. In the Reception class, work is adapted well to suit the needs of all children and the teacher's sensitive support for the least able means that these children are fully included and make good progress.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In both classes, children's learning is based well on observation and exploration.
- Visits out of school help to develop children's understanding of the world.
- Good use is made of the computer in the Reception classroom.

Commentary

40. There is sound teaching in the Nursery class and good teaching in the Reception class although, because of the low level at which they started in the Nursery class, children do not reach the goals children of their age are expected to reach by the time they start in Year 1 and standards are below average. Nevertheless, children achieve satisfactorily in this area of learning due to the wide range of experiences they are given in both classes. For example, Nursery children watched in awe as the ice rabbit melted in their hands and the blue water mixed in swirls with the uncoloured water already in the water tray. They found planting bulbs in the Nursery flower troughs interesting, and making noodles and tasting them caused great excitement in the Reception class.
41. Visits to places of educational interest satisfactorily further children's knowledge of the world, such as when Reception children visited a nearby zoo and Nursery children took public transport to the local town library. Both the Nursery and Reception children have access to the computer suite twice a week and make good use of it. They are also encouraged to use tape recorders to listen to story tapes and operate the floor robots to make them travel in particular directions. Consequently, by the time they leave the Reception class, they are confident users of ICT. Children's computer skills are promoted particularly well in the Reception class where children are encouraged to use the computer to practise, in particular, counting.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In both classes, there are lots of opportunities for children to use large and small tools and equipment.
- Reception class children are well aware of the effect exercise has on their bodies.

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in this area of learning. Although standards are below those expected and they do not reach the early learning goals for their age by the end of the Reception class, children achieve well enough from a low starting point on entry to the Nursery. This is because there are lots of opportunities in both classes for children to use, for example, paintbrushes, glue spreaders, modelling tools, and mark-making equipment. They roll out dough, for example, in the Nursery and cut out shapes. In the Reception class, they use sticky tape well, as well as split pins and glue to join things together, selecting the most effective for the job they have to do.
43. Both classes have access to the outdoor learning area where they can engage in boisterous play and to the school hall where they can use the larger apparatus from climbing; wheeled toys are available to children in both classes. Although no physical education hall sessions were seen in the Nursery, the Reception class made good use of this space and time to move imaginatively to music. They felt their heart beat before and after the lesson and realised that it beat faster when they exerted themselves.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children do well to reach the goals expected for their age by the end of the Reception class.
- Nursery children are taught a good range of creative skills so that, when they move into the Reception class, they can use their imagination to create effective models and pictures.
- Music is taught well in both classes.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are good in both classes and because of this achievement is good. Activities are planned and supported well so that children in the Nursery learn how to use paint to create different effects. They use different media to make, for example, spider masks, snowmen and penguins. Their paintings of Van Gogh's sunflower picture are very good.
45. These good skills taught and practised in the Nursery are then put to good use in the Reception class where more individuality is seen in children's work. For example, the monkey masks, made to celebrate the Chinese year of the monkey, all look different and the Christmas trees on display are of all shapes and sizes, again showing individuality.
46. Outdoor learning opportunities further enrich children's creative skills. Encouraged by staff, Nursery children used their imagination when playing, for example, in a cardboard boat and Reception children negotiated who would be the chef and the waiter when role-playing in the 'Chinese restaurant'.
47. Singing sessions are particularly lively, with children joining in enthusiastically and already building up a repertoire of songs, including number rhymes, raps and traditional songs. They sing in tune and play instruments, keeping in time with the music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and writing are well below the nationally expected level.
- The National Literacy Strategy is firmly embedded into the school curriculum, increasing teachers' subject knowledge about what to teach and when to teach it, giving structure to lessons, and ensuring a good balance between teacher explanation and pupil activity.
- There are effective reading initiatives in place, which contribute to pupils' enjoyment of reading and help to raise standards.
- With the exception of Year 2, there are inconsistencies in the use of assessment, which reflects in the lack of challenge for the most able pupils.
- Support staff are deployed effectively to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Staff have effective behaviour strategies that are used routinely in all of the classrooms and because of this behaviour is mostly good.
- There are insufficient opportunities to practise and use writing in other subjects; this slows progress.
- Marking does not give pupils a clear enough picture of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve, and teachers too often accept messy and untidy work from pupils.

Commentary

48. Standards have risen over time and although they are below those normally expected, pupils do well enough given their attainment on entry. Standards in speaking and writing are well below the expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6; pupils struggle to talk about what they are doing and have done, and consequently have difficulty putting their thoughts down on paper. However, the school works hard to develop pupils' skills in these aspects of English by providing many opportunities for speaking and listening in classrooms and assemblies. Pupils also take part in role-play and poetry reading as part of their literacy work. Most pupils, including those with English as an additional language, speak openly within the classroom situation and make themselves understood but they are restricted by a limited vocabulary. Consequently both their understanding and their ability to communicate effectively are hampered. This in turn affects the quality of their written work. For example, Year 6 pupils struggle to find precise words to explain what they mean and interesting words to hold the attention of the reader; only the most able pupils consistently use full stops and capital letters correctly.
49. Although standards in reading are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils throughout the school enjoy reading. Book areas in classrooms are well organised and the library has recently been refurbished. Group reading and opportunities for individual reading are well organised. Reading is well supported by a trained group of parents who hear pupils read. This recent initiative has already made an impact in raising standards in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 6 have favourite authors such as J K Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson and understand both characters and plot. They use a variety of strategies for reading unknown words in both fiction and non-fiction books. They do, however, find difficulty predicting what might happen next.
50. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with good teaching in Year 2, where the teaching is livelier than elsewhere and holds pupils' attention well. Teachers throughout the school have secure subject knowledge and this means that the National Literacy Strategy is firmly embedded into the English curriculum. There are displays of word banks and points of grammar in classrooms to support pupils' writing. However, not enough attention is paid to the

presentation of work and handwriting and, except in Year 2, there is an insufficient range of tasks to further challenge the most able pupils. The way that teachers mark pupils' writing varies considerably. Some do it conscientiously and set targets for pupils to work towards; others, however, mark in a perfunctory way and opportunities to move pupils forward are missed.

51. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by specialist teachers and teaching assistants and these pupils make good progress. There is a range of additional resources to help pupils of lower ability and those who are making insufficient progress at other levels. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed using praise, rewards and sanctions. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for making their own decisions and to make the correct choices.
52. The leadership and management of English are sound and there have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. This is because the two subject leaders have a secure idea of what needs to be improved. They have identified speaking, listening and writing as the next priorities for development. However, they do not have sufficient time to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning in lessons and this means that they struggle to suggest to colleagues how they can improve their teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

This is unsatisfactory. Teaching pays insufficient attention to using and developing pupils' writing skills in other subjects. There are few demands made on pupils, for example, to write about what they have learnt in history, which would give them more time and opportunity to use and apply the literacy skills they had learnt in English lessons to a specific purpose and thereby make it more meaningful to them.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and, although below the national average, pupils do well enough from starting school to leaving.
- Teaching is good in Year 2 where pupils make the most progress.
- Effective teaching of pupils with special educational needs means that these pupils make good progress.
- Except in Year 2, the information about what pupils already know is not used to tailor the work for differently attaining pupils.
- There is insufficient use of problem-solving and practical activities in lessons, and mathematics is not used well enough in other subjects.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is not sufficiently developed to show teachers how to improve their teaching.

Commentary

53. Standards overall are below the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6, but achievement is satisfactory. The progress of those pupils with special educational needs is better than that of their more able schoolmates because of the good support they get from teachers and classroom assistants.
54. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; pupils make most progress when the activities are carefully planned to meet the wide range of abilities that exists in all the classes. This happens more often in Year 2 than it does elsewhere. For example, in one lesson, the teacher

and the classroom assistants worked well as a team to ensure that all the pupils understood how to count on and back in 10s. A small group of most able pupils then enjoyed the added challenge of adding 20p to a given amount.

55. Although information is kept on what pupils know, understand and can do, it is not used by all of the teachers to plan future activities and this results in the planning of activities in most other classes being insufficiently detailed to meet the needs of all of the pupils and this leads, in particular, to a lack of challenge for the most able. Nevertheless, throughout the school lessons are well structured and teachers are clear about what to teach and when to teach it because they make effective use of the national subject guidelines. However, although from Year 1 to Year 6, pupils show a gradual improvement in their basic number skills, there is a lack of planned practical and problem-solving activities provided in lessons that allow them the opportunity to extend the use of these skills.
56. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and improvement since the last inspection has been adequate. The two well-informed and enthusiastic teachers who manage the subject are aware of the areas requiring further development and there has been steady improvement over time to standards. There is no time available during the school day for these teachers, however, to monitor the teaching of the subject in other classrooms and therefore the help and advice they can give to colleagues are limited.

Mathematics across the curriculum

The use and practice of mathematics in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils have some opportunities to apply the skills they have learnt in mathematics lessons to activities in other subjects, for example reading temperature scales in science and timelines in history. These are limited and because of this do not contribute significantly enough to raising standards in mathematics. Limited use is made of computers to support activities during lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in science are rising due to improvement in the curriculum and assessment of pupils' work.
- The quality of teaching is good and pupils achieve well.
- Effective leadership and participation in a local primary science initiative have resulted in teachers having high expectations about what pupils can do.
- An emphasis on practical investigations promotes the development of pupils' scientific and thinking skills well.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT to support work in science.

Commentary

57. The school has been involved in a primary science project that has led to effective curriculum development. This has improved the quality of teaching, and standards are rising.
58. At the ages of seven and eleven, pupils reach standards that are in line with the nationally expected levels. All pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, achieve well because teachers have high expectations and they place appropriate emphasis on investigation work. Teachers' confidence and subject knowledge have improved since the last inspection. The teaching is good overall and in the best lessons teachers provide clear explanations and devise imaginative learning activities. They enable pupils to concentrate by giving them practical tasks that have a relevance to their

lives. Learning support assistants facilitate learning by ensuring that pupils understand what to do and how to organise their equipment successfully to complete the task. As a result there is a good pace to lessons and pupils are interested and excited by their discoveries. They show a very positive attitude to learning.

59. The school has worked productively with an external consultant to develop curriculum and assessment procedures. Staff use new commercial subject guidelines, resulting in a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The integral assessment system enables teachers to track pupils' progress and build systematically on their skills and knowledge as they grow older. Good planning with clearly expected learning outcomes for pupils of different attainment levels ensures work is tailored to suit different pupils. Where pupils miss science lessons for extra literacy tuition the teachers ensure that these pupils make up missed work. Pupils' progress is evaluated at the end of each unit of work and teachers take account of what pupils understand when planning the next unit of work. This rigorous system allows the school to be secure about the levels at which pupils are working and the targets they set for them. It helps pupils to make good progress. These developments have contributed significantly to the recent rise in standards.
60. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has successfully led the recent curriculum developments. She is enthusiastic and provides effective support for all teachers to enable them to obtain the knowledge and have the resources to do a good job. The resources to teach science have been improved to support the curriculum developments although opportunities are missed to use ICT in science. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection through improved teaching, curriculum, and assessment procedures.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 1 to 2 do well to reach the nationally expected level by the time they start in Year 3.
- Good improvement has been made since the last inspection because of the very knowledgeable subject co-ordinator's effective leadership and management.
- Older pupils have a good understanding of communicating using technology.
- Effective teaching guidelines mean that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it.
- Good use is made of computers to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Although the computers in the computer suite are used well, insufficient use is made of those in classrooms to practise the skills taught in the suite and to support work in other subjects.
- Pupils' word-processing skills are poor.
- All pupils in the same class are taught the same skills regardless of whether or not they already have them.

Commentary

61. Although standards are below those expected nationally by the end of Year 6, teaching is satisfactory and achievement in lessons is now sound. However, due to problems in the past with equipment not working properly, the lack of teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of how to teach ICT effectively and the amount of necessary catching-up, pupils in Years 3 to 6 have not made the rate of progress they should have done over time. They are still learning skills that many pupils in most other schools already have. However, in Year 2, where the improvements are having more impact, progress is good and pupils are now working at the expected level.

62. This is because of the good improvements brought about, since the last inspection, by the subject co-ordinator who has a good grasp of what is happening in the subject. She finds out how good teaching is and what needs improving by talking with colleagues when they come to her for help. However, whilst this system works now, as teachers gain more confidence they are not approaching her as often and there is no other way currently of checking on the quality of teaching and learning other than by looking at pupils' work.
63. Nevertheless, whilst their computer skills are not as good as they should be and their word-processing skills are particularly weak, pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of how technology is used to communicate in different ways. For example, they know that electronic mail is faster than ordinary mail, but that there is danger of someone receiving mail not intended for them. They understand that faxes can be sent and that text messages and voice mail are other means by which technology supports the country's communication network.
64. Computers are used well to support pupils with special educational needs, especially in the small group work with the special educational needs co-ordinator. In these sessions, pupils concentrate exceptionally well, working on spelling patterns and matching words on screen.
65. The implementation of the local authority subject guidelines gives good support to teaching and learning. They help teachers by telling them what to teach and when to teach it so that teachers build pupils' skills systematically over time. However, because teachers follow them closely, they do not alter the work for those pupils who are further on than others. Consequently all pupils do the same work and learn at the same rate; the most able pupils mark time because of this.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

The use of ICT to support work in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Special software from learning support services means that teaching makes effective use of computers in withdrawal sessions to support pupils with special educational needs. These pupils enjoy working on special programs that help them, for example, to recognise and learn spelling patterns. However, with the exception of Year 3, teaching makes very little use of the computers in classrooms to practise skills taught in the computer suite or to support work in other subjects. This is exacerbated, however, by most of the classroom computers being set up to work on the network and not operating effectively as stand-alones, making their use difficult.

HUMANITIES

No **history** or **geography** lessons were seen. It is therefore not possible to make a secure judgement about the provision in these subjects. However, scrutiny of pupils' work, examination of subject planning, and discussions with staff and pupils show that there is full coverage of the history and geography curriculum and sufficient resources to teach them. However, there is an overuse of worksheets, which require little writing from the pupils, slowing progress in this aspect of English.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Main strengths and weaknesses

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

- Pupils have sound knowledge of different faiths.
- Religious education contributes well to pupils' personal and social development.
- There are missed opportunities for writing.
- Resources for teaching and learning are good.
- Assessment procedures are insufficiently rigorous to inform teaching and to tailor the work to meet the needs of differently attaining pupils.

Commentary

66. Standards by the age of seven and eleven are below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus but pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve well enough. Their learning is built satisfactorily over time and so, by the time they leave the school, pupils have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the major faiths of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. For example, pupils in Year 1 talked about God 'making beautiful things', such as islands, deserts and glaciers. They linked this to their own feelings and talked about their favourite places such as a holiday abroad and 'paradise'. Pupils enjoyed sharing their own thoughts and ideas. By the end of Year 2 pupils know a range of stories from the Bible and about the significant events in the life of Jesus. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 talked enthusiastically of work they had completed. They showed understanding of stories from the Bible and the meaning that these stories have that is relevant to their lives today. Two examples they gave of these were Jonah and the Whale and Lazarus. They knew key features of the major religions of the world and what an important part faith plays to the followers of them. Pupils clearly enjoy the subject.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subject and prepare lessons carefully. Teachers handle issues sensitively and pupils' increasing knowledge of the major religions adds to their appreciation of the variety of faiths and ways of life. This has a positive impact on their personal, social and moral development. There are missed opportunities, however, for pupils to practise the writing skills taught and learnt in literacy lessons due to the utilisation of worksheets that require one-word or short phrase answers.
68. The leadership and management of the subject are sound and the school has made steady progress since it was last inspected. The leader looks at teachers' planning and offers help and advice to colleagues. She is aware that documentation needs updating and that assessment procedures should be formalised but has insufficient opportunity to do this.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in **art and design** and therefore no judgement is made about the provision in this subject. Pupils in Year 2 have produced lively colourful paintings of themselves, their homes and their families. They have explored and designed patterns in the tradition of Aboriginal, Indian and ancient Roman styles. Over time pupils learn to work in a variety of styles using a range of materials, producing two and three-dimensional images. They learn to create and follow design plans, explore and develop ideas and experiment with a range of media and processes. They work in the style of well-known artists such as Van Gogh, Picasso, Degas and Renoir and they are introduced to Greek, Roman, Celtic, Chinese and Aboriginal designs. As pupils progress through school, greater emphasis is placed on learning and using skills and techniques. They begin to develop their own personal styles. Many of the Year 6 pupils show good mastery of shade and texture in their still life drawings. Their sketchpads show how they explore and develop their ideas using different techniques to communicate shape and form. The subject co-ordinator is responsible for the management of resources and seeking out technical support for teachers who wish to further develop their skills. She looks at lesson plans but does not observe teaching and learning. This means that she has no clear overview of what needs to be done to raise standards further.

No **design and technology** lessons were observed during the inspection because time allocated to the subject is shared with art and design and takes place in the second half of each term. Therefore no judgement is made about the provision in this subject.

It was possible to observe only two lessons in **music** and therefore no judgement is made about the provision. The activities planned for each class ensure that the pupils are involved in a satisfactory range of musical experiences. The pupils in Year 5 showed good imagination as they selected the sounds of different instruments to represent the actions of a journey into space. In a Year 3 lesson

the pupils developed an understanding of how to clap to the rhythm of different notes. In a hymn practice the junior pupils' singing, with the support of the teachers, was satisfactory but a number of the older pupils displayed a lack of interest.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do well to attain standards in line with the nationally expected level.
- The high quality teaching of, in particular, the gymnastics specialist promotes the subject well.
- The good range of curriculum activities holds pupils' interest and ensures that they make good progress.

Commentary

69. Pupils do well in physical education to reach nationally expected standards by the end of Years 2 and 6; usually all pupils can swim up to 25 metres by the time they leave the school. This is because of effective teaching throughout the school, and particularly the specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6. Because of the expertise and high expectations of teachers, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, show very good levels of performance and very good progress in their gymnastic ability. For example, pupils in Year 6 devised a good range of well-formed balances, showing very good body control as they copied the excellent demonstrations of the specialist teacher. The pupils' behaviour was very good and they displayed excellent levels of physical effort because of the very good pace of the lesson. The observation of lessons taken by the specialist teacher by the class teachers is enabling them to develop their own skills in the teaching of gymnastics.
70. Subject leadership and management are effective and improvement since the last inspection has been good. The subject co-ordinator supports colleagues well and keeps a good check on what is going on. This means that pupils of all ages take part in a good range of physical education activities, including dance and games. A number of pupils represent the school when they participate, successfully, in local sporting events.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons were seen in personal, social and health education to make a secure judgement about provision in this subject. However, this subject is central to the school's work and is included in other subjects. From discussions with Year 6 pupils, they have a good understanding of citizenship in particular. They know that as the oldest pupils in the school they have a moral responsibility to set a good example and to "keep the good name of the school". They understand that their actions have consequences and say that pupils who behave inappropriately deserve to be punished. Pupils say that this is fair school and appreciate that they have a say in what goes on through the school council. They relate school rules to the laws of the country, agreeing the need for them to keep an orderly community. They know that the media can present information inaccurately and that newspaper articles sometimes slant a story a particular way.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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