

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whittlesey, Peterborough

LEA area: Cambridge

Unique reference number: 110647

Headteacher: Mr R High

Lead inspector: Mr F Carruthers

Dates of inspection: 1-3 March 2004

Inspection number: 257002

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:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	124
School address:	New Road Whittlesey
Postcode:	PE7 1SZ
Telephone number:	01733 204422
Fax number:	01733 350847
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Collis
Date of previous inspection:	9 March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This smaller than average primary school has 124 pupils aged four to 11. Year groups vary in size and overall there are more girls than boys on roll. Since the time of the last inspection, numbers have fallen by about 25 per cent. Apart from the Reception class, all classes have two age groups in them. The social and economic circumstances of families are broadly average but pupil mobility¹ is slightly above the average for primary schools nationally. Almost all pupils are white British, very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds and only a small number has English as an additional language. Their home language is Panjabi. There is a small number of Traveller families. However, these have been static for several years and the children have remained at the school throughout most of their education. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (about 25 per cent of the roll) is slightly above the average of primary schools nationally. Their needs are mainly for moderate learning difficulties, and a small number has physical or medical difficulties, speech and language difficulties or emotional difficulties. The attainment of the children on entry to the Reception class varies each year. Some years there are more children with learning difficulties than others. The attainment of the current intake of children is broadly average for their age. Almost all have attended the pre-school class which is on the same site as the school.

¹ Mobility refers to the proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at times other than at the start of the Reception year or the end of Year 6.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21285	Mr F Carruthers	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
12277	Mr K Halden	Lay inspector	
29426	Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	English Science Geography History Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

PBM, Brookbridge and Bedford Ltd
13A Market Place
Uttoxeter
Staffs
ST14 8HY

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Pupils achieve best in mathematics and standards are above average in the current Year 6. Pupils' achievement in English and science, compared to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2, is good but standards are slightly below average. The quality of education is good. Leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is high compared with primary schools nationally but more in line with smaller schools. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Strong teaching of mathematics leads to pupils achieving well in the subject.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- Improvements in provision in information and communication technology have led to pupils achieving well.
- Improvements in the teaching of English have led to rising standards in writing, which need to be consolidated by strategies such as improved target-setting for pupils.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well.
- Teaching is good in all classes.
- Links with parents have weaknesses and should be strengthened.

The school has made good progress in addressing key issues arising from the last inspection. Standards in reading and writing in infant classes have improved well, as have standards and provision in information and communication technology. The school has developed a much clearer picture of how pupils are achieving through improved procedures to assess their progress and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Provision in design and technology has improved. In addition, good standards in mathematics throughout the school have been maintained and provision has also improved in the Foundation Stage². Overall, the trend in results at the end of Year 6 in the last five years has been below the national upward trend, though results are significantly affected by variations in the size and nature of different year groups.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Overall, pupils achieve well, though results, as illustrated in the table above, fluctuate. For instance, there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the class of 2002 and this factor contributed to the school's results being well below average in English and mathematics, and in the lowest five per cent of schools in science. Pupils often make very good progress in mathematics when compared to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2. Pupils' progress is good in English, though this has been the case only recently. Pupils have begun to reach good standards of writing, which is evident, for example, in results at the end of Year 2 last summer. Results in tests at the end of Year 2 have risen well in the last five years, though they too are influenced by the nature and size of year groups. For example, standards are below average in

² The Foundation Stage in this school is the Reception class.

reading, writing and mathematics in the current Year 2, because of a large minority of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good.** Pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well. Levels of attendance are just below the average for schools nationally but, with almost no unauthorised absence, are satisfactory overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school, including teaching and learning, is good.

Teaching is good in all classes. Strong features include the level of challenge in the work so that it is appropriate to the pupils' needs and pushes them on well, and good use of support staff to help the learning of pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are good. Pupils are well cared for and are given good support and advice for their personal and academic needs. Whereas links with the local community, the community college and the pre-school group are good and contribute well to the pupils' learning and preparation for the future, links with parents have shortcomings.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. Strengths include the leadership of the curriculum by the headteacher and key staff, and the recent developments in evaluating how well the school is performing. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements and, ably led by the chair, is gaining a good awareness of the school's strengths and points to improve. Strategic and financial planning are good but action to address the falling pupil roll has had limited impact so far.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Evidence arising from the inspectors' questionnaires indicates that parents have very mixed views of the school. Whereas the majority of parents praise the staff for their work and like the qualities that come with a small school, a large minority (approximately 25 per cent of parents) express concerns. They do not feel that communication with them is effective enough, they say they do not know how well their children are doing and some feel that not enough is done to deal with incidents of unsatisfactory pupil behaviour. Some do not feel that they are listened to enough and say that they are not consulted well enough over important developments such as pupil groupings in the mixed aged classes. Pupils express satisfaction with the school and the great majority enjoy what it offers. Many say they would like more things to do at play and lunch times.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Maintain the current drive to raise standards in English, for example through developing further the setting of targets for pupils to achieve.
- Strengthen links with parents, especially how well the school communicates with them and takes their views into account.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, and subjects

Overall, pupils achieve well. Standards are just below average in English and above average in mathematics at the end of Year 6. Children make good progress in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve best in mathematics and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Last year, standards were well above average.
- There have been good improvements in standards of writing in recent years, which now need to be consolidated.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- Standards have improved in information and communication technology since the last inspection and are now average by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

1. Pupils in Year 6 have been reaching above average standards in mathematics since the time of the last inspection, except in 2002, when there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and test results were much lower. This dip in results is evident in the table below and affected results in English and science as well as mathematics. The good trend in results in mathematics arises from the strength in depth in the quality of teaching and learning of the subject. Comparing the pupils' performance over the junior years indicates that pupils often make very good progress in this subject and this is evident in the educational value added measures that can be calculated.
2. Standards in English have shown good improvement in recent times because of a concerted effort by staff to improve standards in writing. Although standards in the current Year 6 are below average, when these pupils were in Year 2 they were well below average. Individual pupils are working at high levels and the pupils, generally, are likely to achieve or even exceed their targets. They are working well up to their capacity, so their achievement is good. The actions to improve writing are bearing fruit and a sample of pupils' work in Year 6 indicates that handwriting and spelling are developing well. Pupils are becoming better at writing for different audiences and purposes, such as persuasive pieces, descriptions or for information. This improvement now needs to be consolidated through better target setting for individuals and groups of pupils, assessment and marking. Standards in reading are average, and in speaking and listening are above average in Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (23.8)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.7 (23.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.0 (24.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. All pupils make good progress over time and this includes those with special educational needs and the very few who have English as an additional language. Through good support

from teachers and classroom assistants, pupils achieve well. Groups of pupils have additional sessions with support staff in aspects such as reading, writing and mathematics. These regular sessions are taught well and contribute towards the targets in the pupils' individual education plans. Newly arrived pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive initial support from specialists from the local education authority, and their progress is monitored at intervals thereafter. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their classmates and are challenged well by the quality of teaching. Pupil mobility is not a significant factor in the progress that pupils make even though the rate is slightly above the average of most primary schools.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.5 (16.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.5 (15.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.1 (16.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Children get off to a good start in the well-resourced provision in the Reception class. Attainment on entry varies year by year. For example, the current Year 1 has a significant number of higher attaining pupils compared with the range of attainment evident in the current Reception class. Children achieve well in all areas of learning because of good teaching, which is well planned and involves the good contribution of all adults. By the end of the Reception year, the children are achieving the goals expected of them in all areas of learning and a good number are achieving beyond them. Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. The relatively small numbers of pupils in the different age groups mean that results vary significantly from year to year. For instance, Year 2 in 2003 consisted of only 11 pupils, all of whom were girls. These pupils did particularly well in writing, which was the result of concerted action taken by the staff to raise standards. About one third of the present pupils in Year 2 have special educational needs and although standards are below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, pupils do well in relation to their attainment at the end of the Reception year. Some pupils in Year 2 are working at high levels.

5. Standards in information and communication technology have improved since the last inspection and, through better access to computers in classrooms, pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. It is frequently good among the older age groups. There is good quality specialist teaching of particular aspects, such as control technology and multi-media presentations, sometimes by external providers. Standards in religious education at the end of Year 2 are above average and this is the result of good teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

In general, pupils have good attitudes to school and education. They behave well and their sense of values deriving from their social, spiritual and moral development is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes of pupils to school are consistently good, leading to good levels of learning.
- Behaviour is good throughout the school. Teachers demand good behaviour of the pupils, who respond appropriately.
- There is good provision for social, moral and spiritual education so that character and personality are developing into maturity.

Commentary

6. Pupils' attitudes to learning are generally good. They like to be in school, not only because they are taught well but also because they meet their friends there and get on well with their teachers. They are keen to learn and ready to be challenged. There is normally intense competition to answer the teachers' questions. Enthusiasm for assignments and the ability to complete tasks are noticeable features. Pupils work both collaboratively and independently. As a result, pupils' application and productivity are good.
7. Behaviour is good although a few incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour were observed. The school's policy for managing pupils' behaviour, which is currently being reviewed, is effective and highlights the importance of good behaviour for effective learning. Some parents have expressed concern about bullying in the school but the evidence from the inspection showed that this is adequately managed and that it is not a problem in the school. Two cases of short exclusion involving one pupil were recorded in the past year.

Exclusions

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	109	2	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	5	0	0

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

8. Relationships among all members of the school are good. The school has a strong family atmosphere. Personal development and the moulding of character are part of the aims of the programme for personal, social and health education which highlights behaviour, mutual respect and good social interaction. Racial issues are also given due prominence and are dealt with effectively. Pupils are proud to be given tasks like taking the class register and the dinner money to the school office.
9. Attendance is at a rate which is just below the national figure but is satisfactory overall. There is very little unauthorised absence. There is some lateness but this is confined mostly to one or two classes. The punctuality rate is satisfactory. The school is mindful of the fact that there has not been a sustained trend towards good attendance since the last inspection and that the rate has not been in line with the national rate. One explanation given for this is that attitudes among some families tend to elevate other priorities such as holidays and family celebrations over education. Help is received from the education welfare officer towards efforts to raise the attendance rate and the school is about to introduce a special project which will provide a worker whose tasks include helping families to recognise the priority of education and, consequently, achieve a good attendance rate.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.2	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education, including teaching and learning, is good. The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory. There is good provision for the care and welfare of pupils. Links with parents have significant weaknesses.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and ensure that pupils mostly achieve well. Assessment procedures are good in literacy and very good in numeracy but not so well developed in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lesson planning is good in the Reception class and teachers make good use of the national strategies for planning the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
- Good class management throughout the school leads to positive attitudes among the pupils and a good use of time.
- Individual targets for pupils are not yet fully developed.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1	20	7	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.

- Lesson planning for children in the Reception class is good and offers a wide range of learning opportunities in line with national guidance. Teachers make full use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to plan their lessons, frequently planning activities for different ability groups of pupils within their classes. Teachers generally are confident with the teaching of mathematics and exhibit good levels of knowledge and understanding with the result that, by the time they are in Year 6, pupils have made very good progress and reach standards which are above average. The teaching of literacy skills is effectively promoted across the curriculum, particularly in religious education and history lessons and pupils have the opportunity to write in a variety of forms. Computers are used satisfactorily to support learning across the curriculum, though there are missed opportunities to include them in some lessons. Teachers' confidence is not so high in some other subjects and, for example, their planning is heavily dependent on a commercial scheme for the teaching of science. Teachers support their planning with good preparation for lessons. Using the school's improved resources, they are able to bring relevance to lessons and make good use of time. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, have good quality aerial photographs of the local environment to stimulate art work.

11. Each class contains more than one age group and so teachers have to be particularly well organised to meet the full range of pupils' needs. Good class management and organisation are features of teaching at the school. Teachers adopt a firm but pleasant manner and pupils respond with positive attitudes to their work. This particularly helps pupils' learning because teachers ensure that they pay attention and that when inattention does occur, pupils are gently returned to the task, often by the teacher asking them a question. A particularly good example occurred in a religious education lesson when young pupils were discussing the importance of making and keeping promises, and a pupil with special educational needs was skilfully included in the conversation by the teacher seeking his opinion.
12. Good management means that time for learning is maximised. Lessons start punctually, movement of pupils and distribution of materials during lessons are quick, efficient and purposeful. Sessions at the start of the day are used well to promote the learning of basics like mental mathematics, spelling and handwriting. Discussion forms a part of most lessons and again the positive quality of the relationships between pupils and teachers gives pupils the confidence to take part. Pupils' answers and learning are frequently extended by teachers' skilful use of questioning. The good quality of relationships is particularly helpful for the confidence of pupils with special educational needs and because of this, they achieve well in relation to their prior levels of learning.
13. Teaching assistants also have an important influence on pupils' learning of how to use computers, when they teach skills to small groups. Teaching assistants are not always so well used in whole-class sessions, however. In one otherwise good music lesson for children in the Reception class, the teaching assistant had very little to do. As well as having high expectations of behaviour, teachers often strive for equally high quality in learning, so, for example, it was pointed out to Year 2 pupils, writing lists of instructions, that it is not necessary to start an instruction with 'firstly' when the instructions are numbered. In their desire to engage pupils fully, teachers sometimes adopt a rather free ranging approach to lesson content, attempting too much and not focusing sufficiently on the learning objectives of the lesson. In a lesson for older pupils, the teacher took pupils through two texts where one, studied in more depth, would have concentrated pupils' attention. The teacher pointed out the use of adverbs in a passage but made no further reference to these in connection with the pupils' own writing.
14. Assessment arrangements in literacy are good and in numeracy they are very good, especially in junior classes. Pupils' progress is carefully recorded and, by analysis of pupils' responses to test material in numeracy, and regular, unaided, writing assignments, areas of weakness in learning are highlighted and used in the planning of future lessons. Teachers are not yet making full use of this information, however, to set precise targets for the learning of individual pupils. Arrangements for assessing progress in other subjects are not yet so thorough and this is an area for development. One area of assessment not as strong as others is the marking of pupils' work. Work is mostly marked, although this is occasionally perfunctory with a tick or initials. Teachers offer encouragement to pupils but there are relatively few examples of them telling pupils how they might improve or extend their learning.

The curriculum

The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory. Extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum well. The overall accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is enriched with a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils' personal development is promoted effectively through lessons in personal, social and health education.
- Support staff contribute well to a variety of school experiences.

- The range of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum is limited.

Commentary

15. The curriculum is satisfactory, meets statutory requirements, and in some respects has improved since the last inspection. There have been improvements in the provision for both information and communication technology and design and technology and this has led to an improvement in pupils' standards, particularly in information and communication technology.
16. The school has been particularly thorough in its implementation of the national strategies for numeracy and literacy. This has had a positive impact on standards in mathematics, which are above average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has not had such an immediate beneficial effect but pupils achieve well and the school's considerable recent emphasis on improving pupils' writing skills, both in English lessons and in subjects across the curriculum, is beginning to bear fruit.
17. The school has adopted a mixture of commercial schemes and programmes inspired by the local education authority to cover other subjects, including religious education. These are useful in bolstering teachers' confidence and ensuring that the pupils' skills are developed systematically and that there is a full coverage of subjects. To help ensure this full coverage in the different subjects, in mixed age classes, the school has adopted a two-year rolling programme in the infant classes and a four-year programme in the junior classes. Pupil numbers mean that it has been necessary to divide Year 2 pupils between infant and junior classes but the school has given considerable thought to this process and has done it to the benefit of the achievement of virtually all pupils involved.
18. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well planned and ensures that pupils make good progress towards achieving their targets in their individual educational plans. These are detailed and thorough and contain clear and achievable targets for progress. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to meet pupils' needs. The expertise of outside agencies is used very well.
19. Considering the small size of the school, it provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. Because they are open to a wider age range of pupils than is usual, they attract good numbers. Opportunities for sport are good, particularly in dance and swimming. The good number of football teams which represent the school in games with other schools means that a large proportion of pupils have the opportunity to develop their skills in competitive situations. Clubs are open to both boys and girls. The range of educational visits and visits from outside speakers and agencies, which would enrich and extend the curriculum, particularly in the humanities and the arts, is rather limited and this is an area for development.
20. The promotion of pupils' personal development is a strong feature of the curriculum. Personal, social and health education is fully timetabled and the detailed programme of work helps to ensure full coverage. Young pupils have the opportunity to devise their own rules for their classroom and consider aspects such as wedding customs in various cultures. Older pupils consider how having certain rights also involves taking on duties. The school has suitable sex education and drug use policies and matters are handled sensitively and appropriately. Pupils have ample opportunities to work alone as well as in small groups. Adults provide good role models and relationships are constructive and caring so that pupils gain in confidence.
21. Teaching assistants play an important part in reducing the workload of teachers and contribute significantly to pupils' learning. In some cases assistants are taking a direct responsibility for teaching parts of the curriculum, for example, in work with computers.
22. The accommodation supports the curriculum generally well. The large classrooms are suitable for a variety of teaching styles and there is ample space for practical activities. The large, attractive school field allows for a full range of physical activities and has facilities such as a

long jump pit, not found in many primary schools. The lack of a computer suite means that skills can only be taught to small groups of pupils at any one time and this tends to slow progress. The library is awkwardly situated in a corridor and does not help to promote library skills.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. Support, guidance and advice for educational development are also good while the procedures and practices used for consulting with pupils and informing itself of their views are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good procedures for child protection. Care and welfare standards and practices are good.
- Relationships among staff and pupils are good and teachers have high expectations so that pupils feel a sense of security and confidence. This enhances their learning and performance.
- The school makes good ancillary support available to pupils through support staff.

Commentary

23. The school makes good efforts to offer its pupils a safe, healthy and supportive environment. The headteacher is responsible for child protection arrangements and he, in turn, ensures that all staff are up-to-date in their knowledge of the appropriate procedures. There are regular consultations with social workers. The school makes good provision for medical emergencies through its first aid facilities. There is a medical room and several staff are suitably qualified in first aid.
24. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. The school is aware of its responsibilities to ensure that all pupils have the best possible opportunities in school and is successful in meeting them. There are a few minority ethnic groups in the school and they are well integrated into the life of the school. This is confirmed by parents. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
25. Pupils are involved in the consultation process only to a small extent at present. There are occasional questionnaires by which their views are invited on matters related to their school life and education, but at the time of the inspection the establishment of a school council was only due for early implementation.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Overall, links with parents are unsatisfactory, although written communications with parents are generally good. Links with the community and inter-school contacts and relations are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with parents have important shortcomings as have the school's efforts in seeking the views of parents.
- Written communications with parents are good.
- There are good inter-school relations and links with the local community.

Commentary

26. Evidence from the inspection shows that there is a significant discrepancy between what senior staff and governors think about parents' satisfaction with the school and their concerns, and what the parents actually think and feel. This was established from the pre-inspection

questionnaires completed by parents and from informal discussions with parents on the school grounds. While the majority of parents are highly satisfied with the school, evident for example in those who attended the parents' meeting, there is a large minority who take a totally different view. Concerns revolve mainly around communication with parents over such things as why changes occur in staffing, the grouping of pupils and incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour in school. The school has not taken sufficient steps to inform itself of these views and to then take remedial action.

27. Inspectors find the written communications to parents about the school's programmes and activities, and reports on their children's progress are good. Monthly newsletters are sent out and these are supplemented as necessary by special information letters. The governing body's annual report meets requirements and the annual reports showing pupils' academic performance, including their achievements and targets, are satisfactorily presented.
28. There are good links with local schools, as there are with the community. Local clergy support the celebrating of religious festivals and assemblies and pupils participate a lot in various festivals and charities both national and local. The arrangements made by the school for the transfer of pupils to secondary education meet parental expectations and are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the curriculum by the headteacher and staff are good.
- The work of the governing body meets statutory requirements and is well led by the chair of governors.
- The school's leaders are committed to including all pupils in what the school offers and take effective action to promote opportunities for all.
- Good quality training in self-evaluation is helping key staff to identify areas for improvement and to take action.
- Insufficient attention has been given to strategies to reverse the declining numbers on roll.

Commentary

29. The school's leadership, management and governance are satisfactory overall and senior staff have made good progress in addressing key issues arising from the last inspection. The school has developed a much clearer picture of how pupils are achieving through improved procedures to assess progress and to monitor the quality of teaching. Standards in reading and writing in infant classes have improved well, as have standards and provision in information and communication technology. Provision in design and technology has improved. In addition, good standards in mathematics throughout the school have been maintained and provision has also improved in the Foundation Stage. Strategic planning for the development of the school has been effective in key aspects of provision, such as improving teaching and learning, but has not been as effective in halting the declining pupil roll in recent years. The support of all parents must be won if the decline is to be halted and reversed.
30. Leadership and management of the curriculum are good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key staff have a clear overview of how provision is developing in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology in particular. Through good in-service training and advice from consultants of the local education authority, developments have continued despite changes of staff and their responsibilities. Procedures to improve the performance of teachers fit well into the school-wide focus on standards and provision. Staff have been conscientious in effecting developments and assisting support staff to undertake training in how to teach initiatives such as *The Early Literacy Strategy* and

Springboard Maths. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has similarly improved. An important element in the thinking of staff is how opportunities can be provided for all pupils, including those with specific need, to take a full part in the life of the school. For instance, by considering very carefully the needs of pupils, senior managers have made the most effective arrangements to provide appropriately challenging lessons for pupils in the mixed aged classes.

31. More recently, senior staff have also begun to improve their strategic vision of the school through good quality training in school self-evaluation. This training, ongoing at the time of the inspection, is helping key leaders to evaluate how well the school is doing and where improvements are needed. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning, for example, is improving through much better information on pupil progress, so that teachers can track how well the pupils are doing and provide challenging work for them. Staff analyse the information for details of the standards achieved and of trends over time in readily accessible forms. This is proving to be valuable information. The next step is to develop the pupils' own awareness of what they need to do to improve, by devising short-term targets in specific aspects of English and mathematics.
32. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. It is well led by the chair of governors who has been in post since the beginning of the school year. He is developing his strategic awareness of the school's situation well and there are good initiatives in place to make links with subject leaders so that governors become more familiar with the provision. Governors are setting up a register of visits to school and report back to the governing body on findings. The structure of committees is clear and staff are invited to address the governors on their areas of responsibility. Opportunities for governor training are good and recent sessions on school self-evaluation are having a positive impact.

Financial information

33. The expertise of senior staff and governors to monitor the performance of the school through comparing information about standards with those in other schools has improved in recent times and is now good. Governors have been heavily involved in managing successfully a budget which has been reducing mainly because of the falling roll. They have made detailed comparisons between services, for example in relation to buildings and grounds maintenance, and sought best value by consulting widely and seeking alternative suppliers. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is high compared with primary schools nationally but is more in line with the average of smaller schools. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	382,605	Balance from previous year	29,600
Total expenditure	405,689	Balance carried forward to the next	6,516
Expenditure per pupil	3,271		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is **good**. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- The Foundation Stage co-ordinator manages the provision well.
- Teamwork among staff is very good.
- Children with special educational needs achieve well because of the very good support of adults.
- The accommodation is very spacious and used well.
- Links with the pre-school class are good.

Commentary

34. The children join the Reception class at the start of the school year in which they are five and settle into the routines of school quickly. This is because there are good opportunities when they are in the pre-school class, which is on the school site, to visit the Reception class and meet the Foundation Stage staff. The attainment of the children on entry to school varies year by year. In some years, numbers are small and the range of attainment is narrow; in others, such as the current year group, which has 25 children on roll, there is a wide spread of ability. A few children have identifiable special educational needs and some are above average. Overall, the attainment of the current intake of children is at about the level expected of four year-olds. Their attainment in personal, social and emotional development is above average because of the good social experiences they have had in the pre-school class.
35. The children make good progress in all areas of learning. This is because provision in the Reception class is good. It is well managed by the teacher, who is the Foundation Stage co-ordinator, and there is strong support from other adults working in the class who assist with the teaching of groups of children and the few with special educational needs. The children's progress is regularly checked and records kept diligently. The accommodation both internally and externally is very spacious and well resourced. Staff make very good use of all its facilities.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress. They develop self-confidence and independence as they enjoy the activities available to them.
- Through good teaching, the children feel secure and relate well to one another and to adults.
- Snack time could be used better to promote independence.

Commentary

36. Staff cater well for the needs of the children and give them confidence to have a go at all the various activities on offer. The children learn how to manage dressing themselves and seeing to their personal hygiene. When they are outside they are confident playing on apparatus or wheeled toys. Most share the equipment well and staff are vigilant to prevent any selfishness from getting out of hand. The quality of teaching is good and staff make good use of other

areas of learning to promote awareness of how people feel and how they should behave towards them. Current routines at snack time, however, which involve the children sitting at tables and being served by adults, limit the opportunities for independence. Nonetheless, children make good progress in this area of development and at the time of the inspection, almost all children were achieving the goals expected of children by the end of the Reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are confident and enjoy talking with adults.
- Good opportunities for children to enjoy books and learn about words mean the children are positive about reading.
- Children develop skills of writing well, as they play in the *café* and writing corner.

Commentary

37. A noticeable feature of the children is their confidence answering questions and talking about their experiences, for example when they were discussing with the teacher what it is like to feel lost. They soon became relaxed with the visiting inspector, asking questions and wanting to share a book. The quality of teaching is good and the children learn well. Through effective teaching of short sessions that follow the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy, the children have a growing awareness of letter sounds and recognise common words in the texts of their *Big Books*. Each day there are good opportunities to look at books in the *Reading corner* or when they come into class after lunch. Groups of children regularly read with the teacher and there is class story time. Good use is made of computer programs to consolidate the focus activity on words and letter sounds. Much encouragement is given to the children to write. A sample of their written work shows that most have developed the confidence to write their own short sentences using words they attempt to spell as they sound. In the *café* they take orders for meals. As a result, children make good progress and most are on target to achieve the goals expected of them. Some are working at higher levels.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are made aware of numbers through using good quality resources, including computer programs.
- They listen to and learn songs and rhymes to consolidate their understanding.
- Teaching is well planned and includes whole-class sessions that focus well on skills such as counting on and back.

Commentary

38. The quality of teaching is good and provides a variety of experiences for the children so that they increase their familiarity with numbers, counting and sorting. Whole-class sessions and group activities with the teacher make use of floor tiles and large numbers so that the children jump, hop and walk as they count forward and backward. The children use good quality computer resources to practise counting and taking away. They enjoy these interactive programs with pictures and sound. Recognising numbers around them is a further important part of the teaching, and includes reference to time and dates. Singing songs and rhymes at

the start and end of sessions is also a regular feature of the provision. At the time of the inspection, above average and average children were recognising numbers to at least 15, adding one or two more to a given number correctly and learning the value of coins. They have experienced measuring volume using cups in the water tray, and seeing the symmetry in objects. Most are well on the way to achieving the expected goals in this area of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children widen their experiences through many opportunities both in the classroom and outside.
- Teaching focuses well on scientific, geographical and historical understanding as well as the customs and beliefs of people.
- Children are confident operating equipment such as computers.

Commentary

39. The children's attainment on entry to the Reception class is most limited in this area of learning. They make good progress through good teaching. Topics are explored through many parts of the provision and this helps to develop the children's awareness. For example, the children were finding out about living things through well-chosen traditional stories, such as *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and others such as *Jasper's Beanstalk*. They planted beans to watch their growth and were provided with the implements that Jasper uses so that they can re-enact the story in their outdoor play. They built a large castle from construction kits in the water trough and the staff selected appropriate figures and models for the sand tray, so that the children could make up a giant's garden. Other topics focus on religious beliefs and festivals such as Pancake Day and the Hindu festival of Holi. Regular opportunities to use large building equipment outside and computers and listening centres inside promote the children's learning well and most children are on course to achieve the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many opportunities to use equipment outside and in the school hall mean the children make good progress in this area of learning.
- Levels of resourcing are good and the children use small tools and equipment with confidence.

Commentary

40. The outdoor areas are a strength of the provision with a wealth of opportunities for the children to run, jump, push and pull large wheeled toys, to build and climb on blocks and apparatus. Planning for what the children do outside is good and includes playing on apparatus, with wheeled toys, bats and balls, as well as dressing up and quieter activities such as reading and playing in the comfort of a tent, painting at the easel, playing in the water tray or sitting at tables. Because the areas are secure and very accessible, staff make full use of them throughout the year and in the summer spend many days out of doors, so that the area becomes an outdoor classroom. On the tricycles and toy cars, the children show a good awareness of space and the needs of others. They move confidently and with increasing control over their bodies. They enjoy using simple equipment to make patterns and designs as

they play with *play dough*. Most children achieve very well in this area of learning and standards are above average by the end of the year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children play imaginatively in the role-play area.
- They enjoy music lessons in the music room.
- They paint, colour and make designs well.

Commentary

41. Children play in the role-play area for good lengths of time, assisting one another and taking various roles. Teaching is good and support staff often join the children in the area to develop the play and this provides them with good encouragement. The children respond to music well as they listen to extracts of classical music and try to imagine what they might represent. They enjoy singing simple songs that they are taught. Each week there are opportunities for the children to explore paint, mix colours and use simple printing techniques. They use chalks and pastels in their pictures. They construct houses and make a record of them by photographing them with a digital camera. Progress in this area of learning is good and a number of children display good form and shape in their drawings and paintings. Most children are on course to achieve the expected goals in this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Achievement is good, however, particularly in writing.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Assessment procedures are generally good.
- Insufficient use is made of computers to support learning.

Commentary

42. In national tests in 2003, the standards of pupils in Year 2 were average for reading and well above average for writing. Standards in English, for pupils in Year 6 were average. Observations indicate that standards are lower for pupils in the current Years 2 and 6 and are likely to be just below average in both cases. Although there appears to show a fall in standards, the results do not tell the whole story, and pupils generally achieve well. The relatively small numbers of pupils tested can mean that national comparisons are unreliable. Year 2 in 2003 consisted of only 11 pupils, all of whom were girls. About one third of pupils in the current Year 2 have special educational needs and although standards are below average, pupils do well in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Some pupils in Year 2 are working at high levels. Although the standards of pupils in Year 6 are below average, when these pupils were in Year 2 they were well below average. Individual pupils are working at high levels and the pupils, generally, are likely to achieve or even exceed their targets and they are working well up to their capacity, so their achievement is good.
43. The school has embraced the National Literacy Strategy wholeheartedly. This has had the advantage of helping to ensure a consistent approach to the teaching of English throughout the school, that there is a full coverage of the subject and that pupils' skills are developed systematically. Progress in skills of speaking and listening is good and attainment by Year 6 is above average. Attainment in reading in Year 6 is average overall and there is a good proportion of higher attainers who read fluently and can readily find information from books. The minority of lower attaining pupils are not far short of the expected standard in the current class of pupils. The school has put considerable emphasis in recent times on improving standards of writing, both in English lessons and subjects across the curriculum, and the achievement of pupils is generally good. This includes pupils with special educational needs who benefit from a good level of support in the shape of tuition in small groups withdrawn from lessons or individual help in class lessons from skilful and generally well briefed teaching assistants. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are monitored well on entry to school and also make good progress in small group sessions with teachers and teaching assistants. All pupils benefit from appropriately timed sessions at the beginning of the day which highlight handwriting and spelling. Skills are taught in a carefully structured way with the result that by the time they are in Year 6, pupils spell most regular words correctly and employ an even, joined script. Many pupils in Year 6 write in paragraphs although few establish any links between paragraphs. Lower attaining pupils are still not consistently using capital letters at the start of sentences or for proper nouns.
44. The school has developed good procedures for obtaining information about how well pupils are doing in this subject but there are some weaknesses in how the information is used to help pupils make progress. The assessment of reading is thorough and results are used to ensure that pupils are allocated suitable books from the school's reading scheme. Recently introduced procedures to assess writing are developing well. However, pupils' responses to assessments are not, as yet, analysed so that areas of weakness in learning can be identified. The school is

not therefore in the best position to pinpoint clearly reasons why, for example, there are different rates of progress for girls and boys. It also means that the process of setting learning targets for pupils is not as precise as it might be. One aspect of assessment not so obviously consistent as others is the marking of pupils' work. Some work is merely initialled. There are some examples of encouragement being offered but there are relatively few examples of suggestions of how pupils might improve their work. Where these are offered, they are often in an abbreviated form for example, *punc at the end of speech*, which does not set a high example to pupils. Computers are not yet being fully used to allow pupils to draft their work and obvious opportunities are missed. In a class of pupils from Years 2 and 3, who were compiling lists of instructions and using devices such as bullet points, the computers, although switched on, remained unused.

45. Teaching is good overall. Good class management means that teachers are confident in allowing pupils ample opportunities to discuss matters and voice their opinions. Teachers support this by questioning well, challenging and extending the learning of their pupils, with the result that standards in speaking and listening are higher than in other aspects of literacy. Using the National Literacy Strategy as their basis, teachers plan their work thoroughly, often providing activities for pupils of different abilities which helps the learning of all pupils. Learning objectives are often shared with the class so pupils have a clear idea of what they are trying to achieve. At times, the focus of the lesson is not sufficiently precise so that, for example in an otherwise good lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5, a group of pupils were left to find similes in the poem *The Highwayman* but were not sufficiently prepared for the task and so struggled. Teaching assistants are generally well briefed and are a significant help to the learning of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, in the group and independent work sessions during lessons. They are not always so purposefully employed during whole-class sessions. Work is almost entirely completed on separate sheets rather than in exercise books. These sheets are usually appropriate and sometimes designed to give pupils different degrees of assistance. Because many are undated, it is difficult to assess the progress of individual pupils and the use of sheets of paper occasionally leads to modest standards of presentation.
46. The leadership and management of English have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The subject leader has a good overview of standards because she is able to monitor teaching and learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply and develop their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing in other subjects apart from English. Discussion is a feature of most lessons and pupils, encouraged by skilful questioning from their teachers, often show themselves to be confident and articulate. Religious education and history lessons, in particular, are used very effectively to develop and consolidate pupils' writing skills in a range of different forms. The use of computers to develop literacy skills is an area for further development.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of strength in depth in the teaching of the subject.
- Close analysis of how pupils perform in assessments and tests leads to effective teaching of aspects that pupils find difficult.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set challenging work.
- Subject leadership has been very effective for a number of years.
- The setting of termly targets for pupils would help the pupils to be more aware of what they need to achieve;

- Marking is very good in Years 1, 2 and 3 but less consistent in Years 4, 5 and 6.

Commentary

48. Since the time of the last inspection, standards that pupils attain by the end of Year 6 have been above average or well above average in most years. In 2002, there was a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and as a result, test results were much lower. Standards in the current year group are close to those seen in test results in 2003, which were well above the national average. When the pupils' current attainment is compared to the results that they achieved at the end of Year 2, it is clear that they have made very good progress. This is because there is a very good level of challenge in the work that pupils are asked to do. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average. There is a large group of higher attaining pupils who are achieving good standards but also a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs working at below the expected level.
49. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Above average and average attaining pupils in Year 1 understand large numbers up to 100 and are confidently calculating addition problems with totals up to 25. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 know simple multiplication facts, work with numbers above 100 and are beginning to solve problems involving money and measuring. Pupils in Year 3 are making very good progress when compared with their performance in last summer's tests. This is an example of progress accelerating because of the high expectations that staff have. Teachers set a challenging pace to the work and by Year 5 pupils are developing a good understanding of equivalence in fractions and the value of numbers and decimal numbers. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs receive good support by teaching assistants who take small groups for lessons of *Springboard Maths*. The very few pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as all pupils do over time. By Year 6 pupils are investigating coordinates in four quadrants, negative numbers and fractions of large numbers. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and several confirmed it to be one of their favourites. The great majority work well independently and in small groups.
50. The quality of teaching is good. It is strong across all age groups and because the work is pitched at a challenging standard in the mixed age classes, the pace of pupils' learning is consistently good. Pupils get through a good amount of work in lessons. Only occasionally does the pace of lessons dip and this is where teachers spend too long teaching the whole class instead of moving the pupils on to other activities. Teachers use time very effectively, for instance at registration periods, when pupils work on problems that suit the various levels of attainment in the class. Teaching assistants make a particularly useful contribution to group work.
51. Subject leadership is very good and has been for some time. By monitoring pupils' work, the subject leader with the support of a numeracy consultant has identified weaknesses and put on training for staff, including teaching assistants, to address them. Shortcomings in pupils' mental work have been identified and regular whole-class sessions of mental mathematics held. One aspect in which provision has improved in recent years is the detailed assessment of pupils' progress. Regular weekly or half-termly assessments help the teachers to check how much pupils have learned. However, there are no short-term targets for pupils, which would help them to focus on how they can improve. The subject leader acknowledges this as the next step. Marking of pupils' work is especially good in Years 1, 2 and 3 and this good practice should be extended to older classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. Staff plan to use mathematical skills of graphic representation satisfactorily in subjects such as science and there are good examples of pupils investigating census data in history. Pupils also use their knowledge of coordinates in work on maps.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average for pupils in Years 2 and 6.
- The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall.
- Procedures to assess pupils' progress are underdeveloped.

Commentary

53. The results of national tests in Year 6 in 2003 showed standards to be average, although the number of pupils working at higher levels was below average. The relatively low numbers of pupils in different year groups means that results tend to fluctuate and there is little evidence of a discernible trend in the school's results in recent years. There is, however, no significant difference between the scores of boys and girls. Observations indicate that the standards of pupils at present in Year 6 are likely to be just below average. The achievement of these pupils is satisfactory and some higher attaining pupils are working at high levels. They have, for example, a good knowledge and understanding of the properties of light. There still persist some misconceptions, such as the moon has no gravitational pull and that this is a reason for the lack of plant growth. The standards of pupils in Year 2 are below average but this is influenced by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. The achievement of these pupils is good, with some pupils working at high levels.
54. Higher attaining pupils understand how certain animals are adapted to their environments and have a good knowledge of the effects of exercise on the body. They are able to collect and collate information on the body, improving their mathematical skills by calculating the areas of parts of the body using standard units. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are disadvantaged, to a certain extent, by low literacy skills but make good progress in recording, moving from having to arrange prepared statements in a certain order to recording their own observations using their own simple sentences. They are helped in this by a good level of individual help from well-informed teaching assistants.
55. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. This has led to an improvement in pupils' attitudes, which are generally good, and there is no hint of the poor attitudes noted at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' confidence in the teaching of science is not always high and they tend to rely heavily on the commercial scheme, which forms the basis of the school's programme of work. This does have, however, the advantages of encouraging a standardised approach to the teaching of science throughout the school, that the coverage of the subject is good and that pupils' skills are systematically developed. Teachers tend to rely on the material in the programme for their planning, which means that they need to refer to it on occasions, sometimes hindering the pace and flow of the lesson, and teachers occasionally miss teaching points because the scheme assumes a certain level of teacher knowledge. For example, in a lesson for older pupils doing work on constructing and using a dichotomous key to classify creatures, pupils did not use a key but merely deduced the type of creature from the evidence available.
56. Lack of teacher confidence also leads to there being less emphasis on a practical, investigative approach to work. Older pupils do a lot of direct preparation for national tests by

working on specimen questions and examples from past papers. This is not necessarily a bad thing and often leads to pupils focusing on important areas of learning. It does not, however, help pupils to build learning through first-hand experience or develop scientific procedures through designing experiments, applying principles such as fair testing or using different ways of recording their observations. Opportunities to devise methods of recording results are also reduced because of the extensive use of worksheets. Work is generally completed on separate sheets, which are often undated. This makes it difficult to observe pupils' progress over time, as well as reduces the opportunity for pupils to present their work in a neat, organised manner.

57. When teacher confidence is good, they question well, challenging and extending pupils' learning. Teachers prepare for lessons well so that pupils have suitable materials to engage their interest. There are some examples of pupils using their computer skills to support learning in science. For example, pupils in Year 4 worked on a program on the identification of different bones in the body. However, the use of computers to help scientific learning is an area for development. The marking of pupils' work is often perfunctory and gives pupils few indications of how they might improve.
58. The leadership of science is underdeveloped and the subject leader has not been in position long enough to have had any impact on learning. Procedures to assess pupils' progress have not been fully developed. For example, pupils' responses to test material have not been analysed to discover areas of weakness in learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when provision was unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' expertise to teach the subject is much improved.
- Pupils have good, regular access to networked computer workstations in each classroom.
- Support staff make a good contribution to the teaching of skills.

Commentary

59. Provision has much improved since the time of the last inspection as a result of concerted action to address key weaknesses found then. As a result, the expertise of all staff has improved, including classroom assistants, and good quality resources are readily accessible to pupils in each classroom. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and frequently good, especially among the older age groups.
60. Attainment in the current Year 2 is just below average and this finding reflects the fact that there is an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the age group. Nevertheless, they have built well on the good start they received in the Foundation Stage and their achievement is at least satisfactory. Most pupils use the mouse carefully but their keyboard skills are slow. They can use simple word processing software to write sentences and are learning to change the size and type of font. They regularly use programs to consolidate their understanding of words, letters and sounds as well as number. The attainment of the majority of pupils in the current Year 6 is in line with expected levels. Most pupils are making good progress. Older pupils generally have good keyboard skills and use the mouse accurately. They experience the full range of activities, such as data handling and word processing. They have had specialist teaching in control technology. In this, the pupils devised a pelican crossing and traffic lights system. Pupils have corresponded by email with pupils in an Australian school. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were learning how to put together a presentation using *PowerPoint*. They were able, with help from the classroom assistant, to select features, such as moving pictures, text and sounds, to make combinations

appropriate to their requirements. Pupils in all classes have positive attitudes to computer technology and are keen to show what they can do.

61. Only one lesson that involved the teaching of specific skills was seen during the inspection. Nevertheless, computers were in use in a number of lessons. It was not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching in the infant classes, however. In junior classes, teaching is never less than satisfactory and has a number of good features. For instance, teachers and assistants encourage good attitudes to learning and plan to use the pupils' computer skills in their weekly planning. They expect pupils to behave well and to work independently without close supervision if necessary. As a result, pupils' learning in lessons is often good. They make effective use of both resources and the skills of support staff. This was especially evident in the Years 5 / 6 class when pupils were learning how to make their presentations.
62. The subject leader was absent at the time of the inspection. However, it is clear that she has been heavily involved in leading the important improvements since the last inspection, which have produced clear gains in pupils' learning. Resourcing has improved, though the lack of a full suite of computers results in time being spent teaching skills to pairs of pupils rather than whole classes simultaneously. Teachers record pupils' development on simple charts satisfactorily and keep individual pupils' work on floppy disks.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. This aspect of provision is satisfactory and is being developed. All staff plan to use available software to support work in most subjects. For instance, pupils were observed using the Internet to find out more about the human body in science and about famous people in history. Opportunities to use computers were sometimes missed, however, in lessons seen.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in **geography** or **history**. A scrutiny of samples of pupils' work in history indicates that a good amount of work is covered and standards are likely to be average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Work in history provides good support for learning in literacy. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2, for example, write detailed accounts of why they would or would not like to live in Sparta. The resourcing of geography, an area of weakness at the last inspection, has improved, including the provision of aerial photographs, used appropriately, for instance, by pupils in Year 4. Pupils have few opportunities to visit places of either historical or geographical interest so that they may gain first-hand experience and bring interest and relevance to their work.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of pupils in Year 2 are above average.
- Teaching overall is good.
- Work in religious education gives very good support to learning in literacy.
- Insufficient use is made of visits or visitors or computers to help learning.

Commentary

64. Standards in Year 2 are above average and some higher attaining pupils achieve high levels. This is the result of good teaching. Pupils have a good knowledge of the basics of Christianity, for example, ideas about creation. This is a theme which pupils in Year 4 contrast in science lessons, when they speak about evolution. They have a good knowledge of other religions such as Buddhism. They consider more abstract aspects such as change. Pupils in Year 6 achieve

standards which are average. Higher attaining pupils show good understanding of links between different religions, for example, The Eight Fold Path and the Ten Commandments. They have knowledge of topics such as reincarnation. However, few have a clear understanding of the teachings of Jesus and could not, for example, say what a parable is or give an example of one.

65. Teaching is good overall. Good management techniques enable teachers to give pupils ample opportunities to discuss a variety of topics in lessons. A firm but pleasant approach, involving plenty of praise and skilful questioning, challenges and encourages pupils to speak carefully and thoughtfully. A good example occurred in a lesson involving pupils in Years 1 and 2 speaking about Jesus as leader and teacher, and considering the importance of making and keeping promises. A particular feature of this lesson was the way that whenever pupils' attention wandered, momentarily, the teacher brought them back into the conversation by skilfully involving them in the discussion. Religious education is used very well to help develop pupils' writing skills. Pupils are given ample opportunities to write their own accounts. Teachers' marking of work is generally thorough and often offers encouragement but there are few examples of pupils being shown how they could improve their work. Some use is made of the local church as a resource but there are few visits to other places of interest, such as mosques and synagogues within easy reach, to give pupils first-hand experience and bring the subject to life. There are relatively few examples of computers being used for research into religious matters.
66. Subject leadership is underdeveloped. The subject leader has helped staff confidence and knowledge by preparing the medium term plans but she has not had the opportunity to support teachers by monitoring their work. Assessment in religious education is an area for development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These subjects were only sampled during the inspection. A limited number of lessons were observed in **art and design, music** and **physical education**. No overall judgement is possible on the quality of provision. Sampling pupils' work and teachers' plans indicates that the subjects meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to learn how to play musical instruments, including the recorder. There are good opportunities to take part in competitive sports and the school achieves well, especially in football. All pupils learn how to swim.

No lessons were observed in **design and technology**. From discussions with the subject leader, staff and pupils, as well as a scrutiny of pupils' work, it is clear that the school has made good improvement since the time of the last inspection, when the subject was judged to be unsatisfactory. The curriculum taught meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and its development was well managed by the previous post holder. Progress is continuing under the guidance of the new subject leader.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Only one lesson was seen and the teaching and learning were good. The school has a good programme of work and pupils cover a good range of topics in some depth. Pupils develop their literacy skills in discussion and written responses to some aspects. Older pupils consider quite sophisticated topics such as whether people's rights also involve duties on their parts. Younger pupils consider more personal matters, such as why children should attend school. The subject is supported well by outside agencies. The visit of the *Life Education Bus*, sponsored by the local education authority, stimulated much interest amongst pupils. Older pupils have visited the local fire station where they were presented with a range of problem solving scenarios.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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