

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sowerby Bridge, Halifax

LEA area: Calderdale

Unique reference number: 107518

Headteacher: Mr C Rowlands

Lead inspector: Clive Davies

Dates of inspection: 1-3rd March 2004

Inspection number: 257001

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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	146
School address:	Sowerby New Road Sowerby Bridge West Yorkshire
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Telephone number:	01422 831351
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor R W Booth
Date of previous inspection:	May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

New Road is a small primary school in Sowerby Bridge, near Halifax. It serves a mixed community although a large percentage of pupils (25 per cent) who attend are entitled to school meals free of charge. Almost all pupils who have attended in the past few years speak English as their main home language and at present there is only one pupil from a non-British white family attending. The school has traditionally served very few families from a professional background, although there is a wide socio-economic mix within the local population. The number of pupils starting or leaving school at times other than reception or Year 6 respectively, is about average. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register is also about average. When they first start school the communication skills of many pupils is well below the level expected for their age. This is reflected in the low levels of personal and academic skills that many of the children in nursery and reception possess.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is an improving school, which has gone through a difficult period. However, the strengths now outweigh the weaknesses. The new leadership has started to give the school a clear direction but the new initiatives introduced have been inconsistently implemented, resulting in only partial improvement in pupils' achievement. The teaching is satisfactory but there are serious concerns about the provision for nursery aged children. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked hard to improve the school's reputation in the community.
- Pupils' behaviour, which has been an issue in the school in the recent past, is now much better.
- Pupils in Year 6 achieve well and this is helping to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' use a limited descriptive vocabulary and this is stopping them attaining higher standards in writing.
- Pupils lack fluency and expression when reading.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well when they are withdrawn from their class for specialist support.
- The provision for children in the nursery is poor.
- Teachers' planning and assessment arrangements do not always take full account of the needs of all abilities and this results in more able pupils underachieving.

The school was last inspected in May 1998 and has made satisfactory progress since that time. There have been many changes to the school since the previous inspection, with pupils' behaviour becoming a major concern for the new headteacher to deal with. Many parents had lost faith in the school and the present leadership has had to work hard to regain parental confidence.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The vast majority of pupils achieve appropriately with pupils in Year 6 achieving well. The school's results have been well below average for several years and were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally for English and science in 2002. There is an improving picture with the 2003 results being the best results the school has managed in more than five years. The present Year 6 cohort maintains this improvement with standards in mathematics and science being close to national expectations this year.

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	D
science	E	E*	E	E

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - very low (bottom five per cent)*

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

The vast majority of children start school with academic and personal skills that are well below the level expected for their age. The present arrangements in the nursery do little to improve children's skills. However, within the reception there is a different provision and children make good progress at this point. Despite the good progress in reception, only about a quarter of the children attain the early learning goals expected in each of the six areas of learning. As pupils move through the school they make satisfactory progress until Year 6, where the rate of progress increases and pupils achieve

well. As a result standards are in line with national expectation in many subjects by the time pupils leave the school. The exceptions are English, where pupils' limited descriptive vocabulary is holding back their ability to attain well in writing, and geography and history. Pupils also lack fluency and expression in their reading and many struggle to gain confidence in their own ability to carry out research as a result. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6 with pupils carrying out multi-media presentations and making good use of databases.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. However, a significant number of pupils in each class are challenging and can be difficult to handle. Attendance levels are lower than they should be despite the school's efforts to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. However, there is poor provision for nursery-aged children. The school has taken the sensible step of providing Year 1 pupils with a foundation stage style curriculum to help them develop their personal, social and emotional skills. **The quality of teaching is satisfactory** but varies from very good in Year 6 and when small groups of pupils are withdrawn for specific support, to poor in the nursery. There have been many new initiatives introduced to help improve the quality of teaching but many of these have not been implemented as yet. This results in a great deal of inconsistent practice especially with regard to planning, marking of pupils' work, use of target setting and assessment arrangements. Teachers are good at managing pupils who have the potential to be difficult and there is little time lost to disruptive behaviour. Teaching assistants are very effective when working with small groups of pupils outside the main classroom but their use within classrooms varies considerably.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have done a great deal to improve behaviour in the school and to raise the school's profile in the community. Many of the new initiatives that have been introduced have not yet embedded themselves into day-to-day practice and this is something that the headteacher is aware of. There are appropriate procedures in place to check on the quality of teaching and learning and the school now has an effective process for tracking the progress being made by pupils. However, not all teachers are making the most of the information available to them and this results in inconsistency of practice across the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents still have a mixed view of the school. Most agree that it is an improving school but a significant number have concerns about the quality of teaching, homework arrangements, the quality of information they receive and behaviour. Pupils feel that this is now a nicer place to be and do not feel worried about being bullied. They enjoy taking responsibilities and have welcomed the introduction of a school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to talk and link this with raising standards in writing.
- Look at ways of raising pupils' confidence in reading.
- Provide more consistency in planning and assessment arrangements.
- Improve the provision for nursery aged children.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards have been low for several years but **the vast majority of pupils achieve appropriately with pupils in Year 6 achieving well.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- National test results have been well below average for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils for some years.
- Pupils in Year 6 achieve well.
- Children make very little progress in the nursery although they catch up in the reception year.
- Pupils' limited descriptive vocabulary is holding back their progress in reading and writing.
- There is inconsistency in the provision for more able pupils, resulting in some underachieving.
- Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of their achievement when withdrawn for specialist support.

Commentary

- 1 In the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils the school's results have been well below average compared to all schools and to schools in similar settings for many years. On many occasions the school's results have been in the bottom 5 per cent nationally, especially the Year 6 results in 2002. The tables below indicate that the gap between the school's results and the national results have been considerable for all subjects but have been particularly wide for reading and writing. The difference between girls and boys' results is no greater than the national comparisons. It is a combination of more able pupils' failure to attain at the higher levels and too many pupils not attaining at the expected level that is causing the results to be low. However, in 2003 the school experienced its best set of results at both Year 2 and Year 6 for several years. This improvement is being maintained by the present Year 2 and Year 6 respectively.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.8 (11.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.3 (11.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.0 (14.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 17 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	25.3 (23.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.8 (23.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	26.0 (24.5)	28.6 (28.3)

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

- 2 The pupils in the present Year 6 class achieve well. This is mainly as a result of good and very good teaching that is challenging them. More able pupils, for example, are given demanding tasks early enough so that they have to work to their full capabilities. This is happening consistently in all lessons. Similarly, the lower attaining pupils are being well supported either by teaching assistants or by the carefully prepared activities that help them to make good progress in their basic skills. However, at present there is too much dependence on the Year 6's improvement making up for only satisfactory achievement earlier in the school. The senior leadership of the school recognises this as a major issue for the school to deal with.
- 3 The children in the nursery are not making enough progress because there is insufficient challenge being provided for them. On too many occasions there are missed opportunities to help move their learning forwards. For example, during an outdoor play session there was little opportunity taken to make the 'road' more interesting for children so that they were being challenged to ride their wheeled vehicles up slight inclines or around obstacles. Inside the classroom there is no incentive given to challenge children to think more carefully about the outcomes of their building when engaged with construction play materials. On too many occasions the activities in the nursery reflects a 'supervisory' rather than 'challenging' outlook. However, in contrast to this there is good work happening with reception-aged children. In this class there is much 'catching up' going on with children being provided with appropriate tasks to help them improve their communication, language and literacy skills, in particular. There is also much attention given to helping these children improve their personal, social and emotional skills. Overall, this results in children in the foundation stage of learning making satisfactory progress although the progress is not even or continuous over the two years.
- 4 Throughout the school, one of the main barriers to pupils' achievement is their lack of descriptive vocabulary either verbally or in written form. Many pupils struggle to answer questions in full sentences and often revert to phrases, one-word answers or gestures. The spoken English of the majority of pupils does not conform to Standard English with words like 'of' and 'have'; 'was' and 'were'; 'is' and 'are' being inter-used. This, together with pupils' limited use of descriptive English is hindering their creative efforts. Many pupils do not have the confidence to move into an imagined world because they feel they do not have the language to support their creative ideas. Too frequently, this results in pupils taking the simple alternative. Overall, this is the main issue contributing to lower standards in English work, which is also reflected in other subjects like history, geography and religious education.
- 5 Although there is good challenge being presented to pupils in Year 6 there is an inconsistent level of challenge being presented to more able pupils in other classes throughout the school. Too often when teachers have planned for an extension activity for the higher attainers it is not presented to them until they have completed all the other work first. There is also a lack of recognition of the level of challenge that some pupils could cope with in some lessons. This results in some pupils coasting and taking their time to complete work that they are more than capable of doing at a much greater pace. In addition, the level of challenge that should be provided for more able nursery aged children is inappropriate as already set out in a previous paragraph. The overall picture is one of more able pupils working at levels below their capabilities until they reach Year 6 when the level of challenge is greatly increased.
- 6 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is mainly as a result of the quality of support provided for them when they are withdrawn from classrooms for specific work with teaching assistants. Specific reading recovery work with these pupils as well as others is helping to raise the confidence of pupils in using a range of skills when reading. As a result they often find it easier to read aloud with expression and greater fluency. The level of support for pupils with special educational needs is not as good when they are within their own classrooms, where the work of teaching assistants is not as effective.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupil behaviour has greatly improved although there are a few pupils in each class who are potentially difficult to handle.
- The school has introduced a range of successful strategies to help improve pupils’ attitudes and behaviour.
- Relationships throughout the school are good.
- There are missed opportunities to develop pupils’ spiritual development.
- Attendance is below the national average but is improving due to the headteacher’s pro-active approach.

Commentary

7 The staff have worked very hard to improve behaviour across the school. The school effectively encourages pupils to behave well and consider the needs of others. All staff have high expectations and the successful approach to behaviour management has impacted positively upon the number of exclusions, although the number being excluded is still high (see table below).

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	146	9	1

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

- 8 The school has adopted a three-tier model to improve behaviour and raise self-esteem. For the majority of pupils ‘Golden Time’ works very well. ‘Golden Time’ is a scheme that gives pupils the opportunity to be rewarded for good behaviour. They can earn thirty minutes of free time when they can choose from a range of exciting activities, including games and dancing. These activities are chosen by the school council and give pupils the opportunity to work outside of their own year group. Those pupils who lose points through inappropriate behaviour are able to redeem them. However, those who do not are excluded from ‘Golden Time’ and are supervised by the headteacher. The number of pupils within this group is decreasing. Another strategy in place is the ‘Chances’ – reward cards, which pupils accumulate and are then entered into a weekly prize draw. The children are very enthusiastic about ‘Chances’ and speak of them with delight.
- 9 Pupils work well together in pairs and in groups on collaborative tasks. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive and the pupils feel that they are able to approach an adult in school should they have a problem. Productive relationships are promoted well through circle time. All support staff are trained in ‘Cognitive Therapy’ and their skills are used successfully with the pupils in raising self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs display good attitudes to learning. The support from teaching assistants for these pupils maintains their motivation and concentration in learning activities. The pupils are eager to please both in class lessons and in small group work.
- 10 Too few examples exist to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in lessons. Spirituality, in particular is quite low key with missed opportunities to further enhance this aspect of pupils’ development in lessons. On too few occasions there is time taken to consider the ‘incredible achievement of humans or animals when opportunities arise. Stories

read to pupils lend themselves to this. Moments shared during collective worship are not used effectively to highlight this aspect of their learning. However, a good example was seen in a Year 3/4 geography lesson where pupils responded well to a video showing a comparison of lifestyles giving them the opportunity to reflect upon their own personal circumstances.

- 11 The attendance rate, which is below the national average (see table below), is improving due to the pro-active approach of the headteacher, the involvement of the educational welfare officer and occasionally social services. The headteacher is very keen to raise levels of attendance. Pupils' absence is investigated thoroughly and good attendance is actively encouraged. The headteacher communicates the importance of this by contacting parents by telephone, letter and by making informal home visits. Both classes and individuals are rewarded for high levels of attendance by whole school recognition and certificates.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (92.4%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.5	School data	1.2
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. However, there is poor provision for nursery-aged children.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but varies from very good in Year 6 and when small groups of pupils are withdrawn for specific support, to poor in the nursery.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good in Year 6.
- Teachers use effective strategies to manage pupils who have the potential to be disruptive.
- Many new systems have been introduced to help pupils to learn more effectively, however these are have not been consistently implemented.
- There is an inconsistent level of challenge for more able pupils.
- The quality of marking and assessment are unsatisfactory.
- There is good use of teaching assistants to support pupils in small groups outside the classroom.

Commentary

- 12 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory but varies from very good in Year 6 to poor in the nursery (see table below). In Year 6 the teacher is very well prepared and uses the learning objective for each lesson to secure pupils' engagement. The other major strength of the teaching in Year 6 is the way the teacher challenges pupils of different abilities. There is good consideration given for the needs of all pupils and this is effectively attended to both in the planning and the execution of lessons. In one literacy lesson, for example, the teacher in Year 6 effectively used a well-prepared resource to help pupils to work collaboratively in pairs. During the lesson there was good attention to pupils' descriptive language. One pair spent

time considering whether 'invented' was an accurate alternative for 'developed'. The teacher is fully aware of the need to develop pupils' spoken vocabulary and gives this full attention during lessons. In a numeracy lesson the pace was such that pupils were taken along with the demands and responded very well. The headteacher teaches this group for science and information and communication technology. He also challenges them and gives full consideration to the needs of pupils of different abilities. This results in Year 6 pupils achieving well and making rapid progress, which is helping to improve the school's National Curriculum test results at Year 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	8	12	2	2	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 Staff have adopted effective strategies to cope with pupils who have the potential to be disruptive. The school has a recent history of coping well with pupils who have challenging behaviour. This is borne out by the views of parents who acknowledge that behaviour is much better now than it used to be. All staff have been involved in training to look at appropriate classroom methodologies for coping with difficult pupils. This is working well with all teachers adopting similar approaches to incidents that occur in classrooms. The high level of temporary exclusions is part of the strategy aimed at short-term consequences in return for long-term reward. The consistent approach by all staff to serious and less serious incidents has helped to get the message across to all pupils. As a result pupils, through their pre-inspection questionnaires, identified that this is a pleasant school with little fear from bullying.
- 14 Since the arrival of the present headteacher and deputy headteacher the school has adopted many new innovative strategies aimed at improving pupils' learning. There is good use of music, physical activities and target setting to help focus pupils' attention. However, the strategies have not been adopted by all staff, resulting in inconsistencies in teaching practices across the school. In Year 6 these strategies are seen to be working well with different types of music being used to impact on different moods and learning styles. In other classes the strategies are given very little recognition, resulting in target setting being given cursory attention in some classes. Where the new innovations have been introduced there is little doubt that they are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, too many staff are still reluctant to embrace these new ideas and consequently are adding to the inconsistent practice that is happening across the school.
- 15 As has already been mentioned the main issue relating to teaching and learning in the school is the inconsistency of practice adopted by teachers. This extends to the level of challenge provided for more able pupils. In some cases, especially Year 6 and reception the teachers' planning is very focused on the needs of pupils of different abilities. In others there is little clarity in the planning as to how the needs of more able pupils are to be met. This is also transferred into day-to-day practice with opportunities being missed to move on the learning at a brisker pace for those pupils who could cope with more demanding tasks. This results in more able pupils underachieving in certain classes.
- 16 One of the main problems relating to the inconsistent challenge being provided for more able pupils are the unsatisfactory arrangements that exist for assessing pupils' progress. Day-to-day assessment procedures are unsatisfactory with teachers' marking being inconsistent and not aiding pupils' understanding about what they need to do next in order to improve. Too often marking is cursory and gives little indication to the pupil as to what they have done well and what could have been improved. The inconsistent implementation of a target setting procedure adds to the problems with some pupils being given clear indication as to what they

need to do next in order to improve and others not benefiting from this system. In classes where the assessment is unsatisfactory there is little attention given to identifying what pupils of different abilities need and therefore leads to a lack of challenge for some pupils, especially the most able.

- 17 Teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils in small group work and in one-to-one teaching. This is mostly done outside the classroom when individuals or groups are withdrawn. When working with a group of Year 3 and 4 pupils, for example, the teaching assistant showed skill in providing opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills. This focus on boosting reading skills through the reading recovery programme is having a positive impact, especially with pupils who have special educational needs. The teaching assistants have developed very effective skills in dealing with pupils in small groups and are a valuable resource to the school. However, within classes teaching assistants are less well used and often are not able to make the most of their undoubted talent.

The curriculum

Strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum provision in the nursery is poor.
- There is inconsistent use of pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across the curriculum.
- The school has appropriately taken the decision to provide Year 1 pupils with a Foundation Stage of Learning curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but better when pupils are taken out of class for small group and individual work.
- Accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. There is no outdoor play provision readily accessible for reception-aged pupils.

Commentary

- 18 Whilst the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are being met there is poor provision for nursery-aged children. The range of opportunities provided for children in the nursery is too narrow and does not provide effective learning opportunities for these children. It relies too heavily on more challenging provision in the reception class to ensure that children are making satisfactory progress within the foundation stage of learning. Within the nursery although the planning broadly covers the expectations of the Foundation Stage curriculum the day-to-day practice does not. Children are not being challenged and there is an unsatisfactory partnership between parents and the nursery staff with limited information being passed on to parents about their children's progress or experiences. As a result the provision in the nursery is poor and this puts too great a demand on the reception class.
- 19 There inconsistent use of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum. This is partly because the school has concentrated on improving basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT before thinking about applying these skills in other areas. In addition, pupils' limited vocabulary and indifferent reading skills limits their access to learning across the curriculum. However, in most classes teachers give good attention to developing pupils' oral skills but more opportunity needs to be given to oracy in other classes. In some classes teachers are ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to practice writing skills across the curriculum. Although pupils have improving numeracy skills they do not have opportunities to use and apply their numeracy skills to solve problems. Pupils are having regular access to information and communication technology (ICT) resources and are improving their personal skills at a rapid rate and there is beginning to be better use of ICT across the curriculum.

- 20 The school has taken the sensible decision to provide Year 1 pupils with a curriculum based on the foundation stage style. Reception-aged children work in the same class as the Year 1 pupils and the school has looked carefully at the needs of all pupils. It has managed to organise a very carefully thought-out curriculum, which meets the needs of both Year 1 and reception pupils and at the same time is challenging. This is helping pupils to develop their personal, social and emotional skills and providing a good foundation for future learning.
- 21 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall but better when pupils are taken out of class for small group or one-to-one work. The programme of reading recovery, which is used with many pupils, is working well ensuring that pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading when supported by teaching assistants. The curriculum is well organised to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The focus on developing reading skills for pupils with special educational needs improves the access for these pupils to all areas of the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs are well cared for and they respond well to the reward system used to motivate learning and modify behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants are good at managing pupils who have the potential to be difficult.
- 22 Accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. There is no readily accessible outdoor play provision for reception-aged pupils. The information and communication technology area is very open and 'traffic' through the area makes teaching very difficult at times. Some areas of the school are in a poor state of repair and urgently need refurbishment. However, there is a major plan for refurbishment in place and work is about to start on this after the inspection has finished. The school has sufficient resources to meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum although plans are in place to provide more resources to develop investigative and practical work.

Care, guidance and support

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection arrangements are good.
- The developing school council and the pupils' views of the school are seen as important.
- Lunchtime arrangements do not meet the needs of the pupils
- The tracking system used to ensure pupils are making appropriate progress is not used consistently across school.

Commentary

- 23 Child Protection arrangements are good. The school follows the guidelines set out by the authority. There is good liaison between school and support agencies. The staff are proactive and trained in child protection procedures. There is no child protection governor at present but governors are very supportive and aware of national issues. Satisfactory procedures are put in place to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. All adults are safety conscious, checking on potential risks and renewing systems regularly. Staff are aware of pupils' medical needs and ensure these are met. The school caretaker is very conscientious and trained in health and safety management. He manages the challenging site and issues of access well. There is good liaison between the headteacher, caretaker and the chair of governors. Risk assessments are thorough for day trips and residentials and are routinely carried out when required. A high-quality cleaning programme ensures pupils work in a clean environment and are not put at risk. Pupils are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle.
- 24 Pupils hold a positive view of the school as evidenced in the pupils' questionnaires. They enjoy the activities in school, particularly art and circle time. They feel that bullying is tackled, adults in school are kind and friendships are valued. The headteacher is well liked by the pupils. The involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is

satisfactory. The relatively new school council meet fortnightly at lunchtimes. The democratically elected councillors are at present developing their roles. They are proud of their achievements, which include choosing the colour scheme for the school entrance, the stairwell display and for the colour of their school uniform. The younger members lacked the confidence to discuss their role, however, the Year 6 pupils were able to talk enthusiastically about their ideas for fundraising and the purchase of new playground equipment. There has been some dissatisfaction voiced over the quality and quantity of school meals.

- 25 The school has not as yet given consideration to varying the style of lunchtime service to enable the older pupils to take some responsibility for the younger pupils. Such an arrangement would help to develop pupils oracy and personal and social skills. An example of current good practice is the 'Table of the Week' and 'Class of the Week' (packed lunches), which are chosen by the lunchtime supervisors and given recognition throughout the school. A tablecloth is laid and flowers placed on the table making it a special occasion for the pupils. The lunchtime staff, show good knowledge of the pupils and relationships are positive, however there is a need for them to become more actively involved in lunchtime games.
- 26 The whole school tracking system is not used consistently across the school leading to under achievement of the more able pupils. There is a need for a greater involvement of the pupils to ensure that they are aware of targets set and the next steps to achieve them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with its parents and the community are satisfactory. This is another improving aspect of the school's work with the vast majority of parents believing that the school is much better than it was.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high response from parents' questionnaire indicates a positive view of the improvements that have occurred in the past few years.
- There is a growing level of trust between the school and parents.
- Not enough parents take an active role in supporting education events at the school and in helping with their children's homework.
- There is a strong Parent Teacher and Friends Association, which is being run by the school caretaker.

Commentary

- 27 The high response from parents' questionnaires indicates that most parents are pleased with the school's approach, especially to care and pastoral issues. They praise the school's friendly atmosphere and most feel happy to approach teachers if they have concerns. Parents are particularly happy with the quality and number of out of school activities and they attend performances at school in large numbers. Almost half the parents completed questionnaires and most of the responses obtained were positive. Parents particularly praised the school's approach to care and guidance. Parents stated that they think the school is improving and some have rejoined the school after going elsewhere for a time.
- 28 Parents are responding to the school's drive to increase attendance and punctuality, although the level of attendance is still too low. The school's steady progress on building up trust, in an area that traditionally has had little engagement with education, is bearing fruit. Parents feel that they will be welcomed in school if they have concerns about their children although they still have too few opportunities to enter the classroom, especially in the younger years. Parents have access to information about what their children are going to learn, but some said they do not have enough information about progress. Parents welcome the school's clear expectations about behaviour. Some parents do not think the school is well led and managed; this is explained by the headteacher by the fact that he has taken a robust line on

the school's expectations of behaviour, punctuality and attendance. He talks regularly to parents and has had few complaints.

- 29 The school still finds difficulties in engaging some parents with their children's education, and there is a low attendance at parents' evenings. Many are reluctant to join in education evenings or explanations about what children are going to learn. There is a very low attendance at meetings to explain the curriculum and not all parents attend reviews or parents' meetings to discuss progress, although the level has risen substantially in the past two years due to steady encouragement by the school. Reviews of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are carried out at parents' evenings. As not all parents attend these meetings they are not always involved in planning or supporting the learning of pupils with special educational needs, this needs to be addressed.
- 30 The Parents Teachers and Friends Association gives valuable support to the school in social and fundraising activities. It is a successful body, which fundraises vigorously and organises social events often involving the local community. The caretaker takes a leading role in the association and works exceptionally hard to keep the association an active body. Local people and parents attend performances and events at school in large numbers. Parents approve of the large number of after school activities available, and there is good liaison with other schools in the area to increase the range of experiences open to pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked hard to introduce a range of new initiatives although these have not yet had time to embed themselves in the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have brought about a greater focus on raising pupils' achievement.
- Many initiatives have been introduced since the new headteacher arrived but they have not been embedded in the school practise as yet.
- Procedures to check on the quality of teaching and learning and on the achievement of pupils are now well established.
- The governors provide appropriate support for the school leadership but are not yet in a position to be challenging.
- The school uses a range of strategies that help check that it is getting the most from its spending.

Commentary

- 31 The headteacher and his deputy headteacher have brought about a clear sense of direction for all staff, which is aimed at improving pupils' achievement. This is evident in much of the school's most recent innovations with a high profile given to pupils' learning and creating an atmosphere in each classroom where this can take place. However, the inconsistent implementation of the procedures means there is much more work to be done to ensure that the leadership's vision is shared by all. The first priority was to 'improve' the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils who were causing concern to staff and other pupils. The school's leadership recognised that this was of paramount importance if they were to help pupils to achieve better than they were. There is little doubt that this has been accomplished successfully and, in this aspect, all staff have been very committed to the lead shown by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school's National Curriculum test results have improved recently and this is no small measure due to the greater focus provided by the school's leadership.

- 32 Most staff have been quick to get behind the headteacher's innovations and have worked hard to seek to improve the provision and achievement of pupils. However, the new ideas have not been whole-heartedly accepted and the headteacher and deputy headteacher recognise that there is much work still to be done to convince all staff that changes are necessary. In classrooms where the new innovations have been adopted there has been a significant improvement in pupils' learning and attitudes. However, in some classes pupils' learning has not been affected because there has been either a reluctance or difficulty in taking on the new ideas. The headteacher is aware of these issues and recognises that there is much still to be done in order to move the school on.
- 33 The headteacher, with support from his deputy headteacher and the local education authority, has implemented good systems to help check on the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. There are also good procedures in place to help check on the achievement of pupils with appropriate tracking of pupils' progress happening. The staff are provided with clear feedback about their teaching and work towards targets, which are presented to them. Each teacher is provided with information about the expected progress to be made by each individual pupil and is expected to keep this very much in mind when planning, targeting work and assessing pupils. However, not all this information is used as effectively as it could be which results in an inconsistent approach to target setting and unsatisfactory assessment arrangements.
- 34 The coordination of provision of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is a timetable in place, which allows teaching assistants to have a designated area in which to work with groups of pupils. The special educational needs coordinator has dedicated time each week to carry out this role. The coordinator is trained in reading recovery and is supporting the teaching assistants who are now training. Regular attendance at network meetings for special educational needs coordinators helps to keep the school's coordinator up to date with new developments. More time needs to be made for the coordinator to share good practice with all members of staff in school.
- 35 The governors are very dedicated to the school. Many have been with the school during some very difficult times in the recent past and now accept that the school is moving in the right direction. They have good sources of information to help keep them informed about school practice and effectiveness. The headteacher provides them with comprehensive information through the headteacher's report at meetings but they also have very good information from parents who are keen to tell them about their views. Whilst this puts the governors in a good position to help check on the school's performance they are not yet challenging the school. In many respects they recognise that they had to initially support the new headteacher in turning around the school, especially in dealing with incidents that led to temporary exclusions of individual pupils.
- 36 The school, through its leadership, is in a good position to check on the impact of its spending. Best value measures are well-established with the governors being able to give consideration to the impact its decisions is having on school performance. The employment of a number of teaching assistants is measured against the achievement of the lower attaining pupils. The school is also about to embark on major work to the premises and careful thought has been given to how this is likely to impact on overall provision.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	457,462.87
Total expenditure	463,322.80
Expenditure per pupil	3,173.44

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	27255.77
Balance carried forward to the next	21395.84

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 37 There is significant difference between the quality of education being provided for children in the nursery and that provided in the reception. The nursery is situated in a building that is a little distance away from the main school and there is no natural link with the reception class, which makes liaison difficult. In each of the six areas of learning the overall provision is satisfactory only because of the substantial work that is happening in the reception class to pick up children's progress after a poor start in the nursery. It is in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and creative development that the children's provision is at its worst in the nursery.
- 38 Children are accepted on a part-time basis into the nursery before moving on to full time education in the reception class. The reception class also has Year 1 pupils present, but the curriculum is designed in accordance with the foundation stage of learning because the majority of the Year 1 pupils have not met the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. There is no access to an outside environment from the reception class and the teacher has to compromise by allowing groups to work in the nursery classroom for periods during the day. This is not ideal but helps to allow these children to have some access to outdoor education on a daily basis.
- 39 When they first start school the majority of children have personal and academic skill levels that are well below that expected for their age. This is especially the case for communication, language and literacy, where children are not always able to express themselves clearly. Many have speech problems. There is a tendency to use short phrases, single words or gestures as a way of communicating. Their physical skills are slightly stronger but very few are strong in creative ideas and thought.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's social skills are poor when they start school.
- Many new initiatives have been introduced into the reception class to help develop children's personal, social and emotional skills.

Commentary

- 40 When they first start school many children have poor social skills. They are not used to sharing or taking turns and seldom sit and listen for prolonged periods. Within the nursery there are many lost opportunities to help develop this aspect of children's learning. The quality of adult intervention is poor and therefore when the opportunity arises to make a telling teaching point it is lost. In the reception it is very different where a 'circle time' arrangement has been introduced. This enables children to sit together to consider each other's feelings and well-being. There is much made of developing children's social skills during snack times with appropriate table manners introduced. There are also opportunities for children to take turns and to be responsible for handing out food and drink introduced at this time. When reception aged children join the nursery group for outdoor play there is further opportunity for the older children show responsible ways of behaving and there is much made of the fact that they should show consideration and care for the nursery aged children. Children make satisfactory progress overall in this area of learning but it is as a result of the good work that is happening in the reception class. Teaching is satisfactory but only because of the good

teaching that is happening in the reception class. It is often poor or unsatisfactory in the nursery.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children oracy is poor when they first start school.
- This area has been recognised as a key area for development in the reception class.
- Pre-reading and reading development skills are a prominent feature of the work that is taking place in the reception.

Commentary

- 41 When children first start in the nursery many display poor communication skills. Their skills are not being well developed in the nursery but there is rapid progress made in the reception class, resulting in pupils' achievement being appropriate overall. However, by the end of the reception year only about a quarter of the children are meeting the early learning goal for this area and very few, if any, exceed it. It is in the area of oracy that the greatest difficulty lays. Many children use only a few words when they communicate at the start of their school life and many use gestures rather than speech. A significant number have speech therapy requirements and are sometimes lacking confidence in communicating with adults.
- 42 There is good provision for this area of learning in the reception class. Great efforts are made to focus resources on children's pre-reading and reading development. Teaching assistants are experienced and expert in helping children to acquire a full range of reading skills before the end of the reception year. There are opportunities for children in the reception to engage in writing experiences daily. Children take pride in taking books home and by the end of the reception year most have developed a love for books. Most children are able to write the letters that appear in their name by the end of the reception year but very few are able to move beyond early stages of writing. The teaching in this area of learning reflects that of most other areas, that is, unsatisfactory in nursery but good in reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on linking mathematical development with practical tasks.
- There are lost opportunities to help young nursery aged children to use number as part of their everyday work.

Commentary

- 43 Very few children know a range of number rhymes when they first start in the nursery. Although a number of children can recite 1 to 10 they are not sure about the values of number and take time to link the symbols with actual amounts. During their time in the nursery they make unsatisfactory progress in this area of learning. However, as with other areas, there is good progress happening in the reception, which helps about a quarter of the children attain the early learning goal for mathematical development by the time they leave the reception. Very few, if any, are moving beyond this and a large number are still well away from the early learning goal.

- 44 During their time in reception children are helped to sing number rhymes and often do so at the start of sessions, which involves mathematical work. Children are helped to recognise number to 20 although many still mix up the tens and units values. There is every opportunity to involve mathematics in all activities from the play environment to building. This is not the case in the nursery because the learning environment is not conducive to this happening. Resources are not accessible and therefore there are many missed opportunities to develop mathematics when children are at play. The teaching in the nursery is unsatisfactory but is good in the reception.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children have limited general knowledge when they first start school.
- A number of visits to the local area and visitors to the classroom help to enhance the children's skills in this area.

Commentary

- 45 Most children have very limited general knowledge when they first start school. They have little knowledge of the immediate area and do not always have a clear understanding about the type of shops that exists in the locality. They have limited knowledge of how things grow and that plants need food and light to survive. During their time in the foundation stage they make satisfactory progress overall with only about a quarter of the children meeting the early learning goal by the end of reception. In the reception, where the progress is better, children have opportunities to visit the locality and learn about the purpose of different shops. They also learn about 'old' and 'new' and can begin to identify the things in the environment that have been around for some time. They are helped to gain greater understanding about the people who are needed in the local community by a number of visits to school from amongst others fire-fighters and health visitors. The teaching again reflects that in other areas, being much better in the reception than in the nursery.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's physical skills are stronger than in other areas when they first start school.
- There is a good outdoor environment in the nursery but none in the reception.

Commentary

- 46 Children's have better developed physical skills when they first start in the nursery. However, many are much stronger in the area of gross motor skills than in finer manipulative skills. As they move through nursery to reception children make satisfactory progress overall and become quite confident in manoeuvring their wheeled vehicles. However, there are lost opportunities in the nursery to further enhance the children's skills. No attempt is made to set up more, or less, demanding trails or to consider varying the way they use their vehicles. The desk-top activities that take place in the reception allow children ample opportunity to improve their manipulative skills but this is not happening regularly enough in the nursery. Reception aged children use the school hall twice weekly and spend time improving the co-ordination skills during dance and games sessions. Overall, about a third of the group meets the early learning goal by the end of reception and the teaching is satisfactory overall.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision is the weakest of the six areas of learning because many children find it difficult to move into an imagined or creative world.
- There are many lost opportunities in the nursery to develop children's skills in this area.

Commentary

47 It is in this area that the greatest concern exists in relation to children's skill development. When they first start nursery the vast majority of children have poorly developed skills in this area. However, the provision for this area of learning in the nursery is poor with many missed opportunities to enhance children's skills. The play environment is not well organised and children find it difficult to move into a make-believe world as a result. There is also poor organisation of creative materials, such as paint and musical instruments. This is further hindering progress. Although the provision is much better in the reception it is not enough to help make up for lost time and children are therefore not making the expected progress in this area within the foundation stage. The teaching is therefore unsatisfactory for this area and the planning is also inadequate. By the end of reception less than a quarter of the children are meeting the early learning goal for this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is improving, which is reflected in better National Curriculum test results for both Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
- Pupils' oral communication is hindering their ability to write creatively.
- Pupils lack fluency and expression when reading.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but very good in Year 6.
- The work carried out by teaching assistants is helping to improve lower and mid attainers' achievement.
- There is inconsistency in assessment arrangements.

Commentary

- 48 For the past few years standards in English have been well below average. On occasions, the National Curriculum test results have been in the bottom 5 per cent nationally. Very few pupils have attained the higher levels for reading and writing in the tests in Year 2 or Year 6. This, combined with far more than nationally failing to attain the expected level for their age, is responsible for low results. However, the set of results attained by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2003 were the school's best results for many years and this improvement is being maintained by the present Year 2 and Year 6. One of the main reasons for improved results is the good achievement of pupils in Year 6. When considering the low skill levels of children in communication, language and literacy when they first start school and measured against their attainment at the end of Year 6 there is good progress overall. However, overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory but with significant improvement happening in Year 6. There remains an inconsistent level of challenge for more able pupils with good progress only evident in Years 2 and 6 for these pupils. The achievement of less able pupils is more consistent, being good throughout the school.
- 49 One of the main difficulties encountered by the school is the limited use of spoken English by the pupils. Most pupils find it difficult to use an extended descriptive language and often mix up their tenses in everyday speech. They tend to opt for simple rather than adventurous, descriptive words and this is having a detrimental impact on their confidence levels when it comes to being imaginative and creative. The staff in each class are aware of the issue and most are successful in maximising opportunities for pupils to communicate orally during lessons. However, there is no whole-school practice that helps to develop pupils' spoken English in a progressive manner. There are pockets of good practice as was seen in Year 1 when pupils were taught to face each other and explain things clearly to one another. However, this is not an approach that is used in all classrooms.
- 50 As a result of the limited use of descriptive English, pupils' written work is lacking flair. By the end of Year 2 the most able pupils are only just able to keep a sequence going when they write and their endings are weak. Too frequently, new sentences start with 'and' and they tend to be simple with little evidence of compound or complex sentences being used. Their ideas are quite limited and inevitably their stories lack sparkle. By Year 6 more able are able to sustain a piece of writing appropriately and the sequence is good. However, the same issue of a lack of imaginative flair still exists. They make many basic grammatical errors, such as, 'how' for 'who' and 'of' for 'have'. Words like 'drowned' predominate much of the verbs used. There are the odd occasions when words like 'scurried' are used to describe

events but most of their adjectives and adverbs are drawn from simple and unadventurous vocabulary.

- 51 Another consequence of the lack of confidence in the use of a wide, descriptive oral vocabulary is the lack of fluency and expression pupils have when reading. The vast majority of pupils use a full range of skills to help them read unknown words but when they read aloud most do so in a very staccato way. Many struggle for expression and they rarely alter their voices for different characters. This is hindering their progress in reading and is causing many pupils to suggest that they do not enjoy reading. The staff work hard at helping pupils to be more accurate with their reading and they use a full range of ideas to help less and mid ability readers, in particular, to be more confident and to increase their reading vocabulary. However, many pupils see reading as something they have to do rather than something that will give them life-long skills that can be used for enjoyment and recreation.
- 52 There is a great variation in the quality of teaching, being very good in Year 6 and sometimes lacking decisiveness in other classes. When it is at its best, as in Year 6, there is a good level of challenge for more able pupils who recognise that they have to work hard to 'keep up'. The demands are equally intensive for mid attainers, with work being carefully planned for each ability group. There is good use of resources as happened during a lesson on non-chronological writing. During this session pupils of different abilities were presented with sheets that were more or less informative, according to the ability of the pupils. The teacher enabled pupils to work in pairs for part of the lesson so that there were opportunities for full discussions to occur. As a result, some of the initial words to be used were improved because of the quality of discussions. For example, the word 'developing' was changed to 'inventing'. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher also gave enough time for pupils to talk about the way a story they were reading was likely to finish. However, in other lessons there was not enough attention given to the needs of pupils of different abilities, leading to underachievement amongst the most able. There is also inconsistent use of assessment information, which results in activities not always being directed at the needs of pupils of different abilities with, again, the more able pupils being the ones that are not challenged.
- 53 One of the strengths of the teaching is the work carried out by teaching assistants when working with small groups of pupils from the mid or lower attaining sets. These teaching assistants are very talented with some being qualified for working with pupils on a programme of reading recovery, which is aimed at helping pupils to acquire a full range of reading skills. By working with small groups the teaching assistants are able to promote these reading skills and give intensive support at the same time. The overall impact has been to improve pupils' achievement and to improve their attainment, which is one of the reasons why fewer Year 2 pupils are now not attaining at the expected level for their age in the National Curriculum tests at Year 2.
- 54 The inconsistency in practice across the school is one of the main reasons why pupils' achievement is so variable. This inconsistency is seen at its greatest in assessment arrangements with teachers not being able to take full advantage of pupils' prior attainment because the information they receive on a day-to-day basis is not aiding their ability to plan as effectively as they should. In addition, the school now, through the work of the deputy headteacher who is also the literacy leader, is able to track the progress of individuals and provide individual teachers with good quality information about what needs to be done to help pupils improve. The use of target setting has been introduced but this is not used as well as it could be by all staff to help create greater impact and focus on improving skills in reading and writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 55 There is inconsistent use of pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum. This is mainly because staff have concentrated on improving pupils' basic literacy skills. The focus on improving pupils' oracy skills has not always been carried through in lessons in history and

geography. There are pockets of good practice, especially in Year 2 and 6, but the main problem comes back to inconsistency. In science and mathematics pupils' lack of fluency and confidence in literacy is hindering their progress in investigational work and problem solving.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have steadily improved over the past few years, mainly because of the good progress that is happening in Year 6.
- Teaching is very good in Year 6 but varies considerably across the school.
- Not all more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory.
- Not enough emphasis is given to problem solving activities and helping pupils to use and apply their number skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

- 56 Standards have been low for several years but there is an improving picture. Currently, by the end of Year 2 standards are below that expected for pupils nationally but pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations with good achievement amongst Year 6 pupils making a significant difference to overall standards. Achievement is satisfactory overall but could be much better if there was a more consistent approach to challenging more able pupils. Presently, too much is expected in Year 6 to pick up the rate of progress pupils make. In this Year group there is very good challenge for more able pupils and they respond well to it. As a result more pupils are now attaining at the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils.
- 57 The quality of teaching varies considerably across the school but is at its best in Year 6, where it is very good. Effectiveness of teaching methods for mental and oral number work is good. Teaching assistants work efficiently to ensure that the requirements of lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs are met. Very good teaching was seen in Year 6 where thinking processes were prioritised, pupils were motivated and enthused. The interactive whiteboard was used very effectively as a teaching aid and learning was clearly linked to pupils' aspirations and future careers. Pupils remained engrossed in their work following the class teacher's philosophy of, 'The more you think, the more you ask and learn'.
- 58 The level of challenge for more able is consistently the one factor that separates good from indifferent teaching. Too frequently, the planning does not take full account of these pupils' needs. To some extent teachers do not accept that they have 'more able' pupils in their classes. In other cases extension activities are prepared but they are not used soon enough and pupils tend to coast and take more time over mundane tasks rather than move on to the more demanding ones. When pupils are challenged, as is seen in Year 6 and sometimes in Years 1 and 2, there is an immediate response with highly motivated pupils working to their full capabilities.
- 59 Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory resulting in the match of work to the different abilities within classes often not being met. Accurate assessments and extension activities are needed to fulfil the needs of the higher attaining pupils. There is a need to introduce a more rigorous target setting system, which is used consistently in all classes to enable the teachers to set day-to-day targets and for pupils to fully understand their next steps for improvement. Marking varies in quality, at best it identifies small steps for improvement to

move learning forward but in general it is used only to reinforce and give praise. There is no formal means of identifying gifted and talented pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60 The use of problem solving in mathematics is under-used. The mathematics leader is keen to promote mathematics in a cross curricular way but recognises that this is not happening consistently across the school. There are pockets of good practice as was seen in a Year 4/5 art lesson where the pupils were identifying and discussing the shapes on a bicycle during observational drawing. Due to the low levels of oracy problem solving has not been a high priority neither has using and applying number skills in other areas of the curriculum. However, an example of good practice was seen in Year 1 with good links between mathematics to literacy. Here pupils counted the fruit from The Hungry Caterpillar story and created their own number sentences. Another good example was in a Year 4/5 lesson where pupils worked in pairs calculating and discussing the area of regular shapes whilst interacting productively.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving mainly as a result of challenging work that is taking place in Year 6.
- Pupils' limited use of descriptive English is hindering their progress in science.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but inconsistent across the school.
- Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

- 61 Standards have been low for several years and had, for a time, declined since the previous inspection. However, the 2003, Year 6 cohort and this current group of Year 6 pupils have done much to improve standards, which are now close to the national expectations. Standards are still below average in Year 2, with teacher assessments indicating that few pupils are moving to the higher levels (Level 3) at that stage. Standards are generally better in scientific knowledge than they are in scientific enquiry because pupils' oracy is hindering their ability to discuss appropriately and to carry out investigations. It is mainly as a result of the good work that is happening with Year 6 that standards are improving and the general improvement is not yet being reflected throughout the school. More able pupils are not always being challenged enough in classes other than Year 6.
- 62 The limited descriptive vocabulary of pupils inhibits learning with limited time being given to allow pupils to talk about their work. Pupils also find researching difficult because many are not confident with their reading skills. Pupils are also reluctant to commit ideas to paper because they sometimes do not possess the flow of language they require. The use of ICT to support learning in science is at an early stage of development with recently acquired interactive white boards used to help Year 6 pupils to compare the properties of materials through the creation of a branching database.
- 63 Teaching is satisfactory overall but varies across the school. Where teaching is good, as in Year 6, pupils are given time to discuss observations and use correct scientific terminology. However, this is not the case in all classes and there is evidence of insecure subject knowledge indicated by the fact that plans are not always adapted to meet the needs of particular groups of pupils. Planning and teaching show that there are low expectations of more able pupils which results in a lack of progress for these pupils who often underachieve.

However, teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with special educational needs and these pupils make good progress.

- 64 Ineffective use is made of information from assessment of pupils' work and assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory. As a result, work is not planned on the basis of what pupils know, understand and can do. The marking of work is unsatisfactory and pupils are not being provided with enough information to help them improve their work. Not enough comments are made to help pupils to develop scientific thinking and pupils are not involved in setting targets for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory, which is a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for ICT has improved greatly since the previous inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils possess ICT skills that matches that expected for their age.

Commentary

- 65 The previous report indicated that provision for ICT was insecure with some aspects not being covered appropriately. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to improve the quality of resourcing and to increase the skill knowledge of all staff. The school is at the stage of introducing interactive whiteboards to all classes but recognise that this will take some time. The ones that are in place at the moment are being used effectively, especially in Year 6. The creation of a central ICT suite in the school has helped to teach basic ICT skills to each class in turn. However, the location of the suite is not ideal because it is in an open area with access for other pupils to move around the perimeter of the suite. This can sometimes cause problems because of subsidiary noise, which is not helping the teachers when they are trying to make teaching points to the whole group. The number of computers now allows pupils to work on individual machines or at worst share one computer between two pupils. This is a much-improved position compared to the previous inspection.
- 66 Pupils' skill levels in ICT now meet national expectations. Year 2 pupils are able to load and save work from or to their own folder. They can also delete and insert text appropriately and can also search a CD ROM and save text for later use. Year 4/5 pupils are able to enter information onto a spreadsheet and then use their spreadsheets to find out information. They do this quickly and all are happy to experiment with using different fonts, styles and size of print. Year 6 pupils are able to produce a multi-media presentation. They can also successfully set up 'tree diagrams' to organise information and can use this to help develop work in science, history and geography.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 67 The use of ICT across the curriculum is quickly improving and is much stronger now than at the time of the previous inspection. However, there remains some inconsistency in its use and application across the school. There are developing links with science and good use in pockets during literacy lessons. However, there is still some way to go before its use is used well in all classes.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory. The school has successfully adopted the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching, planning and assessment arrangements are generally satisfactory but inconsistent across the school.
- Pupils have appropriate access to learning about religious other than Christianity but have limited opportunities to find out more through visits or talks from visitors.
- Some teachers make effective use of religious education lessons to develop pupils' oracy skills.

Commentary

- 68 Pupils in Year 2 and 6 attain standards that are in line with that expected of the locally agreed syllabus. From the lessons seen teaching of religious education is satisfactory overall. The teaching of Year 2 pupils improved their knowledge of special people. Teachers' good relationships with pupils ensure that pupils are well behaved and have a good attitude in lessons. However, in some lessons teachers do not expand on pupils' ideas and miss the opportunity to relate these to spiritual or moral thinking. Planning of lessons is based on the locally agreed syllabus, however there is little evidence of this being adapted to meet the needs of groups of pupils of different ability within classes. The marking and assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent and not well used to move pupils on in their learning.
- 69 Pupils have the opportunity to learn about other religions. Year 6 pupils, for example, are able to make comparisons between Christianity and Islam when talking about pilgrimages to Lourdes and to Mecca. However, due to difficulties in providing funding, the school does not make use of visits out of school and getting visitors into school to extend pupils' experiences.
- 70 Appropriate use is made of religious education to allow pupils to practice literacy and independent writing skills. For example Year 2 pupils confidently attempt writing about people whom they consider to be special.
- 71 Work was sampled in **history** and **geography** only one lesson each was seen in history and geography. It was not possible, therefore to make an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. Evidence from pupils' work and from talking to them enables secure judgements to be made about standards in both subjects. By the time pupils are at the end of Year 2 standards are below the level expected for their age. Standards of work completed by Year 6 pupils in history are below those expected for pupils of this age. Standards of work of Year 6 pupils in geography are below those expected for pupils of this age.
- 72 In **history** Year 2 pupils have studied the life of Florence Nightingale and have begun to make comparisons between her life and the work of nurses now. Year 6 pupils have considered the effect of World War 2 on the people of the time. A group of Year 6 pupils were able to recall learning in previous years about a range of history topics. Year 6 pupils make use of their literacy skills to produce a variety of work in history, for example posters, poetry, descriptions and instructions.
- 73 In **geography** Year 2 pupils have studied the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' mainly through the use of published worksheets. There is very little evidence of the work being marked and no examples of work being matched to the ability of pupils. Year 6 pupils are able to recall work on rivers and mountains and have used books and atlases to aid their research into these topics. Teachers' good subject knowledge engaged Year 3 and 4 old pupils in learning about Kenya through the use of a wide range of resources.
- 74 Resources are satisfactory in both subjects. The use of books and pictures are the main sources of information although some use is made of artefacts, the local environment and

visitors into school. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching and learning in these subjects. The marking of pupils work is not sufficiently detailed to enable pupils to know how to move on with their learning. Due to the schools focus on the core curriculum the subject leader has not yet had time to develop the role.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music

The provision for music is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are broadly in line with national expectations.
- Pupils are keen and enjoy music.

Commentary

- 75 Standards in music are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. In the few lessons observed the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy music. In Year 3/4 pupils were enthusiastic whilst singing 'Chocalosa', an African song, accompanied by a selection of unusual African musical instruments. In assembly, the children sang in tune and kept time well, although the overall effect was rather muted. Pupils enter the hall for assembly to a variety of music, for example Goldberg's variations, sitting attentively and listening. In a Year 2 lesson the pupils were keen to sing solos and showed an obvious enjoyment of music especially rhythms.
- 76 The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. The use of subject specialists in Years 1 and 2 are working well to lay a firm foundation and develop good habits. The curriculum is further enhanced by extra curricular activities including a keyboard club and tutoring. Music is linked to topics for all year groups and musical workshops are held throughout the year.

Physical education

- 77 There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in physical education. No teaching was observed and, at present, there is no co-ordinator in place.

Art and design

Provision in Art and Design and design and technology are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to raise the profile of art and design technology within the school.
- Work is attractively displayed around the school.
- Assessment and monitoring have not yet been fully developed.

Commentary

78. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about teaching and learning as only one art and design lesson was observed and no design and technology lessons. Teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory. The leadership and management

of the subjects are satisfactory. Since adopting the co-ordinators role the emphasis has been on developing routines of good practice, use of resources and laying down of plans. No monitoring of lessons has yet taken place. A comprehensive range of displays of pupils' work has been collated onto a CD Rom celebrating pupils' achievements and showing links to other curriculum areas. Educational visits have been effectively followed up by creative art and design work, for example, a trip to Eureka and the environmental garden. Good examples of links with science were seen in a display of musical instruments linking with sound and vibration. There is a good range of resources. In the Year 4/5 lesson seen, the pupils were very enthusiastic and keen to develop their skills of observational drawing using a variety of pens to recreate the complex design of a bicycle.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

- 79 No lessons were observed during the inspection therefore it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education. The school follows a published scheme for the teaching of personal, social and health education. However, no evidence of pupils' work on this was available at the time of the inspection. During discussions Year 6 pupils indicated that very little personal, social and health education had been covered in that year. However, they were anticipating an out-of-school visit to learn about safety for life.

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	4
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	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
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	4
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	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
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).

