

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Billingham

LEA area: Stockton on Tees

Unique reference number: 131409

Headteacher: Mr A Paterson

Lead inspector: Mr R B Higgs

Dates of inspection: 14th – 16th June 2004

Inspection number: 257066

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	282
School address:	Halidon Way Billingham.
Postcode:	TS23 3NR
Telephone number:	01642 560768
Fax number:	01642 560942
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W E A Mitchell
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oakdene Primary School is a relatively new school formed by the amalgamation of an infant and junior school in 1998. At the time of the last inspection in 1998, it was preparing to move into the extended and refurbished premises of the junior school. It was a very large primary school but now, due to rapidly falling entry numbers, it is of medium size with 282 boys and girls. It expects this reduction in size to continue. Oakdene is situated not far from the centre of Billingham, serving an area of mixed municipal and private housing. Almost all pupils are from the majority ethnic group; 21.5% are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average, and more than average have special educational needs. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is below average. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark and has been recently awarded Investor in People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1608	Mr R B Higgs	Lead inspector	Citizenship Geography History
11358	Mrs V Lamb	Lay inspector	
32130	Mrs L Halliday	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education
22667	Mrs A Firth	Team inspector	English Art Music
30499	Mrs T Woods	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Oakdene is a **good school with a number of important strengths**. Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Good leadership and management ensure that the quality of education is good and a very good ethos for learning is established. The school gives **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is good by Year 6.
- Pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well; relationships are very good.
- Teaching is good, with very good teamwork by all staff.
- Pupils with low prior attainment or special educational needs make very good progress.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good.
- Achievement in speaking and listening is not as good as it is in reading and writing.
- Progress in spoken language, creativity and independence lags behind other areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils who are gifted and talented are not identified and given specific provision to meet their needs.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used sufficiently across the curriculum.
- Accommodation and resources are very good, but library resources need improving.

The school has made **good improvement** since the last inspection. Previous weaknesses have been overcome and standards have risen. This has been achieved during a challenging period of amalgamation and rapidly falling entry numbers.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

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

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

Standards have fluctuated in previous years, but work seen indicates standards are similar to 2003 in English, above average in mathematics and average in science, representing **good achievement**. Children enter nursery with below average standards and make **good progress** on the whole, achieving the goals expected of them by the end of the Foundation Stage. Progress in spoken language and creativity, though satisfactory, is not as good as in other areas of learning. **Progress continues to be good**, so by Year 2, standards are above average and achievement is good in reading and writing, but only satisfactory in speaking and listening. Standards are average in mathematics and science and achievement is good taking account of the very good progress of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In most other subjects, achievement is good. By Year 6, **achievement is good** apart from in speaking and listening, history, design and technology and religious education, where it is satisfactory. Pupils with low prior attainment, or with special educational needs, continue to achieve very well. Boys' achievement is better than girls by Year 2, but there is no significant difference by Year 6.

Attitudes and behaviour are **good** and exclusions are very rare. Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality **good**. Pupils' personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** across the school with very good teaching in Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, but does not encourage independent learning enough as too much of it is only satisfactory. Teachers' good knowledge of literacy and numeracy leads to good progress in reading and writing but their current methods lead to only satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. The very good progress among low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs results from very effective collaboration with teaching assistants. Assessments of pupils' work are satisfactory. Limited use is made of ICT for learning across the curriculum.

The curriculum is **good** overall with very good provision for pupils with special educational needs or low prior attainment. However, gifted and talented pupils are not identified and their needs are not planned for. Provision for sports is good. Accommodation and resources are very good, although the library needs re-stocking. Care, support and guidance are **good** as are the partnerships with parents and links with other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are **good**. The headteacher has provided clear leadership during a challenging period of amalgamation and falling rolls. He manages resources very well. The governing body knows the school well and takes an active role in shaping improvements.

PARENTS AND PUPILS VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are **very satisfied** with the quality of provision the school makes and with its leadership and management. Pupils enjoy coming to school and like the friendships they have and the work they do.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise achievement in the skills of speaking and listening;
- Identify and make specific provision for pupils who are gifted and talented;
- Develop Foundation Stage teaching to improve children's independent learning and creativity;
- Extend the use of ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are **above average** overall. In English and mathematics, standards are above the national average and average in science, representing **good achievement**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, achievement is good.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs or low prior attainment is very good.
- Achievement in the skills of speaking and listening is not as good as in reading and writing.
- In the Foundation Stage, progress in developing spoken language, creativity and independence lags behind other areas of learning.

Commentary

1. Pupils reach an above average standard overall by Year 6. Standards of work are higher than 2003 results in mathematics and science and similar to those gained in English. This represents good achievement based on pupils' prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs or whose prior attainment is below average, achieve very well. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 is average and the achievement of these above average pupils is satisfactory. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified, so the school is not able to track their progress or analyse their achievement. Boys' and girls' achievement is similar by Year 6. Standards in English are above average. In speaking and listening, standards are broadly average and progress is not as good as in reading and writing. Standards are above average in all areas of mathematics; pupils make particularly good progress in problem solving. In science, standards are average, partly because pupils lack confidence in using enquiry skills independently.
2. The school sets challenging targets that it exceeded in 2003 and is on course to reach this year. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved faster than the national trend by Year 2 and in line with the trend by Year 6. Standards in design and technology and religious education show good improvement.

Foundation Stage

3. On starting school, standards in nursery are below average. Children make good progress by the time they enter Year 1 and most are reaching the goals expected of them. However, children make less progress in developing their spoken language skills, their creativity and independence. Children with special educational needs make very good progress due to the well-focused support that they receive. Though teaching is good overall, children are not being encouraged to be more independent and make choices for themselves.

Key Stage 1

4. Standards are above average in reading and writing and average in speaking and listening. They are average in mathematics and science by Year 2. Boys do better than girls. Pupils' achievement is good across the curriculum. In particular, pupils with low prior attainment or special educational needs make very good progress. This is due to some very good teaching in Year 2 and very good teamwork with teaching assistants which ensures that pupils get very good support. In history, geography, art and music, standards are above expectations and in line with expectations in ICT, design and technology, physical education and religious education.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (15.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.6 (15.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.6 (16.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

- Standards are above average in English and mathematics, and above expectations in geography, art and music. In other subjects, pupils do as well as in all schools. Pupils' achievement is good in most subjects and satisfactory in all others. Good progress is made in English, mathematics, science, geography, ICT, art, music and physical education. Pupils with special educational needs, or who enter Year 3 with low attainment, make very good progress. Good teaching, often very good in Year 6, and effective use of teaching assistants bring about this achievement.
- Pupils' acquire good skills in literacy, which enable them to take generally good advantage of the curriculum. The same is true of skills in numeracy. However, skills in speaking and listening are not as well developed as reading and writing. Consequently, pupils sometimes have difficulty in expressing their thoughts and adequately engaging in discussions, which hampers their learning. Their skills in ICT are generally satisfactory, enabling them to participate adequately in other subjects when the opportunity arises.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.2 (27.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.4 (28.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.4 (29.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their personal development is **good** as the school makes **good** provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is **satisfactory** and punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive and supportive relationships with others.
- The very positive climate for learning enables pupils to gain in self-confidence and awareness of the needs of others.
- Behaviour is good overall though a small minority present some challenging behaviour.
- Pupils very willingly accept responsibility and take their role on the school council very seriously.
- There are good systems to encourage attendance and follow up absence.

Commentary

7. Attendance has improved recently and is now in line with schools nationally. The school works hard to establish reasons for absence and to encourage pupils to attend regularly. Most parents now contact school on the first day of absence with explanations and the school calls those who do not to establish the whereabouts of their child. Punctuality is good, with only a few regular latecomers at the start of the day.
8. Pupils' personal development is good. They have good attitudes towards school and are very interested in what is provided for them. Good working habits develop and most pupils work sensibly. However, in a significant minority of lessons, when not directly under the watchful eye of the teacher, a few do not sustain concentration and sometimes misbehave. Overall, pupils behave well in all school situations, and particularly at playtimes, when the majority participate in a very wide range of activities. These are organised, led and supervised by teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors and their involvement does much to enhance the quality of play and co-operation in the playground. The few pupils who do not always behave as the school expects are managed well. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively.
9. A very positive climate for learning is engendered by the headteacher with the active support of all staff and pupils. The school has high expectations of behaviour and relationships. Pupils trust their teachers and support staff and know they are there to help them achieve their best. As a result, pupils enjoy very good relationships with staff and each other, and the achievements of all in the school are celebrated. Certificates showing adults' qualifications and children's work are displayed to good effect in the foyer and elsewhere, helping raise and reinforce the self-esteem of staff and pupils alike. As part of the schools personal development programme, pupils sit in a circle in their classes to discuss and share feelings and views about themselves and others. This circle time activity also enables them to grow in confidence, develop an awareness of others' needs, and learn right from wrong. Pupils are very willing to take responsibility, for example taking their involvement in the new school council very seriously. Collectively, school council members feel that they are able to make a real contribution to the school. For example, they have made suggestions for improvements to external play facilities that the school has acted upon.
10. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted. Their moral development is well supported in many contexts, including assemblies. This is reflected in their good behaviour, awareness of moral issues, and respect for adults and each other. Pupils demonstrate good social skills. They are polite to visitors and each other and chat and play positively at lunchtimes. Cultural development is promoted well, for instance through a range of visitors and visits, such as to Preston Park Museum and other locations such as Whitby. Understanding the culture of other faiths is aided by visits to a mosque in Middlesbrough and other places of worship. Spiritual development is enhanced through thoughtfully planned assemblies and opportunities such as those in art. Here, they find to their delight that they, too, can produce art and design of good quality that is appreciated and admired by others.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.5
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.

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	229	1	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to day	5	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The curriculum is **good overall** whilst the accommodation and resources provided are **very good**. The care and guidance of pupils are **good**. Teaching overall is **good** as are links with parents.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan well and have good knowledge of how to teach literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers manage behaviour well to enable pupils to concentrate on learning.
- Relationships are very good and contribute positively to learning.
- The use and collaboration with teaching assistants are very effective.
- There is too much satisfactory teaching in the Foundation Stage.
- Gifted and talented pupils are not identified for specific provision.
- There is not enough use of ICT for learning in other subjects.

Commentary

11. The quality of teaching is good across the school with almost one fifth very good. This is mainly concentrated in Year 2 and Year 6. In the Foundation Stage, most teaching is good but a considerable amount is only satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen.
12. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good overall but there is a higher proportion of satisfactory teaching than in other parts of the school. Teachers and assistants have a good understanding of children's learning needs and work together effectively as a team. Relationships are very good. Sessions are well planned, with activities that meet children's needs and ensure that they make mostly good progress in all areas of learning. However, there is a tendency for adults to take the lead too strongly in activities. As a result, children are not learning to be as independent as they could be, to make choices and to express themselves more fully. This holds back spoken language development and creativity.

13. Teaching in the rest of the school is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge overall and a good command of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This results in overall good progress in these areas, although progress in speaking and listening is only satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Objectives and key questions are clearly identified and well-tailored activities chosen so that all groups of pupils can make progress. Lessons are usually organised into distinct but well-connected parts. This is a distinctive feature of good lessons in English and mathematics. In very good lessons, activities challenge pupils to think hard and stretch their skills and understanding. In these lessons, but not so much in others, learning is often checked well and followed up in the final part of the lesson, so that pupils make very good progress.
14. Teaching is effectively matched to the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and low attaining pupils. These are very well supported by teaching assistants who provide a very good bridge between individual needs and lesson activities. Teachers help pupils with special needs achieve as well as they can by good use of individual assessments. Though lessons are also suitably varied so that more able pupils can progress, targeting of the gifted and talented is not evident, as the school does not yet separately identify these pupils for support.
15. A good feature of most teaching is the emphasis placed on providing activities that are interesting and motivating. Teachers use a variety of ways to praise and encourage pupils who are reluctant to learn. They have effective strategies to deal with those who are being inattentive or noisy. Consequently, relationships are very good and contribute positively to learning as pupils on the whole take care with their work and try hard to complete it. Increasing use is being made of ICT to help pupils learn in other subjects, and, where this happens, it effectively promotes learning. However, this is not, as yet, planned for systematically throughout the school.
16. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, there are some weaknesses that limit learning. In these, activities are mundane and teachers do not expect enough of pupils, particularly those who are higher attaining, so that learning is too slow. Learning objectives are sometimes not sharp enough to give clear direction to the lesson and to ensure pupils can progress to higher levels. Sometimes, pupils who are being inattentive are not dealt with firmly enough so that progress is not unduly interrupted.
17. In English, mathematics and science in particular, teachers use the assessment information available to them from formal tests and their own marking to monitor progress and set targets for improvement. Pupils are organised into attainment groups that allow teaching to be appropriately varied. Work in all subjects is marked regularly, but is not consistently marked against learning objectives. Pupils know their targets but feedback in lessons outside of English and mathematics, and in those that are only satisfactory, is not given enough emphasis.
18. The quality of teaching was judged to be good at the last inspection and all lessons were at least satisfactory. The school has sustained this quality despite having to manage rapidly falling pupil numbers and the subsequent turnover of staff.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 52 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	9 (17 %)	28 (54 %)	15 (29%)	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.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **good**. Curriculum enrichment is **satisfactory**. Accommodation and resources are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs and low attaining pupils are provided for very well.
- The availability and use of support staff are very good
- Specific opportunities are not provided for pupils who are gifted and talented.
- ICT is not used sufficiently across the curriculum.
- Accommodation and resources are very good but library resources need improving.
- Pupils have good opportunities to participate in sports.

Commentary

19. Curriculum provision is good and meets the National Curriculum statutory requirements. Schemes of work are securely based on recommended units of work and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Although there is no co-ordinator for personal, social and health education, provision is good. Circle time discussion is established in all classes. There is a planned programme for sex and relationships education for older pupils, Year 5 pupils are involved in the Justice Support Project and the school is preparing to be involved in the Healthy Schools Award scheme. The new school council provides good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and listen to the views of others. These initiatives have a positive impact on the quality of relationships and on the standard of behaviour throughout the school.
20. There is equality of access to a broad and balanced curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and low attaining pupils is very good. In day-to-day lessons, teachers and support staff provide well-matched tasks to meet different learning needs. Individual learning plans are used effectively and shared with teaching assistants. Additional learning programmes are implemented well; a range of assessment methods is used to select pupils for inclusion and to track their progress. However, specific planned provision for the gifted and talented is not made, as these pupils are not yet identified.
21. Curriculum development is satisfactory. This is because the school is only just beginning to make the curriculum flexible enough to meet more fully the needs and interests of pupils. Teachers are beginning to adapt the recommended units of work to make links between subjects, to encourage greater creativity and to develop thinking skills. The science curriculum is being revised to take account of the combination of mixed age and single age classes now established. However, these initiatives are only just underway and have not had time yet to have an impact on standards. Where developments have had more time to become established, their outcomes are more positive on raising standards. For example, following changes to the literacy hour, pupils are benefiting from the special time allocated to reading and are practising and improving their skills at a good rate.
22. Opportunities to enrich curriculum experiences through the arts and through visits and visitors are satisfactory. For example, Year 5 pupils visit Whitby as part of their studies in geography, and Years 1 and 2 visit the museum at Preston Park. Pupils respond well to the good opportunities to play and enjoy a range of sports including football, basketball and table tennis. The range of other activities the school provides to support learning beyond the school day is, however, less well developed. Pupils can learn to play the recorder and sing in the school choir or they can attend clubs for art and craft. The teaching of music is further supported by the local authority's peripatetic music service.

23. Overall, accommodation is very good but more could be done to develop the outside environment for children in the Foundation Stage. Teachers make good use of the space available for practical subjects such as design and technology. The provision of two computer suites has had a positive impact on the teaching and learning of ICT but is not yet supporting the development and application of these skills adequately across the curriculum. Although the library stock needs improving, the quality of other resources is very good overall. There is a good number of teaching assistants to improve learning for individuals and small groups. Very effective use is made of teaching assistants and other supervisory staff to provide extra help in the classroom and to support outside play activities. Issues from the last inspection about curriculum planning and the level of resources for design and technology and religious education have now been fully addressed.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **good** care of pupils, ensuring their welfare and safety. Staff provide **good** support and guidance that help pupils enjoy school and try their best. The involvement of pupils in the school's work is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good relationships between pupils and with adults in school make a significant contribution to the good care provided.
- There are good systems for seeking and acting on pupils' views that ensure they are involved well in the school's work.

Commentary

24. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Staff know pupils well and respond conscientiously to their personal needs. The vast majority of pupils feel that they have a trusted adult to turn to for help if they need it. Pupils also turn to other pupils for support and guidance, especially those with particular responsibilities around school. Staff readily share with a more senior person any concerns they may have about the welfare of pupils. These very good relationships form a secure basis for school life that encourages pupils to try their best.
25. Teachers use rewards effectively to motivate pupils to do their best work and to behave well. They actively promote pupils' welfare by helping them learn how to keep healthy and safe. The school takes effective steps to ensure that pupils are provided with a clean, safe and secure environment. Health and safety risk assessments are carried out and necessary action taken promptly. The school has adopted local authority procedures for child protection but recognises the need to review and update its policy, especially to ensure specific training for all staff. The school makes good arrangements to help children settle in and for when they move from one class to another. Parents are welcomed into school on a daily basis, so they can easily discuss anything about their child's welfare with staff.
26. The school encourages pupils to become involved in activities that enable them to share views, understand issues and make valued contributions to school life and the wider world. For instance, a school council has been recently established that helps pupils learn how to gather opinions, share ideas and make decisions. The school council is well run, giving all pupils the opportunity to raise any concerns and make improvements. Pupils know that their views are taken seriously, as they have free rein to raise issues and see their ideas realised around school. Circle time is beginning to be established as a forum for pupils to discuss their views by raising and trying to resolve issues. Surveys and suggestion boxes are also used to identify ideas and concerns. Pupils are strongly involved in the charitable work that the school engages in. They are encouraged to work closely alongside staff and parents and provide benefits for a variety of people in need. Pupils are highly satisfied with what is provided and there is very little that they would like to improve.

27. The school has a well-organised system for assessing progress in all subjects. Particularly in English, mathematics and science, targets are set for improvement and pupils are generally well involved in their own learning through knowing how they are getting along. The school monitors progress soundly through its subject co-ordinators, but the information is not scrutinised rigorously enough during the year by the headteacher and governing body to track the progress of all individuals and groups.
28. The school has maintained the good level of care, support and guidance identified in the last inspection.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established a **good** partnership with parents, other schools and colleges, and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's action to ensure parents' satisfaction and to act on their views is very effective, so parents are very supportive of the school.
- Staff and governors provide parents with a good range of information about school.
- The school works well with other schools and has established good links with the community.

Commentary

29. The school has a commitment to working closely with parents and so provides them with good quality information about school life and the progress that their children make. The attitudes and values that the school promotes are clearly presented in the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. Both documents contain all of the information for parents that they are required to provide. The prospectus, in particular, gives parents a good outline of school procedures and the curriculum. Teachers are easily accessible to parents each day and provide information that parents find useful during formal consultation sessions. Written reports give parents a good picture of how their child is progressing academically and of their personal development. Parents receive frequent newsletters with additional information to keep them up to date. Open days, when parents are invited into school to see their children working at first hand, are a good extension of the information available for parents and the commitment of the school to working closely with them.
30. Part of its partnership with parents is the school's efforts to establish their views on what they like best and what they would like to see improved. Questionnaires on a wide range of school activities are issued and analysed, so that new developments can be planned, taking parents' ideas into account. The school has a successful 'open door' policy that enables the headteacher and governors to receive parents' concerns, especially as the large majority of parents feel that staff are approachable and helpful. Parents are very appreciative of school events that involve their children actively. These include concerts, sports days, and social events such as discos that are organised by a small group of dedicated parents and teachers. They support fund-raising particularly well. Most parents ensure that their children attend regularly and on time, dressed in the school uniform and suitably equipped for the day's activities. Although many parents help school by ensuring that homework is completed, the school finds that many do not support their child's learning actively, especially with tasks such as hearing their children read. Consequently, the school is developing a number of projects to encourage greater parental involvement. Several parents regularly help in school, especially in classes of younger children where some good projects are in place to help them find out what their children are learning and how they can help. In this way, the school is strengthening community involvement.

31. The school takes many opportunities to work with other schools and develop links with the community. The school participates in a number of networks and, for example, benefits from the sports co-ordinators programme. There is regular use of community facilities and the school welcomes visitors to enhance the curriculum. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 visit the secondary school to take part in projects in several subjects during term time. There are also good systems to aid transfer to secondary school. For instance, former pupils from the neighbouring secondary school visit to answer questions from Year 6 pupils about what they can expect to find. Teachers also lead class discussions in circle time to address any anxieties. Some pupils attend summer schools as part of their induction to secondary education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good**. Governance is **good**. The headteacher and key staff provide **good** leadership and management. The headteacher's financial management is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership and management and have established very good teams.
- The headteacher and key staff are very good role models for staff and pupils.
- Staff induction and development are good overall.
- The headteacher manages finance and resources very well.
- There is a good system of monitoring.
- Assessment information is not kept under close scrutiny during the school year.

Commentary

32. The school has an effective governing body that enjoys a good and thriving partnership with the headteacher. The governing body has a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Governors are very clear on the future budget forecast and the impact upon the budget of falling pupil numbers. Their view of standards with regard to teaching is less clear and they reported that this was very much the responsibility of the professionals. This is partly due to lack of first hand information about the school, as the system of special interest governors is not currently working well. They have worked closely with staff in the achievement of the 'Investors in People' award and this has helped to develop and strengthen the links between governors and the school community. They utilise the range of skills found within the governing body for the benefit of school developments and ensure that the school fulfils all its statutory duties. They give good support to the headteacher and school. They provide a good level of challenge, taking their responsibilities very seriously and asking relevant questions relating to school priorities and finance. Committees meet regularly and are well attended. Governors ensure that parents have access to them by providing fortnightly surgeries, though these are rarely attended. The school improvement plan has governor input through their committee structure that helps to set the direction of the school.
33. Leadership is good. The headteacher provides the school community with a strong sense of direction and provides a high level of care, both for staff and pupils. School improvement planning clearly identifies the agreed priorities for school developments over the next year and these include a good focus upon establishing systems of self-review. The school had recently changed from a three-year to a one-year school improvement plan but now recognises that this hinders forward planning.

34. There is a commitment to the careful selection and development of key staff. Focused professional development is also used to help to improve the skills of those staff identified through the school monitoring system. Subject leaders for English and mathematics, and the special educational needs co-ordinator are part of the senior management team. They promote their subjects well and responsibilities and the outcomes of their monitoring are translated into action through the school improvement plan. The careful development of teams has ensured that loss of key staff due to reductions in pupil numbers has not affected standards. However, the strength of subject leadership across the school is variable, as teachers learn and develop new roles as a consequence of staff turnover. The headteacher fully recognises this and a good feature of his leadership is the involvement of staff in external professional development programmes and awards such as 'Investors in People'.
35. Management is good. The headteacher maintains a good focus on self-evaluation and he critically analyses his own performance. School improvement planning also involves good systems of monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum, although personal, social and health education and citizenship are not included yet. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities, are well supported through the established pattern of teams, and have access to relevant training. Policies and systems, such as behaviour management and assessment, are consistently reflected in the work across the school. Performance management and appraisal systems for non-teaching staff are properly implemented. There is good analysis of data for use as a basis for setting pupil targets, aimed at improving provision and raising standards. However, once targets are set, the data is not regularly scrutinised at a senior level. Hence, the progress of particular pupils and groups of pupils, such as the gifted and talented, is not monitored closely enough to ensure they achieve as much as they are capable of doing.
36. The headteacher's financial management is very good. A three-year forecast is shared with governors and this ensures accurate and sufficient information to support school improvement planning effectively. Though a large balance has been carried forward in recent years, this has not been at the expense of the quality and range of accommodation, staffing and resources available. This skilful management has been particularly important in controlling the financial impact of falling pupil numbers and the consequent need to reduce staffing levels. Principles of best value are well applied.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	754,319
Total expenditure	761,203
Expenditure per pupil	2357

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	71,037
Balance carried forward to the next	64,153

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. Thirteen observations were made in the Foundation Stage and teachers' planning and assessments were considered.
38. In the nursery and reception classes, children get off to a good start. Provision is good overall and very good for children with special educational needs. The children start nursery with below average standards. They make good progress in most areas of learning to reach the expected goals by the end of reception. The exceptions are in the development of spoken language skills, creativity and independence in which progress is only satisfactory. Teaching and learning are generally good, though there are too many lessons that are no more than satisfactory. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall with some good features such as teamwork and involvement of parents in some areas.
39. Although the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, it is not on a par with the very good teaching seen in the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Progress is good overall and children reach the standards expected.
- Teaching and learning are generally good.
- Opportunities to develop children's thinking and independence skills are often missed.

Commentary

40. Children develop good relationships with adults and peers. They are encouraged to consider the needs of others and their behaviour is generally good. Children learn well to work as part of the class and also in groups, taking turns and sharing resources. Their attitudes are good; they learn to maintain their concentration and sit quietly when listening to the teacher. They select resources independently to support their chosen activity from the range provided. Consequently, their progress is good. Although adults interact well with children, questions and suggestions that probe and extend children's thinking are too limited. Opportunities to develop children's independence are missed or are restricted due to excessive direction by adults. For example, during snack time it is the adults who give out and collect snacks and drinks.
41. Teaching and learning are generally good. This is because teachers' planning and systems of assessment are good and the Foundation Stage team works very well together. Adults are very good role models with regard to behaviour and relationships. However, as it is adults who largely initiate tasks, children get little chance to develop their own ideas and activities. Adults need to provide more opportunities to build upon and extend their play and thinking.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good apart from in the skills of spoken language.
- Teaching and learning are good overall but children's independence is not sufficiently encouraged.
- Relationships between staff, children and parents are good.

Commentary

42. On entry, standards are below average, but by the end of reception they are in line with expectations. In the nursery, children know some initial sounds and can match some objects to name cards, for example 'ambulance'. Children in reception show an understanding of the sequence of events and correctly know that the book they are reading is a book of facts and can be described as non-fiction. Children in both nursery and reception invent stories during role-play, related to their study of garden plants.
43. On entry to the Foundation Stage, children make rapid progress at first in their acquisition of the basic skills. However, teachers' levels of expectation and challenge do not increase as children become more skilled. This particularly affects children's levels of independence and their ability to talk to other children and to adults. Nonetheless, children make generally good progress from their low starting point on entry.
44. Effective teaching is characterised by tasks that are well matched to children's levels of ability. Good support is provided both by teachers and by assistants to enable children to make good progress. Relationships are good and the adults are good role models for the children. Systems for assessment are good. However, opportunities to engage children in meaningful conversations related to tasks begun by the children are few. This is hindering the children's progress with regard to the development of their use of spoken language.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and standards are in line with expectations.
- Teaching and learning are good, although adults do not encourage independence enough.
- Links with parents to support learning are good.

Commentary

45. Children achieve well from a lower than average starting point, as standards by the end of reception are in line with what is expected for their age. Children in the nursery count to five using their fingers and match numerals to words using a number line. In reception, they can combine two groups of objects within ten. They record their calculations using a variety of approaches. Progress across the Foundation Stage is good. This is assisted by the provision of workshops that allow parents to work alongside children at school. This also contributes to parents' knowledge and skills of how to support children at home.

46. Teaching and learning of mathematical development is good. This is because planning is effective and children's thinking is supported by the provision of good resources. Teachers and assistants give clear demonstrations of skills, which reinforce both the strategies to be used and the mathematical language required. Sometimes opportunities are missed to develop children's practical skills in measuring and weighing, since adults do not encourage individual trial and error, but give too much direction.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress and achieve standards in line with expectations for their age.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.

Commentary

47. Achievement is good. Children in nursery enjoy and learn well from practical activities. For example, they plant seeds to understand the need for soil and water. They use a computer program to construct their own flower and, in doing so, they demonstrate good mouse control. They can identify roots, leaves and petals. In the reception class, children talk about their recent walk around their neighbourhood. They find out about mini-beasts, looking closely at the animals and using a simple key to help them identify the creatures. They sequence and record the life cycle of an insect using a computer program.
48. A suitable curriculum, based upon providing practical experiences, is carefully planned; activities clearly focus upon the development of skills and knowledge; and good support from adults positively promotes good progress. In reception, the pace of progress is sometimes slower. This occurs when resources are not carefully selected to support children's learning needs. For example, children lost concentration when a discussion about a walk in the neighbourhood was not supported by visual stimulus, such as digital photographs.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in physical development meet expectations, as children make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Teaching assistants effectively promote children's progress.
- Resources have improved since the last inspection.

Commentary

49. Children achieve well. They learn to throw and catch a large ball and beanbag. They move around the space provided, showing awareness of others and also of their own position in that space. They practise these skills and this results in improvements. Sessions are well managed by the adults and children listen and respond very well to instructions. They stop and start on command, listen to their teacher and try to follow her guidance. The teaching assistant demonstrated good support in a lesson where she provided encouragement, praise and a similar quality of guidance as the teacher.

50. Since the previous inspection, the provision of suitable outdoor resources to develop children's gross motor skills has been addressed. The planned use of this provision, along with large wheeled toys in the external nursery area, ensures that children now make good progress in the development of those skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards meet expectations overall as children's progress is generally good.
- Teaching and learning is good, although opportunities are missed to develop children's independence and to extend their creativity.

Commentary

51. In the nursery, a good range of activities is provided. Children use a wide selection of materials to make pictures, employing cutting instruments effectively to shape malleable materials. They use their imagination in role-play and become gardeners in a garden centre. However, adults do not intervene consistently enough to extend the thinking of the children so they try out new possibilities. In reception, children use materials to make a model of a garden. However, the template for the model was provided for the children and the choice of materials was restricted, so opportunities for personal creativity and making choices were missed. Overall, progress in skill development and in acquiring knowledge is good. However, children are not encouraged enough to apply their skills and understanding independently.
52. Teachers plan a wide range of activities that promote skills and knowledge development with relation to creativity. The resources provided are good and the children have access to a wide range of materials. However, activities are sometimes led too strongly by adults with too much direction about what to do. Consequently, children do not learn to make choices, or to develop and extend their creative thinking. Careful intervention and probing questions are insufficiently used to extend and enrich children's creative thinking and experiences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in reading and writing is good.
- Teaching is good, based on confident subject knowledge and good planning.
- Achievement in speaking and listening is not as good as in reading and writing.
- Pupils who find literacy difficult achieve very well because of the very good provision for them.
- The subject leader provides very good leadership.
- The library is not well stocked, so is not used sufficiently to promote positive attitudes to reading.

Commentary

53. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and similar to results in national tests in 2003 thus sustaining the good improvement from the sudden dip in 2001. Boys do generally better than girls by Year 2, but this difference is less apparent by Year 6. Achievement is good in both reading and writing. Pupils with special educational needs, or who enter school with low attainment, achieve very well.
54. Progress in speaking and listening is not as good as in reading and writing and standards are only average. Most pupils willingly engage in conversation with adults new to the school. However, many do not have a good spoken vocabulary or good fluency and, in some cases, this slows the pace of lessons, as they struggle to verbalise their thoughts. Although pupils read well, in discussions with them about their favourite books and authors, conversation was limited to simple answers not always given in sentences. Teachers are aware of these difficulties, and consciously use a wide range of technical vocabulary and reinforce correct speech. Fresh approaches have been introduced to help develop spoken language and expand pupils' narrow vocabulary range, but these have not yet brought improvement.
55. The school has successfully raised standards in reading to match writing standards because of a renewed emphasis on developing reading skills in the curriculum. All teachers plan reading workshops that enable them to work closely with specific groups of pupils on particular aspects of reading. This is most successful in Year 6, where teachers ensure that those engaged in independent reading activities stay on task. In less successful lessons, because the teacher does not keep a watchful eye on all groups of pupils, levels of concentration waver and a few do not apply themselves to the best of their ability. This inconsistent application of the method slows the pace of progress in reading across the school. Although parents, in the main, support younger children in reading at home, this is not always the case for older pupils. The school is aware of this problem and is actively encouraging increased parental involvement in pupils' learning. The school library is spacious and well organised. However, it lacks exciting and interesting reading material to motivate and encourage pupils to read more books.

56. In writing, good teaching in the early years establishes the basic skills, so standards by Year 2 are good. Consistent attention to handwriting, punctuation and 'zero tolerance' to incorrect spelling help most pupils to reach high standards. The continued sharp focus by all teachers on developing writing skills ensures good progress. The impact of staff training is evident; staff display good subject knowledge and insist upon high standards of work. In a lesson to learn about character analysis, a pupil took on the role of a key character from a book and was asked questions enthusiastically by others. The teacher adeptly expanded the answers, ensuring that character traits were carefully examined. As a result of this and similarly interesting teaching methods, pupils are well prepared for writing activities and produce work of a good standard. Hence, pupils are able to write in a range of styles. Very good work is celebrated and framed for display in the foyer.
57. Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in Year 6 that is characterised by excellent subject knowledge. Teachers clearly identify what pupils are to learn in their planning, ensuring that those who find reading and writing difficult can be well supported by assistants. Teachers plan interesting lessons and make good links between reading and writing. They also plan to reinforce specific skills taught in literacy in other areas of the curriculum, such as history. For example, in one lesson pupils pretended to be an evacuee in 1941 and learned how to plan an appropriate letter, organised into paragraphs. Teachers ensure that pupils have opportunities to participate in lessons and use a range of learning resources to interest and motivate them. Lessons are taught in an orderly environment, based on mutual respect and commitment to learning. Very effective teamwork with teaching assistants promotes the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
58. The subject co-ordinator is skilled. She has worked hard to make important changes yet recognises that there are still areas to develop, demonstrating very good leadership. The co-ordinator is monitoring progress and using data in order to plan for the future. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection and has made progress in raising standards in reading.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. The school makes good use of opportunities for developing literacy across the curriculum in order to maintain and improve standards still further. The good quality of lessons in English and other subjects shows the effects of the school's initiatives to improve writing. Reading activities and resources are used well across the school to achieve different learning purposes. However, opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills are not shaped by a clear overall plan or matched consistently to pupils' actual language needs. Consequently, pupils frequently find it hard to express their thoughts clearly when speaking, or to sustain their involvement in a discussion. This slows their progress and restricts their achievement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 6 are above average and achievement is good.
- Teaching in Year 3 to Year 6 is mainly very good, based on very effective methods.
- The leadership and management of the subject leader are very good.
- The progress made by low attaining pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 is very good.
- Teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs.

Commentary

60. By Year 2, standards are average. Pupils subtract 11 and nine from given numbers by using ten minus/add one as appropriate. When using a floor robot, they distinguish movement in a straight line from turning movements and are able to describe right angles as 90 degree turns. In Year 6, standards are above the national average and higher than they were in tests in 2003. Pupils in Year 6 develop their strategies for problem solving; they identify and gather the information necessary and are able to explain their conclusions, providing reasons to support their thinking. Achievement is good across the school. There is very good progress amongst the lower attaining pupils who just reached Level 2 by Year 2. Progress quickens between Year 3 and 6 for most pupils. This is because of the consistently good and, often, very good teaching that they receive.
61. Teaching is good overall across the school but there is some variation. In Years 1 and 2, teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. When teaching is very good there are clear links made with previous learning, a focus upon expecting pupils to explain their strategies and very effective use of resources. The teacher makes close assessment of pupils' learning during the lesson and makes adjustments to ensure good progress. In a minority of lessons, however, progress is affected by a lack of pace and a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Teaching is good and about half very good, in Years 3 to 6. In the most effective lessons, there is a very good level of support and challenge from both the teacher and the assistant, who demonstrate good subject knowledge and use probing questions to extend pupils' thinking. Lower achieving pupils and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress overall. This is due to high levels of effective support and the use of teaching methods that involve investigative and practical approaches. These methods help pupils to develop their understanding of concepts such as reflective symmetry. There is a good level of challenge generally for all groups, although gifted and talented pupils are not separately identified for specific support.
62. The subject leader provides very good leadership and management. Monitoring of the subject is thorough and enables the subject leader to have a very clear understanding of issues related to teaching and learning. The outcomes of evaluation are translated into action as school priorities. There is a key focus upon the development of teaching through observation and feedback, the development of staff expertise through relevant professional development and visits to observe leading practice. Pupils' progress against the key objectives is tracked and they are given termly targets. However, the target setting system is not yet fully established, as marking does not consistently refer to the progress pupils are making towards the targets. ICT is not used sufficiently to promote learning in the subject.
63. The focus upon ensuring that mathematics has kept a high profile shows the subject leaders' commitment to, and enthusiasm for, the subject. This is achieved through the provision of themed weeks, links to drama through the use of theatrical groups and mathematical trials that promote the subject as enjoyable and linked to real-life experiences.
64. Standards in this subject have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of subject leadership is now very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. Mathematical skills are developed well in mathematics lessons to enable pupils to access other subjects in the curriculum. This gives pupils the confidence to use these skills when required and promotes good progress. So, for example, pupils can read and complete databases in ICT lessons, record and calculate findings from scientific investigations and make accurate recordings from their observations in geographical studies.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs make very good progress.
- The most able pupils in the school make only satisfactory progress.
- Inadequate planning across single age and mixed age classes has restricted the progress of some pupils.

Commentary

66. Standards in science at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with the national averages. Pupils make good progress and achieve well overall. Pupils with low prior attainment and those with special educational needs make better progress than other groups of pupils. Their achievement is very good. This is because teachers and support staff provide them with very good support and help them to be successful in the tasks they are given to do. However, the most able pupils in the school make only satisfactory progress, because not enough is expected of them and they are not always given sufficient information about what they need to do next to improve. Their achievement is satisfactory.
67. By Year 2, pupils have satisfactory knowledge, understanding and investigative skills. They are able to name a good range of sound sources, learning that sound is made when an object vibrates by investigating this using a range of equipment provided by the teacher. They investigate materials, finding out what a seed needs to grow, learning how to make a prediction and record what they have found out in simple tables, diagrams and charts. By Year 6, pupils know more about the required topics, such as materials. They can make a simple electrical circuit with a switch and know that the thickness of the electrical wire affects the brightness of the bulb. They have a secure understanding of what makes a test fair and can use a range of equipment safely when carrying out investigations.
68. The quality of teaching is consistently good. Pupils are managed well and behaviour is good. Teachers' planning is thorough and there are clear learning objectives that provide a sharp focus for each lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this well to demonstrate and explain new topics. There is a good emphasis on experimental and investigative science. This ensures that pupils learn how to apply their knowledge and skills to new investigations. However, it is only recently that teachers have placed sufficient emphasis on the importance of pupils planning their own investigations and making decisions about how to record their findings. This has hindered the progress of the most able pupils. Similarly, ICT has not yet been used to best effect to help pupils, the most able in particular, to achieve more.
69. The school has found it difficult to adjust the curriculum to take account of pupils moving through a combination of single-age and mixed-age classes. Progress has been adversely affected, particularly across Years 1 and 2, where new learning has been organised in the wrong order. The subject leader recognises this and knows that a review of curriculum provision is needed to develop the subject further. Overall, her leadership and management of the subject are good. She has a clear view of standards and regularly monitors the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Although standards are not quite as high as they were at the last inspection, there are now signs of gradual improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Four lessons were seen and pupils' portfolios of work were examined.

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, attaining in line with the national expectation.
- Staff professional development is good.
- ICT is not used systematically for learning across the curriculum.
- The current system of assessment is not based securely on national expectations.
- Resources and accommodation are good.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for learning.

Commentary

70. Standards are in line with national expectations. By Year 6, pupils are able to input data and interpret their findings using a database. They understand that, sometimes, inadequate information can give unreliable results. They make good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils plan and give instructions enabling a floor robot to move. They describe accurately the outcomes of their programming. Their progress is good.
71. Teaching and learning are good overall. This is because effective planning ensures that lessons are well structured. Teachers and assistants provide clear explanations, give good demonstrations and provide an effective balance of support and challenge through probing questions. This is based on confident subject knowledge. Sessions at the end of lessons are used well to consolidate and extend thinking and teachers have good subject knowledge. There is an effective focus upon pupils predicting and thinking things through during lessons. Pupils respond well, showing interest and, usually, good concentration though they can be easily distracted when doing independent work in some classes. Pupils in Year 6 explored the use of a control box and more than one output device. They were able to suggest developments and refinements to the program. Teachers' assessments at the end of units describe pupils' performance at and above expectations. Work samples, however, are not judged in relation to national expectations. This, together with the reliance on the use of a nationally recommended format for assessment, results in the subject leader and teachers being unclear on the standards achieved.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is a well-planned programme of study but links with other subject areas have yet to be made explicit. Consequently, ICT is not being used systematically to support developments in other subjects. The subject leader demonstrates good subject knowledge and has supported colleagues with both planning and the delivery of lessons. Training has been provided for all staff. This has ensured that staff have the skills and knowledge to support effective teaching and this is beginning to increase pupils' progress.
73. Good resources and the provision of two ICT suites have enhanced opportunities to develop pupils' skills. Commercial schemes that ensure the systematic development of skills have recently been acquired, but need time to raise standards. Where teachers have access to recent technology, such as interactive whiteboards, these are well used to support teaching and learning. There are sound plans to further extend this facility in classrooms throughout the school in the near future.

74. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements in the level of resources and accommodation. Although standards appear to be lower than those at the last inspection, access to new technology has been very greatly enhanced for each pupil. This has established their competencies in a broader range of skills. The school is well placed to improve standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Teachers use the two computer suites to support learning in other subjects. When they use these facilities, such as the interactive whiteboard, this enhances learning, as it did in a history lesson when pupils were looking at vivid evidence of life in 1940's Britain. Pupils acquire sufficient skills to be able to use computers in other subjects, using them confidently to access the Internet, to do word processing, to interrogate databases and to use desktop publishing. However, opportunities to apply these skills are restricted and not planned systematically into the curriculum. Consequently, pupils are not using ICT as much as they could to extend their learning.

HUMANITIES

Geography, History and Religious Education

Four lessons were observed in history and three lessons in religious education. No geography was being taught during the inspection. Pupils' work and teachers' planning were looked at in each subject.

The provision for history and religious education is **satisfactory** and for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations in geography and pupils achieve well.
- By Year 2, standards in history are above expectations, representing good achievement.
- There is a good emphasis on learning through enquiry.
- There is not enough planned use of ICT.
- Standards and resources have improved in religious education since the last inspection.
- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' multicultural, moral and spiritual awareness.

Commentary

76. Standards are above national expectations in geography by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make good progress across the school. This is particularly true of pupils who are below average or who have special educational needs. Pupils show good understanding of the weather and the local environment by Year 2, acquiring a good range of geographical terms and skills. By Year 6, pupils show good understanding of physical features and processes such as rivers and waterfalls and take great care in drawing neat diagrams. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to explain patterns and features and show good understanding of the different views that are held about environmental changes.

77. Standards in history are above those typically found by Year 2 which is due to very good teaching that helps pupils develop good skills of enquiry, gain an understanding of chronology and begin to understand features of everyday life in the last century. Consequently their achievement is good. By Year 6, pupils make satisfactory, though not consistent, progress in learning about a wide range of historical topics. Their attainment is in line with national expectations, as too often the planned activities do not provide sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able, to allow pupils to reach a higher standard. However, standards in Year 4 are high due to lessons that not only focus on gathering factual information, but also prompt pupils to speculate and think about causation. Pupils enjoy history as their teachers often convey an enthusiasm for the subject and bring interest to lessons by using a variety of resources and visits to museums and sites.
78. Standards in religious education by Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the local agreed syllabus and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils learn about faith traditions and worship and are beginning to show understanding of some differences. They make simple comparisons between special Jewish and Christian celebrations and know that 'kosher' means fit to eat. They show, through labelled drawings, a growing understanding of the important features of a Christian church building. By Year 6, pupils show a developing understanding of the meaning of symbols and rites, such as baptism, the significance of the font and the sign of the cross. They make links between their studies and their own experiences and, in doing so, improve their understanding of different faiths and cultures. Their learning is supported well by visits and visitors. For example, in Year 5, pupils visit a nearby mosque to support their studies, which deepens their understanding.
79. Teaching in geography is good overall as it successfully promotes good progress and attainment that is above national expectations. There is a clear focus in pupils' written work on what is required by the National Curriculum. Teachers' high expectations are reflected in the quality and accuracy of responses. Fieldwork is built firmly into planning to develop geographical concepts and skills. In history and religious education, whilst there is some good and very good teaching evident, it is mostly satisfactory. Teachers use a range of methods that encourage discussion and reflection though pupils sometimes struggle to sustain their verbal contributions. In both cases, insufficient emphasis is put on activities that consistently stretch skills and understanding. In religious education, teachers are aware of how to support multi-cultural understanding and deal sensitively with pupils' attitudes towards different communities. Whilst teachers are beginning to use ICT, use is infrequent in all these subjects. Teachers mark work regularly but could involve pupils more in assessing their work and provide more feedback on how to improve.
80. Subject co-ordinators have created sound long-term plans, based on published units of work, which bring coherence and progression to the curriculum. They have gathered useful portfolios of pupils' work to guide expectations about standards. These usefully inform the common assessment and recording arrangements established in each class. However, though records of progress within the units of work are kept, these are not compared with national age-related expectations for standards in geography and history. Co-ordinators provide effective leadership and management of these courses.
81. Provision in geography has improved since the last inspection as standards are higher and the curriculum is better planned. Similarly, there is now an established scheme of work for history that supports continuity of learning, although links between units are rarely made. Good improvement has been made to religious education, which now meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and standards are higher by Year 6. It makes a good contribution to multi-cultural and multi-faith awareness in the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, music, design and technology and physical education

The following lessons were seen: two in music, one in design and technology, three in physical education and none in art. Pupils' work was looked at as well as portfolios of art, tapes of music, examples of models and school displays.

Provision in art, music and physical education is **good** and **satisfactory** for design and technology.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in art and music are above those normally expected and achievement is good.
- Achievement in physical education is good, enhanced by good opportunities to participate in sports.
- Teaching and learning are generally good in art, music and physical education.
- Good quality, specialist workspace is available for art, design and technology and music.
- There is limited use of ICT for learning.

Commentary

82. Standards in art and design are above the national expectations and pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop a range of artistic skills; Year 2 pupils develop the skill of weaving using a simple loom. This is based on a visit to Preston Park museum where the children had first-hand experience of working with an expert making hand-woven mats. In Years 3 to 6, work on textiles was of a very high standard. Older pupils had worked collectively in producing a superb collage of padded appliquéd flowers and leaves. They used a range of fabrics and textiles. Pupils take part well in a whole-school project based on the theme of portraits. In Year 3, pupils make good progress working with clay and explore shape, form and pattern to make clay sculptures based on the school motto, 'Learning for Life'. Portraits are of good quality and show that pupils have learned a wide range of skills.
83. In music, pupils make good progress and achieve standards that are above expectations. In Year 2, pupils sing well together, improving their performance through practice and incorporating actions and simple percussion instruments. In Year 4, pupils create music matched to mood, based on a painting produced by a child. Pupils learn well, eagerly selecting instruments for group work. They make good progress in learning about dynamics, texture and tempo. In both cases, the teacher acts as a good role model and demonstrates to a good standard, showing good subject knowledge. Pupils clearly enjoy opportunities to perform for assemblies, taking pride in the quality of their performance.
84. In design and technology, standards are broadly in line with the expected level by Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 improve their design skills by drawing and labelling designs for a hand puppet. They make sensible decisions about the materials and fixings they will use. They are learning satisfactory skills of evaluating the design and functioning of their product. By Year 6, pupils have added to and improved their design skills. When making bridges, they find out how to increase the strength of their structures and how to make a strong join. They use tools safely and accurately. Pupils need a high level of teacher guidance when putting their designs into practice. This is because they have not yet fully acquired the skills they need to work more independently. However, they are well on the way to doing so, because they are working with a good range of materials and tools. They also practise regularly the skill of identifying what was successful in their work and what they could do to improve it.

85. Standards achieved by pupils in physical education meet national expectations. Pupils in Year 1 learn to travel with, send and catch a ball. Their degree of accuracy is generally sound and they make satisfactory progress. In Years 3 to 6, the techniques of running are carefully demonstrated and pupils learn a range of sports skills, such as those for 'Kwik cricket'. They are encouraged to evaluate and define the skills required. After practice, they are able to evaluate and improve upon their performance. Progress by Year 6 is good and better than by Year 2 because there is a greater focus upon children improving the quality of their work.
86. Teaching is good overall in these subjects. Lessons are well planned and based on national schemes that support progression in learning. For example, in physical education, lessons follow a three-part structure that concludes with a warm-down and debrief which clarifies the skills that need practice. Links are beginning to be made between the subjects to promote learning, for example between design and technology and music, where pupils make a range of musical instruments including simple shakers, flutes and drums. However, whilst the national schemes provide a secure structure, they have not yet been adapted to take full account of pupils' interests, needs and aptitudes. Teachers plan good lessons, partly as the result of effective subject leadership in these areas. In music, a part-time music instructor supports teachers effectively. She works alongside them and her coaching skills clearly have had an impact on the quality of teaching and standards seen. Teachers manage pupils well and behaviour is generally good as a result. Teachers take full advantage of the good quality spaces allocated to the teaching of art, music and design and technology. In design and technology, opportunities for pupils to carry out independent research are limited. In all areas, learning using ICT is restricted and not planned for systematically. Assessment is satisfactory but not informed by national age-related expectations.
87. There has been improvement since the last inspection in physical education and in design and technology. Standards have been maintained in art and design and in music. Achievement in physical education is now good; standards in design and technology meet national expectations, and resources are good. Promotion of sport overall is now a strength. This is achieved through energetic involvement by the subject leader in the sports' co-coordinator initiative and good provision of clubs beyond the school day.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is **good**. Pupils' personal development has a high priority in the school. A considerable range of opportunities is provided through sharing ideas and opinions in lessons, and by taking part in school assemblies, visits and out-of-hours activities. Class discussions in circle time have also been established to help pupils explore and express their feelings, to boost their self-esteem and resolve issues. These sessions make a good overall contribution to learning but there is some variation in quality; some lessons are good and some are only satisfactory.
89. There is no overall scheme for PSHE or citizenship but there is a planned programme of sex and relationships education for older pupils and lessons on drugs education and personal safety. A newly established school council is helping develop pupil participation and pupils' understanding of decision-making. The school operates effectively as a community and encourages social and moral responsibility. As well as sampling circle time, meetings were held with the school council and other groups of pupils. These confirm that pupils are becoming confident in sharing their ideas and exploring opinions with adults. However, the restricted vocabulary and lack of fluency of pupils hold back learning. Although senior members of staff have taken responsibility for the introduction of circle time and the school council, no member of staff is designated to lead the development of PSHE or monitor the quality of provision, to ensure consistency and promote further improvement.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	2
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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