

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKMERE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Potters Bar

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117371

Headteacher: Mrs L M Dyton

Lead inspector: Mr G Timms

Dates of inspection: 26-29 January 2004

Inspection number: 257069

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 – 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 357 |
| School address: | Chace Avenue Potters Bar Hertfordshire |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Leslie Bullamore |
| Date of previous inspection: | 2 November 1998 |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oakmere Primary School has 341 pupils, 26 of whom are part time in the Nursery and this is bigger than average. The school has a socially mixed intake of pupils from the local area, with a significant proportion who have moved from London boroughs. This has led to a high level of mobility of pupils or to a high level of pupils joining the school at times other than the usual time. The school buildings have been improved and the members of staff have created a largely very imaginative and bright learning environment for the pupils. Although there is a range of ability, the attainment of most pupils when they enter the Nursery is well below that expected for their ages, especially with regard to their communication skills and their mathematical development. There are 81 pupils on the register of special educational need, four of whom have statements of special need entitling them to extra support. This is above average when compared with schools nationally. The main needs relate to social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, moderate learning difficulties, and pupils' speech and communication skills. There is a wide range of pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds although the majority are of white British or white non-British descent. Thirteen pupils receive extra support with learning English although none are beginners. The school also has pupils from Traveller backgrounds. The proportion of the parents who claim their entitlement to free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The school has achieved the Gold Artsmark award in recognition of its work in the arts subjects.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--|
| 21038 | Geof Timms | Lead inspector | Foundation Stage English Art and design Physical education English as an additional language |
| 32700 | Laurie Miller | Lay inspector | |
| 30506 | Roy Bowers | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music |
| 30000 | John Tresadern | Team inspector | Mathematics Religious education Geography History Special educational needs |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school with an excellent ethos of inclusion and it provides good value for money. Standards are below those found nationally overall, but pupils make good progress and achieve well given their attainment on entry to the school. The leadership and management are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The achievement of pupils who have completed most of their primary education in the school is good.
- Although most pupils make good progress, standards are well below average in science and pupils' writing skills need improving.
- Standards in information and communication technology and in art and design are above those expected.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and has created a very inclusive ethos offering support and care for all pupils.
- The leadership and management of special educational needs are excellent.
- The teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 is very good.

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The nature of the catchment area has changed, especially due to the level of mobility, and this has resulted in the school having to work hard to maintain the present standards. The provision for special educational needs has improved greatly. There is less unsatisfactory teaching and the accommodation has been improved. The issues raised at the last inspection have all been addressed successfully.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

*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.*

Pupils' achievement is good, especially for those pupils who spend a significant amount of time in the school, and they make good progress given their attainment on entry. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards have improved on the well below average levels found on entry to the school though they remain below average by the end of Reception. Children achieve well through Nursery and Reception years. Throughout Years 1 and 2, most pupils continue to achieve well, although the results of the 2003 national tests indicate that the more able pupils achieved less well than others. By the end of Year 6, standards overall are below average, although achievement is satisfactory. They have risen over recent years in line with the improvements found nationally, although they remain well below average in science and below average in mathematics. In English, standards are broadly in line with those expected and this represents a good level of achievement given the attainment on entry. The standards are adversely affected by the high level of mobility and by the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, the very good provision for these pupils, together with the excellent inclusive ethos, helps them to make good progress and achieve well given their prior attainment. The pupils from Traveller backgrounds, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress owing to the support they receive. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected. Standards in art and design are above those expected and pupils have a wide range of opportunities to use a variety of media

and materials. The pupils' personal development is good and this has a positive impact on their learning. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Attendance is poor. **The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**, and they learn to respect others from a range of different cultures and backgrounds.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of the teaching is good overall, and very good in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Year 6. Over half of the teaching is good or better. The curriculum provided for pupils is broad and balanced and provides a very good level of enrichment through a wide range of extra-curricular and out of school activities. The school is a very caring, supportive and inclusive community and the equality of access and opportunity for all is excellent. In the Foundation Stage, planning is good and the assessment of children's learning gives staff a clear picture of how well they are achieving and a basis for planning future activities. Children are given responsibility through the choice of activities and most develop good working habits in preparation for their future education. Where the teaching is weaker, some pupils are not fully engaged in the lessons and the learning objectives are unclear. The best marking is very effective in assessing pupils' work but overall, marking is inconsistent. The links with parents are good, while those with the local community and other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very good and has been an important factor in the development of the very inclusive ethos surrounding the school. She gives willingly of her time for the families in her care and she has clear and high aspirations for her pupils. The governance of the school is good and the school is well managed. Although the subject coordinators have time to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning in their subjects, there is little evidence that this is sufficiently rigorous or that it has any impact on provision. The assessment coordinator has devised a very effective system for analysing pupils' progress and this provides staff with a clear picture of pupils who are under achieving or doing better than expected over time. The leadership provided by the coordinator of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and this aspect of the school's work is a real strength.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents and pupils are happy with the school. The children like school. The parents think that the leadership, management and teaching are good. They are happy with the way the children are introduced to school, especially in the Nursery and Reception classes. A number of parents feel that communication between the school and home is not always effective and that there is some bullying. The inspection found that the school works very hard to support parents and links between school and home are good. There is little evidence of any bullying and any misbehaviour of any sort is quickly and effectively dealt with.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in science by increasing staff expertise in the skills of teaching investigative and experimental work;
- improve the quality of pupils' writing by carrying out the planned improvements in creative writing and by providing more opportunities for effective writing in other subjects;
- raise the standards of all of the teaching to that of the best in the school by:
 - ensuring the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is sufficiently rigorous;
 - ensuring all pupils are sufficiently engaged in their learning;
 - improving the writing of learning objectives, individual and group targets and the marking of pupils' work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are below average when compared with schools nationally. However, pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory throughout the rest of the school. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected by the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs, and of those from ethnic minority or Traveller backgrounds, is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes.
- The progress of pupils through Years 1 and 2 shows some underachievement among the more able, especially in writing, mathematics and science.
- The mobility of pupils is high and this has a negative impact on the test results; pupils who spent a significant amount of time in the school achieve well.
- By Year 6, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in art and design and information and communication technology.

Commentary

1. Many of the children who enter the Nursery class have levels of attainment well below those normally expected. This is especially true for their communication skills, and their mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. They achieve well owing to the good teaching they receive and this continues through the Reception classes. Even so, by the time they start Year 1 most children are still attaining levels below those expected nationally.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| reading | 14.9 (16.0) | 15.7 (15.8) |
| writing | 13.9 (13.6) | 14.6 (14.4) |
| mathematics | 14.8 (16.3) | 16.3 (16.5) |

There were 40 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The results of the 2003 Year 2 national tests were below the national average in reading and writing, and well below average in mathematics. In reading and writing, too many pupils remained at the lower levels and a below average proportion reached the higher levels. In mathematics, although the proportion reaching the expected level was broadly in line with that found nationally, too few pupils again reached the higher levels. However, analysis of the progress made from pupils' baseline assessments on entry to the Reception class to the Year 2 national tests shows that overall achievement is satisfactory, although there is some underachievement among the more able pupils. Over time, the results show that boys attain less well compared to boys nationally and, to a lesser extent, compared to girls. However, this reflects the individual groups of pupils rather anything the school is doing. Over time, standards at the end of Year 2 have risen in line with those found nationally.
3. Current standards in Years 1 and 2 are below average in reading and writing, and well below average in mathematics. However, given the pupils low ability on entry this represents satisfactory achievement. Standards in science are well below average. Overall achievement

in science is satisfactory. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with those expected and those in religious education are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. In both subjects, achievement is satisfactory. Standards in art and design are above those expected and achievement is good.

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

| Standards in: | School results | National results |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| English | 26.7 (26.6) | 26.8 (27.0) |
| mathematics | 26.2 (26.5) | 26.8 (26.7) |
| science | 27.4 (26.7) | 28.6 (28.3) |

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

4. The standards in English at the end of Year 6 were broadly in line with those found nationally in the 2003 tests. This represents good achievement given the pupils low standards on entry to the school. In mathematics, standards were below average while in science they were well below. This picture is the same when the pupils' progress from the tests they took when they were in Year 2 to those they took at the end of Year 6 is taken into account. However, when the results of those pupils who spent all of the junior years in the school are analysed this shows they largely achieved at least in line with expectations. This shows that the underachievement and lower standards are mostly due to the pupils who join the school late, as the teachers have less time to work with them.
5. The current standards are broadly in line with those expected in English, and achievement is satisfactory, and good in English in Years 3 to 6, although weaknesses remain in pupils' writing skills. In mathematics, standards are below average and improving. Pupils achieve satisfactorily compared to the results in Year 2. In science, standards are well below average, although pupils' achievement is satisfactory given their prior attainment. In particular, the pupils' skills in investigating and experimenting are low and often hampered by their low literacy and numeracy skills.
6. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected by the end of Year 6. In religious education standards are broadly in line with those expected and are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art and design, and are above those expected by the end of Year 6 and pupils have very good opportunities to create a wide range of imaginative work using a good variety of different media and materials.
7. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys or girls by the end of Year 6. The school supports the boys well and the differences evident in Year 2 are overcome by the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good owing to the very good provision made for them by the school. The majority of these pupils are making progress at a rate equal to or greater than that expected. Pupils from Traveller backgrounds, some of whom may spend only a brief time in the school, also achieve well and the provision made for them is very good. Effective use of specialist support staff and the local authority support service helps create a very inclusive ethos where these children can prosper. The pupils who have English as an additional language achieve well, although those who also have special educational needs make very slow progress. Their achievement is supported through good bi-lingual support, appropriate resources and the very good tracking system devised by the assessment coordinator which enables teachers to follow the progress of individual pupils and highlights underachievement. This tracking enables the school to set appropriately challenging targets for pupils' achievement in the annual tests. Pupils from ethnic minorities who are fluent in English achieve in line with their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. The school provides a good environment, encouraging the children to behave well, develop a caring attitude to others and grow in confidence and self-esteem; this means that most are responsible, confident and generally well behaved and that they develop good relationships with others. Attendance is well below the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils behave well throughout the school day; the teachers take appropriate action if any potentially disruptive behaviour occurs.
- Relationships are very good; the school cultivates a caring environment in which pupils are usually kind and supportive to one another.
- Children are confident; the school works very hard to raise the children's confidence and self-esteem.
- The level of absenteeism is high; however the school does its best to encourage the regular attendance of the children.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good.

Commentary

8. Generally the standards of behaviour are good and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Good behaviour is expected of the children and, in general, they live up to that expectation. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most work hard in lessons. Parents are very pleased with the level of care the children show for each other. Pupils are well behaved in assemblies and around the school; there is some boisterous behaviour at lunch times, however, the lunchtime supervisory staff deal with any issues effectively, actively intervening if they feel it is required. Behaviour is especially good in the assemblies; pupils listen attentively and enthusiastically participate when required. The teachers use a number of strategies effectively within the classrooms to ensure that the good standard of behaviour is maintained. The pupils listen respectfully to each other's answers and ideas. Racial harmony within the school is good.
9. Pupils are keen to take on responsibility such as being part of the school council and being library monitors; this opportunity results in the children having a high degree of pride in their school. The school is very good at creating an atmosphere where good relationships flourish, including racial harmony.
10. The spiritual development of the pupils is good. The school makes a continuous effort to enhance their sense of well being by focusing on the development of their self-knowledge. To do this pupils are made to feel aware of themselves as part of a 'school family'. This is promoted in lessons, assemblies and in the whole working ethos of the school. The sense of right and wrong of pupils is very well addressed through all aspects of the life of the school. Most pupils respond to this well. Pupils are continually challenged to consider how they view situations and others in making decisions in order to try to arrive at the 'right' decision. They are encouraged to consider the consequences of their actions and the way they should respond to the feelings of others.
11. Social development is a very strong focus of the school and pupils' respond very well. For example, pupils suggested through the school council that an area should be set aside as a refuge for pupils who feel lonely and be constantly staffed by other pupils who would act as friends. The school has acted upon this suggestion and it is working successfully. Many activities include visits to and from the local community and pupils take on a range of duties within the school. Cultural development is also very good. Pupils study aspects of their local cultures through subjects such as geography, history and religious education. They participate in sports and take part in local arts activities. They are aware of other cultural traditions

through studying their religions, music, art, food and artefacts and know of the contributions that other cultures make to our own society.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

| Authorised absence | | Unauthorised absence | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.7 | School data | 0.1 |
| National data | 5.4 | National data | 0.4 |

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

12. The schools' rate of authorised absence for the year 2002/2003 was well above the national average. This is largely due to the high level of mobility and the proportion of Traveller families in the school. The schools' rate of unauthorised absence was better than the national average. The school works hard to encourage good attendance and punctuality, although there are a number of families whose children are persistently late.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. A major strength is the excellent inclusion that ensures that all pupils are supported equally to ensure they are able to access the opportunities provided for them. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and the school provides a good curriculum with very good opportunities for enrichment.

Teaching and learning

The quality of the teaching and learning is **good** throughout the school. It is particularly strong in Year 6 and in the Foundation Stage. The teachers and support staff are very clear about the importance of inclusion and ensuring all pupils are treated as individuals, and provided with appropriately challenging work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes, and in Year 6, is very good.
- Very good teaching was observed in music, dance, art and design, and with pupils with special educational needs.
- The teachers have very good relationships with pupils in the majority of lessons and this supports learning.
- The teaching is less successful where teachers' own subject knowledge is less secure, or where the objectives of the lesson are unclear.
- The assessment and marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed in most classes but a number of pupils, although quiet are less engaged with the lesson and so do not achieve as well as they could.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|---------|--------------|----------------|-------|-----------|
| 2(4%) | 10 (20%) | 21(41%) | 15(29%) | 1(2%) | 2(4%) | 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 teaching and non-teaching members of staff are very hard working. They understand the needs of the pupils and demonstrate an exceptional level of care and understanding for their individual needs and problems. This ensures that all pupils are fully included in activities and the daily life of the school, and supported in achieving well. The teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. The newly qualified teachers have received effective induction to the school and they have a good level of support and guidance from colleagues and senior staff. The teaching of literacy is good and teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy. The teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy is less consistent, and varies more with teachers' personal expertise and subject knowledge and understanding. This has a negative impact on some pupils' achievement. The teaching in other subjects is mostly of good quality, although some teachers have less good knowledge and skill in teaching music and physical education.
14. Where the teaching is strongest relationships between teachers and pupils are very productive. Teachers use humour well to keep pupils focused on tasks and attentive. Learning objectives are clear and shared with the pupils, although this does not happen in all classes. Lessons are well planned and resourced and the learning is very good. The most effective teaching creates good cross-curricular links, such as those between history and literacy in Year 6, or the design and technology and science in Year 3. This enables pupils to make important connections between their learning in different subjects. Classrooms, especially in the Foundation Stage, provide very bright, interesting and imaginative learning environments for the pupils. Expectations are high, both of behaviour and of the level of challenge in the work provided.
15. Part time and external teachers are used very effectively to provide support for particular groups of children. Teachers and teaching assistants from the traveller education service and who can offer support for pupils with English as an additional language enable these pupils to take a full part in school life and to achieve well.
16. The special needs coordinator, teachers and well-trained teaching assistants work and plan closely together to ensure good learning experiences for the pupils with physical or learning difficulties, both when they are working in a whole class situation and in withdrawal groups. For example, a teaching assistant working with two Year 3 pupils used a good understanding of phonics to help the pupils attain a high standard of accuracy in identifying the four different ways a particular sound in a passage of text was spelt. Teaching relates well to clear and specific targets set out in the pupils' individual education plans, and pupils know what they must do to improve.
17. Subject coordinators and senior staff monitor the quality of the teaching and learning. However, this monitoring does not always result in rigorous enough feedback to enable teachers to clearly understand how they can improve their work, or to spread around the very good practice that exists. Where the teaching is weaker, this is due to a range of factors that are often minor but represent a level of inconsistency that results in some pupils not being fully engaged in the lessons. This is due to times when the work planned is not closely based on pupils' needs and prior attainment.
18. Although teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and the classrooms are quiet and well ordered, there are times when they do not pick up pupils who are inattentive and not fully engaged in their learning. Target setting for groups and individuals happens inconsistently and is not based on good, effective marking in some classes. The assessment coordinator has devised a very good spreadsheet for tracking individuals' progress across the school. This provides teachers with useful information about who is underachieving and who is higher attaining and requires work that is more challenging. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. There is some very good practice in Year 6, particularly in English, but in other

classes, the marking does not make clear to pupils what they have done well or what they need to do to improve further.

19. Pupils' learning is good. In the majority of lessons, they are fully involved and have very positive attitudes. They are keen to answer questions and show pride in their work when showing it to adults. The teaching assistants support this learning effectively when they are well deployed and pupils regularly turn to them for advice and support.

The curriculum

Provision is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The breadth and balance of the curriculum is good, and provides good opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and needs of the pupils.
- Opportunities for enrichment are very good and extend pupils' experiences through clubs, sporting activities and cultural events.
- The quality and quantity of resources and accommodation are good and help to support teaching and learning.

Commentary

20. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements including provision for religious education and collective worship. The school operates an excellent level of inclusion. For example, teams representing the school are composed from all pupils who wish to participate and the Traveller community is fully included in the life of the school, as are those from minority ethnic backgrounds or who have special educational needs. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils in the school. Preparation for each stage of education is very good, with care taken to give pupils experiences that introduce them to the types of learning environment they are moving to.
21. The school provides very good opportunities for learning outside the school day. There are various clubs including sewing, recorders and chess. The school encourages a range of sporting activities including football, netball and athletics and organises local inter-school events. There is an active school choir and orchestra. The pupils perform at local events and for old people. At the time of the inspection, pupils were beginning to rehearse a dance for a performance with another local school at the Royal Albert Hall. Visits are made to theatres and museums.
22. Teachers and support staff are well matched to the needs of the curriculum by their training, expertise and experience. They plan closely together to ensure good support for the pupils. The school offers good provision in both resources and accommodation. For example, there are two well equipped and spacious libraries, two halls, specialist rooms for special educational needs, information and communication technology and music, and good facilities for all year groups including the Nursery.

Care, guidance and support

The steps taken to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school buildings are well maintained and provide a safe environment for the children. The members of staff know the children well and the staffs' attitudes reflect the very inclusive and very good caring ethos of the school.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Adults throughout the school know the children well and monitor their personal development very well; they provide very good levels of care.
- The staff have very good relationships with the children which leads to the children feeling safe happy confident and secure.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good; the induction of new children is well handled, including an informal buddy system, which leads to them settling in quickly.
- Arrangements for ensuring health and safety and child protection are very good.

Commentary

23. The school is very effective in ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of its children. Policies are in place and are followed. The school is well maintained and provides a safe environment for the children. There are good first aid procedures, which are followed well. The first aid provision at playtimes is good. The head teacher has the role of designated person responsible for child protection. All teachers have been trained in child protection procedures. There is very good liaison with external agencies and staff work within the correct procedures. The head teacher works very closely with the Child Protection Team. The staff generally has a good awareness of safety issues and the caretaker is active in maintaining the buildings in a good state of repair.
24. There are very good arrangements across the whole school for the settling of new children. This is important given the high mobility found throughout the school. The children in the Nursery were happy, settled and well aware of the routines. This also applied to a number of children that had only been in the school for two weeks or less. This is a reflection of the very caring ethos of the school. The provision of the 'CAT' club gives the children the opportunity to talk about issues that are worrying them, enabling them to feel happy and secure. The school works hard to take pupils' views into account.
25. The teachers know their pupils well; Target setting systems are effectively used across the school to enable teachers to plan lessons appropriate for pupils' prior attainment and so senior staff can track progress and underachievement. There is good advice, support and guidance for academic development. The 360 credit system in Year 6 works very well and is a great motivator for the children to work and behave well. It also encourages the children's caring and responsible attitude. There is very good quality advice, support and guidance for personal development. The children are keen to take on positions of responsibility: there is a great deal of pride in the school council and the work it is doing, and in the other positions of responsibility, for example the library monitor scheme.
26. The identification of pupils with special educational needs is made according to clear criteria. Teaching assistants and teachers monitor pupils' work on a daily basis and records are kept and analysed by the class teacher and the special needs coordinator. Both the attainment and the rate of progress of individual pupils is closely monitored and acted upon as appropriate at the reviews of pupils' achievement held at least every term and more frequently if necessary. There is very good support for the academic and personal development of the pupils with English as an additional language.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Children are supported well in their learning by the school's very good partnership with the greater community. The school uses the visitors and extra curricular activity very well in broadening the children's education. The school has a good relationship with parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents, in general, are happy with the school and the procedures to deal with any complaints and issue are very good.

- The school is active in forging strong links with the local community which benefit teachers and pupils.
- The links with other schools are very good.

Commentary

27. The school has worked hard to create strong links with a number of local businesses and the general local community. The school invites local people to talk to the children about their cultures. Members of the business community have also come to talk to the children. The school also has a number of trips each year to local places, and get involved in local activities, for example the burying of a time capsule; all of which raises the children's' social and cultural awareness.
28. The school provides the parents with regular newsletters, which keeps them informed about school activities and events. The communication to parents is very structured, with important information being sent in a letter. Other information is sent via the children, with a view to developing their responsibility. Most parents were happy with the level of information about events and their children's progress.
29. The school has an active fund raising organisation and the fund raising events are well supported by parents, staff and children. The children are actively involved in the events by making things to be sold in the classrooms. This increases the involvement of the children in their school.
30. The members of staff have a good relationship with parents. The majority of parents feel that if they have to speak to the staff or the head they can and that their issues and complaints are dealt with effectively. The school has very good mechanisms in place for the transfer of children, not only to their next school but also within the school, from year to year. This leads to reducing the level of anxiety for the children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good, overall. The governance of the school is good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. She is well supported by the other key staff and the governors offer a good level of support and challenge. The school is well managed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has created a very caring ethos in which pupils feel secure and staff support each other very well.
- The school's commitment to inclusion, promotion of equality and concern for the needs of individuals is excellent.
- The Foundation Stage is well led and managed.
- The systems for school self-evaluation and improvement do not have sufficient impact upon standards.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent.

Commentary

31. The headteacher, with support from the senior staff, has created a warm, positive ethos in which staff and pupils feel valued for their contributions to the life and work of the school. The support that the members of staff give to each other and their concern for the welfare of all the pupils are very strong features of the school. The headteacher, governors and all the staff are fully committed to the school's principle of inclusion and all have a strong desire that pupils achieve to their capacity in all areas of their school work.
32. The school improvement plan is constructed following consultation with staff and governors and effectively sets out school priorities for improvement. The system for the performance management of teachers is appropriately in place and provides a good basis upon which teachers can develop their professional expertise. This system has been extended to some of

the support staff and there are plans to continue this until all employees are included. The system for data collection to show the progress of pupils is comprehensive and detailed. The data, however, is not used sufficiently well to influence the quality of teaching. Similarly, although there are some lesson observations and some monitoring of pupils' work carried out by the senior staff and by the subject coordinators, it does not have enough impact upon standards in many subjects.

33. Many of the subject coordinators have only recently taken up their responsibilities and have not yet had a significant influence upon standards. In some subjects, such as music and information and communication technology, the coordinators have very good subject knowledge and this, combined with their enthusiasm for their subjects and support for other staff, has raised standards in those areas. The school supports well the newly qualified teachers through their induction period. They are provided with training and mentoring, with advice being available through the senior staff and the subject coordinators. The Foundation Stage is led and managed very effectively and this results in the close teamwork, innovative ideas and good achievement evident.
34. The leadership and management by the special educational needs coordinator are excellent. She uses her impressive knowledge of the area to demonstrate clear vision and a sense of purpose in undertaking her role. She carries out her administrative duties meticulously; she monitors both teaching and pupils' work, teaches groups herself and undertakes training for teachers and teaching assistants. She is also developing a set of staff development resources relating to specific areas of difficulty experienced by pupils. She maintains excellent contacts with support agencies and both she and all the staff were highly praised for the quality of their care and work by both a visiting educational psychologist and by parents of pupils with special educational needs. Teaching assistants are well deployed, and provided with a wide variety of good quality teaching resources. Accommodation is good. There are areas for withdrawal groups to operate and a large and well-equipped specialist room is available. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with English as an additional language and for race equality are very good and support their full inclusion in the work of the school.
35. The governing body carries out its duties well and the governors are ambitious for the school to continue to improve. Many of the governors visit the school regularly and are very knowledgeable about the school. On occasions, governors observe lessons and discuss what they see with the teacher. Other governors sometimes help in the classrooms. Through their committees, the governors are involved in all aspects of the school. The committees meet regularly, are well organised and are kept well informed by the headteacher. The governors receive regular financial reports and are fully involved in all major financial decisions. The relationship between the governors and the senior staff is very positive. The governors' role as critical friend is satisfactory and governors are now well placed to play a greater role in the monitoring of school standards and in discussions that relate to progress on the priorities in the school's improvement plan.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | | Balances (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 963,054 | Balance from previous year | 56,700 |
| Total expenditure | 882,187 | Balance carried forward to the next | 137,568 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,333 | | |

36. The quality of the financial management is very good. The systems are fully computerised and are very effective. The school was audited a year ago and the systems and procedures were

found to be very good. The school has since acted upon and rectified the few minor points raised by the auditor. Budgets are set in accordance with statutory requirements, including finances set aside for pupils with special needs and for those who speak English as their second language. Decisions about spending are taken in consultation with the local authority with the principles of 'best value' in mind. The school provides good value for money. The carry over of finances at the end of the last financial year was high. Most of the money, however, was wisely set aside by the governors to carry out major premises improvement work, which is now complete.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

37. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** and a major strength of the school. Children's levels of attainment when they start in the Nursery are low when compared with those typically expected for their ages. This is especially so in their social skills, communication skills, their mathematical understanding and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in the Nursery due to the very effective teaching and very good support they receive from the teacher and the Nursery nurse. Resources are very good and imaginatively developed as, for example, in the very good Nursery snow play corner. This good provision continues into the Reception classes where the majority of the teaching is also often very good. The members of staff have a good knowledge of the needs of children of this age. Assessment procedures are good and well used to record moments of learning and queries about particular children and their development. These systems are being reviewed and a different format is being considered.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are very well introduced to school life and quickly learn the routines and rules.
- The staff put an appropriate emphasis on this area to ensure children are prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Very good relationships between staff and children promote children's confidence and encourage them to work hard.

Commentary

38. Children achieve well and the quality of the teaching is good. Children's personal, social and emotional development is seen as a priority in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff work hard to develop skills in this area of learning but many children are still unlikely to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. This is due to the low attainment on entry rather than deficiencies in the provision. Members of staff plan a range of good activities, including role play, to support the development of children's skills in working and playing together. In the Nursery class, children are able to choose activities from a prepared range and make their own decisions about whether to work inside or outside. Many activities are designed to help children learn to share and take turns. However, the immaturity of many is clear in the way they abandon activities after a brief period. The Nursery nurse has very caring relationships, especially with tearful children and the rules and expectations for behaviour are clearly explained.
39. In the Reception classes, teachers and support staff work hard to continue developing good working habits among the children. Each class has developed good rules and routines that are clearly understood by the children and this has a positive impact on their learning and working habits. Children in the Foundation Stage, whatever their background, are accepted and included well in all activities and the staff work hard to ensure that no child is left alone or is not involved for any length of time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's speaking skills are poor although they make good progress through the Foundation Stage.
- Reading and writing skills are below average; however, the teachers plan a very good range of appropriately challenging activities intended to develop children's skills.

Commentary

40. The children have below average communication skills when they start at the school. Although they achieve well and make good progress towards the early learning goals a significant number are unlikely to achieve them by the end of the Reception year. Talking with children in the Nursery reveals how immature some of their speech is and the members of staff correctly make this a priority through devising a range of activities designed to support talk and communication. The adults working with the children talk to them and encourage them to comment in return. Role-play opportunities provide a lot of support for children's speaking skills. Few of the children speak in sentences. Reading with the children shows they have a good understanding of how books work and how to use the illustrations in telling a story. The teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes use the same phonic system to teach sounds and early reading skills, and this provides children with some consistency of approach. They are aware that text contains meaning. Early writing skills show a developing formation of letter shapes but this is at a low level for most of the children. Some are able to trace and copy the teacher's writing.
41. In the Reception classes, the teachers use the National Literacy Strategy appropriately given the ages of the children, to develop and extend further their reading and writing skills. Large texts are used so that the teacher can model reading and then children can take part. One text used is very well linked to the senses topic by the fruit in the story. These cross-curricular links help children to see the connection between subjects. Names are used to explain the use of capital letters. Few children are yet familiar with a question mark but the good teaching helps them understand that bold text is intended to show how the words are spoken.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery, many activities are provided to improve children's knowledge and skills.
- The teaching of shape is very good in the Reception classes.

Commentary

42. Children achieve well and the quality of the teaching is good. The early assessment of children points to this being one of the weakest areas of their learning. Although the staff ensure that the provision is good, a significant proportion of the pupils are unlikely to reach the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. In the Nursery, children gain early mathematical concepts through using a range of materials such as sand and water in their play. They develop early measuring skills using apparatus such as cubes.
43. In the Reception classes, computers are used well to identify shapes and the mouse is used to move them around the screen in response to the task. They can describe some of the

properties of common two-dimensional shapes, including the numbers of sides and corners using the appropriate language. Children's understanding of comparative size is very effectively reinforced through the use of bears. Most children can count to 20 accurately. The classroom displays include a good range of number work and vocabulary.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for children to use fruits and vegetables in food technology work.
- Teachers work hard to provide an interesting and appropriate range of activities and resources.

Commentary

44. This area of learning is one of the weakest evident in the early assessment of children when they start at the school. However, the members of staff devise a good range of activities to enable children to progress well towards the expected early learning goals, although a significant proportion is unlikely to achieve them fully. The quality of the teaching is good. In the Nursery class, children have the opportunity to bake biscuits and they learn how to join different ingredients and how cooking then changes these. Children use computers for activities such as drawing and clicking and dragging clothes to dress children in appropriately for the weather. These activities develop good mouse control and an understanding screen messages and icons. The members of staff make good use of the school site and the access to a nearby wood to develop children's wonder at the world around them. This was evident during the cold weather when the teacher found some ice outside for children to observe.
45. In the Reception classes, a topic on our senses caught children's imaginations to the extent that one child's grandmother had prepared a lot of herbs and spices to be taken to school for testing. These were passed around for smelling in a mature and sensible way. In one very good link to the text in their literacy work, children learned about some unusual fruits by handling and smelling them. This work was later extended with a range of vegetables used to make soup. Children helped cut up and choose ingredients, in the process learning about the vegetables and the seeds found inside some of them. The teaching assistant also used the opportunity to introduce some information and communication technology through the programming of the microwave.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good outdoor area for the Nursery but access to this outdoor area is limited for the Reception class.

Commentary

46. The members of staff in the Nursery and Reception classes provide many opportunities for children to use a range of tools and media, developing their skills in controlling these, such as pencils, paints and modelling materials, well. Hence achievement is good. By the end of the Reception year, the majority of the children are likely to attain the expected early learning goals, due to the good provision and teaching. The Nursery children have regular access to the wheeled toys and other outdoor activities. However, the position of this area makes it difficult

for the Reception classes to access. The school is aware of this and is looking at options to improve the Reception provision. Members of the reception staff make good use of the school hall for physical activities such as early gymnastic and dance skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities for Nursery children to play instruments and sing.
- Many activities intended to develop children's creative skills are provided.

Commentary

47. The very good provision and teaching enables children to achieve well and most of them are likely to attain the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. In the Nursery, children have easy access to a range of percussion instruments. In one good lesson, they made good progress in keeping a beat with some recorded music. They can sing action songs well, although a number of the younger children only watch others and are not yet ready to join in. Children's cultural development is supported through very good artwork based on Chinese calligraphy and very bright collages turned into dragons. When painting, the Nursery nurse leads a very good discussion about the colours being used, extending children's knowledge of colour and also using the opportunity well to develop their speaking and listening skills. In the Reception class, children used paints to create very good colourwash backgrounds on which they created some very effective collages using a range of seeds, herbs and spices as part of their senses topic.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and this is reflected in the progress made by pupils from the infants to the junior classes, and the achievement of those who have spent a significant amount of time in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average by the end of Year 6 but the progress made by pupils' especially those who have been in the school for sufficient time, is good.
- More able pupils have underachieved in the infant classes.
- Pupils' skills in creative writing and writing at length in other subjects are underdeveloped.

Commentary

48. The most recent test results for the end of Year 2 showed that reading and writing skills were below average when compared with schools nationally, and well below average when compared with schools that take pupils from similar socio-economic backgrounds. The inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Year 2 are below average but that achievement across Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. These standards are below those found at the last inspection, but the nature of the school has changed through differences in the backgrounds of the pupils attending. The reason for these low results was that too few of the more able pupils, as shown in their early assessment soon after starting school, achieved the higher levels and there is still a need to ensure that the school's expectations are high enough.

There are no significant differences between boys' and girls' achievement, although there are more boys among the low attaining pupils.

49. The 2003 national tests for Year 6 showed that English standards were broadly in line with those of all schools nationally, and for those with pupils from similar socio economic backgrounds. Inspection evidence indicates similar standards now. The overall attainment figures are affected significantly by the high mobility among the pupils. Analysis of the achievement of pupils who spent most of Years 3 to 6 in the school shows that these pupils achieved at least what was expected of them, and many did even better. In both key stages, the pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for and taught, resulting in them achieving well. Very effective resources are often used, such as the information and communication technology equipment used by one visually impaired pupil and this enables her to take a much more effective part in the lessons. Traveller pupils and those pupils at an early stage of learning English are fully included in the lessons. They also receive good support from specialist teachers and teaching assistants and, together with the good range of resources and the very positive relationships created in the school, this supports their learning very effectively.
50. Many children have a low level of speech and communication skills when they start at the school. This has a lasting impact on their learning and, especially, their writing with regard to selecting the correct tense and showing a satisfactory level of understanding of texts. Throughout the school, good opportunities for speaking and listening are provided in many lessons. In one very good Year 2 lesson, for example, groups of pupils created role play to act parts of the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff. They were developing good negotiation skills, discussing and sharing roles, with some acting as narrators.
51. The school has worked hard to improve reading skills since the last inspection. Support for the present Year 3 pupils through additional literacy support is being provided, following their poor performance in the tests when in Year 2. Extra literacy support is also available in Year 1 for pupils recognised as underachieving. Teaching and non-teaching staff have had training in guided reading and this has had some impact on their skills. The quality of the teaching in literacy lessons is at least satisfactory and often good, but there is little that is very good. Home-school books provide a very good opportunity for communication between the teachers and parents. In Year 2, these show parents when pupils have read, either on a one-to-one basis with an adult or in a group as part of guided reading. More able Year 2 readers are fluent and read expressively. All pupils spoken to enjoyed reading, using and looking at books.
52. The school has recognised a weakness in the provision for pupils' creative writing and this is an issue the school has as part of its development planning. It is also clear from the inspection evidence that there are weaknesses in the provision of sufficient opportunities for writing in other subjects and in a range of formats. The pupils' poor language development hinders their writing as they have such a limited vocabulary. The school is aware of this and works hard to introduce pupils to a wider and richer use of language. Plans also exist to address the weaknesses in spelling.
53. The subject is being well managed by the recently appointed coordinator. She has not had time yet to monitor the quality of the teaching and learning in many lessons but she has monitored the planning and offered advice and guidance for colleagues when asked. Last year the school organised a meeting for parents of infant pupils about reading, and especially to emphasise the idea of reading for enjoyment. Assessment is good and the school is very effective at tracking pupils and highlighting under achievement and those who are doing better than expected. The marking of work is very good in Year 6 but needs more consistent development elsewhere so that pupils are fully aware of what they have done well and how they can improve in future. The school is fortunate to have two very well-resourced and cared for libraries and these are used well as a resource in a range of subjects.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The cross-curricular aspects of the subjects are seen as being very important in the school. Even so there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at some length in other subjects. Very good links with drama and art are made through regular theatre visits, and these have inspired some very good work. The pupils use research skills in non-core subjects such as science and geography, and most are aware the system for finding a book in the library. Good links between literacy texts and art and design are made through work such as that in Year 5 based on the Greek myths.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below the national average by the end of Year 6 and well below the national average by the end of Year 2.
- The quality of teaching in Year 6 is good and provides pupils with challenging tasks that help them to make good progress.
- A significant number of pupils lack focus and positive attitudes in some lessons, especially in Year 4.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' progress throughout the school.
- Assessment data is collected and analysed rigorously resulting in the clear identification of pupils' needs.
- Individual pupils' are not made sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

55. Standards in mathematics have declined since the time of the last inspection. This is the result of the current composition of the school population. Despite the high mobility of pupils in both the infant and junior years, achievement is satisfactory in Years 1-2 and in Years 3-6. Analysis of the 2003 national test results, however, indicates that a significant proportion of the higher attaining pupils did not make sufficient progress by the end of Year 2. There was also some underachievement by average attaining pupils by the end of Year 6.
56. The overall quality of the teaching is satisfactory. Where the teaching is good, pupils are challenged by the tasks and the teachers expect them to work hard and gain the confidence to solve problems by themselves. For example, pupils learning to work out multiplication problems from written questions understood the strategy to use because the teacher carefully built up their ability to analyse a question, see how its constituent parts could be used and exuded confidence that they would succeed. Good teaching was also seen in a lesson on the use of coordinates in four quadrants, in which the teacher used the computer suite very effectively to re-visit the topic with some pupils. All pupils worked by themselves on tasks that were challenging but well matched to the different ability levels in the class so that all the pupils were making good progress.
57. In some lessons, a significant proportion of the pupils pay insufficient attention to the teachers. This is the result of questioning strategies that do not involve all the pupils sufficiently in the substance of the lesson. It is also the result of a lack of clear progression in the way the subject knowledge is taught. This inhibits both the pupils' learning and the development of positive attitudes towards the subject. Teachers involve the teaching assistants well in planning the lessons and give them responsibility for teaching groups of pupils. Because preparation is thorough, teaching assistants are confident and their work is effective. As a result, the pupils who are supported by them respond well, work hard and make good

progress, especially those with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language.

58. Pupils are assessed regularly. Information from tests and assessments is used well to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, including the progress individual pupils are making. Teachers keep detailed records of the needs of individuals and these are used to make changes to the provision. A particular success of this system is the good progress being made by lower attaining pupils.
59. Pupils' work is marked regularly and they have encouraging comments written in their books. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and in some classes there are few written comments that explain what they have done well or tell pupils what they need to do to improve. The use of target setting for groups and individuals is inconsistent, although there is good practice in some classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Although pupils have some opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and design and technology, this aspect of the subject is not well developed. Computers are used effectively to support mathematical skills.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory** and, taking into consideration the differences between cohorts, is similar to that found at the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed science coordinator is aware of what is required to raise standards.
- For those pupils who stay at the school for a number of years, achievement is satisfactory.
- The teaching of the skills of scientific investigation and enquiry has improved since the last inspection but is still in need of development.
- The monitoring of pupils' standards is not rigorous enough to have an influence upon standards.

Commentary

61. The achievement of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, is satisfactory. Standards are, however, well below average. Although the achievement of the pupils is generally in line with that found at the last inspection, the overall standards are lower. This is because pupils now enter the school with fewer skills than in previous years. In the infant classes, the more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should because the work they are given does not provide sufficient challenge. However, the school has recognised this and is working to improve provision.
62. There have, however, been some improvements in pupils' skills in investigating scientific ideas. These improvements have been brought about through training provided for the teachers and through the implementation of a scheme of work that provides a structure and progression of skills through ideas for practical investigational activities. As a result, the standard of teaching observed is good overall. Although most pupils are developing an understanding of fair-testing and the skills of investigation, the knowledge of even some of the older pupils is still limited. This is because the training has not sufficiently provided for the development of all teachers and some still do not possess the necessary expertise to provide lessons that systematically develop pupils' skills. Pupils are now more knowledgeable about materials and their properties, reflecting the emphasis placed upon this by teachers.

63. Pupils' learning is good. They are mostly interested in their work, enjoy science and respond well to the tasks set by their teachers. The pupils cooperate together well and help each other if problems occur, without prompting from the teacher. Resources are good, organised and accessible. Overall, the school has successfully raised the profile of science since the last inspection.
64. The coordinator is recently appointed to the post and is still acquiring knowledge of the subject. She is aware that improvements in standards can be made most effectively through developing the expertise of those staff who do not have the skills to teach as well as others. The lack of rigorous monitoring of pupils' standards through lesson observation, monitoring of pupils' work and analysis of data needs to be addressed if all teachers are to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to teach science well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**, which represents an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed coordinator has a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and leads and manages very well.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve very well.
- Not all members of staff have the knowledge and skills to enable the pupils to reach their capacity.
- The systematic approach to assessing the progress of pupils is not yet fully introduced.
- Information and communication technology is beginning to be used to support learning in other subjects but needs to be developed more systematically.

Commentary

65. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, achieve well in the infants and very well in the Years 3 to 6. By the time pupils leave the school standards are above average. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with expectations. Pupils are able to use their computers to draw pictures and to write, combining them to produce illustrated stories. In Year 6, pupils can produce slide presentations on the computer, use a data handling programme to produce graphs and cause their construction models to move through the use of their computers. Many pupils can also use the Internet, send e-mails and construct their own private web-sites.
66. Since the last inspection, good emphasis has been placed upon the development of teachers' confidence and skills and this, combined with the development of the information and communication technology suite, have been the reasons why pupils are now achieving very well. Overall the teaching is good and this supports the good learning. Although some teachers have very good skills when using computers, the skills of others are less well developed and consequently the pupils do not learn as well as they could. The recently appointed coordinator is fully aware of the need to develop the skills of all staff and plans to do so. The school uses a national scheme of work which provides very well a basic structure for teaching. The system for assessing the progress of pupils against pre-determined skills is not yet fully introduced. The implementation of such a system will enable the teachers to assess what the pupils have learned and plan their lessons accordingly. It would also enable the coordinator to check more rigorously upon the progress of pupils in all year groups and to provide assistance to the teachers where needed.
67. The coordinator is highly knowledgeable and very enthusiastic to continue with the improvements already made. She is fully aware of the areas for development and has the ability to ensure that pupils achieve even more. Members of staff are using the technology

more regularly to support and benefit their teaching. The assessment coordinator has made very effective use of a spreadsheet to devise a tracking system to highlight over and underachievement among individual pupils in all year groups.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Information and communication technology is used occasionally to support the learning of pupils in a variety of other subjects and is sometimes used very well. One pupil used information and communication technology skills to research and produce a very good piece of work on 'The Planets'. Computers are, however, not used consistently in all classes to support learning in a variety of subjects.

HUMANITIES

69. Standards in both **history** and **geography** are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6 and Year 2. Not enough lessons were observed to enable a secure judgement on teaching or provision. In both subjects pupils gain first hand experiences and learn investigative skills through such activities as exploring the quality of the environment in the local area and through visits, for example to a museum with a Victorian classroom where they are taught in the manner of that time. In a good history lesson seen, the teacher continued to make use of the experiences of the pupils. He drew upon their experience of a World War Two, evacuee visitor to the school and the evidence of a ration book to challenge the pupils and develop their problem solving skills by working out ways in which they could seek to alleviate the difficulties rationing posed. From the scrutiny of pupils' books, however, much of the work seen was very descriptive and there was little evidence in their writing that pupils are encouraged to practise their thinking and writing skills to explain, compare, present alternative views about the past or to create links between events. The management of both subjects is satisfactory. Co-ordinators have non-contact time to undertake the observation of teaching and the monitoring of pupils' work. Scrutiny of planning and evidence from teaching observed during the inspection indicates, however, that the quality of planning and of teachers' subject knowledge is inconsistent. There is currently no system for monitoring and tracking the progress of individual pupils.

Religious education

Provision for Religious Education is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The subject is well planned using the locally agreed syllabus and local schemes of work.
- Pupils learn about a range of different faiths.
- The assessment of pupils' work is underdeveloped.

Commentary

70. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and teachers' planning shows that standards have been maintained since the time of the last inspection and in Years 2 and 6 are in line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Teaching is well supported by the Hertfordshire scheme of work and the resource base provided by the school. In one lesson, the teacher used a good set of pictures to promote satisfactory learning about the Sikh religion despite having to focus a lot of attention on the disruptive behaviour of some pupils. Pupils participated well in discussion and demonstrated a good knowledge of their previous learning.

71. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator supports teaching staff by monitoring lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work. The school has made efforts to improve the standard of written work in the subject and the work seen was generally well presented, however, most of the writing was in the form of factual recording and there was little evidence of other styles of writing. There is no formal assessment system for monitoring the progress of individual pupils and this has been identified as an area for development by the school. Links and visits to the local Christian church are maintained. Learning about other faiths is supported by visitors representing other religions although no visits are made by the pupils to the buildings associated with these faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. In **design and technology** only two lessons were seen, but discussions with pupils and looking at pupils' work show that pupils' achieve well and have developed design and making skills which are as good as most pupils of their age. There is evidence of pupils' work in mechanisms, structures and control, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. In a Year 2 lesson, the very good teaching enabled the pupils to begin to design their own vehicles, communicating verbally and in writing what are the purposes of the vehicle they are designing. This development and communication of pupils' ideas again represents an improvement since the last inspection. The coordinator is enthusiastic and ensures that an appropriate range of activities is taught in each year group using a national framework. Resources are good, well organised and accessible.
73. In **music**, few lessons were observed, but all the pupils were heard singing in assembly and pupils were observed playing a variety of instruments during the lunchtime clubs. The coordinator is highly knowledgeable about the subject and his enthusiasm and expertise inspires and motivates pupils to perform with great skill. The quality of the playing of the brass and stringed instruments of the school orchestra and of the recorders in their groups is very good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their music and many pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are highly motivated. Pupils and staff are encouraged by the coordinator to develop an interest in music and many have taken and passed exams at a variety of levels. The many clubs are extremely popular and very well attended by boys and girls from all types of background. The differing cultures of the pupils are celebrated through the variety of music studied. The local community appreciates the quality of the music, and the school choir and music groups are often requested to perform, raising money for national charities. A new scheme has recently been implemented, but some teachers lack the confidence and skills to ensure that the pupils are taught well.
74. In **physical education**, only three lessons were observed. Two of these were gymnastic lessons taught by staff at the school. The other was a dance lesson, first in a series helping the school prepare for taking part in a local authority festival at the Royal Albert Hall. The teacher had a very good level of personal subject knowledge and expertise and this was reflected in the quality of her teaching and the progress made by the Year 5 pupils who responded to the lesson very positively. The teaching of the school staff was less effective where the management of the pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory and this resulted in less progress being made. However, pupils progress well and by Year 4 are able to create good sequences of balances and jumps. Again, the good teaching stemmed from a very well managed lesson and good relationships with the pupils. The school has a good number of staff with personal expertise and interest in this subject and this expertise is used in after school activities, clubs and teams. The requirements for swimming are met and standards are in line with those expected.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good** and introduces pupils to a wide range of activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use a wide range of media, tools and materials.
- The quality of the teaching in the lessons observed was good, overall.

Commentary

75. Standards are above average throughout the school and pupils from all groups achieve well. This has been maintained since the last inspection. The good teaching reflects the emphasis the school puts on developing pupils' creative and practical skills to counter balance and support the difficulties many of them experience with the more academic subjects. Teachers prepare lessons well and ensure a wide range of resources is available for the pupils to use. They have good subject knowledge and make very good use of well-known artists, such as Picasso and Klee, as inspiration for the pupils' work.
76. Year 1 pupils develop their design and weaving skills through a range of activities using paper weaving and then developing into weaving with a range of textiles and materials. This results in some complex and imaginative work of high quality. They have a good knowledge of the correct terminology as teachers use the opportunity to extend and develop their vocabulary as well as their practical skills. In Year 2, pupils used modelling materials to make good clay tiles decorated with fish and shell imprints. Pupils have studied the work of Georgia O'Keefe and created some large flower pictures in her style.
77. In one good Year 5 lesson, pupils created imaginative work based on the Perseus myth and using a range of textile techniques including batik, block printing and sewing. In a very good lesson in Year 6 pupils learn how to correctly use preparation drawings for a larger painting and they create work in the Cubist style of Picasso. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are beginning to use sketchbooks but this use is underdeveloped and more productive and imaginative use for experimenting with techniques needs to be made. There is good practice in Year 4 where samples of materials were pasted into the books as part of a study of patterning. In Year 5, observational drawings and exercises in pencil use are evident.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

78. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good and includes teaching about sex education and the misuse of drugs. Teachers are supported by a good scheme of work. The subject is taught regularly and pupils' learning is augmented through the operations of the school council, which deals with a wide variety of social issues. Pupils' individual social needs are given additional support through the weekly meetings of the 'Cat Club' and which offers pupils the opportunity to talk privately about personal problems they face.

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 | 1 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 3 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |
| Overall standards achieved | 4 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 3 |
| Attendance | 6 |
| Attitudes | 3 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 3 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 3 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 2 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 3 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 2 |
| 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).