

INSPECTION REPORT

Merton Infant School

Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116004

Headteacher: Mrs Lynn Clement

Lead inspector: Keith Sadler

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th February 2004

Inspection number: 256900

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	151
School address:	Romsey Close Popley Way Popley Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG24 9HB
Telephone number:	01256 324507
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr George Hood
Date of previous inspection:	6 th July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is located on the Popley estate on the northern outskirts of Basingstoke. The school shares a site with the junior school and was opened in the early 1970's. There are currently 151 pupils on roll. Children enter the school in the September in the year in which they become five. There are six classes, two for each of the infant school years. The school serves a London overspill estate made up mainly of Housing Association homes, some of which have been bought and are now owner-occupied. There is a large proportion of single parent families and high unemployment on the estate. The pupils' socio-economic circumstances overall are well below average. Almost all are of white British heritage and no pupils have English as an additional language. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at unexpected times is small. Although on entry to school the full range of ability is represented, overall the children's attainment is well below average. Forty-eight per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is well above average. Most needs are learning or speech communication related. There are three pupils with statements of educational needs.

The school gained a *Schools Curriculum Award* in 2002, a *DfES School Achievement Award*, *Healthy Schools Award* and the *Investors in People* standard in 2003. There is a pre-school playgroup on the site, and there is a range of community and parenting projects operating in the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16405	Keith Sadler	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Science, Physical education.
9275	Candy Kalms	Lay inspector	
32153	Richard Chalkley	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, Art, Information and communication technology, Music, Special Educational Needs
32257	Jacob Herbst	Team inspector	English, History, Geography, Religious Education, Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is good and it provides **good value for money**. Good teaching ensures that the pupils achieve well in relation to their ability. Standards, though generally below average, are improving faster than the national trend. The very good leadership of the headteacher has been a key factor in the school's improvement. The school takes account of the needs of all its pupils very well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher has a very clear vision that is pivotal in improving the quality of education, the caring and supportive ethos and the strong sense of community in the school.
- The very good curriculum is organised in an innovative way and is made relevant for the pupils by building on their interests and curiosity.
- The school is inclusive and ensures that pupils of all abilities make good progress.
- The pupils have very good attitudes to learning and they enjoy going to school.
- Links with parents and the community are very good.
- Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils achieve well.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

All the key issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed very well. Although standards in writing remain below average, the opportunities for writing for different purposes and audiences are now a strength. Pupils' writing about their experiences, observations and investigations is well catered for and there have been improvements in handwriting. Higher attaining pupils are well provided for, through being set suitably challenging work and the monitoring role of subject co-ordinators has been substantially strengthened. The headteacher has built on the good leadership previously reported and has brought further rigour and determination to the school's improvement processes, which have resulted in improved standards. Overall, the school has shown good improvement since the last inspection and is well placed to make further improvements with the full confidence of the parents.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils achieve well for their ability. The school's improvement trend is better than the national trend, and inspection findings show that current standards are better than the below average results in the 2003 tests. Standards are above average in information and communication technology, music and physical education and are average in most other subjects, though they remain below average in writing. The 2003 test results show that in comparison with similar schools, attainment was above average in mathematics, average in reading and below average in writing. Although the full range of ability is represented on entry to the school, overall children's attainment is well below average when they start in the reception classes. This is particularly marked in the important areas of communication,

language, literacy, personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve well, though by the time that they join Year 1, only a minority achieve the early learning goals in these areas.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their moral and social development is very good. Spiritual development is good and cultural development satisfactory. Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning and they behave well. Although the school has a range of good processes to improve the pupils' attendance, the rate of attendance is below average and unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching is good and is very good in the Foundation Stage. Pupils learn well because teachers ensure that the activities provided are interesting, relevant and pitched at just the right level to encourage good progress in lessons. Teachers' assessments are very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 and 2. Teaching assistants provide a very valuable contribution. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is very good.

The quality of the curriculum is very good. There is a very good emphasis on integrating work between many subjects to make activities more meaningful. Regular 'specialist' curriculum weeks help to contribute well to the pupils' good achievement. The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Partnerships with parents are very good as are links with both the community and other schools. All these areas make a good contribution to the pupils' achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher has the skills and determination to build on the current good provision to raise standards and move the school forward. Governors are effective. They are supportive of the school and they carry out their role as a challenging body well. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and ensure that statutory requirements are met. Management is very good. There are good evaluation and monitoring processes in place.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express very positive views. They are very satisfied with the school and have confidence in the headteacher and staff. They are kept well informed and are consulted about any improvements needed. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. There are good links with both the community and other schools.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Improve the pupils' attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement throughout the school is good. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, though few attain the learning goals in most areas of learning by the end of the reception year. Currently, Year 2 pupils' standards are below average in writing and are average in reading, mathematics, science and art. Standards in information and communication technology, (ICT) music and physical education are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school with higher attaining pupils achieving particularly well in mathematics and ICT.
- The improvement trend in reading, writing and mathematics tests is better than the national trend.
- Standards are below average in writing.
- Standards are above expectations in ICT and music.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress due to the high quality provision.

Commentary

1. Children start school with levels of attainment that are well below average. In the reception year, children make good progress and achieve well. However, they generally attain standards that are below average in the three key areas of learning of personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and also mathematics. In their physical and creative development and their knowledge and understanding of the world, children are on course to achieve the expected goals.
2. In the national tests taken for pupils in Year 2 in 2003, in comparison with all schools nationally, results were below average in reading and mathematics and well below average in writing. Teachers' assessments for attainment in science were also below average. In comparison with similar schools, standards in mathematics were above average, in reading they were average and in writing below average. These results represent a dip in attainment from the school's steadily rising standards for the previous four years. However, the school's improvement trend over the past five years has been better than the national trend. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. An increasing number of pupils attain the higher levels, particularly in mathematics, where higher attaining pupils achieve particularly well.
3. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in their work because well-informed and experienced teaching assistants are effective in their support. Furthermore, pupils are identified early and there is very good provision based on thorough analysis of their needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.7 (15.9)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	12.9(14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.0 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to attain below average standards in writing, though standards in reading, mathematics and science are likely to be in line with the national average. This is because pupils are well taught and sometimes very well taught, and the curriculum is very good. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons, learning is boosted and they achieve well. Overall, standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, though there has been an improvement in physical education.
5. In ICT, pupils achieve well and attainment is above the national average. This is because teachers make sure that computers are used in most lessons as part of normal class routines. In music and physical education, standards are above average: in art and history standards are in line with expectations. Pupils achieve well in all these subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' very good attitudes to work and their good behaviour produce a calm atmosphere in which the pupils learn and gain in confidence. Their very good moral and social development, good spiritual and satisfactory cultural development are a result of the school's philosophy and positive atmosphere.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes to their work boost both learning and achievement.
- Assemblies, the curriculum and the personal, social and health education programme, play an important role in developing the pupils' very good moral and social understanding.
- Relationships are very good and the school is a harmonious community where all pupils get on well together.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Children settle well into the day-to-day routines in the reception classes because of the high expectations of staff. When they start in school many have limited personal, social and speaking skills. During their time in the reception year, they become more confident and develop very good attitudes to their work. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 maintain these very good attitudes to their learning. They enjoy school and come wanting to learn. They are interested in their lessons and listen very well to their teachers.
7. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is good overall. It has improved since the last inspection because the headteacher and staff expect pupils to behave well. In classes where teaching is very good and teachers have clear expectations, behaviour is very good. No pupils have been excluded in the past two years and this illustrates how well pupils understand the 'Golden Rules' for good behaviour and the staff's expectations. Bullying, racism or other forms of harassment are extremely rare. Pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong because of the school's very good moral provision. This is promoted by the atmosphere in the school that is built upon respect for others and because all staff help pupils to understand what is acceptable. As a result, the pupils show respect for people and property. Each week the headteacher's Golden Tea party, which is a reward for good behaviour, plays an important role in reinforcing moral and social values.
8. Provision for pupils' social development has remained very good since the last inspection because of the emphasis staff place on pupils' social and personal development. In lessons pupils are frequently encouraged to work together in pairs or small groups. As a result, they co-operate and share sensibly. Pupils are helped to become increasingly mature as they move through the school because of the good encouragement provided for them to take responsibility. Returning registers, putting out chairs and moving lunch time trolleys are examples of this. Each week, older pupils are encouraged to work with younger children for example, by teaching them mathematical board games. There is a good system of

'playground friends' to help those who find it difficult to play together in the playground. When they leave at the end of Year 2, pupils are offered the opportunity to share their ideas and express their views about the school.

9. Pupils' spiritual development has remained good. Spirituality is an integral part of the school's atmosphere and is well promoted throughout the school. Pupils' efforts are regularly acknowledged and praised, and displays of work celebrate their achievements. In religious education and assemblies pupils are given the opportunity to consider the beliefs and practices of world faiths.
10. The pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils have little experience of cultures other than their own, and the school is offering some experiences to help them appreciate the diversity and richness of the various cultures in society today. Religious education lessons introduce pupils to religions other than Christianity. Assemblies celebrate some of the major world faith festivals and each week an assembly is devoted to a multicultural topic. Other aspects of their cultural development are supported in the curriculum, particularly art during the annual arts fortnight.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-2003 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	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.

11. Attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory. Current attendance data shows figures similar to those at the last inspection. The school is working hard to improve attendance and needs to continue to be vigilant. Each week attendance is monitored, absences followed up and those pupils with poor and irregular attendance are identified. Despite all these measures, attendance remains below the national average, unauthorised absences are currently high and approximately a third of pupils have attendance below 90 per cent. This affects the learning of those pupils who are frequently absent. There are several reasons for absence. Whilst some are due to illness, a number are due to the relaxed attitude of parents to the importance of regular attendance and parents taking their children on holiday during term time. Punctuality is satisfactory, although some pupils are brought to school after the start of school. For a small number of pupils this occurs frequently.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good overall, and is very good in the Foundation Stage where the assessments of the children are particularly effective and support the teachers' planning of future work very well. The curriculum is very good and is enhanced by innovative and effective planning, and is a strength of the school. Provision for the pupils' guidance and support are very good. There are strong links with parents, the community and other schools. The ethos for learning is productive. It reflects the family atmosphere and supportive environment created by all who work in the school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and the assessment of pupils are all good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching, learning and the staff's assessment of children are all very good.
- Throughout the school, teachers give good encouragement and they successfully engage the pupils in the good activities provided.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support.
- Staff ensure that the needs of all pupils are carefully considered in lessons and the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Pupils apply themselves very well in most lessons and this quickens their learning.
- Effective use is made of assessments to help to target pupils' future learning.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching is good, with over a third of lessons seen being very good. This ensures that pupils learn and achieve well in almost all subjects. Teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage, with over two thirds of lessons seen being very good. Overall, over a third of lessons seen were very good and almost all lessons were good or better. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when the teaching was satisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
0	13 (37%)	20 (57%)	2 (6%)	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. Teaching is very good in the reception classes and this helps the children to progress well in their learning and to achieve well. Teaching is never less than good and is sometimes very good. Staff create a very caring ethos, which enables the children to feel safe and helps to raise their self-esteem. They provide a very broad range of interesting and exciting activities that capture the children's imagination. Very good use is made of assessments of prior learning which enables activities to be pitched at the right level. Furthermore, the staff have a very good understanding of the required curriculum for the Foundation Stage. They ensure that the activities, whether teacher directed or child initiated, relate directly to progressing children towards the learning goals. This is supported through the very good quality of the questioning by staff. Teaching assistants are well trained and make a very positive contribution to the teaching and learning in both reception classes.
14. The strengths in the quality of teaching in the reception classes continue throughout the rest of the school, and teaching is good overall. In Years 1 and 2, almost all the teaching seen was good and there were some examples of very good teaching in both year groups. Teachers encourage the pupils very well, and they have high expectations of what can be achieved. Lessons are well planned and teachers are adept in providing a good context for learning. For example, Year 2 pupils, in their science topic, raised a number of questions that they wished to find answers to, and both teachers planned topics around the good questions that were posed by the pupils. This helps both to engage the pupils and involve them directly in their learning. In all classes in Years 1 and 2, pupils are listened to very carefully and their views are built on by teachers. Lessons usually involve some collaborative work, and this too helps to maintain the pupils' interest and concentration.

15. There has been training to consider pupils' different learning styles. As a result, staff are very conscious of ensuring that their teaching methods and approaches encompass the full range of pupils' preferred learning styles. The resulting adaptations to teaching and learning, particularly when teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, has brought benefit because care and thought has been given to ensuring that the teaching methods employed match the pupils' needs.
16. In most subjects, teachers are careful to ensure that the work set is relevant and practical. Teachers use assessments well to check pupils' learning and this helps to ensure that teaching quality is maintained because teachers are able to pitch the work at the right level to make sure that all pupils progress. Teachers and support staff work closely together and very good use is made of the learning areas outside the classrooms for support. The teaching assistants make a very good contribution to learning. They supporting individuals and groups in class, and also take responsibility for teaching small groups which are withdrawn. Teachers are able to plan for the use of computers as part of most lessons knowing that the teaching assistants are well trained and confident in support the pupils when using computers.
17. Pupils learn well through both Year 1 and 2. They thoroughly enjoy lessons, concentrate very well and benefit from learning from each other. When teaching is very good, this is characterised by very good subject knowledge, such as in a Year 2 gymnastics lesson when pupils were urged to improve performance through the teacher's very good analysis and evaluation of the pupils' work. She constantly drew attention to high quality work and this was then effectively modelled by other pupils. In this lesson, the pupils achieved particularly well and the standards achieved were well above national expectations.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils with SEN are identified early. The progress of pupils with SEN is closely monitored. Pupils are very well supported in small groups and individually by teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies. Teachers value all pupils equally as individuals and work hard to enable them to achieve their full potential.

The curriculum

The very good quality of the curriculum is a key strength of the school and an underpinning reason why the school's effectiveness is improving. Opportunities for the enrichment of the curriculum and curriculum resources are good and the accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has taken some very good and innovative steps to make sure that the curriculum is of high quality, relevant and practical.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- There is very good equality of access and opportunity for all in the curriculum.

Commentary

19. Overall, the curriculum is very good and a strength of the school. There has been good improvement from the effective curriculum reported in the last inspection. The curriculum in both the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is very well prepared and has some very strong features that stem from the headteacher's vision for infant education.
20. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good. All the required areas of learning are carefully considered and covered. Staff ensure that the practical and interesting work set gives good opportunities for children to initiate activities and to take responsibility for their learning. The staff provide a broad and high quality range of activities which are well matched to meet the children's needs. As a result of this, the children make good progress in their learning and achieve well.

21. In Years 1 and 2, the school has made some bold and appropriate decisions about how the curriculum should be organised and provided. First there is a heavy emphasis on integrating work across many subjects to make activities more real for the pupils. This does not mean that the required content of each subject is not provided, but rather that it is presented in a way that is more real for pupils. Second, the school has a separate Friday afternoon session in which the headteacher and assistants supported by volunteers, instructors and older pupils lead the whole school in a series of activities that cross the age groups. These sessions are carefully planned to strengthen curriculum provision. Third, the school places particular emphasis on school-wide extended studies. There is an annual two-week event where all focus on the arts. Each year a week is planned to focus on environmental studies, healthy living, books, poetry, sports and writing. All of these events are carefully planned to contribute to the whole-school curriculum and are integrated into the school's overall curriculum provision. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and enriched well by making use of visitors to the school, such as local fire services and police, and also visits to places that bring a further perspective to the topics being taught. As a result of this innovative curriculum, the pupils are provided with a rich range of good learning experiences which encourages them to progress and achieve well.
22. There is a good emphasis on personal, social and health education (PSHE), and there are well-planned sessions each week. Taken together, the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements.
23. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that all pupils have full access to the learning opportunities provided by the school. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs. A feature of the school is the emphasis placed upon pupils of all levels of academic and physical ability and those with challenging behaviour becoming involved in all activities.

Care, guidance and support

The school has appropriate arrangements for ensuring that the school provides a healthy and safe environment. Pupils are well cared for. Pupils' progress and personal development are very carefully monitored and the pupils are effectively involved in school life. There are good arrangements to seek and act on the views of the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good support and guidance arrangements enhance pupils' achievement and development.
- There are excellent arrangements for the induction of children into the reception classes.
- The provision for pupils to be involved in the life of the school is good.

Commentary

24. The headteacher and staff have a very high regard for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. As a result, pupils are given very good support and guidance throughout the school. The good provision in these aspects reported in the last inspection has been maintained. There has been a strengthening of the previously reported good monitoring of pupils' progress to the current very good provision.
25. All members of staff value and respect the pupils and the school has a very friendly and caring atmosphere. Teachers know the pupils very well and this helps to ensure that their individual needs are met.
26. Arrangements for the induction of children when they start school are excellent. Parents and children have numerous opportunities to meet with the class teacher before starting school and children are provided with very good opportunities to begin to make friends with their new classmates prior to entry. Parents and children complete a 'fun' booklet together which informs teachers of each child's circumstances and needs and helps them to settle children into the

class more effectively. The playgroup, which is based in the school building and attended by almost all the children before entering the reception classes, works closely with the school and provides very useful information about the progress and needs of individual pupils prior to their admission to the school. As a result of these excellent arrangements, children settle very quickly into the school and are helped to feel secure. As a consequence, their learning is boosted. One further benefit is that children who may have special educational needs are identified early. When the children move from the reception classes to Year 1, there are very good transition arrangements to ensure that the move is as smooth as possible and their learning is carried forward without hindrance.

27. Parents are pleased with the good level of care provided for their children and rightly believe that the teachers listen carefully to their children's views. For example, before the school hall was re-decorated, the school balloted the pupils for their opinions on what colours should be used and the choice of the curtain fabric.
28. At the time of the last inspection, there was a weakness identified in the monitoring of pupils' academic progress, but this is now a strength. There are now very good and rigorous systems in place for tracking pupils' progress in most subjects. As a result, individual targets are set which are then drawn together in classes to set class targets. These very good arrangements extend to the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. These systems make a significant positive contribution to the raising of standards.
29. Child protection arrangements are good. The arrangements for dealing with day-to-day injuries are also good.
30. There are appropriate arrangements in place to audit the school premises. The school completes risk assessments of activities which produces a generally safe environment. However, there is a need to ensure that the area outside the reception classes is properly maintained.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the local community and other schools, are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with parents and the local community contribute very well to pupils' learning at home and at school.
- The quality of information provided for parents is good.
- The staff work well in partnership with parents.

Commentary

31. Parents hold the school in high regard. They consider it to be well led and managed, providing a safe and secure environment in which their children are well taught and make good progress. This trust and confidence is a reflection of the school's core value of

involving parents and its concern to work with parents for the benefit of their children. There has been an improvement in these areas from the previously reported good partnerships.

32. The school places great importance on ensuring that there is a close partnership with parents and the school, and encourages parental participation in a variety of ways. Parents are consulted about the school's development through questionnaires and there are daily opportunities to meet the headteacher and staff. There is also a suggestion box for parents located at the entrance to the school. As a result, parents' support is very strong because they know their views are valued. Since her arrival, the current headteacher has ensured there are no areas of significant dissatisfaction. Any queries and concerns raised by parents are dealt with quickly and effectively.

33. The statutory information for parents is good. Monthly newsletters from the headteacher keep parents up to date, well in advance, with events and changes in school. Annual reports to parents are comprehensive and build on the regular communication between class teachers and parents. These good communication systems support and enhance pupils' learning.
34. A small number of parents assist regularly in classes. A larger number of parents help on a one-off basis either on class visits or in class. Any queries and concerns raised by parents are dealt with quickly and effectively.
35. The school has taken advantage of government initiatives to provide a very good range of support for parents. A pre-school group for parents and toddlers meets weekly to learn together. Another group of parents meet monthly to help them fulfil their roles as educators at home. As a consequence, parents' confidence in supporting their children is enhanced and this is likely to have a positive impact on learning.
36. Community links are very good. The school hosts a daily playgroup. Barclays Bank employees listen to children read weekly. The curriculum is further enriched by a regular cycle of visits and visitors. For example, a local nature reserve and a farm are visited. Visitors range from musicians of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra who run music workshops, to the local vicar, police and fire brigade. The school nurse also runs a health education class in Year 2. As a result, the curriculum is made more real and is substantially enhanced.
37. Links with local schools are very good. Pupils participate in an annual skipping festival organised by the local secondary school. Links with the junior school (on the same site) are good. Transfer arrangements to the juniors are well thought out. Infant staff share training days with staff from the junior school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. In particular, both the leadership and management of the headteacher are very effective. This has been a key factor in the school's improvement. The governing body is effective and the leadership by other staff is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of education and development planning are very good.
- Subject leadership is good.
- Governance is good.

Commentary

38. The headteacher has a clear and incisive vision for the school. Her vision very effectively encompasses a belief in the need to provide a positive learning ethos through which pupils achieve well across not just the core subjects, but also the whole curriculum. Her leadership is driven by these beliefs and they have a positive effect on the pupils' achievements. She is committed to ensuring that all are included. As a consequence, there have been good improvements from the effective leadership found at the time of the last inspection. Parents agree fully that her leadership has been key to the improvements in both the quality of education and the standards achieved since the last inspection. As a consequence, the school has been awarded both a DfES *School Achievement Award* for improvements in standards and also the Schools *Curriculum Award* for development in the quality of the curriculum.

39. Improvement planning is very good. The process of evaluating plans is exceptionally good and enables all the school community to feel part of the school's development. The plan is comprehensive and yet focuses well on key priorities. The priorities identified are appropriate, carefully planned and costed, and effectively monitored for their positive impact on the pupils' achievements.
40. Overall, curriculum leadership is good. Subject co-ordinators each have clear plans for improvement in their areas of responsibility and each manager has developed a useful vision statement for her subject which is then developed into subject action plans. In some areas, such as the Foundation Stage and special educational needs, leadership is particularly effective. In both cases, the co-ordinators are skilled in ensuring that there is a strong sense of teamwork developed in the promotion of their areas of responsibility, and as a result the quality of provision is very good. In the case of the special educational needs co-ordinator, she also closely monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs and provides very good support to the teachers and their assistants. She ensures that her area of responsibility is regularly reviewed and discussed by including it on staff meeting agendas.
41. The governing body is effective. Governors are appropriately involved both through the provision of a very good range of evaluation information provided by staff of the school and also through governors gaining direct evidence of the school's effectiveness for themselves. This includes governors spending significant periods of time in the school in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the subjects that they have responsibility for. For example, recently both the literacy and numeracy named governors prepared a report of their monitoring and evaluation activities which was presented to the governing body. The vice-chair of governors provides a useful analysis of comparative information about standards and aspects of provision using LEA information. This is helpful in enabling the governing body to ensure that decisions made are supported by good comparative information. Hence, governors have a very clear understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school.
42. The management of the school is very good. Since her arrival three years ago, the headteacher has strengthened the monitoring and evaluation processes in the school. The school now has a comprehensive system of review and development that is very effectively integrated into the very good performance management arrangements that the school now has for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Performance targets are effectively linked both to individual's professional development needs and also to the priorities established by the school. Very good in-service training arrangements ensure that staff are kept up to date. The school has achieved the *Investors in People* standard for its work in these areas and this represents good progress since the last inspection where there was a key issue for development relating to the monitoring and evaluation role of subject co-ordinators. Whilst subject leadership is effective, there remains a need to provide further opportunity for some co-ordinators to include observation of teaching and learning as part of their annual cycle. The headteacher and governors are mindful of the arrangements to bring about workforce reform, and good adjustments to the school's week have been made both to enable teaching and non-teaching staff to plan their work and also to enrich the curriculum. This is good practice.
43. Financial planning and management are both good. The school administrator and her assistant are both highly effective and are key to the smooth running of the school. There are very good arrangements in place for both financial management and control and the school seeks best value in its spending. Overall the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	468,696	Balance from previous year	25,904
Total expenditure	495,665	Balance carried forward to the next	1,066

Expenditure per pupil	3,272
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PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Teachers know the children very well and plan for challenging children of all capabilities at their individual levels of need. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. The co-ordinator is highly skilled, knowledgeable and experienced. Arrangements for children starting school are excellent. Prior to starting school, parents and children are offered several invitations to go to the school to meet the teacher and begin making friends with others in the class. They complete a 'fun' booklet about themselves which provides teachers with additional information to help them settle children quickly into school. There are very good arrangements with the local playgroup which provide teachers with details of children's individual needs and achievements. Overall, teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The main strengths of the teaching are the very caring and very enthusiastic learning atmosphere provided by all the adults who work in the Foundation Stage and the very good assessment information which is used very well to plan appropriate activities for the wide range of ability amongst the children. Teaching assistants are well trained and used very effectively.

Compared with children of a similar age, children enter school with well below average levels of attainment in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and mathematics. In knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development children enter school with below average levels of attainment. The accommodation inside is bright and welcoming. Teachers make the best use of the accommodation available by planning a varied curriculum according to the conditions and available space. Overall resources are good although the outside area is not covered and includes aspects that are unsafe and risk injury.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the very good teaching.
- Teachers provide a very caring and supportive environment in which children are encouraged to become confident and independent.

Commentary

44. Overall, the quality of learning in personal, social and emotional development is very good and their achievement is good. This is due to the very good teaching. However, few children are in line to achieve the expected learning goals by the time that they leave the reception class. A wide variety of appropriate activities are provided for the children to develop in this area. For example, during snack time, the children are encouraged to say 'please' and 'thank you' as they receive pieces of fruit and a drink from each other and to listen carefully to what others are saying. All children take part in a wide range of directed and self-chosen activities. Great care is taken to foster the children's self-confidence and to encourage positive attitudes to learning by keeping lessons well focused and fun. This helps to encourage a positive attitude and enhance achievement. For example, children were seen to be thoroughly enjoying their first use of a large colourful parachute in which they developed their understanding of working together and taking turns.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the very good teaching.
- Very good opportunities are provided to develop children's speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

45. Children enter the school with well below average standards. Their learning is very good and they achieve well because of the very high emphasis the teachers place on developing their skills. Overall, because only a minority of children are on course to meet the expectations by the end of the school year, their attainment is below average. Speaking and listening skills are particularly well developed. Staff use drama to encourage children's vocabulary and to develop their skills in speaking fluently. Teachers intervene very effectively and take every opportunity during activities to develop children's vocabulary through good questioning and encouraging extended discussion. In whole-class sessions, staff set high expectations for children to contribute appropriately and the children listen carefully to each other and to adults' explanations. Teachers are aware of the small number of more able children and plan lessons to provide more challenging work for these children. For example, in reading, the most able pupils are brought together in a group for extension work. This helps to foster very good learning and has a positive impact on the children's achievement. The positive and very lively learning environment also helps to give children the confidence to talk and to feel that their contribution is valued. Overall, children thoroughly enjoy these lessons and are developing an interest and enjoyment in stories and rhymes.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of the very good teaching.
- Teachers make very good use of assessment data to meet the needs of all the children.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are very good and because of this children achieve well though few children are on course to achieve the expected levels. This is because on entry to the school, the children have well below average mathematical skills and knowledge. Teachers use the very good assessment procedures to plan a very good range of tasks for all children, regardless of levels of ability, to develop their understanding and use every opportunity to consolidate their learning. For example, the types of containers for use in the sand tray are regularly changed in order to develop children's understanding of capacity and the meaning of 'more' and 'less'. Teachers use number songs and rhymes effectively to help consolidate children's learning about number. Teachers use a very good range of teaching strategies to maintain children's interest, for example, children created simple graphs about their favourite flavour following an activity in which they made porridge. Teachers' enthusiasm to make learning fun and exciting results in a very positive atmosphere in which children feel confident and try hard to succeed. Activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of individuals and ensure that all pupils can participate at their own level of ability and achieve well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of interesting and appropriate activities is provided.
- Teaching is very good.

Commentary

47. The quality of both teaching and learning are very good and as a result children are provided with very good opportunities to use all their senses to support their learning and they achieve well. Children are on course to achieve the expected goals in this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Adults use good questions to encourage the children to think about what they see and feel. As part of their class project about 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', for example, children made porridge and were encouraged to smell and taste different flavours. At registration times teachers consolidate children's learning by asking them about the days of the week and to describe the weather. The children have a wide range of construction toys which are used effectively to initiate their own learning. Children are beginning to ask questions about why things happen and how things work. For example, they were making very good use of the outside area as they looked closely at flowers and shrubs beginning to grow in the spring. They drew good quality pictures and made simple models to represent their observations. This area of learning is enhanced by all children being provided with good opportunities to use a computer and programmable toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of high quality activities provided to develop the children's skills.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- Some aspects of the outside area are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

48. In this area, children enter school with about average levels of attainment. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan a wide range of physical activities to enable children to make satisfactory progress in their physical development so that, by the time they enter Year 1, the children are in line to achieve the expected goals. Children are developing increasing skill and control in handling tools for making and drawing and manipulate small construction equipment, puzzles and toys with reasonable control. Children have access to larger equipment and are developing good control. Large wheeled toys are also available for use in the outside area. These help develop body control, balance and an awareness of space and are well used by the children.
49. Some aspects of the outside area, for example, the uneven surface, raised manhole cover, old shrubs and bushes and rough edging stones, present safety hazards and are in need of repair.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn very well and achieve well in art and music activities.
- There are many good opportunities for creative development.

Commentary

50. The quality of both teaching and learning are very good and this results in children achieving well. Children are on course to achieve the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teachers' planning indicates that opportunities are wide ranging and include experimentation with different textures, colours, shapes and role-play activities. Children enjoy singing and learning songs that help them to consolidate their learning in other areas. For example, children laughed loudly as they sang 'The Three Bears Rap'. This lesson was very well led by the teacher and, as a result, children's singing skills, understanding of pitch and rhythm, and understanding of number, developed well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are achieving well and teachers' assessments are being used well to help them do better.
- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject.
- Teachers' lesson plans provide appropriate support and challenge to all pupils.
- The school has developed effective approaches to improve writing, though standards remain below average.
- The co-ordinator's monitoring role could be developed.

Commentary

51. Standards achieved by pupils in their tests at the end of Year 2 have been generally improving, though in comparison with all schools nationally, they were below average in reading and well below average in writing in 2003. In comparison with similar schools, standards in reading were average and they were below average in writing.
52. Pupils achieve well in both Years 1 and 2. The school has successfully implemented a range of strategies to raise standards in both reading and writing. In consequence, the overall standard of reading and writing has gradually improved since the last inspection and the overall improvement trend is better than the national trend. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of effective teaching and good support from teaching assistants.
53. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average standards in speaking and listening; they achieve well and attain average standards by the time that they leave the school. There are a number of reasons for this. Teachers' good questioning skills, in tandem with the very positive and supportive school ethos, create an environment where speaking and listening skills can flourish. High expectations and good modelling by adults contribute to good progress where children in both year groups become increasingly confident speakers. There are good planned opportunities for speaking and listening in other subjects. For example, drama is used well to promote speaking and listening skills. In science, pupils are encouraged to work in groups and discuss their investigations, coming to joint decisions about how they are going to carry out their work.

54. Standards in reading are below average in tests, though inspection findings are that the current Year 2 pupils are attaining average standards. In the early part of Year 1, pupils receive a good grounding in developing the core reading skills of phonics, sight vocabulary and prediction. These skills are further developed by good teaching and support. In consequence most children in Year 2 become enthusiastic readers. Achievement is good, and currently a majority of pupils are now reading at expected levels, with a small number at the higher level. Teaching assistants provide very good support to raise standards in reading, and the school's emphasis on surrounding pupils with books that are both relevant to their interests and encouraging them to read further, is working well. The school has a good stock of books both in the library and also in the classrooms. There is a very good and comprehensive range of graded reading books which is used effectively by pupils and staff. Displays of work and word banks throughout the school ensure that children are always in a text-rich environment, and this too heightens the profile of reading. Furthermore, the very good arrangements that are in place for parents supporting their children's reading also helps to improve standards.
55. Standards in writing, though improved, are below average. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress in writing, and are adept at identifying areas for improvement for each pupil. This leads to all pupils being set individual targets for writing. These are invariably matched appropriately to their learning needs. In consequence, pupils remain focused and they enjoy writing. Staff have worked hard to extend the range of opportunities to practise writing and staff have high expectations of what pupils can do. This has led to the development of very good writing links with other subjects, such as religious education, history and geography. By the time that they reach Year 2, most pupils are confident and are beginning to write independently. The most able can organise a sequence of ideas in writing, making good use of vocabulary.
56. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective. Pupils are supported well in developing literacy and communication skills through both the very good teaching and also the work of the teaching assistants. These pupils, both when withdrawn from lessons and given focused support and also when taught alongside the rest of the class, make very good progress towards their targets due to the very good support that they are given. This is aided by the very good assessment arrangements which pinpoint any particular needs that the pupils may have.
57. The quality of teaching and learning are good because teachers and teaching assistants make lessons stimulating and purposeful. They work well as a team in supporting different groups within the class. Lessons are brisk and well resourced. Lesson plans are informed by teachers' assessments and good subject knowledge, ensuring appropriate learning objectives and tasks for pupils. This ensures that pupils maintain a strong focus on the lesson and settle to tasks well. In consequence, pupils achieve well and build on their strengths. ICT is used effectively by teachers in most lessons to develop pupils' learning. The youngest Year 1 pupils enjoy using programs aimed at improving their reading skills and most pupils are adept at using the computer to compose written work.
58. The subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator who has a clear vision of ways in which reading and writing can be improved, practised and applied in other subjects.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. There are good examples of planning to develop pupils' skills in language and literacy in other subjects. Discussions are encouraged in religious education and in history lessons. Children are given many opportunities to practise and use their reading and writing skills. Computers

are used well to promote literacy skills. This has a positive impact on the pupils' achievement in both English and other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved year-on-year and pupils are currently working at standards that are in line with national expectations.
- Pupils enjoy lessons, have very positive attitudes and they achieve well.
- The quality of the teaching is good and sometimes very good.
- The curriculum is good.

Commentary

60. In the 2003 tests for 7 year olds, in comparison with all schools nationally, standards were below average. Standards were above average when the school's results are compared to similar schools. In these tests, 46 of the 51 pupils that took the test attained the expected level. One quarter of the pupils achieved the higher level, which is also above the national average in comparison with similar schools. These results show a year-on-year improvement in standards. The rate of improvement is much better than the national rate and there are indications that the results in 2004 tests may continue to show further improvement. Inspection findings are that the current Year 2 pupils are on course to achieve national average levels by the end of the year. Overall, the school does well for its pupils and achievement in mathematics is good for each group. There is little difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Higher attaining pupils achieve particularly well, and those with special educational needs learn and achieve well when compared to their abilities. The provision for these pupils is very good.
61. Since the last inspection, the school has placed a great emphasis on raising attainment. At that time, although the inspection found that standards were in line with national expectation, pupils' progress was satisfactory and higher attaining pupils were provided with work that was too easy. Progress in learning and the pupils' achievement have improved because teaching has improved significantly from the satisfactory quality found at that time.
62. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average mathematical skills and understanding, but by Year 2, the pupils are quick and accurate in mental calculation when, for example, they are asked to write a three digit number that contains no figure 1 and add or take 5 or 10 from any three digit number. The most able can explain how they found the right answers. These are both examples of above average standards. Teachers are adept at finding a good context for mathematics which is an important feature in the good achievement. For example, at the time of the inspection the Year 2 pupils were working on a topic concerning healthy food and the body. In mathematics, the objectives of the national strategy require the pupils to learn about measuring and the teachers prepared a very good investigation measuring different parts of the body using a tape measure. The pupils achieved very well in this lesson and, by the end of the lesson, almost all were able to measure their partner accurately. When questioned, they could make comparisons between the circumference of their own head and that of their partner and the most able were checking to see if there was a correlation between the size of the head and the height of the pupils in the class.
63. The quality of the teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. Teachers plan lessons well and they are particularly adept at setting tasks which meet the learning needs of pupils of different abilities. In both Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is boosted by teachers

setting mathematics groups according to the pupils' abilities on two occasions each week. This helps the pupils to work alongside others of similar ability and also for the teachers to ensure that the work matches the pupils' needs. This system works well and is helped further because the support staff also make a good contribution to the teaching and learning when working with groups of pupils. Teachers have high expectations and they constantly encourage and prompt the pupils with good questions to further their learning. As a result, the pupils thoroughly enjoy their maths lessons and they have a very positive attitude to learning. This encourages good achievement.

64. The good quality of the mathematics curriculum is a further reason for the improvement in standards. Teachers not only provide a good context for learning by integrating their practical mathematics with topic work but they also make the work as practical as possible and provide very good investigative activities. This is a strong feature of the curriculum provided. In addition, the school has a good programme of homework for mathematics which involves the pupils and parents working together on investigations. This programme, called IMPACT maths, strengthens the link between home and school and also provides a further opportunity for some pupils, often the most able, to continue learning at home. In addition, there is a lunchtime maths club operated by learning support staff. This helps to keep the profile of mathematics high in the school and also enriches the opportunities provided for the pupils.
65. Leadership of mathematics is good. There is careful monitoring of teaching and learning, including regular visits and reporting on teaching and learning by the numeracy governor. There is a good system to check and track pupils' progress and to set targets for improvement for all pupils in both year groups. These features have a positive impact on standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. This is a particular strength. The whole curriculum is planned in such a way as to ensure that teaching and learning is not constrained by subject boundaries. Hence, as well as having the required dedicated daily mathematics lesson, there are good opportunities for pupils to experience and practise mathematical skills and knowledge across the curriculum. For example, the topic for Year 1 at the time of the inspection was 'Toys'. Mathematics received good prominence in the 'Toy Factory' whole morning session which was for both Year 1 classes. Activities included building a robot or spaceship using mathematical shapes and a shop activity where pupils had a number of real coins in a purse to spend on toys at the shop. Graphs and charts are used in geography, history, design and technology. The consequence of this is that the pupils' achievements are enhanced.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in learning from the below average attainment on entry to Year 1 and they achieve well giving rise to standards that are in line with expectations.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The curriculum is good. It is broad, made relevant and based on practical work.

Commentary

67. Teachers' assessments for pupils leaving the school in the summer of 2003 show that standards in science were below average in comparison with all schools nationally, and were in line with the national average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection findings are that on entering Year 1, pupils have below average standards; they achieve well and the current Year 2 pupils are working at nationally expected levels. This is due to the good provision, including the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the resources used.
68. In a very good session in which they were sorting and classifying toys by the material that they were made from, the pupils achieved very well and, in this lesson, they achieved above average standards. This was partly due to the very good questioning by the teacher. As a result of this, the group of pupils were helped to grasp quickly the concept of discriminating between different types of materials. Teachers have some particular weaknesses in the pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 to tackle. The pupils' limited language in providing explanations has to be overcome. This is achieved due to the good quality teaching. Teachers consistently provide interesting investigative lessons in which pupils work together in pairs or small groups. This helps both to quicken learning and give the pupils confidence. By the time that they reach Year 2, they are secure and confident in working together. They listen carefully to others' suggestions and they collaborate very effectively. In a Year 2 lesson in which the pupils were classifying foods by type, the very good science language used by both Year 2 teachers was copied and modelled by the pupils. By the end of these lessons, the pupils were accurate in their vocabulary when talking with learning partners about their findings and were confident in using words such as protein, vitamins, starch and energy. They could identify healthy foods and were able to classify them onto a "food pyramid". The lesson was enhanced by the use of the computers which enabled some pupils to use the internet to find the 'Welltown' website which has a section about the Welltown school dining hall and, in it, a range of information about healthy foods. In all lessons seen, the pupils were enthusiastic and had a positive attitude to science. They were keen to learn, interested in the activities set by the teachers and they collaborated effectively. These positive attitudes stem directly from the good quality teaching.
69. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons well, make them interesting and relevant to the pupils' needs and they successfully find practical contexts to enable pupils to meet the lesson or unit learning objectives. The work in the pupils' science books demonstrates this in the good range of topics studied. Teaching is enhanced by homework as, for example, when pupils were asked to identify different uses of electricity by spotting and classifying a number of heat energy sources that were either electrical energy or non-electric.
70. The curriculum is of good quality. The range of work provided meets statutory requirements and is made particularly good because the work set is integrated into the topic being studied. The 'Keeping Healthy and Safe' Year 2 project which commenced at the beginning of the inspection, was made relevant and offered good first-hand experiences because teachers planned work carefully. Working together, the teacher and pupils raised a series of very good questions that they were seeking to answer as part of the topic. Questions raised to be followed through included 'What happens to our food?' 'How do our hearts work?' 'What are

our teeth made of?' and 'Are there bones in our ears?' Such an approach has a positive impact on achievement because the pupils are directly involved in their own learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above the national expectation and pupils achieve well.
- Information and communication technology is used well to support learning across the curriculum.
- The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well.

Commentary

71. The above average standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained and pupils achieve well. Year 1 pupils enter the school with below average standards and, as a result of good teaching, they achieve standards in line with national expectations by the end of the year. For example, pupils are adept at controlling a programmable toy and thoroughly enjoy responding to the teacher's suggestions to make the instructions increasingly complex. By Year 2, pupils attain standards that are above expectations. In a very good lesson, focusing on extracting information from a named website to enhance learning in science, the pupils were able to search the internet to find the site. They used the keyboard with confidence, found the appropriate site and extracted information by cutting and pasting into another document. The most able pupils achieve particularly well. They are able to talk about their preferences in the school's programs, have a very good awareness of entering and retrieving information, can make tables and import images. Pupils have also made use of PowerPoint and can insert a photograph that they have taken with the school's digital camera into text that they have prepared. All pupils are taught how to use digital cameras and there are some good examples of them being used to support work in other subjects.
72. The quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result of good training, teachers are confident in the use of ICT to provide all pupils with good opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding across the curriculum. Teachers' planning shows that all required aspects of the ICT curriculum are taught throughout the school. Teachers extend learning through the use of good questions and, in lessons, they systematically build on previous learning. Staff, including learning support staff, are patient in their explanations to pupils. Computers are placed in classrooms and in areas outside of classrooms so that they are easily available for use throughout the day. This helps pupils to achieve well as they are used as part of most lessons.
73. ICT is well led and managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic coordinator. She has provided training for teachers and arranged for them to successfully complete nationally recognised awards and as a result has helped to improve their confidence in the use of ICT. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning on a regular basis by looking at pupils' work, scrutinising teachers' planning and observing lessons. This has a positive impact on teaching and learning and is an important feature in the above average standards. She is aware of the future needs of the subject and has begun to introduce effective assessment and recording systems.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. The use of ICT in pupils' learning in other subjects is good. In mathematics pupils use Roamer for geometry and for developing skills in estimating and computer software programmes to

help in learning times-tables; in English, pupils use computers to present final versions of their stories and poetry; in science, software and websites are used to learn about healthy food, and in History pupils use computers to support their learning about famous people of the past. Of particular note is the use of ICT in art. For example, during the recent 'Art Fortnight' the pupils used digital cameras and PowerPoint to record a diary of their activities to present to others in the school and show them what they had achieved. Software programs are also used to paint pictures and make copies of the work of famous artists. All of these features have a positive impact on the quality of provision in subjects and on the pupils' achievements because the pupils' progress is supported through using ICT as a learning tool.

HUMANITIES

75. Work was sampled in history, geography and religious education. Two lessons were seen in history and none in either geography or religious education. It is therefore not possible to form an overall evaluation of the provision in any of these subjects.
76. In **history**, there are strong indications, from the two lessons seen and from reviewing pupils' work, that achievement is good and it is probable that by the end of Year 2, standards are in line with the national expectation. Lessons are very well planned to provide a cohesive and appropriate curriculum for history. Due to good teaching, in the topic on toys, the pupils were able to describe and compare old and new toys. They were helped by a very good range of resources, including an opportunity to compare a very old teddy and a new one. The pupils were able to notice and describe differences between two bears and most were able to distinguish between toys in the past and now. Year 2 pupils developed a good understanding and knowledge of aspects of Victorian hospitals by learning about Florence Nightingale. Staff make good use of drama and the local museum to motivate pupils. Artefacts are also used well to stimulate interest, curiosity and debate.
77. In **geography**, through both discussion with pupils and reviewing their past work, there are indications that they achieve well and are developing knowledge and skills appropriately. Both geography and **religious education** are carefully planned to provide a broad and rich curriculum that meets statutory requirements. The requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are also met. Both subjects are effectively enriched through making visits and having visitors into the school as well as making use of the good range of resources. In religious education, pupils showed appropriate development of both the knowledge and understanding of the agreed syllabus. Pupils were able to describe some of the main features and meaning of Hanukah and Christmas. Pupils' study of Judaism and Christianity has led Year 2 pupils to develop a good understanding of aspects of these faiths, including the importance of symbols.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education

Provision in physical education is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards are above national expectations.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good with some very good features.

Commentary

78. Pupils achieve well and Year 2 pupils are currently attaining standards that are above the national expectation. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line with the national expectation and pupils made satisfactory progress.

79. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. In all lessons pupils showed a keen interest and enthusiasm. They thoroughly enjoyed the activities and skilful teaching helped to heighten confidence and the pupils' self-esteem. All lessons commenced with good warm-up sessions and in the best lessons, the warm-up was particularly good. In these lessons, teachers used music to enhance the warm-up routines with class teacher as leader and pupils modelling their movements. The very creative routines were enthusiastically responded to by the pupils and as a result, as well as building up toward good aerobic exercise, muscles were warmed and appropriately stretched for the main part of the lessons.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons have a good structure, building from pupils working individually on short sequences, whether in gymnastics or dance, and the teachers' high expectations of what the pupils can achieve linked to the good prompting helped to accelerate learning. In the best lessons, where teaching was very good, the teachers' focus on enhancing the quality of performance, whether on wall-bars ropes or in a dance, paid dividends. Pupils were asked to evaluate others' work and this led to an improvement in the quality of the performance. This was built on by other pupils through critical appraisal and good prompting by the teacher. As a result, all the pupils continued to concentrate well throughout the whole lesson and learning was very good.
81. The leadership of physical education is very good and this is having a positive impact on the pupils' achievement. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching and learning well and has also been very successful in enhancing pupils' opportunities in physical education. She has brought in a number of specialist teachers and coaches to broaden and enrich the physical education programme.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the subject and achieve well.
- There is a wide range of curriculum opportunities.

Commentary

82. Standards in art and design are in line with expectations. The quality of teaching is good and it effectively promotes good learning achievement. Pupils concentrate very well because they are provided with interesting and challenging activities. Pupils are encouraged to use art to record their work in other subjects. For example, in mathematics pupils learn more about shapes as they make pictures from squares, rectangles and triangles. In humanities, they learn about the local environment by producing accurate drawings of houses and in design technology they produce careful pencil drawings of their designs of puppets. Pupils also use computers to create pictures and copy the style of famous artists. The impact of this very good approach to teaching and learning in the subject is that pupils achieve well and use skills in art for a variety of purposes. The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and eager to experiment and improve their skills.
83. The wide range of learning opportunities for art work ensures that pupils of all abilities become familiar with using a range of tools and materials for a variety of purposes. Pupils are encouraged well to be creative in their art work. For example, in a lesson seen in Year 1, the teacher provided a wide range of materials which the pupils used as they chose to create items for the Toy Factory that was being built in the classroom. In this lesson the pupils demonstrated appropriate use of the choice of tools and materials and explained clearly why they had chosen them and what they had created. The pupils' art skills and knowledge are boosted in the two-week arts fortnight held each year. This event provides a good opportunity

for pupils to focus on art and design activities and their learning and achievement is enhanced by working with professional artists as well as their teachers.

MUSIC

Provision is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and pupils achieve well.
- Good leadership and management.

Commentary

84. By the end of Year 2, pupils are learning to understand pitch and have good opportunities to develop their understanding of 'higher' and 'lower'. Pupils play a range of instruments which helps them to develop the skills necessary to maintain a rhythm and steady beat and provides suitable opportunities for them to compose their own music. Pupils sing enthusiastically and well in tune, including in French in one assembly.
85. The quality of teaching and learning are both good because teachers plan carefully and engage pupils in good discussions which require them to explain their answers, which in turn, helps to consolidate their learning. In the best lessons, teachers plan in detail and have clear expectations of what they expect pupils to have learned by the end of the lesson. This helps to ensure good pace and challenge which results in pupils of all abilities concentrating and gaining knowledge well.
86. Leadership and management are good. The new co-ordinator, recently appointed, recognised the need to raise standards and subsequently surveyed the staff about their professional development needs. Consequently she provided training and, with the support of the Local Education Authority, implemented a commercially produced scheme of work that has ensured that standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
87. Work was sampled in **design and technology**, with no lessons being taught during the inspection. Evidence was gained from scrutiny of photographs of work, undertaken during the autumn term, pupils' work around the school, teachers' plans and discussion with the co-ordinator. Taken together, this suggests that the pupils achieve well and there are indications that standards may well be average overall. Teaching is well planned and organised. Teachers use a skills progression list to help ensure skills are developed incrementally. Pupils learn to design, make and evaluate simple models such as the good quality examples of model homes displayed during the inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

88. No lessons were seen in this area, and therefore no overall judgement on provision can be made. However, there is a strong emphasis on these areas, not only through the regular timetabled sessions each week, but also through the whole-school ethos. It has a positive impact on all that the school seeks to do helping pupils both to want to learn and also to raise their self-esteem. The school works hard to ensure that pupils meet success, develop independence and they are prepared very well to take on personal responsibility in the next stage of their education. There is a strong emphasis on health education and the school listens carefully to pupils' views and builds on their ideas throughout the curriculum, as well as when making choices about how the school should be re-decorated. This encourages personal responsibility and citizenship from an early age.

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	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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

