

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY OF PEACE CATHOLIC INFANT AND
NURSERY SCHOOL**

Slough, Berkshire

LEA area: Slough

Unique reference number: 110035

Headteacher: Mrs M Dickinson

Lead inspector: Mr R Cheetham

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 June 2004

Inspection number: 257117

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	241
School address:	Derwent Drive Slough Berkshire
Postcode:	SL1 6HW
Telephone number:	01628 661886
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss Pauline Lawes

Date of previous inspection: 18 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Our Lady of Peace Catholic Infant and Nursery School is a voluntary aided school. It is a similar size to other primary schools and has 241 pupils on roll that includes 26 full time equivalent children in the nursery. The proportion of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than usual is below average. The school draws from a large catchment area, which is one of average socio-economic circumstances. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average. Most pupils have a White British background and a small proportion has minority ethnic backgrounds including Mixed White and Black Caribbean or African backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language and one is at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. These needs include: specific learning difficulties, physical disabilities and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school runs a Breakfast Club jointly with the adjacent Junior School. Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed a new headteacher and gained a Healthy Schools award in 2003. In 2001, the school became an Investor in People and was re-accredited in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2592	Mr R Cheetham	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage English as an additional language Science Physical education History
	Mr B Findley	Lay inspector	
	Ms S Suter	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Geography Music
	Mr N Grimshaw	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school that gives very good value for money. It is an ambitious school that plans to improve further. Pupils reach well above average standards of attainment and achieve very well. Teaching and learning are very good and the school is very well led and managed.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Sustained high attainment and achievement in English and mathematics and above average attainment and good achievement in science and geography
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership of the staff team and is very ably supported by senior staff
- The school promotes pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development very well
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and occasionally excellent
- The school provides a very broad and enriched curriculum
- The staff team take very good care of their pupils
- There are excellent links with parents and very good links with the community and other schools
- The assessment arrangements for art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), music and physical education (the foundation subjects) are unsatisfactory
- The subject co-ordinators of science and the foundation subjects are not evaluating provision systematically or planning to improve pupils' achievement

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage and the end of Year 2 have risen very significantly and the school has improved in most other respects. It has made a good response to the key issues in the previous report. Provision and standards have improved in design and technology and ICT. Time keeping is much better and subjects have an appropriate amount of time. The effectiveness of subject co-ordinators has improved to a satisfactory degree.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	A	A	B	A
mathematics	C	A	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

The table above shows that standards have been mostly well above average for the last three years. **Current pupils' achievement is very good.** Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. They make excellent progress and reach well above the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in personal, social and emotional development, and in communication, language and literacy. They make very good progress and reach above

expected standards in mathematical development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development. By the end of Year 2, pupils achieve very well and reach well above average standards in speaking and listening and reading and above average standards in writing. They achieve very well in mathematics and reach well above average standards in all aspects except using and applying mathematics where standards are average. They achieve well in science and reach above average standards in most aspects except in investigations, where standards are average. They reach above average standards and achieve well in geography. In ICT they now achieve well. **The development of pupils' personal qualities is very good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is good.** They have excellent attitudes to school and behave very well. Their attendance and punctuality are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education and the quality of teaching and learning is also very good. Teachers and support staff work very effectively together to include all pupils very well in what the school provides. Teachers make accurate assessments of children's progress in the Foundation Stage and plan very effectively. Teachers' planning in Years 1 and 2 is also very effective and assessments are accurate in English, mathematics and science but not as sharp in other subjects. Sometimes pupils do not know how to improve their work. Teachers make good links between some subjects so that pupils can practise their skills in different ways. Teaching methods are innovative and help pupils concentrate and build confidence in tackling new work. Learning resources are used well and regular homework helps pupils to progress. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they progress well. Staff take good care of the pupils and provide very good access to an exciting and varied curriculum. The school values its excellent links with parents who support their children's learning very well. Staff work hard to maintain very effective links with the community to the benefit of pupils' achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher gives an excellent lead to the staff team, sets high standards with them and encourages them to give of their best. They respond very well to this forward-thinking lead and senior staff manage important areas of the school's work very well. The governing body is very committed to the school's development, fulfils its statutory duties well and manages several aspects of its work well. It has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and plans to evaluate agreed features of the school's work more closely. Co-ordinators of English and mathematics lead their subjects very effectively. Co-ordinators of other subjects are supporting their subjects soundly and enthusiastically but their evaluations are not systematically leading to improvements in pupils' achievements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard. Parents appreciate being able to talk with staff about anything that concerns them. They are pleased with the quality of leadership, and teaching and their children's progress. Pupils feel safe in school and know a trusted adult in school to whom they can turn. They like finding out new things and being helped to improve.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality and use of assessment information on pupils' progress in the foundation subjects
- Ensure the co-ordinators of science and the foundation subjects systematically evaluate what the school provides and plan to improve pupils' achievement

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well and reach well above average standards overall. By the end of Year 2, pupils continue to achieve very well and reach well above average standards in English and mathematics. They achieve well and reach above average standards in science and geography. They reach average standards and achieve soundly in design and technology and in ICT they achieve well and reach average standards. All this represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage, children make very rapid progress in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development
- Successive cohorts of Year 2 pupils have sustained high standards in English and mathematics
- There are very high standards in handwriting
- Pupils read fluently and expressively
- Since the previous inspection, standards in design and technology and ICT have improved
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well

Commentary

1. When children start in the nursery, they have a broad range of abilities and most attainment is around that expected of children of that age. They settle in very quickly and establish themselves as confident learners who are keen to explore the challenging range of learning opportunities provided. Their progress in communication, language and literacy is due to the ample opportunities for speaking and listening and the consistent level of questioning by the staff team that promotes interest and encourages clear thinking. They thrive, emotionally and socially, in an atmosphere of trust, security and high expectations. In the reception classes, children continue to make rapid gains in their learning fostered by very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. Their joint expectations are also high across all the areas of learning and this promotes high standards. By the end of reception, most children will exceed the level expected at this age in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. In mathematical development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development children make very good progress and most will achieve at least the level expected.
2. Over the last three years, standards in reading have been consistently well above the national average and were well above the average of similar schools. Standards in writing have usually been well above average. Standards in mathematics have improved from average in 2001 to well above average a year later and above average last year. During this period, boys have done a little better than girls. In 2003, science standards were above average. Overall, pupils' performance has been well above the national average. The school has usually met or exceeded its challenging targets for Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This sustained improvement has

been due to very good implementation of national initiatives in literacy and numeracy, accurate assessments of pupils' progress and consistently high expectations.

3. Pupils achieve very well in English. Their standards in handwriting are very high because the school teaches a joined script from the outset and pupils get regular practice. All staff emphasise the skills of speaking and listening and provide good role models. Individual, group and whole-class reading sessions are used extremely well so that pupils develop their reading skills regularly. Staff create a good range of opportunities in other subjects for pupils to develop their literacy skills. Pupils have mastered the basic techniques of writing very well but higher attaining pupils do not write with a wide range of expression. In mathematics, pupils achieve very well because the basic skills of numeracy are taught and learnt very effectively. While standards are high in most aspects of mathematics, standards in using and applying mathematics are average. This is because there are not enough opportunities for higher attaining pupils especially to record their findings in different ways or to solve problems. In science, pupils achieve well and their attainment in most aspects is above average while it is average in investigative work. This is now receiving greater emphasis. Standards have improved in geography because the school has implemented the national guidance in its scheme of work to give greater structure to the curriculum and has developed links with other subjects well. Standards have improved in design and technology because pupils' ability to evaluate and refine their designs and models has improved and staff training has improved their subject knowledge. The scheme of work has been revised and homework introduced. Standards in ICT have improved because of staff training, improved resources and better lesson planning.

4. Pupils' special educational needs are identified at an early stage and individual education plans contain suitable, challenging but achievable, learning targets. These have an appropriate focus on improving literacy, numeracy and emotional, social and behavioural skills. Pupils make very good progress because of the school's inclusive ethos and the very good support provided by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in learning the language and make broadly similar progress to that of their peers.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.6 (17.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.2 (15.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (17.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 88 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils have excellent and confident attitudes to learning and their overall behaviour is very good. Pupils develop very well during their time at the school and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Positive attitudes are the result of very high quality provision

- There are trusting, high quality relationships among the school community
- The very good behaviour results from mutual respect and shared expectations
- Personal development results from the willing acceptance of responsibilities, a clear understanding of right and wrong, self-awareness and an increasing awareness of others and a good understanding of their own cultures and an improved understanding of those of others
- Occasional weaknesses in class management lead to inattention and restlessness

Commentary

5. Children in the Foundation Stage make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are likely to exceed the level expected of children at the end of reception. Both they and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have extremely good attitudes to learning because of inspirational teaching that captures their interest. They are given a very clear idea of what they are learning and activities are absorbing and within the capability of what they can do. An example of this was seen in a Year 2 English lesson, when pupils were highly involved in their own learning and shared very effectively in judging how well they had done because the teacher expected a great deal of them. Innovative teaching methods to increase concentration and enrich teaching and learning are very effective in stimulating pupils' interest. Pupils like being at school. They attend regularly and arrive for school on time.
6. The school has worked very successfully to achieve a truly effective whole school community, based upon trust and respect for others. One of the planks of this success is the very high quality of relationships that exist between adults in the school and the pupils. Members of staff show a unified respect for pupils and a deep interest in how they are doing. Consequently, pupils respond very positively to daily routines and their work and are keen to please and do well. Pupils have good role models to show how to treat others and this greatly influences the positive relationships between pupils themselves. This was very apparent in a Year 2 'circle time' lesson (this is when pupils sit in a circle and talk about anything that concerns them) when pupils had a mature discussion that reflected the respect and politeness shown by the teacher.
7. Very high quality of relationships leads to positive responses from the pupils. Pupils are involved in discussions on school rules and understand why and how they are expected to behave. Consequently, behaviour is very good and based on a ready appreciation of right and wrong. There are very occasional weaknesses in class management, which lead to some restlessness but pupils usually need very little encouragement to behave properly. Pupils also behave very well in the playground, because they have been provided with a wide range of interesting play activities, which they can play together. Pupils mix well in play and there is rarely any bullying or any other form of oppressive behaviour. Sanctions of any severity are rare and there have been no exclusions in recent years.
8. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development, in part, because of the opportunities there are for independence and responsibility. Their moral and social development is very good. They feel trusted to carry out small duties around the school, such as filling water bottles for their class and answering calls on the internal telephone system. Other responsibilities include participation in circles of friends and a playtime buddy system in which older pupils look after younger ones. Year 2 pupils receive support from 'buddies' from Year 5 pupils in the Junior School so pupils generally learn very well how communities thrive on mutual support.

9. Pupils' spiritual development is very good. They develop a sense of values from assemblies and lessons in personal, social and health education. Clergy from the local church regularly support assemblies. Pupils are given very good opportunities in assemblies and in their lessons, to reflect on their own responses to what they learn and on their experience both in and out of school. Pupils' cultural development is good. The school is increasingly aware of the need to raise pupils' recognition of cultures other than their own. There are more pupils in the school from families of different backgrounds and this has provided a resource for sharing information, for example, in assemblies. A special 'One World Day' gave each class an opportunity to focus on their chosen culture and create presentations that were experienced by everyone in the school. So, in all these ways, pupils become increasingly self-aware and better equipped to develop as good citizens.

10. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to become self-assured and confident. Teachers actively encourage all pupils to respect each other and to value time to think. As a result pupils wait patiently for peers to respond to questions. This enables all to participate fully.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good standard of education for its pupils and includes them very well in the exciting and varied curriculum it provides. Staff take very good care of the pupils and use information on their progress very well in English, mathematics and science. Assessment of their progress in other subjects is unsatisfactory. There are excellent links with parents and very effective links with the community. Although most accommodation is satisfactory, the two temporary classrooms need some refurbishment at least and the arrangement of classes in the Foundation Stage hinders the further development of teaching consistency. Resources for learning are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The assessment of children's progress is very good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff work very effectively together
- Teachers plan lessons very effectively
- Sometimes pupils do not know how to improve their work
- Teachers make good links between some subjects so that pupils can practise their skills in different ways
- Teaching methods are innovative and help pupils concentrate and build confidence in tackling new work
- Learning resources are used well and regular homework helps pupils to progress
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they progress very well

Commentary

11. Teaching in the nursery is consistently very good. The teacher has an excellent grasp of the learning needs of very young children and works very closely with the nursery nurse to establish children's self-confidence. She has excellent subject knowledge and provides a compelling array of varied learning activities that promote interest and sustain motivation. Children make very rapid progress in their skills of communication, language and literacy and of personal, social and emotional development because planned and incidental opportunities consistently promote them. Effective questioning encourages children to explain their choices and make connections with what they already know. Little time is wasted and the two staff divide their time and combine their talents effectively so that stimulation and encouragement of learning is never far away.
12. In the reception classes, although the quality of most teaching and learning is very good, a few aspects are satisfactory and slightly more are excellent. Staff work hard to overcome the fact that their classrooms are not close together by planning their work jointly and there is still more that they could learn from one another. Teachers track children's progress very effectively using national guidance and this gives an accurate basis for their planning. Classrooms are often alive with interest and reflect the broad range of children's activities and their high achievement. Teachers expect a lot of the children and use very effective strategies to keep their interest. In the best lessons, they vary the activities in tune with the children's pace of learning and the ways in which individuals learn best. For instance, in teaching reading, they encourage children to use

letter sounds, familiar words, illustrations, predictions and the sense of the sentence to make sense of the text. They provide consistent encouragement and praise worthy efforts even if they are not correct but are justifiable. This builds children's confidence and enjoyment in their work. Staff and pupils enjoy excellent, trusting relationships that dispel fear of failure and staff work very effectively together to teach children in smaller groups or support them in whole-class lessons. Occasionally, teaching does not reach these heights and the pace of learning slows because teaching does not ensure all children are paying attention or fully engaged in their work.

13. In Years 1 and 2, most teaching is very good. The consistency of lesson planning makes the most of teaching strengths and ensures a fully effective role for learning support assistants in teaching small groups or helping individuals as part of a larger group. Year 1 teachers are piloting a whole school initiative on extending the range of teaching methods to encourage more effective learning evident in all classes. These methods include providing stimulating classrooms with the subtle, appropriate addition of low background music or the sound of a fountain to create a calm atmosphere to help concentration. This worked particularly effectively on some hot afternoons during the inspection when pupils' concentration could have lagged. This is coupled with changes of learning pace to freshen up interest and attention and maintain motivation. These changes typically feature short mental or physical exercises and often pupils return to their original work with fresh zeal. All teachers try to take into account of how individuals learn best. They provide learning activities that encourage pupils to watch carefully, listen closely and experience things at first hand. They use resources well (as in science experiments or number work) to maintain high levels of interest. These methods give all pupils a more equal opportunity to learn than if teaching catered for just one preferred learning style. Pupils usually have a good idea of how to improve their work in writing but do not know with the same precision how to improve in other subjects. This is largely because the quality of assessment in the foundation subjects is not as sharp as it is in English, mathematics and science. On the other hand, teachers are good at making links with other subjects so that literacy and numeracy skills in particular are regularly practised in subjects such as geography and science. Throughout the school, teachers set regular homework that either consolidates what pupils learn in class or extends it. This approach finds great favour with parents who appreciate knowing what their children will learn next and gives them very good support. Handwriting skills are taught consistently from the outset and pupils take pride in the appearance of their work.
14. In supporting pupils' special educational needs, teachers and learning support assistants work in partnership to ensure teaching methods and resources are suitably adapted. This enables these pupils to complete similar work to their peers and to make very good progress. Teachers have high expectations and consistently build pupils' confidence and social skills alongside their academic learning. The school has a very small minority of pupils who have English as an additional language. The school provides some specialist teaching and this is satisfactory. When combined with their work in class that emphasises speaking and listening (other pupils providing very good role models of clear speech and wide vocabularies), it enables them to make good progress. Some teachers aid language development very effectively by emphasising the correct pronunciation of words but this is not consistent across the school. The school's internal assessments of these pupils' progress do not follow up the initial assessments and this is unsatisfactory.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (8%)	18 (50%)	13 (36%)	2 (6%)	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

The overall quality of the curriculum is very good and the range and quality of learning experiences in the nursery and reception are also very good. The school has worked very hard to enhance the learning environment and it is attractive and welcoming. Opportunities for enriching the curriculum through clubs, working with outside agencies and individuals and visits are good and have a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school has satisfactory accommodation overall and a good level of learning resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's development of stimulating classrooms and innovative teaching methods is making a very good contribution to pupils' learning experiences
- There are well-developed cross-curricular links in mathematics, English, ICT, geography and science
- A very good level of well trained support staff meets pupils' needs very well and contributes to very good inclusion
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities within and outside the school day that stimulates pupils' interest
- Transfer arrangements between the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 are excellent and promote continuity of learning. Those between Year 2 and the Junior School are very good and build pupils' confidence for the next stage of their learning.
- The accommodation arrangements for the Foundation Stage as a whole inhibit the development of greater teaching and learning consistency
- The programme for personal, health and social education now makes an important contribution to the development of the school community

Commentary

15. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements very well. The bright, attractive classrooms stimulate learning. The school has used research findings to provide music, scents and water features in classrooms to improve conditions for learning still further. The school is also innovative in introducing opportunities for improving pupils' thinking skills through the use of physical exercise programmes, 'brain gym' (mental exercises) and meditation.
16. There has been a strong focus on literacy and numeracy that has resulted in very high standards of achievement in those areas. The school has invested heavily in improving ICT provision. It is now using these strengths across other subjects, such as geography and science in the work on Mexico and on the growth of plants.
17. All pupils are able to take full advantage of the curriculum opportunities the school offers. Those with special educational needs are particularly well supported. Teaching staff and

learning support assistants work very well together. They give particular emphasis to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills through very good use of questioning techniques. This ensures that pupils have good access to the curriculum in lessons and make very good progress. Very good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and learning support assistants work in partnership to ensure pupils have similar learning activities to others. The provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory. A few who are at an early stage of learning English have some specialist support and all benefit from working alongside their peers to practise their spoken English.

18. The organisation of the timetable provides appropriate teaching time for all aspects of the curriculum. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection. The curriculum is enriched further through a range of extra activities after school and at lunchtimes. For instance, an Irish Dancing Club after school has had to be extended to two sessions because of the high numbers of pupils wishing to be involved.

19. Personal, social and health education is taught very well in some classes but is not yet fully co-ordinated across all classes. Very good use is made of assemblies and circle time in the classroom and the school also draws on the help of the community to contribute individual areas of expertise, such as local priests and the police.
20. Resources are good for most subjects across the whole school. Very good improvements have been made since the previous inspection in resourcing ICT and in the development of the new, attractive library area. The range of materials available to the pupils in art and design and design and technology is satisfactory. The school has a good number of teaching staff who are very well supported by a very good number of learning support assistants.
21. Overall provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and staff work hard to overcome the difficulties that working in three different locations in the school present to greater teamwork and sharing of strengths. Remaining accommodation is satisfactory. Staff ensure that the transfer arrangements between the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 are excellent and based on thorough staff knowledge of each child. The school has worked with the junior school to make the transfer of pupils between the two schools as seamless as possible. Discussions with pupils show that they are confident and eager about moving on. The use of writing partners, joint assemblies, short exchanges of staff and pupils and a playground 'buddy' system all support the transfer arrangements successfully.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. It provides good support, guidance and advice and makes great efforts to consult and act on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are excellent induction arrangements for new pupils
- Excellent trusting relationships
- Very good procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety
- Pupils receive well-informed support and guidance
- High value placed on pupils' views
- Assessment of pupils' progress in the foundation subjects is unsatisfactory as is the school's assessment of the progress in learning English of pupils for whom it is an additional language

Commentary

22. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the induction arrangements for pupils starting at the school. Most pupils start in the nursery and only a few transfer from other pre-school provision. Home visits are carried out for nursery placements and there is an evening for parents to meet staff and a representative of the governing body. A comprehensive starter pack includes information on how pupils are taught and how parents can support areas of work, such as pre-reading and handwriting. Pupils joining from another school receive support from more established pupils and a close check is made as to how they settle in and make new relationships.
23. The school is careful to see they meet all requirements for the health and safety of pupils and new guidelines are incorporated into school practice promptly. Site inspections are carried out termly with an intensive audit each year and staff are kept up to date with any potential

hazards. All staff have received basic first aid training and some have more specialised training. All staff have completed training in child protection procedures.

24. The quality of support and guidance is good because of the way that information about pupils is shared between teachers and learning support assistants and then used in lesson planning. Learning support assistants are included well in the planning for support and they show a strong commitment to pupils' achievement, for example by attending consultation evenings for parents with the teacher.
25. The school effort to achieve an effective caring and learning community extends to helping pupils influence decisions. They complete questionnaires appropriate for their ages and each pupil has an opportunity to discuss school life with an adult. They also express their ideas in time set aside for this in lessons (circle time), such as when they discuss school rules. There is a box for pupils' confidential notes about anything that concerns them. Pupils feel their ideas are listened to and they value the sense of responsibility it gives them.
26. Teachers know their pupils well. From the time pupils enter the nursery, the school collects and analyses data on pupil progress in all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is monitored thoroughly in English, mathematics and science. This is used effectively to track the progress of individual pupils, groups of pupils, classes and cohorts. Performance in national tests is analysed and the information gained is used to plan improvements in teaching and to set challenging targets to raise achievement still further. Assessment and monitoring are more limited in other subjects. It is more difficult then for planning to take full account of pupils' needs.
27. Pupils with special educational needs are cared for very well. Staff monitor very closely their progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. They also give the pupils regular opportunities to review progress towards the individual targets set for them. Effective support is given to pupils in lessons, which helps them make very good progress.
28. Those pupils who have English as an additional language are assessed well on entry but this is not followed up rigorously. As a result, teachers do not always understand their precise linguistic needs and there is a need for further better assessment and staff training in its use.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a unity of staff purpose that forges highly effective links with parents that are to pupils' significant benefit. There are very close links with all aspects of the community. There are very effective links with other institutions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents make an excellent contribution to school life and give excellent levels of support to pupils' learning
- The school places a very high value on parents' views and provides very high quality information about the school and pupils' work
- The school is a very effective partner within the community and has very good developmental links with local schools
- There is not enough helpful information in reports about how pupils can improve

Commentary

29. The school and parents work extremely well in partnership and parents think exceptionally well of what the school does. Parents are included as a genuine part of the whole-school community, and school decisions take into account their interests as well as those of pupils and staff. Parents think that the school has a very strong sense of community. The school benefits greatly from parents' involvement and support for their children's learning. The parents' group is very active and continues to support school funds. The school can always rely on a lot of help for events like TLC weekends, when parents help to redecorate the school. Parents also give regular help in the classrooms and one parent redesigned the school website. Parents make good use of the reading record, which is frequently a means of dialogue with the teachers. Conscious of home support, teachers can set, with confidence, substantial pieces of homework, such as the completion of a design and technology project.
30. The school consults very well with parents through the use of questionnaires. One included a piece of research with De Montfort University on raising standards, which involved parents, pupils and staff. Very informative weekly newsletters include information about the work pupils will be doing. The parents' group sends out their own newsletter. Parents have ready access to teachers each day and are encouraged to contact the school with any concerns. A record of achievement that serves as the report to parents on pupils' progress has been improved to include targets and parent and pupils' comments. Information is very detailed about what pupils can do in English and mathematics but there are rarely indications of how to improve in other subjects and targets are often too general or concerned only with effort and motivation.
31. The school has forged many links with the community and links with the church remain especially strong. Local businesses support school events and individual organisations contribute to learning, such as football skills' training by Reading Football Club and a continuing arrangement for children in reception to visit Pizza Express to make pizzas. The school works very closely with other schools. Links with the Junior School result, among other things, in joint whole-school policies and joint staff development and effective transfer arrangements. The school works closely with the Slough group of schools on curriculum development and with the Catholic group co-ordinating religious education. Arrangements with the secondary school include the sharing of resources, such as using the secondary school bus for visits.
32. The special educational needs co-ordinator liaises effectively with parents, the Junior School and local agencies. There are excellent transfer arrangements for these pupils with the Junior School in which learning support assistants from the Junior School work alongside pupils towards the end of Year 2 to gain familiarity with their needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and school management is very good. The school is well governed.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear view of how the school should continue to improve and a shrewd appreciation of all facets of its work
- Senior staff carry out their duties very well
- The school has an effective system of curriculum development
- Teamwork is the hallmark of the school's management
- There is a rigorous and forward looking approach to financial management
- The school has an impressive record of professional development

- Governors are very committed to school improvement but do not collect and evaluate enough of their own information
- Co-ordinators of science and the foundation subjects are supporting their subjects' development but not evaluating it systematically
- Best value judgements are not focused on the impact of major spending decisions

Commentary

33. The headteacher has a very well-developed understanding of school leadership and management and gives the staff and the school community an inspirational lead. Not content with the pupils reaching and maintaining high standards in English, mathematics and science, she seeks to develop, with the staff, similarly high standards in all aspects of children's learning. In this high ambition, there are already clear signs of success. Under her guidance, staff are developing well thought through innovative features of curriculum development and of teaching methodology that are promoting pupils' wide access to the school curriculum. Management responsibilities are clearly delegated through a system of paired and team tasks. In effect, this means staff working in teams across subjects and year groups. For instance, subject co-ordination is often allocated to two staff so that they can support one another and share ideas. It also offers opportunities for someone new to the subject or to the school to work alongside a more experienced colleague. Governors have allocated the curriculum leaders time when they are released from their class teaching in order to manage their subjects.
34. The headteacher and deputy headteacher maintain oversight of significant areas of management such as for the Foundation Stage or for the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Both areas are very well managed. The Foundation Stage management involves regular meetings for lesson planning, curriculum development and provision improvement. Part of the special educational needs provision includes the regular review and target setting of pupils' individual action plans. Parents are kept fully informed and are invited to review meetings. Pupils who are not on the special educational needs register but who experience difficulties in their learning are also monitored within the caring community of the school.
35. Both English and mathematics are very well led and the co-ordinators work closely with the headteacher and deputy headteacher on the analysis of pupils' assessment data to set school and year group targets. The co-ordination of the remaining subjects is broadly satisfactory and all are making a contribution to the development of their subjects. They have contributed to the school development plan, have done some monitoring and have written action plans for improving their subjects. Their work in monitoring and evaluating their subjects is unsatisfactory because it is not systematically giving them a clear picture of standards and quality of teaching. Consequently, some judgements about the quality of teaching and learning lack rigour and their action plans are more to do with improvements in provision rather than raising pupils' achievement. The school development plan is useful to senior staff and governors because it has the right priorities and is clearly set out. Some actions have clear, measurable targets that make their achievement plain to see. A large minority are not as clear because they typically concern the completion of a task rather than its impact.
36. Senior staff are leading the development of initiatives such as the one to improve classroom environments to make them more conducive to learning. Another example is the more regular use of various learning activities that ensure that pupils can learn best. These developments are based on recent research and staff have are having thorough training that is being led by senior staff. This training is part of a comprehensive

approach to professional development that is based on very effective performance management. Staff have the opportunity to develop individual skills as well as taking part in training arranged for the whole staff. This long-term view of investment in staff enjoys the full support of governors and has, for instance, enabled three former learning support assistants to gain qualified teacher status. The ultimate beneficiaries are the pupils who gain from access to a well-trained workforce. One example of this is the specialist training given to a learning support assistant who regularly works with a small group of pupils to develop their movement and co-ordination skills.

37. The school also has a strong tradition in supporting initial teacher training. The deputy headteacher has this responsibility and discharges it very well. Besides very good links with a local training establishment for students on teaching practice, the school is currently training a graduate teacher who is making good progress towards her qualification. This level of involvement in training helps staff keep up to date with the latest developments and also serves to increase the adult/pupil ratio.

38. The school benefits from the excellent working relationship between the governing body and staff. Governors are very committed to the school's improvement and have a good idea of its strengths and weaknesses. They recognise the need for more of them to take part in a rota of visits to supplement those made by the governor with oversight of special educational needs provision. A policy on these visits is now being drawn up with the intention of allowing governors to collect and evaluate more of their own information about the school. They are well organised into committees and manage their work well and draw on the support of the headteacher. The finance committee is particularly effective. It plans strategically and uses specific grants and additional funding very well. It sets and monitors the budget closely and has kept additional reserves (which account for the larger than usual carry forward) to help finance the proposed Foundation Stage additional building. The committee also plans strategically over three years so that it can be assured of staffing continuity. Governors and the staff have an adequate regard for best value judgements. For instance, they compare the school's performance with others and seek good value quotations for building work or services. However, they do not examine the impact of major spending decisions such as those on improvements in ICT provision on pupils' achievement and attainment.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	735,230
Total expenditure	668,390
Expenditure per pupil	2,503

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	81,721
Balance carried forward to the next	66,840

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children of nursery and reception age is very good. Children are on track to reach or often exceed the goals expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well and those learning English as an additional language achieve soundly. The quality of teaching is very good overall and while a few lessons are satisfactory, more are of the highest quality. Staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn and teach an exciting and varied curriculum. Children behave very well and are very well motivated. As a result, they make very good progress and achieve very well. Leadership and management are very good. This overall improvement in provision marks significant progress since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a wide range of opportunities to choose their own activities and to use resources independently and with others
- They are very keen to learn and co-operate very sensibly with others

Commentary

39. Teaching is excellent in this area. Children achieve very highly and reach well above average standards. From the start of their time in the nursery, children begin to develop confidence in themselves and in the staff. They quickly understand the routines and adjust their behaviour to the staff's gently expressed but high expectations. During the periods of structured play, children choose from a changing variety of very well-planned options both inside and outside the classroom. They are happy to involve others in their play, to share equipment or to concentrate on something alone. They learn to handle disappointments well and to empathise with others. Staff are excellent role models of caring for one another and are quick to promote independence and responsibility. In the reception classes, teachers and learning support assistants also work in close-knit teams with high expectations and similar qualities of care. In these classes, children learn to take on more responsibility for others and seek, for instance, the privilege of being 'water bearers' (children who pour out and distribute drinking water during lessons). In these classes they continue to make considered choices because teachers consistently promote this. Children work together diligently in tending the plants outside the classrooms and take pride in their achievements. They organise their equipment very well and listen attentively to their teachers and to others during class discussions. They are very polite and grow in self-confidence in response to the praise, guidance and encouragement they receive.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work together very well so that speaking and listening skills are constantly promoted
- Children get great enjoyment from books and most can identify letter sounds, and an increasing number of words by sight
- Higher attaining children speak expressively and anticipate likely events in a story
- They write their own names and many can write simple words unaided
- All children make excellent progress in handwriting and develop a clear, legible, joined script from the outset

Commentary

40. Teaching in this area is excellent. Children achieve very highly and reach well above average standards. Teaching and support staff work as a team in each class to support the rapid development of oracy skills. They do this by providing activities to capture children's interests and encourage the desire to communicate. For instance in the nursery, children have ready access to a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities that encourage working, talking and listening in groups. Usually beside them is the teacher or nursery nurse to prompt the dialogue through questioning and encouragement to refine speech and ideas. Regular times are set aside for practising reading and writing skills such as when the children are split into two groups to increase their access to an adult. At these times, children volunteer information about their interests and listen attentively to others. They then write the initial letters of their names (or more if they can manage it) and draw or write about what they have done. Around the room, teachers also provide incidental opportunities for children to write to help them see the connection between speech and print. In the reception classes, the development of speech, reading and writing continues to have the highest priority. Classroom management ensures that all children get the chance to contribute to discussions and a minority of teachers are very good at encouraging clear, well-enunciated speech. They teach reading thoroughly by getting the children to use all the prompts on the page such as pictures, letter sounds, by recognising familiar words and by anticipating what might happen next. Children learn these skills well, develop confidence and make excellent progress. In the best lessons, teachers use puppets so that children can speak through them and take on the voices of different characters or show different emotions that they then bring to their reading. Handwriting is practised regularly and is closely related to the progression from larger to finer physical movements. Some children also trace out their letters in sand to consolidate the skill and then practise independently in the large sand trays. The hallmark of other writing is relevance and this increases children's motivation. An example of this was in one class when the teacher used the occasion of a child's birthday for everyone to write her a card. All children succeeded in producing some form of writing, which ranged from greetings in complete sentences to a few words and the child's name.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy practical investigations such as gathering and representing information and sorting and weighing objects

- They learn to use numbers to ten and beyond accurately
- Children identify common two-dimensional shapes

Commentary

41. Teaching in this area is very good. Children achieve very well and reach above average standards. This level of progress and achievement is partly the result of the high expectations teachers have of their children and the relevance of the tasks they complete. A good example of this was in the nursery when children were using building blocks to make what at various times became a coach, car and boat. Various children came to take part in the game as it developed and others left to start something else. The nursery nurse took various opportunities to count with the children, the number of them on the boat and to work out if this was more or less than previously. They also learned positional language such as 'on' or 'off', 'above' and 'below'. In a reception class, children confidently asked one another their favourite flower colour, made tally charts of the results and then the higher attaining children went on to complete block graphs from their results. This is normally expected of the average seven year old. In their science work, children categorise plants and measure their growth. Their artwork reflects their good understanding of the names and some of the properties of two-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn very effectively by carrying out their own investigations
- There is a good emphasis on learning about different environments and places in the world

Commentary

42. Teaching in this area is very good and children make very good progress. Children develop very keen observation skills because most classrooms present children with a very wide range of natural and man-made things to stimulate their interest. In the nursery, a gauze butterfly cage, which contained several pupae, was an example of the constantly changing stimuli the staff provide. Unfortunately, the pupae had developed into butterflies over the holiday but the teacher painted a vivid word picture of their release in her garden. One determined child followed this up by recalling her observation of a butterfly with a black spot on each wing and wanted to know more about it. Later in the morning, the teacher and child consulted reference books for more information. The children had recently made a farm visit and vividly recalled how they felt when a baby goat had sucked their fingers as they fed it. Children turn to computers to draw and paint shapes as well as counting objects. Older children look after their garden and investigate the seeds of broad beans harvested from plants they had sown earlier. They are developing a good understanding of conditions that favour plant growth and learn about shade and temperature from their daily weather observations. Accounts of visits to other countries with their parents provide the basis for a number of comparisons about the weather, food and buildings.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children handle tools and small equipment safely and with very good control
- They develop their co-ordination very well by taking part in a variety of energetic, skill-based activities

Commentary

43. Teaching in this area is very good and children make very good progress. The school gives children many planned and incidental opportunities to develop their physical control and this leads to very good achievement. There is easy access to a range of small and larger building blocks in the nursery and children use them effectively to create small models they can manipulate or larger ones they can climb into. They do so safely and co-operatively. They have regular writing practice with the teacher, who ensures their pencil grip is correct and comfortable, and when they choose to write, they carry out the lessons learned. The outdoor play area is used well and pupils weave their way around it on tricycles, having fun and developing their co-ordination skills safely. Older children also have regular periods of physical education when teachers and learning support assistants work effectively together to encourage all the children to take part. Lessons usually involve skills practice followed by a game to try them out. In one lesson, the children made very good progress in controlling small balls with shinty sticks. Children are very enthusiastic and move around the hall confidently making good use of space and are well aware of others. They have a good range of movement and flexibility and this is well developed when children use the trim trail apparatus in the playground or when using small apparatus in the playground at lunchtime.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Displays in classrooms are used very well to stimulate pupils' imaginations
- Children make good use of classroom resources such as paints, fabrics and construction materials to develop their creativity
- Children enjoy singing and playing a variety of percussion instruments

Commentary

44. Teaching in this area is very good. Children achieve very well and reach above average standards. Teachers provide very good resources to develop children's creativity and staff ensure that children choose or are directed to these areas of the classrooms so that they all have an equal opportunity to develop well. In the nursery, small groups of children choose to experiment with paint colours to create new ones. They become absorbed in their work and apply themselves with great concentration. Classroom displays are testament to the quality of their finished products. The study of butterflies gave rise to model making and painting and children referred to photographs while trying out their own designs. Teachers in reception classes make the most of opportunities in art to encourage children to record their work in different ways and so details of what the class caterpillars eat are recorded artistically. Children's colourful slipper designs are delightfully varied, reflecting individual creativity. Music and singing are strong features in

at least one reception class, where children and the teacher make up songs for classroom routines such as moving from one activity to another. Towards the end of the day, they sing favourite songs to guitar and percussion accompaniment. Often teachers play recordings of music to enhance the atmosphere for learning, which aid children's concentration.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have well above average skills in speaking and listening
- Pupils learn very well and are enthusiastic about their work in English
- Pupils' achievement is very good
- Quality of teaching overall is very good
- Teaching assistants support the children very well, particularly those with special educational needs
- Good quality marking helps pupils to know how to improve
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good
- The use of time in some lessons does not give the more able pupils opportunities to extend their writing skills

Commentary

45. Pupils start school with levels of attainment in line with the national average. By the time they leave they achieve very well and reach well above average standards. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very effectively. The very good quality of teaching and the positive attitudes of the pupils mean that results show year on year improvement. The challenging targets set for 2004 will be achieved.
46. All staff place great emphasis on teaching the skills of speaking and listening. They use good levels of vocabulary and act as good role models. Pupils listen attentively and the good relationships with adults and peers encourage pupils to speak confidently.
47. Individual, group and whole-class reading sessions are used extremely well to enable pupils to develop their reading skills. They read expressively – one Year 1 pupil confidently used a variety of voices for different characters in the story. The Reading Record provides a useful link between home and school to support pupils' learning.
48. Standards of handwriting are exceptionally high and pupils take pride in their work. Pupils are taught useful methods of learning spellings and this leads to very high standards. Use of punctuation is also above national averages. Pupils would benefit from more time to develop their independent and creative writing to put their skills into practice. This is because higher attaining pupils do not produce enough high quality content in their writing that reflects their range and ability in reading.
49. Teachers plan meticulously. A major strength is their knowledge of pupils' learning styles and their ability to match these to a variety of teaching methods. This ensures pupils are actively involved and motivated to learn. They work very well both independently and co-operatively. Work is also planned at different levels to meet the needs of groups of pupils of differing abilities. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils. The objectives of the lessons are made clear to the pupils and this helps them to understand what they are expected to learn. In some lessons, insufficient time is given for pupils to extend their

writing skills. Teachers use very effective questioning to extend pupils' learning and to check what they have learnt. The marking of work praises pupils' efforts and also explains how they can improve their work still further. Talented teaching assistants support the work in lessons very effectively. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported and they achieve very well.

50. The subject leader, excellently supported by the headteacher, leads a strong staff team committed to improving standards further. Extensive monitoring has ensured that she has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. There is a detailed plan within the overall school improvement plan that highlights appropriate areas for development. Assessment procedures are effective and staff know the pupils very well. Classrooms are well resourced and a new and attractive library area has been completed with the support of the local authority's Library Service.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is good. Opportunities are taken in other subjects to develop speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. The pupils have produced very good written work on Mexico as part of their geography lessons. Much of this was based on material the pupils had, read having accessed information through the Internet. Generally, ICT makes a good contribution to pupils' progress in English. The school has established a very successful 'Writing Partners' scheme with the Junior School involving collaborative work between Year 2 and Year 5 pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Basic skills are taught very effectively
- The focus on developing numeracy skills has contributed positively to the high standards achieved
- Pupils achieve very well because teaching is of a consistently very good standard
- Assessment is used very effectively to modify the curriculum and to track individual pupils' progress
- Higher attaining pupils achieve well but could be further extended by increasing their opportunities for problem solving
- The subject is led very well

Commentary

52. Pupils enter the school with standards that are average. By the end of Year 2, national tests show standards are well above average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well and higher attaining pupils achieve well.
53. The quality of teaching is very good. The excellent relationships between the staff and pupils have created a positive climate for learning in which all pupils confidently participate. A common feature of all lessons is the enthusiasm of the teachers, which captures pupils' interest. This was very effective in a Year 1 lesson where pupils became

excited about a simple game to reinforce the concept of odd and even numbers. The pace of the lesson was very good, pupils were highly motivated and by the end all could explain if a number was odd or even and why.

54. Teachers know the pupils very well. In partnership with skilled teaching assistants they plan their work carefully to match the pupils' needs. Staff have an excellent working partnership that enables all pupils to do their best. As a result, basic skills are being systematically and very effectively developed. There is a strong emphasis on developing knowledge of properties of numbers. Lessons frequently begin with energetic brain gym activities that involve counting. An excellent example of this was a rap written by a Year 1 teacher. This required pupils to count, rhythmically in twos, fives and tens and in odd numbers.
55. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can count beyond 100 in multiples of two and can recall multiplication facts for the five times-table. Standards in using and applying mathematics and problem solving are average and pupils achieve soundly. The co-ordinator has already identified the need to promote a wider range of methods for the pupils to record their mathematical findings. In addition to this, increasing the opportunities for higher achieving pupils to use and apply knowledge in problem-solving situations would extend them further.
56. Strong leadership has ensured that good progress has been made since the previous inspection. The very good analysis of monitoring information and test data is helping teachers to make accurate evaluations of strengths and weaknesses of performance. Recently, this has enabled teachers to make amendments to the curriculum and place greater emphasis on place value and data handling. While targets have been set for pupils relating to place value, pupils are not always clear about how they could improve their work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Good use is made of mathematics within other subjects and cross-curricular links are consistently emphasised in lesson planning. An effective example of this was a science lesson in which pupils used tallying. Teachers are also beginning to use ICT within mathematics. Year 1 and 2 pupils confidently use an integrated learning system (a computer based program) on a daily basis to develop their numeracy skills. PowerPoint (an ICT program) is used to animate objects for children to count and computers are used for data handling and to investigate patterns of numbers on a hundred square.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By Year 2, pupils reach above average standards and achieve well and this marks good progress since the previous inspection
- They have good subject knowledge and satisfactory investigative skills
- The quality of teaching is very good

- The co-ordinators have made a good start in their new role, are leading the subject soundly but are not evaluating the subject systematically
- Pupils have very good attitudes to science

Commentary

58. At the time of the inspection, the Year 2 pupils were starting a new project on habitats. They were introduced to it via a website that stimulated their interest and it built on what they knew about habitats of different creatures. From work earlier in the year, they also have a good understanding of forces, the different properties of materials and electrical circuits. The current work involves them in gathering and collating information related to minibeasts. This practical approach includes trying to predict what kind of creatures may be found in the school hedgerows and then deciding the best way of collecting them. The pupils made good progress in these investigations for several reasons. Teachers introduced the topic very well by showing the pupils the equipment for catching the insects but asking them to work out how to use it. Although familiar with this level of challenge, the pupils are intrigued and make several plausible suggestions that they are eager to carry out. They also make good progress because the teachers and learning support assistants work as a team asking a series of questions to guide groups of pupils as the insects drop into the catch nets. Pupils have keen observation skills and could begin to sort out familiar from non-familiar insects as well as other categories such as numbers of legs. Throughout this, pupils worked very well together. They shared tasks and observations, were interested in what others were finding out and treated the creatures with curiosity and respect. Teachers have planned the work well together and later this term pupils will visit the pond area in the junior school grounds and examine grassland habitats (the school field).
59. Year 1 pupils are starting a topic on growth and are examining different kinds of seeds and learning the plant them. In these lessons, the same teamwork as in Year 2 between teachers and support staff ensures that all pupils are included and can make good progress. The teachers also use resources very well so that small groups of pupils have enough equipment to make their own observations and carry out planting using a range of media. The pupils are not as familiar with investigations as Year 2 but still came up with a range of questions about frequency of watering and the size of the seeds related to the size of the plant. They also discussed how they thought different planting media might promote diverse rates of growth. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress especially towards their targets concerning working with others and taking turns. Teachers had planned the work very well together and, as in Year 2, were assessing it well at the end of the project to see how well pupils had progressed to help refine their subsequent lessons. They use homework very well to introduce new topics and consolidate what pupils know. Parents actively support this.
60. The two co-ordinators bring great enthusiasm to their new role and have already made an impact. Using an external grant, they arranged for an ex-pupil and now an artist to paint a mural in a corridor and up a flight of stairs. This colourful piece incorporated many pupils' ideas as it developed and shows minibeasts in different habits and a range of plants all linked with characters from favourite stories. In addition, the co-ordinators have audited and re-arranged resources so that staff have ready access to project materials. They have promoted links with other subjects, especially in art and design, and colourful classroom displays are a ready reminder of the quality and range of previous work. The co-ordinators' work in evaluating provision has started. They have worked on planning with some teachers but have not

examined how well pupils achieve. Their action plan is not focused enough on raising pupils' achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- At the end of Year 2, standards of attainment are improving significantly and are now in line with national averages
- The new ICT suite and the interactive whiteboards are having an impact on improving standards
- Leadership of the subject is good
- Teachers have had training in teaching the curriculum
- Although improving, the subject knowledge of staff is still not consistently good enough
- Planning does not allow enough time within lessons for pupils to have direct interaction with the computers
- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is a weakness

Commentary

61. The school is making good use of the computer suite, including the new interactive whiteboards to improve pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. The pupils are becoming increasingly proficient in using the keyboard, mouse and screen icons to carry out tasks, such as editing texts and using simulation programs.

62. Most can produce their own text documents and use programs to produce and print images. In Year 2, pupils are able to use information stored on the Internet, such as in their geography work on Mexico. Many are able to plan and give instructions to move the 'Roamer' (a programmable robotic toy) through a set route. They are able to discuss and identify how ICT influences their lives both within school and outside. Overall, they are achieving well. In the school's previous inspection standards in ICT were unsatisfactory and so the school has made good progress.
63. Teaching and learning in the two lessons observed were satisfactory. Teachers' detailed planning, good use of resources and guidance from learning support assistants ensure that the pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. Restricted opportunities for paired working reduced time available to pupils for 'hands-on' work at the computer.
64. The subject leader for ICT is enthusiastic and has supported the improvements in pupils' attainment since the previous inspection. She has organised staff training and has overseen the expansion of resources very effectively. She has been excellently supported by the headteacher. She has a clear view of future developments through the introduction of additional interactive whiteboards and increases in the number of classroom-based computers. Although opportunities for carrying out monitoring and evaluation activities have been limited, she has an accurate view of standards within the school. This will be enhanced when the planned introduction of a new assessment package is completed next year. At present, recording of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. Information and communication technology is used extensively to support pupils' individual learning programmes in mathematics. There are examples of ICT work in science through the construction of weather maps. Pupils have used ICT programs to generate pictures to support their work in art and design and some pupils have accessed the Internet to extend their geography work on Mexico. In one of the lessons observed, a simulation exercise on the computer enhanced pupils' learning of the growth of plants.

HUMANITIES

66. In **history**, not enough evidence was available to make a judgement on provision. Information was gathered from examining pupils' work, interviewing the co-ordinator and observing one lesson. Year 2 pupils are making good progress in using sources to ask and answer questions as when they looked at photographs and etchings of the period of Florence Nightingale. In this very good lesson, the teacher prompted higher attaining pupils to examine the sources closely to justify their opinions with such questions as, 'Why do you think it's a hospital?' Pupils then went on to speculate over the managerial hierarchy in a photograph based on factors such as their uniforms, positions in the group and the look on their faces. This spirit of active enquiry is one that permeates the teaching of history. Staff draw on a good range of resources and make local visits with the pupils to make the subject come alive. Staff regularly encourage the development of literacy skills such as note taking and empathetic writing to extend pupils' writing skills. They use reference books with the pupils to encourage reading for information and group discussions provide the opportunity for verbal negotiations and short written summaries.

67. The subject is soundly led and makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development. The co-ordinator has made a start on monitoring the subject but this is not yet systematic. She has developed a scheme of work based on national guidance to support teachers' year group planning. Although the assessment of pupils' progress is currently unsatisfactory, the co-ordinator is piloting a better system that will be introduced shortly. She also recognises the need to focus the subject action plan on pupils' achievement rather than provision.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and their attitudes to learning are very good
- Discussions are used effectively to broaden knowledge and understanding
- Pupils attain above expected standards and achieve well
- The impact of provision is not systematically monitored and evaluated
- The use of assessment information is unsatisfactory

Commentary

68. Since the previous inspection, the school has implemented the national guidance in its scheme of work. This is an improvement as it has given greater structure to the curriculum. It has enabled good cross-curricular links to be made to other subjects and helped to improve pupils' achievement and attainment.
69. Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. This is because teaching is lively and engaging and the activities interesting. A particular strength is the in-depth discussions teachers instigate. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher led a very good discussion about the meaning and importance of road signs. The knowledge and understanding of the class was developed through skilful questioning. A playground road provided practical experience. When traffic problems arose pupils were required to explain why they had occurred and what could be done to prevent them. This gave the signs even greater significance and meaning.
70. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. When they talk about what they have learnt, pupils demonstrate an understanding that is above the standards expected by the end of Year 2. They speak with knowledge and enthusiasm about life in a contrasting locality overseas. They can locate Mexico, the village of Tocuraro and the UK on a map. They effectively make comparisons with their locality by referring to occupations, housing, temperature, roads, mountains, schooling and cooking. When talking about Burnham they can describe features they like and dislike. For example, one child liked the train station, while another thought it was 'ugly and noisy'.
71. When given the opportunity, higher attaining pupils express their opinions well in written work. This is particularly evident on class and school displays, where a wide variety of individual opinions are clearly expressed. However, work in books is not typically of this length and detail and does not always reflect the depth of pupils' knowledge.

72. The co-ordinator has improved the quality of resources available and linked these closely to the scheme of work. A permanent central display area and bright displays in all classrooms have helped make the subject high profile. The need to improve the quality of assessment information on pupils' progress has rightly been identified as an area for development. Monitoring has been limited to levelling samples of pupils' work (ensuring teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are accurate). Provision now needs to be more systematically monitored and critically evaluated so that action plans can more sharply focus on raising pupils' achievement. .

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. No **art and design** lessons were observed during the inspection and so there is not enough evidence to make a judgement on provision. The limited evidence available indicates that standards are average and so the school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection.
74. Art on display around the school makes a major contribution to the overall attractiveness of the learning environment. Pupils' work is interspersed with prints of paintings by famous artists to develop artistic appreciation. More recent appointments of staff with qualifications in art have helped to raise standards. The school is to take part in the 'Take One Picture' project – a national project that will enhance links between art and other subject areas. The school is aiming to achieve the 'Artsmark' award in 2005. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The scheme of work has been revised to combine aspects of two published schemes. The subject leader has monitored the work in pupils' sketchbooks and the work on display. She has observed lessons in all classes with a focus on developing basic skills. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory overall. Resources are satisfactory. The pupils' learning would benefit from opportunities to work with a wider range of materials.
75. In **music**, only one lesson was observed, so it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. In this lesson, pupils were learning a new song, which they were soon able to sing tunefully, rhythmically and with enjoyment. The school were also heard to sing tunefully during school worship. From limited evidence, there are indications that standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected.
76. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has raised the profile of music. It is now integral to the ethos of the school and teachers make good use of music within other curriculum areas. Suitable classical and instrumental music is played during the day to optimise the working environment. For example, during handwriting practice, music created a calm and productive atmosphere enabling pupils to maintain a high level of concentration. In addition, all pupils in Year 2 now have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder. Resources have been extended. All classes have their own box of instruments, while instruments from around the world are being purchased. The most recent addition is a steel drum. These resources, a range of commercial materials and staff training are helping to improve teacher confidence and provision.
77. In **physical education**, only one lesson was seen and it is not possible to make a judgement about provision. Year 2 pupils are achieving well in the development of ball skills and are making satisfactory progress in evaluating their performance. They have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. In the very good lesson seen, the teacher managed the lesson well and made very good use of the time available. She worked very effectively with the learning support assistant so that all pupils were encouraged to give of their best. Pupils with special educational needs made very good progress in following instructions, developing their movement and control skills and in working with others. All pupils enjoyed the lesson and were making sound progress in working together. Although the teacher made some shrewd observations of pupils' progress and gave some the opportunity to perform, most did not have a good idea of how to improve their work. The subject is soundly led and well resourced. The co-ordinator has a general idea about standards of attainment but staff generally do not have a clear view of pupils' progress because the arrangements for assessing it are

unsatisfactory. Improvements are in hand. The co-ordinator promotes the subject well through demonstration lessons in gymnastics that have improved teachers' skills.

78. The school encourages pupils' physical development through initiatives such as the involvement of Reading FC in football coaching, regular Irish dancing classes and the use of playground markings, play equipment at lunchtime and the trim trail. Teachers routinely encourage the development of all pupils' physical co-ordination through exercise breaks during lessons and a few pupils have regular support from a skilled learning support assistant in developing their walking, stretching and balancing skills.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in standards since the previous inspection
- Improvements in the pupils' ability to evaluate and refine their designs and models
- The lack of a structured approach to monitoring and evaluation of standards by the subject leader
- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is a weakness

Commentary

79. From the work on display around the school and other evidence, standards are average and pupils achieve soundly. The previous inspection judged standards were unsatisfactory and so the school has made good progress since then. Pupils' booklets, showing the development of their designs, and completed models indicate that pupils can evaluate the effectiveness of their designs and identify aspects for improvement in their finished models. In Year 2, many pupils can produce labelled sketches that indicate choice of materials. In some cases, the pupils can give appropriate reasons for their choices. This was particularly true for their work on producing a bag for Barnaby Bear's passport that neatly linked work in design and technology with work in geography.
80. In the lesson observed, the teacher's choice of teaching methods generated a high level of interest and enthusiasm in the pupils. Opportunities were provided for reflection as a class on the difficulties encountered with their designs, and teaching points arising were used well. The pupils applied themselves diligently and progress during the lesson was good.
81. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has led training for staff to improve their subject knowledge. The scheme of work has been recently revised after trials were completed in certain classes. The use of homework activities has been introduced successfully. Resources are satisfactory. The school relies heavily on the support of parents for basic materials and also seeks support from firms within the community. The pupils' learning would benefit from increased use of manufactured construction kits. The co-ordinator has had insufficient time to undertake a structured approach to monitoring and evaluation of standards. The assessment and recording of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)

82. Provision for personal, social and health education has greatly improved since the previous inspection and there are indications from the evidence available that provision is good. The school has devoted considerable resources towards raising the expertise of members of staff and building a bank of good quality teaching resources from which teachers can plan their lessons, including those on drugs education. School policy remains not to teach sex education as a discrete subject but to answer issues sensitively as they emerge. The school meets the statutory requirements for personal, social and health education. The quality of lessons is generally very good. They are well planned and allow for plenty of discussion. The school has looked to see how other subjects can contribute to personal, social and health education and intends a broadening across the curriculum with all classes giving the subject equal emphasis.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2

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