

INSPECTION REPORT

NINE MILE RIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wokingham, Berkshire

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109814

Headteacher: Mrs CA Jones

Lead inspector: Ruth Frith

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 May 2004

Inspection number: 257026

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	313
School address:	430 Finchampstead Road Finchampstead Wokingham Berkshire
Postcode:	RG40 3RB
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Karen Morrison
Date of previous inspection:	21 September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Nine Mile Ride is a larger than average size community primary school which provides for boys and girls aged four to eleven years. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds but overall, the socio-economic status of families is very favourable and a lower than average percentage of pupils receives free school meals. When children join the school, overall they show levels of attainment which are above average but there is an increasing number of pupils with special educational needs and lower attainers. Currently, 36 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, two of whom have a statement of special educational needs. Most pupils are from White – British heritage with a few pupils coming from a narrow range of minority ethnic groups. There are four pupils from the traveller community. Eighteen pupils joined the school and nine left other than at the usual times during the last school year and in the 2002/3 Year 6 cohort, 80 per cent of pupils had been in the school from Year 1. Teacher mobility over the previous two years has been quite high. The school achieved Healthy Schools and Investors in People in 2002 in recognition of its work. The Artsmark Gold was applied for in January 2004 and the Activemark is being applied for.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2490	Ruth Frith	Lead inspector	Science Geography English as an additional language
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17288	Megan Warner	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs
23805	Margaret Lygoe	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Foundation Stage
24097	Grant Pedrick	Team inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Nine Mile Ride is a good school with very good features and a strong commitment to improve further. Staff create a happy and supportive environment where pupils become confident and enjoy learning. Teaching is good and results in pupils achieving well. The school runs very effectively and the parents have a great deal of confidence in what is provided for their children. Overall, the school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Over the last few years, pupils have continued to reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Although improving, standards in information and communication technology are not as high but remain satisfactory.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and pupils achieve well. The use of teaching assistants throughout, and specialist teachers in Years 3 to 6, is particularly effective.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and frequently achieve well.
- Overall, pupils receive a stimulating curriculum that maintains their interest but more opportunities are needed for them to use their skills to write at length in a variety of contexts.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are good and help them to maintain very good attendance.
- Pupils' personal qualities are developed well and this leads to good relationships and behaviour.
- Leadership by the headteacher and other senior staff is very good, as are the management and governance of the school.
- Links with parents are very good and they, in turn, support the school well.

The school has shown good improvement since the last inspection and successfully addressed all the main issues identified in the last report. Provision for the youngest children and for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly, thereby ensuring more effective learning. The quality of teaching and learning overall has also improved, mainly due to better planning and assessment and a greater focus on developing pupils' investigative skills.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A*	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	A	A*	A

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average*

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

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well due to the good quality teaching and interesting curriculum. Good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage ensures that by the time they enter Year 1 most are working at the levels expected nationally for children of that age in all areas of learning. Some children, particularly those who have attended school since September, exceed these. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well and currently, pupils in Year 2 are working at levels above those expected nationally for pupils of that age in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to achieve well and are currently working at well above average levels in English, mathematics, science and religious education. Standards are above average in design and technology and physical education and average in information and communication technology. Across the school, pupils reach well

above average standards in art and design due to the excellent provision. Some of the pupils' artwork is outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall due to the very effective support provided.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils enjoy school, are eager to take part in activities and have good attitudes to learning. Consequently, they behave well and attendance rates are above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school and the quality of teaching are good.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this well to encourage pupils to learn. Expectation and challenge are good, and frequently very good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Here, specialist teachers use their skills well to gain the interest of the pupils who, in turn, achieve well and frequently reach high standards. Teamwork is a key feature of the school as staff share their skills and expertise to ensure that all pupils receive good learning experiences and have their needs met well. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the pupils' learning and are key members of the school team. Activities for the youngest children have recently been developed well and overall the school provides a very good curriculum with very good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities and support for sport and the arts. Accommodation and resources are good with some particularly good developments for learning outside. Pupils are well cared for and supported. Their views are taken into account well so they become involved in school developments. Staff have very good links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance of the school are very good. The headteacher and governors share a clear vision of how the school should develop and are fully committed to running a school where all pupils' needs are met and where pupils are helped to achieve well, both academically and socially.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are very positive. They believe the school is well led and managed, teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard. Staff are accessible and the information provided is thought to be useful. Most pupils feel that they can approach a member of staff if they have a problem, that teachers encourage them to work hard and pupils are friendly and play well together.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- By the end of Year 6, bring standards in information and communication technology up to those in other subjects by continuing to implement the subject development plan.
- Develop more opportunities for pupils to write at length, particularly in Years 2 to 4.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well and by the time they leave school, their standards overall are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the 2003 national tests, pupils in Year 6 reached well above average standards in English and mathematics and very high standards in science.
- Throughout the school pupils generally achieve well.
- Pupils in the junior part of the school have achieved satisfactorily in information and communication technology (ICT) and their standards in Year 6 are average.
- Pupils with special educational needs generally achieve well because they receive very good support.
- Higher-attaining pupils achieve well because they are appropriately challenged.

Commentary

1. On entry to school, children's attainment is above average overall. This is because many have experienced good pre-school provision and are also well supported by their parents. Due to the good teaching overall and provision of a broad and interesting curriculum, most children achieve well and are likely reach the standards expected for their age nationally in all areas of learning by the time they start in Year 1. Some children are likely to attain standards above those expected, particularly the children who started school in September.
2. Attainment in the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 2 was average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with pupils in all schools. These results show a decline in overall standards from the previous year. When compared with schools with a similar number of pupils claiming free school meals, they attained below average standards in reading and mathematics and well below average standards in writing. Teacher assessment in science indicated a below average percentage of pupils attained the standard expected for their age with an average percentage achieving a higher level. These standards resulted in the trend of improvement over the last five years being below the national trend. However, results in 2003 were unusual and reflect that particular cohort when four pupils were new to the school, four had summer birthdays, three were from traveller families with their achievement being affected by absences and two had statements of special educational needs. This reflects the changing profile of pupils in the school. In the previous three years, pupils had attained above or well above average standards and pupils in the current Year 2 are expected to reach higher standards than in 2003.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.1 (17.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.7 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.8 (18.7)	16.3 (16.5)

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

3. Attainment in the 2003 national tests for pupils in Year 6 was well above average in English and mathematics and very high in science when compared with pupils in all schools. These results continued the high standards attained over several years and continued the school's

trend of improvement in line with the national trend. When compared with pupils who attained similarly in the Year 2 National Curriculum tests, pupils attained well above average standards in all three subjects. The science results were particularly impressive and placed the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally for their 2003 results. The school was successful in broadly meeting its targets for the percentage of pupils reaching the standard expected for their age in English and mathematics. Although there were no signs of underachievement in relation to gender differences during the inspection, in 2003, girls did better than boys in English, mathematics and science. Over the last three years, girls did better than boys in English and boys did better than girls in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.9 (30.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.4 (28.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.7 (30.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. Evidence from this inspection shows that the pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and those currently in Year 2 are working at above average levels in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 similarly achieve well and those currently in Year 6 are reaching well above average standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education. Their standards are above average in design and technology and physical education. Across the school, pupils achieve well in art and design and reach well above average standards. The excellent provision in art and design helps pupils to produce high quality work, some of which is outstanding. Pupils' attainment in Year 6 is broadly average in ICT because they have not benefited from the good facilities and recently improved provision throughout their time in school. Pupils generally achieve well because of the good quality teaching and the work in lessons which builds systematically on their prior learning.

5. Pupils of higher attainment are appropriately challenged and this helps them to achieve standards in line with their capabilities. Results of the 2003 national tests for Year 6 pupils showed that over half of the pupils achieved a level higher than that expected for their age in English and mathematics and over three-quarters in science. The school has identified those pupils who are gifted and talented and provision in class, in school clubs and in other schools helps to ensure that they are appropriately challenged. Pupils with special educational needs reach standards in line with the targets in their individual education plans and achieve well. This is because difficulties with learning are quickly identified and they receive effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. A few lower-attaining pupils in Year 3, who do not have special educational needs, sometimes do not achieve as well as they could. There are not enough pupils from specific minority ethnic groups to analyse any trend in their progress and attainment but school data and test results indicate that individual pupils have achieved well by the time they leave school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils have very good rates of attendance and their punctuality is good. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good moral and social values are promoted well in school.
- Teachers find many opportunities in lessons to develop pupils' spiritual awareness.
- Religious education lessons add considerably to pupils' cultural awareness.
- Not all assemblies inspire and engage pupils as much as they could.

Commentary

6. Children start school with very good attitudes and good behaviour. Their attitudes and behaviour remain good as they progress through the school. They are enthusiastic, keen to investigate and eager to offer an opinion, but sometimes need to be reminded to listen and to keep the level of noise down. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes because they are given very good support.
7. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to put their personal and social skills into practice. They regularly work in groups or pairs in lessons to come up with ideas or find solutions to a particular problem. They develop good skills in doing this. Opportunities such as school clubs and school council meetings take these skills one step further. The elected school councillors, for example, are now very good at listening to both sides of an argument and making their points clearly and at the right time.
8. The best led assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on the sort of personal qualities the school tries hard to promote. However, it is surprising to find in a school with such a good ethos, assemblies that are not always effective in promoting a sense of unity or a true sense of occasion. Pupils' spiritual awareness is very much more evident in lessons and in their written work. Teachers seize the opportunity to promote an insight into experiences that motivate. The older pupils have, for example, written some particularly moving accounts of places that hold a special meaning to them. A good selection of their imaginative work on the theme has been put on display for others to see and aspire to.
9. Pupils' knowledge of cultures and religions is good. Important festivals and traditions are celebrated. Work in religious education reflects the distinctive features of other world religions. When studying the Sikh Code of Conduct for example, pupils learned that religious beliefs are often based on the principles of good personal conduct. Educational visits, such as those made by the Year 1 classes to a Victorian school in Reading, are well chosen to allow pupils to get a real feel of their own and other cultures.
10. Pupils are very clear of the rules to follow should they feel unhappy or threatened in school. Exclusion is used cautiously and then only when it is in the best interests of the pupils involved. Two pupils are temporarily excluded under these terms. Bullying is rare, which owes much to the way pupils are encouraged to talk to adults and have their views taken seriously. Whilst a very small minority of parents felt the school was not dealing with bullying effectively, there is evidence to suggest their views were formed on past rather than present experiences.

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	301	2	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0

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

Attendance

11. As can be seen from the registers, and as shown in the table below, attendance levels are above the national average and there is very little unauthorised absence. Pupils arrive promptly and lessons start on time. The school monitors attendance carefully. Parents know that regular attendance and good punctuality play a very important role in helping their children adopt a responsible attitude to school and work.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.2
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 provided by the school is good. The curriculum is very good overall with very good opportunities for enrichment. Pupils are well cared for and their views are sought so that they contribute to the development of the school well. Links with parents, the community and other schools and colleges are very good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are good throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and supports pupils' good achievement.
- Teaching assistants support pupils well and help them to achieve.
- Arrangements for teaching higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are good so their needs are well met.
- Teachers assess pupils well and use this information to plan work that meets pupils' needs.

Commentary

12. Pupils make good progress throughout their time in school and achieve well. This is because of the good overall quality of teaching and provision of a very good curriculum. The table below gives an outline of the quality of lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers use the expertise of teaching assistants well in lessons and this enhances pupils' learning. A higher percentage of very good teaching was seen in the junior part of the school where specialist teaching is provided in workshops for most subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (6%)	13 (27%)	23 (47%)	9 (18%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in the percentage of lessons that were judged to be very good or better and in the reduction of lessons that were judged to be unsatisfactory. The headteacher has shown very good leadership in creating a team of staff with a shared sense of purpose and has helped them to improve their teaching skills through very good quality continuing professional development. She has also recognised the skills of particular staff and used these well to enhance the overall quality of teaching. This expertise goes beyond the teaching by full-time teaching staff and includes part-time specialists such as the music teacher and coaches for the wide variety of sporting activities. Her innovative approach is also extended to the teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6 through workshops. Here the expertise of staff shines through as they spread their enthusiasm for their subjects and share their very good knowledge and understanding. This was seen, for example, in a Year 3/4 lesson when the geography teacher shared her very good knowledge of the area surrounding the school and helped pupils to identify changes over time. Her ICT skills were particularly effective as she used the interactive whiteboard to show photographs of key features of years ago and compared these with photographs she had taken recently. Learning in this lesson was very good because the pupils were interested in what they were doing and felt able to succeed at their individual levels.
14. In the best lessons, teachers have a clear idea of what they want pupils to learn and share that with them. They provide appropriate support and challenge, which ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment maintain a good pace in their learning. Lessons are planned so that the expertise of teaching assistants can be fully utilised either through supporting within lessons or through teaching small groups of pupils. Pupils benefit from the teaching which is specifically targeted to their level of ability and learn well. Expectations are high, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
15. Another significant improvement since the last inspection has been the way staff assess what pupils have achieved and use this to place them in appropriate groupings and provide work of appropriate challenge. The school provides well for higher-attaining pupils and has developed its practice for those that are gifted and talented. Results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 indicate that pupils are effectively challenged, as over half achieved a standard higher than that expected for their age in English and mathematics and over three-quarters in science. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils well in lessons and encourage them to improve and work harder if they think they can. Most are also effective in indicating through their marking how pupils can improve their work. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils is good. Teachers are encouraging and supportive, which results in pupils becoming confident in their abilities and aware of how they can improve their work and attain higher standards.

16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, both in class and in withdrawal groups. Three withdrawal groups were observed, taught by teaching assistants and a special needs teacher. Groups within class lessons were also observed. Special needs staff are all very experienced and have built up an excellent system for supporting these pupils, especially in literacy and numeracy. Enthusiastic teaching motivates the pupils well. Pupils' needs are assessed regularly and the most appropriate support is then provided. These pupils make good progress and achieve well.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is very good. Very good extra-curricular provision enriches the curriculum. The quality and range of learning resources are good and the quality of the accommodation is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has succeeded in developing a curriculum to meet the needs of all its pupils.
- Opportunities for enrichment are very good and accessed by many pupils.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use their skills to write at length in a variety of contexts.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

17. The school plans the curriculum carefully to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and other national initiatives. It is currently working towards the Artsmark award. The quality and range of opportunities provided are very good overall. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been thoroughly implemented by teachers and this has contributed to the high standards attained by pupils in English and mathematics. However, in Years 2 to 4, in particular, pupils do not have sufficiently long periods of time on a piece of work to develop fully their independent writing skills. Also, in geography and history, although the use of worksheets supports learning, particularly for the lower attainers, pupils should be given a wider range of contexts in which to develop their writing. The school has produced long-term plans for all subjects. This planning has been adapted from the range of national initiatives and guidance to meet the needs of pupils. The school has mixed age classes in Years 3 to 6 and has introduced setting for pupils according to ability, to ensure they are appropriately challenged in English, mathematics and some science lessons. Good links between subjects are regularly made.
18. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These enrichment activities include visits and visitors, and the opportunity to play a wide range of sport, play musical instruments and have the opportunity for residential trips whilst in Year 6. Links with local secondary schools also enhance the curriculum, for example during the school Science Week when support is given by pupils from the secondary school. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils, regardless of ability or gender, have good equal access to the opportunities it provides. For example, a pupil in Year 5 who has outstanding ability in mathematics is given specific support at the local secondary school in order to ensure he is challenged and enabled to make progress in the subject. This approach is a reflection of the high level of inclusion evident in all aspects of the school's work.
19. There is a good number of well-qualified staff to support pupils' learning and the school makes very good use of specialist staff to enhance the teaching of certain subjects. In Years 3 to 6, workshop sessions taught by specialist staff are effective in providing a curriculum which is stimulating and challenging and also prepares pupils well for their secondary education. Resources are good and well used to support pupils' learning. The school's accommodation is good and much has been done to enhance it. The development of the outside environment enhances the curriculum and helps to improve pupils' science skills and awareness of nature.

High quality displays of pupils' work, and features such as the gardens in the school grounds, help to create a pleasant and welcoming learning environment and teach pupils, for example, about recycling.

20. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for. A well-organised system of support through withdrawal groups, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, has been developed throughout the school. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are very well supported individually in a range of lessons including art and design and design and technology. Resources are generally good and include some information and technology software.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, health and safety are good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring pupils' needs is also good. The school takes good account of pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with adults in school.
- Health and safety and child protection issues are dealt with efficiently by vigilant staff.
- School council meetings foster pupils' personal development well.
- Most lessons have elements of personal, social and health education woven into them and staff are developing planning for the subject that will reflect their good practice.

Commentary

21. The pupils' good attitudes reflect the warmth and effectiveness of the staff and the very good links the school has with parents. The contribution made by school clubs and school council activities to the pupils' personal and social wellbeing is very good. Teachers and support staff talk enthusiastically about their pupils and exercise a high degree of patience and goodwill in their dealings with them. They call on a good range of persuasive and supportive tactics, chosen wisely to meet the needs of the child. This has a noticeable and positive impact on pupils' personal development.
22. Good care is taken to ensure every pupil regardless of age, gender or ability has regular opportunities to enjoy responsibility and to understand the merits of it. This results in pupils who are proud of their school and eager to find ways of improving it. School council sessions are lively affairs with pupils making some very sensible suggestions on issues close to their heart such as improving facilities in the playground and the behaviour of some pupils. The school is keen to develop the pupils' already good understanding of personal, social and health issues in a more structured way. The co-ordinator for this subject has made it a priority for development.
23. Child protection procedures are well known to staff and carefully monitored, in the first instance, by the headteacher who has good contacts and is well versed in local procedures. First aid arrangements work very well. A good number of staff are fully trained in administering first aid and are supported by others who have been trained to know what to do in an emergency. Individual health care plans are drawn up to support pupils with specific medical needs, and the staff who work with them are specially trained in implementing these. This represents very good practice.
24. The school's safety and security measures stand up well to the incidents of vandalism that occur sporadically when the school is closed. Staff react quickly and use all methods at their disposal to deal with the incidents and minimise the likelihood of the trouble recurring; an issue

which is a problem to many schools. Good use is made of governors' expertise and staff who are alert to identifying, recording and dealing with routine health and safety matters.

25. There are good ways of checking and recording how well pupils are doing in all subjects. The information gained from monitoring pupils' progress is analysed by senior staff and used effectively to enable teachers to plan lessons appropriate to the range of abilities. All staff contribute strongly to the care, guidance and support of pupils with special educational needs. Their rate of progress is very closely monitored.
26. The school views all incidents of racism or bullying in school as reportable incidents and by monitoring these, staff and governors work to eliminate intolerance. In doing so, they create a secure place to learn that positively embraces all pupils, and their parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership between the school and parents is very good. The school is highly regarded, is heavily over-subscribed and has a very good standing in the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is indebted to its very enthusiastic parent/teacher association whose members excel at fundraising for school improvement projects.
- There are very good systems to deal with parents' concerns and complaints.
- The school works hard to establish itself as a community resource.

Commentary

27. Parents have very positive views of the school. The school works very closely with them and the community, motivating a great deal of interest and enthusiasm for its work. In return, parents and others in the community give generously of their time to the school. They are tremendously successful in raising funds for particular projects, as is evident from the vastly improved gardens and grounds. Parents give good support to homework and make sure their children attend school regularly and as often as possible, and that they behave well when they are there. Parents help in classes and some help run the extensive range of clubs and activities. They are very keen to see their children develop into well-rounded individuals.
28. Much helpful information is provided by the school to help parents understand how they can help their children learn. Curriculum, PTA and school newsletters are sent out in hard copies and also linked to the school's website for ease of access. The "*How you can help*" section in curriculum newsletters is particularly useful. It includes many different ways parents can help children use and extend their learning as they go about their daily lives together. The prospectus and governors' report are attractive documents and contain all the information parents must have about the school and its achievements. The headteacher is available to parents daily in the playground and is able to deal with many worries or problems at an early stage. The school is very keen for parents to have a voice on issues that need their support. Monitoring questionnaires were sent out to gauge parents' views on healthy eating in school.
29. Parents are impressed by the way the school treats their children fairly and as individuals, and are therefore openly receptive to the feedback they receive from teachers at open evenings. The end-of-year reports form a good basis for a constructive discussion at these meetings. School productions, inter-school competitions, class and corridor displays are all open to parents and give good information about the expectations and standards pupils attain. Parents of children with special educational needs are consulted about the individual educational plans made for them and are kept well-informed of their progress. They are fully involved in the annual review meetings with the special needs co-ordinator. They also meet with her half-terminally to assess progress. Parents of pupils who are also on the special needs register but without a formal statement of need meet termly with the class teacher and with the co-ordinator, as necessary.

30. The school is valued and respected by the local community. There is a very active lettings policy with many local organisations and schools taking advantage of it. Using her good connections, the headteacher has taken a lead in forging strong and reciprocal links with local colleges, schools and nurseries. These are of particular benefit when teachers need to access Key Stage 3 work, as they do for gifted pupils. Through exchange visits, college placements and inter-school challenges, pupils are able to build good relationships with staff and pupils from other schools, helping them transfer, with confidence, to the next stage of their education.
31. The governors have an outward-looking approach to working in partnership with the local community. They are adamant that all pupils should be welcomed into the school community, whatever their needs, and given a good start. In an effort to strike the balance between what the community needs and the experiences that pre-school children should have, the school is working in partnership with a private nursery which is soon to be built on school grounds.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and other senior managers is very good, as are the management and governance of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is clearly focused on raising attainment for all pupils and improving the quality of provision.
- Good management means that the school evaluates its effectiveness and improves its practices so that pupils can achieve well.
- Governors are involved well in shaping the school's future direction and contribute very effectively to the school's leadership and management.
- Financial management is good and helps the school to achieve its educational priorities.

Commentary

32. The headteacher demonstrates very good leadership that ensures that pupils have access to a well designed and stimulating curriculum and effective teaching. This contributes strongly to the pupils' good achievement and the well above average standards they attain by the time they leave the school. She has been particularly effective in building a strong team with a shared sense of purpose and has managed sensitively recent changes such as those connected with staffing and significant building works.
33. The headteacher's vision underpins the work of the staff and governors and this is reflected in the way everyone is involved in planning for school development. This ensures the understanding and commitment of all those involved. The school improvement plan provides the school with a valuable guide to help it move forward and monitor progress. Clear targets for improvement are identified together with timescales and appropriate resource implications. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance have been well devised so that strengths and weaknesses can be accurately diagnosed and appropriate action taken. The headteacher and staff are innovative in their approaches, for example, in the way they have developed the curriculum in Years 3 to 6 and continue to use expertise from outside the school to keep up-to-date with current initiatives. Performance management and the continuing professional development of staff are managed very well by the headteacher and are well regarded by staff.
34. The headteacher and governors are committed to developing effective leadership through the role of subject leaders and this, in turn, helps to improve the quality of teaching through subject leaders teaching workshop sessions and the raising of standards. Subject leaders are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and respond accordingly. Provision for pupils with

special educational needs is managed well by the co-ordinator. She has been co-ordinator for a year and has checked that all pupils are correctly identified and receive the support they need. To do this she has used the local education authority's diagnostic assessments and distributed the results to class teachers with suggestions for action. The organisation of teaching assistants and a special needs teacher is very successful.

35. Governors support and challenge the school very well. They are well informed and show a good knowledge of how the school is performing. Governors have good relationships with all staff and pupils through their regular visits to classrooms and they operate effectively as a critical friend. The school finances are efficiently managed and the governing body ensures that financial resources are allocated in accordance with the school's identified priorities. For example, funds have been built up to cover the cost of improvements to the provision of ICT and the Foundation Stage. The school implements well the principles of best value through its use of data, its methods of consulting those involved with the school, its challenging aims and use of the budget. The school provides very good value for money overall.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	722,767
Total expenditure	684,634
Expenditure per pupil	2,201

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	39,510
Balance carried forward to the next	38,133

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There have been good improvements since the last inspection, most of which have taken place within the last year. The school has successfully tackled the shortcomings identified in the last report. The classes have been brought together in one area as an early years' unit, and a good outdoor area is being developed. Activities are now planned in line with the statutory guidance for children of this age and all areas of learning are adequately emphasised. Children now have good opportunities for practical work, and there is a good balance between adult-directed and independent play activities. The key factors underpinning the improvements are the very good leadership and management, and the strength of the team of teachers and teaching assistants. They have a very good understanding of how young children learn, and planning is securely based on detailed individual assessments. Activities capture children's interests, and are carefully planned to move children forward in each area of learning. Children with special educational needs are given very good support, while there is additional challenge for those who are high achievers.

Children start school at the beginning of the term in which they are five, and attend for half time for one term, before starting full-time school. Those children with summer birthdays start full-time school at the beginning of Year 1, and the school prepares them suitably for this change. The standard of attainment on entry is above average, and progress is good in all areas of learning. Many of the older children are on track to exceed the early learning goals in all aspects of the curriculum. Children who enter in the summer term have less time in school than the others but most are on track to reach the early learning goals by Year 1.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good, enabling children to achieve well.
- Links with parents are good, and almost all children start school confidently.
- Children are encouraged to develop good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Staff provide good role models for the children, and relationships are good.

Commentary

36. Good teaching in this area of learning underpins the work of the two classes. Staff fully understand the needs and interests of young children and routines are carefully planned. Parents are involved well, for example at the start of the day, and help their children settle in each morning. At the time of the inspection a few younger children were still finding the moment of parting difficult, and staff were very sensitive to their needs. Once the parents have left all children rapidly become involved in the good variety of activities. Children develop good attitudes to learning because they are interested in what they are doing. They are encouraged to persevere and to complete activities before moving on, and levels of concentration are often good. Teachers and support staff remind children of the importance of sharing and taking turns, and organise activities which promote these skills. Children often co-operate well; for example painting large pictures together and playing together in the role-play area. There are good opportunities for children to make choices and to develop confidence and independence. Relationships are good. Children respond well to the staff because they are confident that adults will listen to them and treat them fairly. Most children are on course to meet, and many to exceed, the expected standard by the time they reach Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good and as a result children of all abilities achieve well.
- Standards in speaking are good, although many children find it more difficult to take turns in speaking.
- Phonics (letter sounds) are taught thoroughly, giving children a good foundation for developing reading and spelling skills.
- Parents give their children good support.

Commentary

37. When children start school most, but not all, have standards above average for their age. Progress is good, and at times very good because language skills are promoted very effectively by all staff in all activities. Children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing, and do so confidently knowing that adults will listen. Staff work hard to encourage children to take turns and to listen to others within the group, while ensuring that children still feel confident in expressing their ideas. Children make a good start in learning to read. A structured approach allows children to match letters to sounds, and direct teaching is matched very well to the needs of different groups. Many of the older children are already exceeding the expectations for their age group. Children enjoy stories and many make a good start on reading independently. Parental support is strong, and children enjoy sharing their work at home. This support reinforces and values the work done at school while promoting high standards. Children learn to link reading with writing, and are taught to form their letters correctly. Many children in the older group already write simple sentences independently. Teachers demonstrate writing very well, and plan good opportunities for writing. In the younger class, where children had only just settled into school, staff were introducing children to the school's writing style, and carefully assessing their knowledge of phonics. The teachers quickly identify those who are capable of being further challenged, while supporting those who need to work more slowly. Standards overall, by Year 1, should be above average.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve well.
- Mathematical skills are promoted through many practical activities.

Commentary

38. Assessment data shows that children start school with good skills particularly in number. Teachers and support staff build on these very effectively, not just during specific sessions, but through daily activities. During the activity session at the start of the day, for example, children in the younger group were transferring the correct number of blocks onto plates. When a child had moved two blocks, the support assistant said "And another two", as she helped. The child then said "Two more is...four!", and they counted the bricks together. In the other group, a short formal teaching session reinforced children's understanding of shapes. The class enjoyed passing round a bag of shapes as they sang, and when the song stopped they took turns at choosing a shape. The teacher guided them carefully as they described the three-dimensional shapes and their properties. Children with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and they achieve well, because questions are at a suitable level to

enable them to join in and to learn. Children who entered in the autumn and spring terms already record addition and subtraction formally, and write numbers at least to 20 and often beyond. Overall standards are above average when children enter Year 1.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children achieve well
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are very good because children have access to good resources

Commentary

39. It was only possible to observe a limited range of activities during the inspection, but teacher's planning and classroom observations show that children enjoy a good range of experiences over time. They are likely to reach, and many older children to exceed, the expected standards by the time they reach Year 1. Model making skills are good and children work well independently to develop their ideas. Children learn about different countries and cultures through well-planned practical activities. After a brief introduction describing Japanese Children's Day, most children enjoyed tasting rice cakes. They made carp kites, wrapped rice cakes and were introduced to Japanese writing. Children were interested and showed respect for different traditions and learning was good because the teacher's presentation was good and the children were open to new ideas. Standards in ICT are very good. Children have ready access to computers in the early years' unit and are taught specific skills in the ICT suite. The children can log on and close the computers down. In one lesson, children typed their names competently, changed font size and style, and quickly mastered the new challenge of changing colours. They maintained concentration very well and thoroughly enjoyed their lesson. One girl worked very systematically typing her name in each colour in turn. In the classroom, children operate the listening base independently.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is based on thorough assessment of children's needs.
- Teaching is good and children achieve well.

Commentary

40. Teachers and support staff plan carefully to cover all aspects of the curriculum. Detailed assessments when children entered the school showed that many children needed practice in small motor skills, such as using scissors, tools and construction materials. Many of the daily activities include an element of manual dexterity, combining fun with a strong element of learning. Children in one group, for example, concentrated hard as they used chopsticks to pick up bricks. Others cut with scissors, threaded string through banners and used tools such as staplers as they made kites. Adults encourage independence and promote confidence by praising effort. Children have good opportunities for energetic play in the outdoor area involving balancing, running and riding wheeled toys. They are introduced to aspects of formal physical education through lessons in the hall. The older group showed good skills in using small apparatus, catching and throwing beanbags. Younger pupils, in only their third week in school, worked very well in a movement lesson. They had a very good awareness of space, avoiding

collisions as they worked. All children followed instructions very well and experimented with a variety of ways of moving over the large mats. Overall standards are likely to be above those expected by the end of the school year.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in music because of very good quality specialist music teaching
- Staff plan a good variety of structured activities and provide good opportunities for independent play

Commentary

41. Teaching in music is very good and children learn quickly because the teacher has high expectations and a high level of expertise. Children improve their singing and playing quickly, learn to hold instruments correctly and to copy repeated patterns of sound. There is good support for children with special educational needs, which enables them to participate fully in the lessons. Displays of artwork show that many children draw well, and that they have the opportunity to work with a variety of materials. Children are often absorbed in their activities including drawing, painting, cutting and sticking. Adults promote learning well through talking with children and discussing their work. A teaching assistant encouraged children to discuss their work and to predict what would happen as they made prints from painted patterns. Children are proud of their work, and in the case of the “Japanese” kites, thoroughly enjoyed flying them in the outside area. The classrooms and outdoor learning area are thoughtfully organised and offer children good opportunities for independent play, and for developing their imaginations. Overall most children are likely to meet and many to exceed the expected outcomes before they reach Year 1.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and in Year 6 reach well above average standards.
- The majority of pupils are articulate and many draw on a wide vocabulary.
- The organisation of literacy throughout the school meets the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment very well indeed.
- Work for Year 3 lower-attaining pupils, who do not have special educational needs, is not always planned and taught effectively to ensure good progress and achievement.
- Limited opportunities are given for pupils to write at length, particularly in Years 2 to 4.
- Small group teaching is very well organised and promotes learning very well.
- The school has a very good library which encourages pupils’ reading and research skills.

Commentary

42. There is a very wide range of attainment within most year groups and the setting of pupils from Year 2 upwards, together with withdrawal groups, provides very well for pupils in the majority of classes. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when the lack of well-matched work to pupils’ levels of attainment was criticised.

43. In 2003, the standards reached in the National Curriculum tests in Year 2 were in line with the national average in reading and writing. This result was unusual and reflected the particular cohort at the time. Although these standards are not as high as they were in previous years, they reflect the changing intake, and more inclusive ethos, of the school, with a larger number of lower-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs than in past years. In the previous three years, standards in reading had either been well above average or high in comparison with other schools nationally. In writing, results had previously been above or well above other schools nationally. Standards in Year 6 have been maintained and, in 2003, were well above both the national average and those of similar schools.
44. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' speaking skills are developed well through, for example, a puppet theatre, role-play and hot-seating activities. In Year 1, pupils are taught in their own class in ability groups and the majority are achieving very well, reaching well above average standards. In Year 2, pupils are taught in two sets, with additional support given to pupils with special educational needs. This provides very well for pupils at all levels of attainment. In the lessons observed, the higher-attaining pupils achieved very well, were highly motivated and articulate, and reached well above average standards in speaking and listening. Very good teaching promoted pupils' enthusiasm and developed their already wide vocabulary very well indeed. When studying a text, pupils also brought their own knowledge to the answers they gave. The pupils who respond to questions in hot-seating activities are confident and mature in their approach, often able to answer unexpected questions 'thinking on their feet': for example, "How did you know the colour of the animals' eyes when you were so far away?" saying, "Because I looked through my binoculars."
45. In Year 1, many pupils write a series of simple sentences confidently with little support, and enjoy reading aloud what they have written. They also write longer stories, sometimes recounting stories they know, and are beginning to use full stops and capital letters. They are also beginning to identify speech using 'speech bubbles'. A smaller number of average- and lower-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing with additional support. In Year 2, the teaching of grammar, handwriting and spelling are methodical and a small group of very high-attaining pupils answer comprehension exercises very well indeed using a wide vocabulary. However, the presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent and few opportunities are given for high- and above-average attaining pupils to write at length. This restricts the standards that they can reach. The teaching of handwriting is in a process of change in the school, with a new style being introduced in the younger classes. This should ensure a more consistent approach in the future.
46. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to use a wide vocabulary which is developed well by teachers. Pupils are articulate, confident and often well read and able to use phrases that they have read in books. Teaching in this age groups ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Where it was excellent, as in a Years 3 and 4 lesson with higher-attaining pupils, the level of discussion was high with the teacher setting excellent standards of English which pupils followed. In this lesson pupils were successfully identifying terms such as verse, chorus, couplet, stanza, rhyme and alliteration in different forms of poetry such as elegies. Pupils named the rhyming couplets, could define 'elegy' and 'epitaph' and showed understanding and a clarity of thought well above average for their age. This lesson also contributed very well to pupils' spiritual and personal development as they discussed poems such as 'Cat's Funeral'. Pupils' learning and their achievement were excellent. Very occasionally learning is not as good as it could be as in the Year 3 and 4 lower set lesson observed. Here, some younger pupils made little progress, as they did not understand the task. The use of incorrect spellings for this age and ability group, in the poem 'Out in the desert', was confusing for some pupils and would not have helped those with a visual memory. The pace of the lesson was slow and the pupils' own spellings, such as 'wright' for 'right' were not corrected. Opportunities to write at length are also few in Years 3 and 4. Teaching in Year 5 and 6 sets is good overall and is very good in the upper set. In the lower set, most pupils achieve well from a lower than average level because teaching is lively and support is effective in meeting pupils' needs. Pupils in the upper set reach above average standards and some write with a high standard of English. In the

lesson observed, all pupils confidently compared and contrasted two texts with speed and accuracy. Very good deductions were made during discussions, with pupils able to justify their opinions. Good opportunities were given for pupils to develop their responses, which is an improvement since the last inspection when this was criticised. Pupils' books show that they write for a wide range of purposes and audiences. For example, a variety of genres are used, including persuasive writing, when pupils consider a proposal for a local leisure centre and produce a group book about it. Imaginative writing is sometimes particularly successful such as in a story about an object in a classroom tray that watched different classes come and go over the years. Pupils convey fear very well when writing a poem about a nightmare and they develop an argument successfully giving a balanced view of both sides. Work is constructively marked so that pupils know how they can improve and, overall, standards are above average, with many pupils reaching well above average standards.

47. Much of the success of the pupils with special educational needs is due to the very well organised provision through withdrawal groups. Assessment is used very well indeed to ascertain what level of help pupils need and what progress they have made. Provision is then tailor-made to their needs. The teaching assistants have considerable expertise and over the years have built up a very successful support system for these pupils.
48. Pupils of all abilities in Years 1 and 2 have books appropriate to their levels of attainment and enjoy reading to adults. Guided reading takes place in literacy lessons and good support is given in these sessions. In Years 3 and 4 group, guided reading also takes place in literacy lessons and, for example in the lesson on poetry, pupils compared different poems about death as written in the context of different cultures. Pupils were very observant and could recognise that one poem was from Jamaica, as they already knew a Jamaican poet and recognised the style, and that another was from Africa, as they had heard African drummers last year and the poem mentioned the drums and the market place. Literacy lessons contribute very well to pupils' social and cultural development.
49. The subjects is very well led and managed resulting in significant developments since the last inspection. For example, the school has a very pleasant, well-stocked library which is managed by a volunteer for four days a week from 8 am to 1 pm. Pupils change books before and after school, as well as at lunch time, and the librarian is happy to look for books that pupils have asked for. The library is computerised and is a valuable resource, providing well for pupils of all abilities and ages. Staff are also effective in looking at how pupils' progress and the standards they reach and use this information to develop the curriculum and individual lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Language and literacy are generally used well across the curriculum. They are used particularly well in religious education and in pupils' own research work. Good opportunities are given for pupils to research and work collaboratively on different projects of their own choice. Books on these different topics are displayed around the school for pupils to read. Literacy is less well developed in geography and history and this is an area for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are planned and structured well because teachers' subject knowledge is very good; consequently pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Frequent good quality opportunities are provided for children to develop their mathematical knowledge, understanding and skills.
- The good relationships in classrooms ensure that children are always well motivated.

- Leadership and management of the subject are good, particularly in the use of assessment data to focus on areas for development.
- Teaching assistants are well used in lessons to support pupils.

Commentary

51. Standards in mathematics are above average in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. They are improving because teaching and learning are good. The subject has continued to be developed since the previous inspection and consequently, standards continue to rise. Pupils' achievement is good and they reach the targets set by the school. These challenging but realistic targets are based securely on the very good assessment information gathered by teachers. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop skills in all areas of mathematics.
52. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and plan lessons well ensuring they are firmly based on what pupils have already learned. Many opportunities are provided in lessons for pupils to learn and develop their use of mathematical language. Pupils are shown, and encouraged to use, a wide range of problem solving strategies and are provided with appropriate resources that support learning. The emphasis placed on good presentation of work ensures that pupils lay out calculations logically and neatly, and so make few errors. Teacher mark pupils' work well, ensuring that they know what they need to do to improve their work.
53. Pupils have a very positive attitude and enjoy their lessons. They are encouraged to work with other pupils in order to discuss and evaluate their work, and to work independently. Teachers clearly communicate to pupils what they are intended to learn and achieve in each lesson. This helps pupils to focus clearly on their tasks and as a result, learning is good. Classroom relationships are consistently good. Teachers and teaching assistants support and challenge pupils and value their efforts and responses. Consequently pupils, including those with special educational needs are motivated and keen to learn because they feel well supported.
54. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject leader is knowledgeable. She analyses the progress made by pupils very thoroughly and uses this information to identify what needs to be done to continue to improve teaching and standards. She monitors and evaluates the school's work in mathematics through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work and has had the opportunity to monitor teaching. Teachers make good use of ICT to support the subject, particularly through the use of interactive whiteboards that have been recently acquired in some rooms. Pupils are taught how to perform calculations using spreadsheets and to store and display data through databases.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. Opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills in other subjects are good. The use of ICT skills in mathematics has been greatly developed since the previous inspection and is now good. Pupils' skills in mathematics help them to solve investigations in science effectively. Pupils have good skills in compiling graphs when analysing data. Their measuring skills help them significantly in design and technology projects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and in the 2003 National Curriculum tests reached standards in Year 6 which were very high.
- Teaching is consistently good and this ensures that pupils make good gains in their learning.

- There have been significant improvements since the last inspection.
- Higher-attaining pupils are well challenged.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Although some use of ICT is effective, it is not systematically planned across the school.

Commentary

56. Inspection findings and recent national test results for pupils in Year 6 indicate that pupils make very good progress in science and achieve well. By the time they leave school, they reach very high standards. These results show significant improvement since the last inspection. The subject has been well managed with a strong focus on improving standards and providing a broad and interesting curriculum with an emphasis on investigative science. The latter has been a key feature in raising attainment, particularly that of more able pupils, and in stimulating pupils' interest.
57. Most pupils in the school respond well to the way science is taught and enjoy the practical nature of the tasks. Staff have focused well on developing the pupils' skills of scientific enquiry so that by the time pupils leave school they can select a suitable way of finding things out when trying to answer a scientific question. Pupils also base their predictions on previously gained scientific knowledge and understanding and identify key factors to be considered when a fair test is part of the investigation. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicated that their knowledge and understanding in all the areas of science were very good. They spoke well about micro-organisms in one lesson and described the process of composting well. Correct scientific terminology was used and pupils were confident in what they were saying. Expectations are high and pupils rise well to the challenges set. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which teachers develop questions which encourage the pupils to think scientifically and explain their ideas.
58. In one good Year 3/4 lesson, the teacher used her ICT skills well and maintained the pupils' interests by the use of the interactive whiteboard. Pupils learnt well as they saw the movement of a skeleton on screen and by the end of the lesson could identify several types of joints found in the body. Although some teachers encourage activities where pupils develop their own ICT skills, these are not developed systematically at a whole-school level so it is difficult to see how pupils progress over time.
59. The subject has been led and managed well over time and this has resulted in improved standards. The current co-ordinator has an enthusiastic approach and has ensured that the curriculum fully meets national expectations and the pupils' needs. The use of science workshops is effective as pupils receive good opportunities to develop their investigative skills and are challenged by a teacher with good knowledge and expertise. The co-ordinator has identified strengths and those areas which should be improved, for example, a whole-school approach to recording what pupils have achieved. This has resulted in improvements in the curriculum and teaching. Pupils are well challenged and additional activities such as the focus on Science Week has helped to raise the profile of the subject and widened the pupils' learning experiences. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for their scientific work in secondary school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has improved significantly during the past year and all pupils have lessons in the well-equipped computer suite.

- Resources are good and the introduction of whiteboards is having a positive impact on teaching across the curriculum.
- Standards in Year 2 are above average but standards in Year 6 are not yet as high as they are in other subjects.
- Teachers cater well for most pupils, but some pupils in Year 3 need more support.
- Leadership is good, but the co-ordinator has not had enough time to monitor teaching.

Commentary

60. Improvement in ICT since the last inspection has been good, and much of this improvement has taken effect relatively recently. All pupils are taught in the new computer suite and every pupil has access to an individual machine during these lessons. As a result, during lessons, all pupils can be fully involved throughout without having to wait for turns. Pupils also have access to computers in their classrooms, and some rooms have been fitted with computer-linked whiteboards. Teachers have been trained to use the new equipment effectively, and during the inspection the use of the new boards contributed significantly to the quality of lessons. Presentations are clear and lively, engaging pupils' attention fully.
61. Standards in Year 2 are above average because teaching is good. Pupils' achievement is good. In the lesson observed, work was linked very well across the curriculum. Pupils worked well to draw their own version of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. The teacher used the whiteboard very successfully to show video clips as a stimulus. Pupils were fully absorbed in their work, working in near silence, using the drawing tools confidently to create competent pictures. Work completed by the parallel group was equally successful. Displays of pupils' word processing show that they have good skills in combining text and pictures.
62. Pupils in Year 6 can describe in detail the work they have covered this year, and show a secure understanding of the aspects they have covered. They know how to develop a multi-media presentation incorporating text, pictures, movement and sound. In discussion, they show an understanding of entering data and of the need to check their work for accuracy. During a lesson, pupils worked well to develop simple sequences of commands to control a lighthouse, with most pupils achieving success. Standards overall are in line with expectations and are not yet as high as those achieved in other subjects. Pupils have only had access to the improved resources for a relatively short time, and their achievement is satisfactory. The school has already identified ICT as an area for continuing development. Classes in Years 3 and 4 are very large, and a few less able pupils in Year 3 tend to achieve relatively little during some lessons because they do not get enough support.
63. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure the successful installation of the computer suite, and has organised relevant staff training. Routine maintenance tasks and trouble shooting the new equipment have taken up much of her management time. The school has now appointed a part-time technician, and the co-ordinator has properly identified the need to monitor teaching and learning in the subject.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. ICT is now being used across the curriculum in most subjects, although there has not been time for the full potential to be realised. Links with art and literacy are good, and pupils use the Internet for research in history and geography. Aspects of mathematics are reinforced through drawing programs, data-handling and work with spreadsheets. There was less evidence during the inspection of ICT being used in science, although work with sensors is planned for Years 5 and 6 later in the term.

HUMANITIES

65. Inspectors observed one geography, two history and two religious education lessons. They also looked at pupils' work and teachers' planning. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision in history or geography.
66. The one **geography** lesson observed was taught by the subject leader and the quality of teaching and learning was very good. Her very good subject knowledge and expertise were used well to provide activities which stimulated the pupils' interests and maintained their concentration. Pupils achieved well because the work built systematically on previous learning and expectations were high. The pupils' work that was completed in the workshops was usually of a good quality and displayed a good range of activities and good coverage of the geography curriculum, including activities to further pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Mapping skills were well developed and some interesting work was achieved in the Year 5/6 work on contrasting localities. Pupils are learning well about the environment, for example, through completing a waste survey with a focus on improving the school environment. Sometimes, particularly with the younger pupils, insufficient opportunities are provided to extend their independent writing skills in geography and the use of worksheets does, at times, restrict their achievement.
67. In **history**, an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them indicated that standards are in line with what is expected nationally. Most pupils make satisfactory progress; however, work is not always sufficiently challenging for more capable pupils. There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets to support learning. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to present their work in different formats, such as through graphs, charts and leaflets/pamphlets. Teachers use artefacts well so pupils develop secure skills of using evidence to draw conclusions about the past and how life has changed for people over time. In Years 5 and 6 pupils answer questions about the 1960s by examining articles, looking at pictures and researching information on the Internet. Pupils examine a pair of John Lennon's spectacles and are delighted to know they were actually worn by John Lennon. Teachers' use of ICT to support learning is developing well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use information retrieved from the Internet to find out about raids carried out by the Vikings. They enjoy the activity and are enthusiastic to share their findings with their peers. As a result, most pupils confidently answer questions about the Vikings and they demonstrate an understanding and factual knowledge of some of the main Viking raids.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in religious education are high across the school.
- Pupils gain a good basic knowledge of Christianity.
- A wide range of topics and religions is studied.

Commentary

68. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are high. No lessons were observed in this age group but pupils' books were looked at and inspectors talked with pupils. The amount of work recorded in their books is far greater than is usually seen and the pupils demonstrated considerable knowledge and understanding of this work. They could remember each lesson and reported accurately what had been taught. A wide range of topics is covered and four world religions are studied. Pupils know about parables, miracles and other stories from the Bible. They visit a local church and can name different pieces of church furniture. As a result of studying Islam they know that Eid follows a time of fasting and as a result of studying Hinduism know stories such as that of Rama and Sita. They know about the Five Ks of the Sikh religion. Pupils learn about what it is to 'belong'. They know that a family is a 'group of people who belong to each other and care about each other'. They know that they belong to their family, the school and to other

groups. They learn about the importance of rules and the right ways and wrong way to do things. Pupils learn about religion and from religion, drawing, for example, from the story of Joseph an understanding of how people feel different emotions at different times. They record their work in a variety of ways. The written work of the more able pupils is of a well above average standard. Many pupils, especially the boys, enjoy writing at lengths on a variety of subjects. Pupils' work is marked constructively and helps pupils know how they can improve their work.

69. Standards by Year 6 are well above average. The range of work covered is again wide. In Years 3 and 4, more able pupils write and record what they have learned independently and lower-attaining pupils are supported well by worksheets. In Year 4, the teacher adds comments to pupils' work which develops their understanding further. As result, the writing of these pupils often shows a good understanding of what they have been taught. In the lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, pupils listened very attentively to, and could answer questions on, a video teaching them about the Hindu creation story, told in words and dance. Judaism is studied in some depth in Year 5 and further work on Hinduism and the Sikh religion is completed in Year 6. In the lesson observed in Years 5 and 6, teaching was good and pupils learned well about Hindu worship in the home and the use and meaning of the Puja tray. Pupils also think about who they admire and learn about people such as Mother Theresa and Florence Nightingale. All pupils have a wide knowledge of Biblical stories and Christian customs, demonstrate a very good degree of respect for different religions, are interested in the subject and achieve very well. Religious education makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and is leading the subject satisfactorily.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. Three lessons were seen in art and design and physical education and two lessons each in design and technology and music. Further evidence was gained by looking at pupils' work and teachers' planning. It was not possible to make overall judgements on provision and standards in music.
71. The school employs a **music** specialist for two days a week, with the specific aim of raising the profile of the subject. This is proving a very successful investment. Instrumental specialists also teach some lessons offering pupils a rich experience. Year 3 pupils have the very good opportunity of beginning to learn to play stringed instruments. All pupils work with a violin or a cello, and almost all hold the instruments and bows confidently after only a few lessons. These lessons include other important musical skills, such as listening, singing and an introduction to formal notation. During the one such lesson observed, learning was slowed by the silly behaviour of a group of boys. Pupils sing well in unison during singing practices. The teacher has high expectations and improves the standards of singing by demonstration and direct teaching. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson, the teacher's enthusiasm and high expectations promoted good learning. Her strong focus on clear diction, for example, resulted in an improvement in singing. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. There is a good range of enrichment activities including instrumental tuition and choir activities.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is excellently led.
- Most classes are taught by the specialist.
- Standards are well above average and sometimes high.
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils is very good.

Commentary

72. The subject is excellently led by an Advanced Skills Teacher who teaches all the Year 3 to 6 classes in lessons known as workshops. This has raised the status of art and design in the school. During the inspection, in her role as an Advanced Skills Teacher, she also taught Year 2 with the class teacher present. A large portfolio of work has been collected which shows that pupils are taught a very wide range of techniques and reach well above average standards. Occasionally standards are outstanding, such as in two pictures; those of a brown boot coloured in pastels, and of a green bottle, where glass was conveyed exceptionally well. The portfolio of work is used to inspire both pupils and teachers.
73. In the Year 2 lesson observed, a considerable amount of time was given to discussing a famous painting before the pupils began their own painting. As a result, pupils gained an enormous amount of information and knowledge about how to appreciate art and interpret a picture, as well as then practising skills themselves. The picture they began, a portrait of themselves as an adult, was to be continued in a future lesson or two. Pupils' enthusiasm was great and their achievement high. The portraits were very personal and reflected the pupils' own interests and ambitions extremely well. For example, portraits of a bird watcher, policeman and teacher in a mortar board and gown were very recognisable. Although only the backgrounds were painted in this lesson, standards were already above average.
74. Teaching of the Year 5 and 6 class was again excellent, resulting in standards being well above average. These standards were again achieved through a long introduction where pupils learned how to draw a moving figure and apply their knowledge of the work of other artists to their own pictures. It is the specialist teaching in these introductions that results in the well above average standards. The task was a challenging one and whilst teaching was excellent, pupils' own skills and level of development enabled them to learn and achieve very well. Many of the drawings conveyed movement very well indeed.
75. Display shows that three-dimensional work is well developed with imaginative models made from broken toys into fantastic animals. A local sculptor has also worked with pupils who made clay figures. The school has its own kiln. Pupils learn to sew, such as in some cross-stitch work, to print and to use a sketch book for sketching and practising techniques. Year 3 pupils have designed an adventure playground and Year 4 created a number of texture pictures. Wall hangings and displays in the hall show imaginative three-dimensional collages and colourful felting pictures. Information and communication technology is used well in the subject with pupils using the 'Paint' program to make, for example, pictures in the style of Van Gogh. The subject is very well resourced.
76. Very good provision is made for pupils who are gifted or talented in the subject, both through class lessons and in clubs. A new club has recently been started with Year 6 pupils teaching younger pupils at lunch time, thereby developing their sense of responsibility and willingness to take the initiative. The school also runs a successful annual arts week. In past years, artists have worked alongside the pupils. This year it will focus on arts around Asia as part of the topic 'Art on the Move'. Work in previous years has been displayed at the Council Offices.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils reach above average, and sometimes well above average, standards by Year 6.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the process from a young age.
- The subject is very well led by a specialist.

Commentary

77. Throughout the school the subject is taught consistently. Evidence shows that the subject is very well led and pupils are attaining average standards in Year 1 and 2 and above average standards in Years 3 to 6. For example, from Year 1, pupils understand the whole process of planning, designing, making and evaluating their products. Pupils' work in Year 2 shows that they plan very well with the help of planning frames. Models of moving vehicles on display show that they understand the mechanism needed to make their models move. Having completed the model, both the teacher and pupil evaluate the work separately. This both encourages the pupils and shows them how they improve the model further. There is a clear programme of work which develops skills across the whole school.
78. In Year 5, pupils begin to use electrical power and links are made between science and design and technology. In Year 6, they design shelters, slippers and controllable vehicles and are carrying out homework tasks. They label their plans well and provide measurements to follow. They compare and contrast different models and write and draw in some detail, both at the planning and evaluating stages. Their own evaluations of their completed products are very good. By Year 6, pupils have worked with a variety of materials. Their work is assessed well and their ability to solve problems is noted. In the lesson observed in Year 5 and 6, teaching by the specialist co-ordinator was very good and, as a result, pupils learned and achieved very well. It was the first lesson of a new project and pupils planned with a partner and as part of a team. Planning as part of a team was also observed briefly in Years 3 and 4. Having given some thought to the subject for homework in Years 5 and 6, pupils were highly motivated, listened well and were keen to put forward their ideas. The teacher demonstrated pupils' ideas very well, for example a chassis and different types of switches, and a wide range of unusual vehicles to make were suggested, ranging from a Moon Buggy to a petrol tanker and supermarket trolley. Boys, in particular, were full of ideas and came up with some advanced technical solutions.
79. In all classes pupils learn food technology. In Years 3 and 4 they make healthy snacks, learning about safety in the kitchen, cooking tools and food facts. In Years 5 and 6 they learn to make bread and biscuits. Parent volunteers help with this subject. These lessons were not observed during the inspection.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The broad range of activities available to pupils ensures that they are encouraged to develop a full range of skills.
- The use of specialist staff enables pupils to develop their skills well.
- The resources available to support the curriculum are good.
- The range of enrichment activities is very good.

Commentary

80. In the lessons observed, standards were above those expected and pupils achieved well. Teaching was good, and lessons were well planned and organised. Pupils' behaviour was very good. Teachers gave good demonstrations and communicated clearly to pupils what they were expected to learn. Pupils understand the importance of warming up and cooling down sessions to protect their bodies. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject and appreciate the range of activities on offer. Specialist staff sometimes takes workshops and in these, pupils achieve well. For example, in a Year 3/4 tennis session, the coaches maintained the

pupils' interest and developed their skills well by providing a good range of activities and the pupils using good quality equipment.

81. All pupils have many opportunities to take part in an interesting and wide range of sport activities out of school hours and through this the school participates in many sports competitions, often successfully. The school offers pupils a full range of physical education. The development of the outside environment as a creative play area encourages pupils to be active. The school hall is well equipped to support pupils' learning in gymnastics.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. This area of the school's work was sampled by looking at two lessons and provision throughout the school's everyday practice, in assemblies, during extra-curricular activities and through speaking with pupils.
83. Provision for personal, social and health education is good overall. All classes cover aspects of development relevant to the age of the pupils. The co-ordinator has identified the need to strengthen this programme, particularly the aspects relating to drugs awareness.
84. Personal and social education is however, implicit in all aspects of school life. Pupils talk confidently to adults and know that their ideas are valued. The school council introduces pupils to the concept of democracy, and is giving them the opportunity to suggest improvements. Pupils readily take responsibility; they are confident and some organise clubs for younger pupils. Work in various curriculum subjects promotes pupils' awareness of community and environmental issues. Year 5 and 6 pupils were introduced to the local decision-making process when they completed work on a road crossing and on proposals for improving leisure facilities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
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	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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