

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK GATE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Southampton, Hampshire

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116033

Headteacher: Mr A K Brown

Lead inspector: Mr R Passant

Dates of inspection: 7 – 9 July 2004

Inspection number: 257142

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	400
School address:	Northmore Road Park Gate Southampton Hampshire
Postcode:	SO31 6LX
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Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Osola
Date of previous inspection:	16 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is bigger than other primary schools, with some 400 pupils on roll; there are roughly equal proportions of boys and girls. Forty per cent of the pupils come from outside the immediate catchment area of the school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Only a very small proportion of pupils have an ethnic heritage that is not White UK and a very small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not or is not believed to be English is very low. There are no refugee pupils. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register is above average; this is because the school has a reputation in the area for the quality of its support for pupils with special educational needs and it tends to attract these pupils. Whilst the percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school at various points in the school year is overall average, there is a higher turnover of pupils in particular year groups and many of those joining have specific additional needs. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2728	Rod Passant	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Personal, social and health education and citizenship Information and communication technology Physical education
9391	Norma Bell	Lay inspector	
12116	Christina Morgan	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Religious education
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	English Geography History Music
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Foundation stage Science Design and technology

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	33

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Park Gate is a good school. It has many very good features. Pupils learn and achieve well and make good progress. Behaviour is very good, as are pupils' attitudes to learning. Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well and plan effectively for them as individuals. The school works very hard to create a very safe environment in which pupils can develop in confidence and self-esteem and enjoy the broad, rich and creative curriculum. The school is led very well by the headteacher, who has the respect of parents and pupils. He is supported very effectively by the very strong senior leadership team. All adults working in the school share the school's aims and work well together for the benefit of pupils. Teamwork is a very strong feature. On-going improvement and development are part of the school's ethos. Governance is very good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the school by the headteacher, deputy and senior leadership team.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. The school has a strong ethos based on mutual respect –'The Park Gate Way'. The school is very inclusive.
- Teaching is good. Teachers work very hard on pupils' behalf.
- The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully.
- Parents and pupils have very positive views of the school.
- The school has identified writing and geography for improvement
- Currently, work in religious education lacks rigour and depth.
- The provision for children in Reception is good and provides them with a very positive start to their school lives.

In a significant number of areas, such as the quality of teaching, the quality of leadership, provision in the Reception class and for information and communication technology (ICT), there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Some of the other improvements made have still to work through to lead to overall improvements in standards but, overall, improvement has been good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The year-on-year variations in the standards, in Year 6 and Year 2 tests, reflect the differing characteristics of the particular year group and the fact that some year groups are affected by pupil mobility¹. Over the last three years, the school has made a number of significant improvements to raise standards further. These improvements have still to work through the school and are not, as yet, having an impact on Year 6 test results.

¹ The numbers of pupils joining or leaving that year group at differing times throughout the year.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress when measured against their prior attainment. The trend for improvement up to 2003 has been below the national trend. Early indications of standards in 2004 Year 6 tests suggest that overall standards are average, with higher-attaining pupils doing particularly well in mathematics and science. The indications are that mathematics has made further improvements, with pupils achieving well above average. When standards in Year 2 tests are averaged over the three years up to 2003, standards are below average in reading and writing and close to the average in mathematics. Indications are that in the 2004 Year 2 tests, the proportion of pupils gaining or exceeding the expected standards (level 2) was in line with national averages.

Standards of work seen are appropriate to the age groups in most subjects across the school. The exceptions are religious education and geography; both subjects lack rigour and an in-depth approach. Reading and investigative work in mathematics and science are particular strengths. There is good development of pupils' thinking skills by teachers asking for reasons, explanations, and other points of view. The emphasis given to oral work is good – pupils are given opportunities to rehearse and try out their ideas. There is very good emphasis on developing pupils' ability to work independently and in groups – collaborative group work is a strong feature. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well, as do pupils with special educational needs.

Standards of behaviour are very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. **Personal development is very good.** Developing confidence and self-esteem and recognising pupils as individuals are very strong features. **The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good** – cultural development is relatively not as strong an element because some aspects within religious education are not treated in the necessary depth.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

There is good provision. Teaching is good. The sample of lessons was characterised by a consistency of pupils' good learning. The curriculum is good, enriched by good additional opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is very good. The headteacher leads the school very well. He is supported very effectively by the complementary skills of the deputy. There is very strong and evident teamwork at senior leadership and across the school. **Management is very good.** Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are very good. Performance management is very good and is helping to develop an open, professionally supportive ethos. Leadership is characterised by openness of communication, shared values, integrity and respect. Governance is very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils are rightly proud of their school and speak about it with very great warmth. They value very much what the school has done for them and their happy experiences. Parents are very supportive of the school. The school clearly has the trust of the parent body.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has identified very clearly in the school improvement plan aspects that need improvement. This includes developing the range and quality of pupils' writing. It has also identified geography as requiring additional development work. In addition, the school should:

- Develop greater rigour and raise the status of religious education as a subject in its own right – review the balance of time given to religious education and personal, social and health education.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils attain standards by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science tests close to the national median for their age group. Pupils achieve well and make good progress when measured against their prior attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in Reception in all areas.
- Standards in Year 2 tests are below average in reading and writing and close to the average in mathematics. In 2004, results show improvement in the overall proportion of pupils gaining the expected level.
- Early indications are that standards improved in the 2004 Year 6 tests, with higher-attaining pupils doing particularly well in mathematics and science.
- Standards seen in class are appropriate to the age group in almost all subjects – the exceptions are geography and religious education.
- Improvements undertaken in the school with, for example, aspects of writing, have still to work through to affect standards.
- Thinking skills and independent and collaborative work are developed well.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Commentary

1. Most children's attainments are at about the expected level for their age when they start in Reception, although many children have additional learning needs. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and attain the standard expected nationally by the time they leave Reception. Children achieve well. Children with special needs are well identified, and much help is provided for them, to ensure that they make progress that is just as good as that of their classmates.
2. Park Gate's test results do not give a clear indication of or insight into the current quality of education that pupils receive. There are year-on-year variations in the standards, reflecting the characteristics of the particular year groups – the proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register – and the degree of mobility within them; for example, in 2003, 13 higher-attaining pupils left the school before taking their Year 2 tests and this fact is reflected in the overall results. In addition, there have been significant improvements taking place over the last three years, particularly with regard to the breadth and creativity of the curriculum, which have yet to work through and be reflected in the tests results in Year 6.
3. Pupils achieve well and make good progress when measured against their prior attainment. Higher-attaining pupils achieve well, as do pupils with special educational needs.
4. When standards in Year 2 tests are averaged over the three years up to 2003, standards are below average in reading and writing and close to the average in mathematics. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls in reading: both performed below the national average for their particular gender when averaged over three years. Girls were slightly better in writing than boys. In mathematics, boys did better than girls. Overall, boys and girls performed roughly the same when the national difference between the genders is taken into account – girls tend to do better than boys nationally. The trend in improvement up to this year was below the national trend. Comparative national data for 2004 are not yet available; however, the indications are that the percentage of pupils gaining level 2 and above in

reading, writing and mathematics is in line with the national average when compared with the 2003 averages. Standards in the teacher assessments for science indicate that they are above average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003²

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.1 (13.0)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- When taken over a three-year average up to 2003, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science tests in Year 6 is close to the national median for their age group. Overall, boys' performance is statistically below the average for their particular gender whilst girls perform above the standard seen for girls nationally. No differences in performance were seen in class. The school monitors performance by gender closely. Statistical differences in boys' and girls' performance are likely to reflect the nature of the particular year group and the proportion of pupils from each gender on the register for special educational needs.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (28.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.5 (26.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.1 (27.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The trend for improvement, up to 2003, has been below the national trend. Early indications of standards in 2004 Year 6 tests suggest that overall standards are average, with higher-attaining pupils doing particularly well in mathematics and science. The indications are that mathematics has made further improvement.
- Standards of work seen are appropriate to the age groups in most subjects across the school. The exceptions are religious education and geography; both subjects lack rigour and an in-depth approach. Good standards in reading, by Year 6, have been maintained since the last inspection because of good teaching and well-planned activities, involving adults talking with pupils to develop an understanding of their given texts and to reflect on the qualities and motives of characters in those texts. Reading and investigative work in mathematics and science are particular strengths of the school. Pupils' writing, on the other hand, demonstrates a lack of accuracy in the spelling of even common words, despite the fact that the school uses regular learning and testing of spelling as a means of encouraging greater accuracy. The school is addressing improvements in spelling and writing but, as yet, these have not had a sufficient impact on standards. Standards in ICT (information and communication technology) are appropriate and pupils are confident and competent in their use of ICT.

² The average point score is a fairer method of determining standards because it takes into account the performance of all pupils, not simply those attaining a particular threshold. It is determined by giving each National Curriculum level a numerical value, determining a total for the cohort taking the tests and then dividing it by the number of pupils in the cohort.

8. Teachers are good at developing pupils' thinking and reasoning skills. The emphasis given to oral work is good – pupils are given opportunities to rehearse and try out their ideas. There is very good emphasis on developing pupils' ability to work independently and in groups; collaborative group work is a strong feature.
9. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs early and develops appropriate learning plans for them. As a result, pupils make good progress and often achieve the nationally expected levels in national tests. The school has clear criteria for providing additional support and for determining which pupils will benefit from intervention strategies. Pupils' individual education plans are useful working documents that clearly indicate progress and which strategies are successful. Higher-attaining pupils are identified and challenged appropriately in lessons. The 2004 Year 6 results in science and mathematics indicate that these higher-attaining pupils have achieved well.
10. The progress of all pupils is tracked carefully. The very small number of pupils learning English as an additional language are given good support, both in class and by specialist provision: as a consequence, they make good progress. A Cantonese-speaking Year 6 student is used to very good effect to liaise with parents and pupils. The school has a small number of Traveller pupils who are now settled within the local community: they are making good progress. There are close links with the parents and the school provides sensitive support to ensure good attendance. The school has a very small number of pupils in public care. The special educational needs co-ordinator monitors progress through the normal school routines and provides additional support, along with the headteacher if required. The school has strong links with the foster parents and social services.
11. There are a number of factors that support pupils' good achievement. These are:
 - The school's very positive ethos, which encourages pupils to be engaged in their learning.
 - The good quality of teaching.
 - The breadth of the curriculum and the good opportunities for enrichment.
 - The careful tracking of pupils' progress and its use as means of developing the professionalism of the teachers.
 - The overall very good leadership and management by key staff.
 - The high quality care and guidance of pupils, coupled with the very effective partnership with parents.

These aspects are explored in greater depth throughout the report.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is good and punctuality is very good. Pupils like their school very much. They behave very well and show very positive attitudes to learning. The social, moral spiritual and cultural development of pupils is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning, they are keen to learn, and concentrate well.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good.
- Pupils work well independently and in groups sharing ideas well and co-operating.
- Pupils arrive very punctually to school and like their school a lot.
- All aspects of pupils' personal development through spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision are very good.

Commentary

12. Pupils, including those with additional needs, like their school and teachers a lot and show real loyalty to their happy school community. Pupils work with a very positive attitude, they enjoy working together and on their own tasks, concentrate well and listen attentively to their teachers and to one another. Parents appreciate the way in which their children are expected to work hard and mature during their time at school.
13. A very strong framework has been laid down in the school so that good behaviour, good relationships, and a desire to do the best you can all combine to create a very good learning atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged to do their best, praised for what they do well and for trying hard, and are helped to develop good learning skills. Pupils also understand the concept of achieving one's personal best in a very mature way. They appreciate that some pupils find learning difficult, whilst others are good at cricket or can play a musical instrument which they, perhaps, cannot. They learn to value others by what they can do, not judge them by what they cannot do. The result is a very inclusive ethos, in which respect for all children is developed, so that pupils with additional needs – be it learning, or physical – are valued and included, not only in formal education but, almost more importantly, in the informal, social life of the school.
14. Pupils enjoy class and group discussions, where they speak with confidence and share their views clearly. A good example of this was in a Year 6 citizenship lesson, where pupils worked in groups to form a building company, assigned specific jobs to each other, and kept to a budget to build a new Wembley stadium.
15. Very young children develop into very confident, secure and independent youngsters. Children learn in the Reception class how to behave together, how to share, and how to co-operate with one another and with staff. Children begin to take responsibility for themselves, their belongings, and their work. They have good self-esteem, and are keen to join in and learn together. Children feel warm and secure in this learning environment, and it is a very positive start to their school lives.
16. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school, even when they are not so closely supervised. Playtimes are happy, lively occasions, when pupils mix. They show concern and courtesy to one another and are friendly and polite to staff and visitors. There is a very consistent approach to behavioural management by all adults in the school; all pupils have a clear understanding of how they should behave and the great majority meet expectations very well. There have been no recent exclusions for poor behaviour. Staff guide those pupils who sometimes find it difficult to control their behaviour with sensitivity and kindness so that the learning opportunities for the whole class are not lost.
17. Older pupils show a sense of responsibility towards younger children, helping them with reading and sometimes also at playtime, and this contributes well to the family atmosphere in the school. There are few incidents of bullying but, when it does occur, it is dealt with quickly by staff and pupils know that they must report unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils have continued to improve since the last inspection and help to provide a very special ethos in the school.
18. As pupils move through the school they are given good opportunities to take on responsibilities in class and in the school and this contributes well to their personal development. Duties such as delivering registers to classes and preparing the hall for assembly are carried out efficiently and with pride. Class Councils and the School Council also give pupils valuable experience in taking a practical role in the school. Pupils recognise that they are part of a special community and need to share and recognise the feelings and

needs of other people. They also understand that, by working together, they can make things

even better within their school community. Developing a respect for others and valuing oneself are developed very well through circle time³.

19. Pupils' understanding of the 'Park Gate Way', the school's code of behaviour, and their respect for it, has a very good effect on behaviour of all pupils and contributes very well to their social and moral development. Pupils also experience, through assemblies and in lessons, very special moments of deep emotion and wonder. In a Year 5 ICT lesson, for example, gasps of amazement and pleasure greeted the presentation on the class white-board of multi-coloured spiral patterns produced from the LOGO software program the class were learning about. Through lessons, visitors who come to the school and the extensive and rich variety of visits made out-of-school, pupils are given valuable opportunities to experience and explore new things and gain not only knowledge but special memories from these experiences. Pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon significant issues, which, along with the consistent focus on developing their self-esteem, ensures that spiritual development is very good. Religious education could make a greater contribution to this and the cultural aspect of the provision. However, pupils are helped to develop a respect for other cultures and traditions and understand that all people and other ways of life require respect. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

20. Attendance is above the national average and good, overall. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy school and want to come. The majority of pupils arrive very promptly and punctuality is very good. Authorised absences are mostly for family holidays in term-time and for minor illnesses. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and punctuality are sensible. Pupils and their families accept that regular and prompt attendance at school is important.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There were no exclusions in the previous academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good and what is taught is interesting, varied, and enriched by a good range of trips and experiences.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good and underpins the pupils' good learning. Assessment is now very good. The quality of relationships between teachers and pupils and their knowledge of the pupils are key ingredients.

³ Circle time is a term used to describe a specific approach to teaching personal, social and health education in which all pupils are encouraged to make a contribution about an issue being discussed. There are usually clear procedures and routines established within the class to encourage pupils to listen and value pupil's individual contributions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate because of good planning by teachers.
- Pupils apply themselves well and work productively; time is not wasted.
- Pupils develop the skills of working collaboratively and independently because of the range of teaching strategies teachers use.
- Assessment is very good; however, the school recognises that it needs to do more to ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

21. There has been very good overall improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. At that time, teaching was satisfactory but, overall, there was an unacceptable level of unsatisfactory teaching, particularly with younger children. There has also been a very good improvement in the overall quality of assessment. Assessment procedures, at that time, were judged less than satisfactory: too much assessment was attempted, leading to cumbersome assessment procedures with limited use of day-to-day assessments.
22. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan effectively for the wide range of abilities within their classes. Work is matched well to pupils' needs. Teachers are careful to provide tasks that meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs, thus enabling these pupils to access the curriculum in ways appropriate to their learning needs. Additional good quality support for pupils with specific learning difficulties is provided through withdrawal and specific tasks related to their individual education plans. Higher-attaining pupils are appropriately challenged, often through work which is qualitatively more demanding. There is good teamwork with teaching assistants (TAs). The school has made a significant investment in TAs and they make a good contribution to pupils' learning in the quality of general and specific learning support that they give to pupils. Their important contribution to pupils' learning is clearly valued by teaching staff.
23. There are very high and consistent expectations of pupils' behaviour, with the result that little time is lost and pupils work productively during the time available. The consistent application of the 'Park Gate Way' within lessons ensures that there is a high degree of mutual respect and a very inclusive ethos. Teachers work hard to foster pupils' confidence and self-esteem. As part of these efforts, and to establish the very positive learning ethos that exists, teachers are very good at using pupils' 'mistakes' in a positive manner, they encourage the pupil to re-think an answer or open the discussion up to the rest of the class. Pupils know that they will not be ridiculed. Praise is used well for the most part to encourage and motivate. Sometimes, however, praise is inappropriate. There are the odd examples of work being rated as excellent when it is plainly not. Similarly, teachers sometimes accept what pupils offer without challenging them to make that extra effort. It is as if they feel that challenge will dilute the positive ethos or harm the warm supportive relationships.
24. Teachers are skilled at expecting pupils to provide reasons, alternative viewpoints and explanations about the task in hand and develop pupils' thinking skills well as a consequence. There is a good emphasis on oral work – pupils have time to think about and, indeed, rehearse their answers; pupils are expected to answer in full sentences and at length; one-word answers are not enough. Teachers have good questioning skills, probing, nudging, and extending pupils' capacity to see the logic, or make the connection. Teachers are very skilled listeners, valuing and respecting pupils' contributions; they are confident to take on a role, to take on a particular character and to be challenged robustly in that role by the pupils. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and are often creative in their approach. There are good opportunities for group working and for independent work, so that pupils' capacity to work collaboratively or on their own is enhanced.

25. Assessment is used very well, both to identify specific needs and to monitor and track pupils' progress as they move through the school. The school undertakes detailed analysis of National Curriculum and other test papers to identify shortcomings and detailed analysis of results to identify strengths and weakness in the school's provision. It is also used most effectively as part of the professional performance management processes, leading to the school's highly professional ethos, balancing professional support with individual teachers' accountability for pupils' overall progress within their care. The overall analysis of data is very good, leading to a clear evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has a very good understanding of what it wants from its assessment system and where it is going with it, acknowledging, for example, that there is a need to streamline the procedures in order to lead to better target-setting. There are some very good examples of evaluative marking, which set clear targets in English, but the marking of older pupils' work in mathematics is currently variable. The school recognises that the feature requiring further work is the aspect of assessment which informs pupils precisely what it is they have to do in order to improve their work
26. Whilst the sample of lessons seen is important, judgements are not made solely on the sample. Judgements about the quality of teaching are made on the basis of the quality of pupils' learning that is taking place and the overall judgement uses a range of evidence, including scrutiny of pupils' books, to judge the impact of teaching over time. To be fair to the school, it is important to recognise that the inspection took place in the penultimate week of term and pupils were tired.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 48 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	3 (6%)	38 (79%)	7 (15%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The school ensures that all pupils have a good quality and range of learning opportunities. It provides them with good opportunities to widen their experiences through extra activities. The school's accommodation and resources support their learning well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an innovative approach to planning the range of learning experiences for all pupils.
- The arts curriculum, which includes music, is a strong and growing feature of the school.
- The provision for pupils with special education needs is good.
- The opportunities for personal and social learning are very good.
- The available resources are good and well used.
- There is insufficient coverage of geography and religious education.

Commentary

27. The challenging and interesting curriculum contributes significantly to the high standards, good achievement and behaviour of pupils in the school. The breadth of the curriculum and its creative nature are helping to raise standards. Curriculum innovations evolve continuously in response to the learning needs of particular groups of pupils. This approach is effective in engaging pupils in their learning by creating interest. Music is a developing area of the curriculum and pupils' involvement in school productions and in musical events locally stimulates this interest. Modern foreign languages (French and German) are available to

pupils in Years 5 and 6; this increases the range of experiences available to the pupils. Good links are made between subjects so that pupils, as in Year 2, develop speaking and listening skills through dramatic activities based on their history. Investigations are well planned in science and this encourages pupils' sense of enquiry. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, and, as a result, their learning needs are met well. The curriculum, especially that for the Foundation Stage, has improved significantly since the last inspection.

28. Pupils' attitudes and relationships are developed very well through personal, social, health and citizenship education. Staff and pupils share the values encompassed by 'The Park Gate Way' and this contributes greatly to the very good behaviour and high expectations in the school.
29. The school provides a good range of extra activities, including sport, dance, and the arts. There is a good range of visits and visitors, which extends the curriculum and creates added interest for the pupils. These contribute significantly to the learning of the pupils.
30. The well-maintained building and grounds contribute significantly to the effective climate for learning within the school. Resources are of a good quality and committed teachers make effective use of them to engage and interest the pupils in their learning. The Foundation Stage is very well resourced. The library is stocked and organised well and contributes to the high standards achieved in reading.
31. However, the learning activities in religious education and geography are insufficient to challenge pupils of different ages and abilities; consequently, pupils do not acquire appropriate understanding and skills in these subjects. In religious education and science, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write. The changes initiated by the school in geography have yet to have an impact on standards by Year 6.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures that all pupils are very well cared for and that their welfare, health and safety are regarded as very important by all staff. Pupils are provided with very good guidance and support and are very well involved in the development of their school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' welfare, care and guidance are a high priority for all staff.
- Pupils' views and ideas are sought regularly, valued and very well respected by the school.
- Pupils feel very confident in the adults who care for them.
- Very good induction arrangements support pupils very well when they join the school.

Commentary

32. A very high priority is given by all adults in the school to the welfare and care of pupils. Regular inspections of the premises and school equipment ensure that the school provides a safe environment. Good arrangements are made for pupils who are unwell and good child protection arrangements are in place and directed by the headteacher, who is the designated person for this area of care. The school works efficiently with local agencies and specialist staff who support and extend the very good care for pupils provided by the school. Parents at the meeting stressed that pupils were treated as individuals and they felt that the school worked hard to identify and reinforce individual pupils' particular strengths.
33. Very effective assessment procedures are used well by all staff to monitor the achievements of pupils, to identify accurately what they know and can do, and to set clear but generally broad goals for them to improve their work. Although personal development is not monitored in a formal way it is based on the very good knowledge that all staff have of the pupils in their care,

and staff are well supported by the headteacher. Pupils receive very good advice and guidance from staff, based upon the information they gather from monitoring and the very good understanding they have of the individual needs of each pupil in their care. Targets are set to give 'goals' for academic and personal development, which pupils can work towards, and these are respected by pupils because they feel that targets help them to do better work and to develop good habits and skills. Parents are appreciative of the way in which their children are guided, encouraged and cared for in their time at school. The high level of care and the community ethos of the school are special features and recognised as such by parents.

34. Pupils feel very confident that they are well cared for in their school and that they are valued and respected as individuals. They feel confident in bringing problems and concerns to staff, reassured that they will be listened to and very well supported. Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good and parents were pleased with this area of the school's work. Pupils and their parents are introduced to the school on a well-planned series of induction visits and Reception staff have good links with local pre-schools so that they get to know new pupils well, even before their visits to Reception. Each year, a number of new pupils join the school in other year groups and their introduction to their new school is equally supported and sensitively arranged. A good feature of induction is the linking with a new friend from the class the pupil is to join. New pupils were very appreciative of these arrangements. The views and ideas of pupils to develop and improve their school through regular questionnaire surveys, class discussions and the School Council are welcomed and valued by the school. Recently, pupils have contributed to school plans for a healthy eating scheme and are discussing improvements to the playground with organised games and new play equipment. These opportunities to discuss significant matters make a valuable contribution to the personal development of pupils and raise pupils' self-esteem.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works in very close partnership with parents. There are very effective links with other schools and good community links are continuing to develop.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school and have confidence in it.
- Parents are kept well informed about their child and how well they are doing.
- Parents' views are canvassed regularly and valued by the school.
- The School Association is very supportive.
- The cluster group of schools support each other very well.

Commentary

35. Parents have faith and confidence in their school and have very positive views about all aspects of the school's work. Especially valued by parents are the way the school is led and managed, the respect that is shown to them and the help they receive when they have problems or concerns, and they are grateful for the way they are kept informed about their children's progress. The school has improved the good partnership with parents noted in the previous report. The excellent prospectus and governors' annual report to parents give a clear picture of the school, are attractively illustrated and very informative. Interim reports, with targets set for pupils and the analytical end-of-year reports, are well set out and give parents a very clear picture of how their child has worked and achieved during the year. Regular newsletters provide additional important information. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed. Overall, the school communicates very well with parents.
36. Parents are able to participate in a number of school events, such as sharing assemblies and receive very helpful information in Reception about how to help their child at home. Overall, the support that parents provide is very good, both in school and with help with projects and

homework at home. A good feature of the school is the regular help given by a number of parents in classes and in the library, as well as with out-of-school visits. Parents feel very welcome in the school and are grateful that, when they have queries or concerns, these are dealt with quickly and courteously. The School Association organises a range of social and fund-raising events and is very supportive of the school. Parents are consulted very well through regular questionnaire surveys and their views are taken into account and valued in the planning and development of the school. Parents greatly value the positive attitude of the headteacher in meeting them and being available in the playground to talk to them on a daily basis, and feel they are well linked with school and fully involved in the education of their child. They particularly value the time the school gives to them and the fact that they feel listened to and valued as equal partners. They are not treated – as one parent at the meeting said – ‘as neurotic mums’, when they have a concern.

37. The school has extended community links and these make a valuable contribution to pupils' achievement and extending classroom studies. For example, local services such as the police, fire service and health care specialists contribute to the school's personal, social and health education programme and also provide valuable support for pupils' understanding of aspects of citizenship. There is a reading partnership scheme with the Cheltenham and Gloucester Building Society and pupils respond well to the one-to-one personal relationships that develop. Pupils of all ages have good opportunities to explore the local area, on short walks for younger pupils, and more specific visits to local historical venues and farms for older pupils. Curriculum studies are extended by visits from local people to share their skills or experiences with the pupils. The curriculum is enriched by such contributions and they bring a new dimension to classroom studies for pupils.
38. The school works very well with other schools in the cluster group, providing important opportunities for staff to meet and share training initiatives. Links with the local secondary school are well used, not only to ensure a smooth transition for pupils at the end of Year 6 to the next stage of their education, but also for class work. For example, pupils are able to develop basics skills in French and German with help from secondary school staff. In turn, the school makes places for secondary school pupils to gain work experience. The school has a well-established link with colleges of further education and provides a base for teachers in training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

There has been, overall, very good improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. Governance is very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is supported by very strong leadership of key staff. Management is very good. The school provides good value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body provides a range of personal and professional expertise, is very supportive, and is prepared to challenge the work of the school.
- Leadership of the headteacher is very good. Parents appreciate his high visibility. He has clear aims for the school and has developed the necessary teamwork to ensure that they can be articulated.
- Leadership across the school by key members of staff is very good; they act as very good role models for staff and for pupils.
- Management is very good.

Commentary

39. Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. The governors bring to the governing body considerable individual expertise, either personal or professional. Members have undertaken training for school governors. They are very supportive of the school, aware

of its strengths and prepared to work hard on the school's behalf. They have a clear understanding of their strategic role and are prepared to hold the school to account and to challenge rather than simply rubber stamp decisions. The governing body is confident to question, for example, the school's performance: it feels it now knows the questions it should be asking. Finance is monitored particularly well. The governing body evaluates itself and has established clear roles, and there is a very effective working relationship with the school's senior leadership team. The school provides the governing body with very good information, either in the form of presentations or written reports, so that governors are able to monitor the progress of the school improvement plan and make decisions based on clear information.

40. There has been very good improvement in overall leadership of the school since the last inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He has the trust of parents, staff and pupils. The last inspection described the headteacher as 'hands on and on hand' – in many ways this remains true: it is part of the headteacher's style to be around the school and playground and parents and pupils respond to this high visibility. What is essentially different, however, is that now the headteacher is able to underpin this visibility with a clear view of the school and its development and the strategic planning to achieve the aims.
41. The headteacher has, since the last inspection, been able to appoint key staff into leadership positions in the school and effective teams have been created. Teamwork across the school by all adults is a very strong feature. The hands-on approach by the headteacher is now a means of monitoring how the school is functioning, getting to know pupils, smoothing and easing the work of the school – it is not, as it was suggested before, simply to keep the school running. Being able to appoint senior staff has given the school a sudden and distinct impetus for improvement and an opportunity to put into practice the headteacher's vision of what the school is about. Although the 'Park Gate Way' is a code of behaviour for the pupils, it is also an expression of the school's values that must be shared by all adults working there for it to be effective. These core values, focusing as they do on the pupils, lie at the heart of the school's teamwork. Communication between the headteacher and staff is open, members of staff feel valued and there is strong mutual respect. There is also a strong sense that issues and matters are handled with integrity.
42. The work of the school is supported by very strong leadership and management. The very strong leadership team brings together the key areas of the school. The very effective deputy headteacher has brought skills which complement the headteacher's, and she has taken forward aspects of the school's improvement agenda and taken on the responsibility of being one of the school's lead professionals. Year management supports key stage leadership. Running across the school there is also strong subject management. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has a very clear overview of provision. She provides good support and training for learning support staff and liaison with outside agencies. The co-ordinator and teaching assistants alike provide skilled support for pupils, both in lessons and when they are withdrawn for additional help.
43. Management across the school is also very good. Performance management and ongoing professional discussion concerning the progress of pupils have led to the creation of a very professional ethos – members of staff want to improve their skills and there is not only strong support but also accountability, leading to on-going improvement. There are comprehensive and analytical assessment procedures in place to track pupils' progress. There is very effective evaluation of the school's strengths and identification of improvements required through careful analysis of data.
44. The school's finances are managed very well. The headteacher knows very clearly how the money needs to be spent, in accordance with the priorities decided in consultation with the governing body, the administration officer, and the finance officer from the education authority. Long-term decisions are taken, with very good consideration given to pupils' needs, with the priority generally given to employing good quality staff, whether in or out of the

classrooms. The budget is organised very capably, both on a day-to-day basis, and through a clear long-term cycle of planning, with a small, but wise, carry-over of funds for emergencies. A recent external audit was very positive, and found no significant areas for improvement.

45. Good account is taken of the principles of 'best value'. The governors and headteacher apply the recommended controls over spending, whether the amounts are large or small. Parents and children are regularly consulted over important matters that will affect the future of the school. School developments are deliberately designed to be challenging for staff as well as pupils. The school's results are compared very thoroughly with those of other schools, in personal and social development, as well as in academic aspects. Very good efforts are made to raise standards of particular groups of pupils, when necessary, or in particular areas of learning.
46. The school's money is spent well; the school provides good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,003,388
Total expenditure	958,852
Expenditure per pupil	2,427.47

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	23,842
Balance carried forward to the next	44,536

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make progress that is at least good in all areas of learning.
- The teaching is good or better in all lessons.
- A good range of subjects is taught.
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.
- The improvement since the previous inspection has been very good.

COMMENTARY

47. When they begin in the Reception, most children's attainments are at about the expected level, although many children have additional learning needs. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, and attain the standard expected nationally by the time they leave Reception. Children with special needs are well identified, and much help is provided for them, to ensure that they make progress that is just as good as that of their classmates.
48. Children achieve well because the teaching is always at least good, and is sometimes very good. Lessons are planned very well, with clear aims for what children will learn and what activities they will do. Teachers and support assistants work very well together in a very good team. The accommodation is purpose built, and members of staff use the different areas very well to organise different activities such as mathematics and story times; water play and painting; and a dressing-up and topic corner. There is a very good range of equipment to enrich children's learning, both indoors and outside, from tabletop toys, games and equipment, to tricycles and pedal cars. Staff track children's learning very thoroughly to see how well they are making progress in all the areas of learning. They use the information that they gather to adjust the long-term plans of what should be taught; the plans for individual lessons; and the ways in which activities can be made most suitable for all children, including the most and least able.
49. New children are introduced to Reception classes very well, with staff visiting all of the numerous pre-school groups several times, and at least four introductory visits to the unit by children and parents. Parents feel very welcome to come in and talk about their children at any time. Parents and staff enjoy close relationships that support children's learning very well. Staff quickly build up a very clear picture of what children can do and cannot do in the main areas of learning within a few weeks of their arrival. Plans are then drawn up for how best to meet the children's needs. This welcoming process helps children to feel settled and secure from the outset, and relationships among staff and children continue to develop into very warm and trusting ones.
50. Good arrangements are made to ease children's transfer into Year 1 when they leave Reception: they have their lunches with the older pupils; games lessons in the main hall; computer lessons in the ICT suite; and use the playground with all the other pupils. Often, they take the class registers to the office, or take messages around school as part of learning how to be more independent and taking responsibility. They also attend assemblies with the rest of the school and, during the inspection, they led a spirited assembly in front of all the other pupils and their own parents. Children visit their new class and new teacher, and after they have moved into the new class, the Reception teachers are always on hand, should they be needed. The records they pass on are very detailed.

51. Children learn well in a wide range of subjects, or ‘areas of learning.’ All of the required areas are taught in separate lessons, and the targets from one area are very often included in lessons for other areas. The way that staff encourage children’s social and language skills in all lessons is especially well done. If children are playing in the ‘Under the Sea’ topic area, for instance, they are learning to play together imaginatively, to share things, and to speak to each other. Although each session has a main focus, many of the activities are organised in an integrated way, with many clearly identified targets for their learning, such as counting, manipulating building bricks or brushes, understanding ‘full’, ‘bigger’, or ‘longer’, for instance. Very often, activities are related to the topic being studied – currently, ‘Under the Sea’. This very good level of organisation is reflected in everything about the Reception classes. Staff work very well together as a team; deciding what will be taught; who will take a group; who will support the learning in a group with the less able children; or who will help individual children with their early reading skills. Support assistants are very capable; they teach groups or individuals, whether in the classroom, the computer suite, or out in the play area – as when they operate their ‘café’ in mathematics lessons.
52. The provision has greatly improved since the previous inspection, when the teaching was often unsatisfactory, the curriculum was disorganised, and children’s progress was too slow in some areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PROVISION FOR PUPILS’ PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS VERY GOOD.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children make very good progress because the teaching is very good.
- A very good range of activities is planned and carried out, both separately and as part of other lessons.
- The very positive relationships are a very good basis for children’s personal development.

COMMENTARY

53. On arrival in reception, many children are already sociable and happy. Their very good progress in the classes sees them become very confident, secure and independent youngsters. The very well-focused teaching allows children to learn how to behave together, how to share toys and activities, and how to co-operate with one another and with staff without fuss. Children begin to take responsibility for themselves, their belongings and their work. They take turns in doing little jobs around the unit each day. They become very pleasant youngsters, who have good self-esteem and are keen to join in and learn together. Children enjoy their lessons, playtimes, snack and lunch-times, and look forward to their days in school. They feel warm and secure in this learning environment, and it is a very positive start to their school lives. Staff focus on this area of learning more than any others, especially in the early times in the unit. Every activity is organised so that social and personal targets are encouraged; opportunities to work and play together are arranged throughout the day as part and parcel of the whole learning experience. Each day starts with a greeting time, answering the call of the register, taking messages, discussing the weather, and what they will be doing for the rest of the day. It all builds up to encourage children’s co-operation, attention, and ability to get on well together for the rest of the day. Children behave very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for children’s communication, language and literacy development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children make good progress, especially in their speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching is good and combined well with other activities.

COMMENTARY

54. Children make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Through very well planned and taught activities, teachers and support staff concentrate their efforts on getting children to pay attention, to listen to what is being said to them, to follow instructions, and to answer questions. They take part in discussions, listen to stories in literacy lessons, talk about what they have been doing at the weekend, and join in excellent acting and role-play stories together. Staff are very good at encouraging children to listen and speak in every activity they take part in – whether playing in the sand trays, water play or music lessons, for example. By the time they are ready to leave the Foundation Stage, they are used to paying attention and joining in literacy lessons; they talk to each other clearly and listen to what they are being told. Progress in learning how to write, and to read is good. Some children learn to read forty or more words by the time they go into the main school, and they will sit together to ‘read’ simple storybooks with staff. In writing, many children form recognisable letters, and put words together when writing about what they have been doing, or about a story they have heard, such as *Goldilocks*, or *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The spelling is not perfect, and letters may be all different sizes, but the writing is readable and it makes sense. Less able children learn to make marks on paper, and know that they can have meaning. They look at books, and talk about what they think they are about.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children’s mathematical development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children make good progress.
- The separate teaching is good.
- The learning is often reinforced well in other activities, and resources are used well to help children’s learning.

COMMENTARY

55. Some children have better skills in number than they do in other areas, such as creativity, when they first come to the unit. They learn well through well-targeted teaching, and all children reach the expected level by the time they leave Reception. Activities include, for instance, games on the carpet or the table-tops, singing counting songs and rhymes; they learn to count one another in the mornings, how many are having packed lunches or hot meals; how many children are in the group; how many shells and fish there are; or how much an ice cream costs in the café in the play area. Staff use a great variety of toys and equipment to help children’s counting skills, and in developing their wider understanding of mathematics, such as ‘on top’, ‘heavier,’ ‘empty’, ‘in front’ and ‘longer’. Children learn to name the different colours and shapes, including some three-dimensional shapes. Very often, these counting and understanding skills are learned in other activities, as well as in the separate mathematics lessons. A lesson might centre on, for instance, ‘Under the Sea,’ with songs and counting games, or working out different ways of making ten, using cowrie shells on boards that look like little beaches. The more able children learn to count to twenty without simply chanting the numbers, recognise all the numbers to ten, and can add and take away in ones, and perhaps in twos. They understand that they can measure things in terms of footsteps, or compare the size of a shoe, spoon and pencil, for instance. Less able children need a lot of staff help and

repeated activities to understand the whole idea of counting, and in recognising the numerals 1, 2, 3.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children make good progress in developing their knowledge of the wider world.
- The teaching is good and imaginative.

COMMENTARY

56. Children make good progress across a wide range of knowledge. When they first come in, some children have little awareness of anything beyond their own home. The teaching, however, is well planned and very well organised to increase their knowledge. They learn, for instance, how different areas of the school are for different purposes – such as lunch and physical activities in the hall, the outside play area, the office area, the computer room. They learn that people do different jobs, both in school and outside, although there are few opportunities for children to visit local facilities. Occasional visitors enhance children's learning, such as the gentleman who came to talk to the children after he found one of their messages in a bottle after their visit to the beach. In all of these activities, children's language skills develop well: they are practising their social skills, having exercise, developing very good computer skills – including creative pictures and patterns - and learning stories about Jesus, as well as stories from other cultures. Their understanding of time develops well, as they realise that days can be split into greetings and register time, play, mathematics work, snack, literacy lessons, lunch, and so on. The more able children understand that clocks are used in telling when the different activities are due to start or finish.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's physical development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children make good progress and enjoy their activities.

COMMENTARY

57. Some children lack physical skills when they join Reception, both in balancing and running, for example, and in gripping and handling small items. With good progress, however, they become quite active and fit. They enjoy playing together, or will play independently using equipment such as the tricycles and pedal cars in the play area, or the mats and climbing apparatus in the hall. As no lessons were seen during the inspection, it is not possible to comment on the overall standard of teaching, but discussions with staff and children indicate that the lessons are exciting, challenging and imaginative, allowing children to develop their abilities, demonstrate their skills to one another, and watch and learn from one another. Records and notes indicate that the lessons are also used very well for developing children's language skills, counting skills, and their social skills in relating to one another. In technology, music, painting and computing activities, children develop their finer handling skills well when handling brushes, instruments, building-bricks, scissors and the computer mouse. By the time they are old enough to move into Year 1, most children have reached the level of skills and general fitness that is expected nationally.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for children's creative development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children make good progress in a range of imaginative and enjoyable activities.
- The good teaching provides a wide range of opportunities to develop children's skills.

COMMENTARY

58. With good encouragement from staff, children quickly become willing to explore the many different activities and to take part in imaginative games and role-play activities, such as making up stories to act out as pirates, sharks and mermaids. They learn to hold a crayon, paint-brush and pencil properly in creating pictures and patterns; they make kites and do rubbings of the different textures on shells. In separate music lessons, children learn how to play different tuned and untuned instruments, joining in songs and illustrating stories with sound effects. Through many different activities, teachers and support staff work with children in play sessions, music and singing groups, and painting and modelling topics. Often, the songs are to do with counting, or are about different creatures. Children achieve well as they take part in all of the different activities, using play dough, construction kits, textiles and cardboard to make models.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are above those expected by Year 6.
- The effective teamwork of teaching and non-teaching staff assists pupils in their learning.
- The school monitors and evaluates its performance continuously and effectively.
- Drama is used very effectively to engage pupils in their learning.
- Standards in spelling and writing are not high enough.

Commentary

59. The above-expected standards in reading, by Year 6, have been maintained since the last inspection. This is because of the effective teaching and well-planned activities, which help pupils to enjoy their learning. Overall, standards in writing, by Year 6, have fallen since the last inspection. However, the achievement of individual pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good when considering their standards on entry to the school. There is a significant increase in the number of pupils achieving at the higher levels. In addition, changes introduced within the last three years have not yet had a full impact on standards in Year 6.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is good. There is a consistent approach to expected achievement and learning created by the very effective teamwork amongst the teachers and other staff. This helps pupils to learn with confidence. Learning support teachers are used effectively, especially to support those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers, with the aid of senior staff, use assessment data effectively to reflect upon their work and to introduce changes in practice. This creates a lively, thoughtful and challenging climate in which pupils learn effectively. Drama and dramatic situations are used effectively to engage pupils' interest. In Year 6, pupils develop their oral question skills in a project on the building of

a new Wembley Sports Stadium. Pupils question teachers and an assistant, who adopt roles, ex-sports coach, public relations manager, construction engineer, effectively to gather information about the project. In Year 2, pupils devise scenes from a story about 'A Victorian Trip to the Seaside'. These pupils learn effectively in groups and present their work to others with confidence. Other pupils watch and listen with respect and develop their speaking skills effectively by questioning the players. In Year 4, pupils are actively engaged in their reading through a series of activities involving adults talking with pupils to develop an understanding of their given texts and to reflect on the qualities and motives of characters in those texts.

61. Pupils' work is carefully marked so that pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve. However, despite regular spelling activities, pupils' writing demonstrates a lack of accuracy in spelling even common words. The extensive use of worksheets, especially for homework, which require short pieces of writing, does not help to set high expectations for standards of writing. Improvements in spelling and writing are being addressed by the school, but as yet, they have not had sufficient impact on standards. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection due to effective leadership and management.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

62. Literacy is well developed across the other subjects of the curriculum, although in science pupils need more opportunities to write a written summary of their investigations. Pupils use their writing skills in history to write narrative accounts in Year 4 and write letters from 'wartime evacuees' in Year 6. Word processing skills are developed in ICT. However, better use could be made of other subjects by identifying key vocabulary, specific and relevant written tasks, and the understanding and ideas with which to broaden pupils' experience and knowledge. This would contribute to the improved quality of writing.

Modern foreign languages (French and German)

63. The curriculum is further enriched for pupils in Years 5 and 6 by lessons in **French** and **German**. Lessons are taught by a teacher from the local secondary school who is enthusiastic and very capable. Pupils learn a range of words in both languages, such as greetings, how to ask for things in different contexts, or talk about their families. The focus is on speaking and listening in the target language, although pupils do write some of what they have learned.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in mathematics is good.
- Attainment is good by Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- The co-ordinator provides good leadership.
- Ongoing assessment procedures are in need of revision.

Commentary

64. Pupils enter the school with standards in mathematics broadly in line with those expected nationally. Standards remain average by the end of Year 2 but the emphasis on practical activities ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of what they do. In the current Year 6, attainment is above average, with over half the pupils working at the higher level. The increased emphasis on developing pupils' mathematical thinking through problem-solving and

mathematical investigations has resulted in pupils' improved ability to apply their basic number skills in a range of different situations. An analysis of pupils' progress shows that pupils are achieving well and that learning is consolidated effectively.

65. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the inspection was good, overall, and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and initiatives to develop the range of teaching strategies used in mathematics are beginning to prove effective. Teachers are aware of the different ways in which pupils learn and pupils are becoming confident in using a variety of strategies to solve number problems. Learning in all the lessons observed was underpinned by very good relationships between adults and pupils. Class routines are firmly established; pupils settle to tasks quickly and remain on task even when not directly supervised. Pupils work well together and discussion during lessons is focused and fruitful.
66. Tasks in lessons are carefully matched to the range of different abilities in the class and pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Higher-attaining pupils are suitably challenged by tasks which are qualitatively different. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and constantly challenge pupils' thinking. Occasionally, introductions are too long but most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace with adequate time for pupils to consolidate their learning.
67. Assessment and recording procedures at the time of the last inspection were described as 'too detailed and cumbersome to inform planning'. Although somewhat slimmed down, current assessment and recording procedures are demanding of teachers' time and are not helpful in giving pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their work. Marking is generally evaluative and contextual in Years 1 and 2. Comments often indicate precisely what pupils can do, what difficulties they had and whether they worked independently. However, older pupils would find it difficult to get a clear idea of what they can and cannot do from the ongoing marking in their books. Much of the work is pupil marked, without moderating comments from the teacher. Although group targets are in the front of pupils' books, these are too general to be useful, while individual targets often refer only to the presentation of work. The school is aware of the need to rationalise assessment and recording systems to make them a useful tool for evaluating pupils' progress.
68. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator who has worked hard to put new strategies in place to develop mathematics teaching across the school and to raise standards. She has led effectively through the quality of her own teaching. Continuous monitoring of provision has led to a climate of continuous improvement and teachers are keen to reflect on and revise their teaching.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Pupils are able to apply their basic number skills in a range of different situations, such as in science and ICT, because of the increased emphasis on developing their mathematical thinking skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The general approach is through very good investigations and experiments.
- Pupils make good progress because the teaching is good.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

COMMENTARY

70. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, many pupils are attaining at a level higher than expected nationally. The great majority of the least able pupils make good or very good progress, and attain at a level expected for pupils of a higher ability. Pupils gain satisfactory skills in a broad range of scientific topics, such as electricity and other forces around us; life and growing things; and finding out about a range of materials and their properties and uses. The best progress is made in carrying out scientific investigations. Pupils learn how to set up an investigation, how to predict what might happen, and how to make sure that the test is fair. They carry out the experiments carefully, and make notes of the results. However, especially in Year 6, pupils do not take the final step of summarising their findings in any written form. This leaves some very good investigations seeming to be unfinished. It also means that pupils are not extending their literacy skills by writing such accounts, or by drawing good annotated diagrams of their investigations.
71. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons carefully, and often carry them out with enthusiasm and imagination, although the introductory explanations are sometimes rather long, making pupils restless. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well, and all pupils are well motivated by the practical approach. Teachers have warm and positive relationships with their pupils; they have high expectations that pupils will be well involved and will try hard and sensibly. Often, teachers use questioning techniques very effectively to make pupils think hard about the topic under consideration. Support assistants are good at helping groups of pupils with their experiments and in supporting individual pupils who have difficulties with their learning.
72. The leadership and management are very good because the co-ordinator is very well organised, experienced and dedicated. Pupils' progress is tracked very thoroughly, and the results are analysed to see what needs to be changed in the future, whether in the next few lessons, or over the course of the next year. Very good use is made of outside people and places, whether on visits to the Science Museum and Planetarium in London, or the beach, sea-life centre, woods and ponds locally. In events such as the 'Science Challenge', pupils compete with other schools in an investigating and construction project. In a very good science week, the whole school took part in experiments and demonstrations, with many visitors coming into school to demonstrate their particular skills in various areas of science. The co-ordinator monitors other teachers, and their planning, as well as examining samples of pupils' work and talking with pupils about their work.
73. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection: there is no unsatisfactory teaching now; pupils continue to make good progress; and the emphasis on investigations has corrected the deficiency that was noted previously.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are confident and competent users of ICT.
- Teachers are confident users of ICT and teach it well.
- Standards are appropriate, with some pupils showing significant skills in aspects of the work.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

74. There has been very significant improvement in the overall quality of provision in ICT since the last inspection. Standards were well below what could be expected and the school was failing to provide a satisfactory ICT curriculum. This is not the case now. Standards are at

least appropriate for the age of pupils and the full range of the ICT capability is now taught. Resources described as adequate in the previous report are now at least good, with a suite of 30 computers plus additional peripheral devices.

75. Year 6 pupils were engaged in creating a presentation for parents – ‘Fond Memories of Year 6’ – and were working at or just above the expected level for their age. Pupils displayed a good range of ICT skills and were confident and competent. In this lesson there was good learning because the teacher set a clear task, carefully differentiated to challenge the higher-attaining pupils and support those pupils who were less confident. In a Year 5 class, using LOGO, a very strong work ethos was maintained throughout the lesson; very good relationships, strong teacher knowledge, and skilled questioning supported good achievement. Overall, the quality of teaching of ICT is good.
76. Pupils have at least good attitudes to the subject. They work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. Many have access to computers at home but seem to enjoy the structured opportunity to develop their skills.
77. The subject is well led. Assessment systems are in place, although likely to be adjusted. The school employs a part-time technician who effectively ensures that the suite is operative and that the subject co-ordinator is concerned with curriculum rather than equipment issues. Resources are good and equipment, such as data projectors and an interactive whiteboard, is used effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. Pupils are confident users of ICT. The subject is taught within timetabled ICT time but the context of the learning and the software used support learning in other subjects, such as English, mathematics and science.

HUMANITIES

79. Because of the timetable arrangements, it was only possible to sample geography and history.
80. In the good Year 4 **geography** lessons seen during the inspection pupils were inspired by a tape of ‘French visitors’ to provide an itinerary for a short visit to a local area. Pupils, who used their knowledge gained from a local field trip, were required to take into consideration the personal likes and dislikes of the ‘visitors’. They had to plan their programme taking in local places of interest, leisure facilities and those for refreshment. Pupils were fully engaged and interested in this activity because they were placed in a ‘real situation’ and given a sense of responsibility. However, the revisions being made to the geography programme have not yet made a sufficient impact on the learning of pupils in Year 6. The development of skills and understanding is not appropriate to the ages and abilities of all pupils across Years 3 to 6.
81. In the **history** lesson seen during the inspection in Year 2, pupils investigated objects and pictures of a Victorian seaside. Through the use of good resources, pupils were stimulated to explore the features and characteristic of this past activity. Pupils were well-behaved because of the high expectations of the teacher. The good relationships established by the teacher helped pupils to learn with confidence.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Coverage of the curriculum lacks depth and rigour.
- The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
- There is insufficient recorded work in pupils' folders.

Commentary

82. Attainment in religious education is broadly satisfactory in Year 2 but unsatisfactory in Year 6. This is a similar picture to that at the last inspection. Although the scheme of work is based on the locally agreed syllabus, coverage of the curriculum is very fragmentary and pupils do not develop an adequate knowledge of world religions as they move through the school. By Year 6, they do not have the ability to compare and contrast the central beliefs and teachings of the different religions. Nor do they have a proper understanding of the significance of stories and symbols or of specific beliefs and practices. Although they have acquired a number of isolated facts about Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, these do not amount to a coherent body of knowledge. As a result, pupils are confused as to which facts fit which religion.
83. Pupils' attitudes are positive towards religious education. They enjoy acting out stories and ceremonies. They enjoy visiting the local church and contributing to assemblies. The one lesson observed made a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social development but this was not sufficiently linked to pupils' understanding of religion. Pupils were confident in sharing their ideas of significant events in their lives, listened carefully to and were respectful of other pupils' contributions. However, no attempt was made to put pupils' experiences into a religious context.
84. There is very little recorded work in pupils' folders and no examples of extended writing in the subject. The majority of consolidation is through drama or drawing. What little recorded work there is indicates a superficial approach, with pupils' errors and misconceptions not corrected. There is insufficient work to form a firm basis for assessment.
85. The co-ordinator has looked at planning, has sampled pupils' work, and has already identified the need for more written recording. There is an appropriate time allocation for religious education but, as it is taught in a block in some classes, there is insufficient monitoring of whether, in practice, adequate time is devoted to the subject. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and provides good support for colleagues. The school has good resources for the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. Because of the timetable arrangements, it was not possible to see sufficient lessons to make an overall judgement in the provision in art, design and technology or physical education.
87. No **art** lessons were observed during the inspection but the portfolios of pupils' work and displays around the school indicate good coverage of the various strands of the curriculum. The co-ordinator has recently revised the scheme of work and provides good support for colleagues in ensuring its implementation. A good balance is achieved between developing art as a means of illustrating other areas of the curriculum and ensuring that specific skills are developed as pupils move through the school. Manageable assessment procedures are in place, which are focused on key skills. Sketch-books are used well and are a useful record of pupils' progress.

88. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development through its focus on the work of a range of different artists. These are linked to different areas of the curriculum. For example, while on a trip to the beach, younger pupils created natural sculptures in the manner of *Andy Goldsworthy*. Pupils in Year 6 created large figures inspired by the work of *Henry Moore*, to make a tableau for their work on the Second World War.
89. Only one **design and technology** lesson was taught during the inspection, as most classes are doing their design and technology at other items of the year. It is thus not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning. The observed lesson involved pupils designing a range of puppets on strings, mainly puppets of different or imaginary creatures. The lesson was well planned, and was taking place over several sessions in two days. Pupils were well engaged on their work, and were enjoying both the design stage and the making process.
90. A scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils and staff, indicates a satisfactory level of skills in this subject. Pupils have made a wide range of products in different materials, using a variety of tools, and with as much emphasis given to the design and evaluation aspects as to the actual making of the finished product. Their recent projects have included, for instance, fairground rides, puppets, sandwiches and salads, and lighthouses with working lights. The subject manager is newly qualified, and has only just taken up the post. However, in collaboration with the headteacher, there are clear plans for developing the subject, particularly with the intention of linking all projects to other subjects in the curriculum. The school recognises the risk of diluting the essential focus on technology skills by this approach.
91. Because of the timetable arrangements and the weather it was possible to sample only two lessons in **physical education** and see the end of a third. What was seen was in a relatively narrow range of physical education activities and it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision.
92. Standards in the physical education lessons seen were appropriate and pupils' achievement was good. Pupils in Year 6 were above average in their independence, their co-operation, general maturity and self-discipline. They were engaged in the task and working at a good rate. Year 2 pupils were engaged in devising a sea-side dance piece working within groups. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are at least good. In two lessons seen, pupils were developing a sequence using physical education equipment but the older pupils were working to a more tightly designed brief and there was clear progression in both expectations and achievement, particularly in pupils' ability to evaluate their own and others' work and to refine their own.
93. Teaching is good. There are some very good features. Teachers are confident and manage the class well; planning is good, based on Hampshire guidelines. In one lesson, the teacher directly challenged the pupils more overtly: 'that's too easy for you', 'that's not very good', and then reminding the class what it was precisely that they were striving for. Teachers used praise effectively to reinforce confidence and ensured that the work provided sufficient challenge in the planning. This was reinforced in one lesson by the very effective coaching taking place as the teacher moved from group to group. There was particularly good support for pupils who found the task difficult or who were having to adjust to working with a new partner. In the Year 2 class, TAs provided enthusiastic support and the class teacher was clearly aware of what she needed to do in order to develop the work next time. A key characteristic underpinning the learning in all lessons was the very good relationships that exist between teachers and the pupils.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strength and weaknesses

- Standards are improving rapidly.
- The quality of teaching is good and contributes to pupils' effective learning in the subject.
- There is a good provision of additional musical activities, which helps pupils to gain confidence in performance.
- The leadership and management of music are very good.

Commentary

94. Pupils enjoy music. In assemblies, they listen respectfully as small groups of instrumentalists and the choir perform. The school is effective in creating a sense of 'audience' as well as developing the talents of individual pupils. Singing by Year 2 is good. Standards observed in lessons in Year 4 indicate an improvement since the last inspection. However, no lessons were observed, nor evidence collected, in Year 6 during the inspection.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and this is used effectively to enthuse pupils. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils have very good self-control and work well together to make music. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 enjoy their singing, especially when they are singing or listening to familiar songs. In Year 4, pupils listen to 'Carillon' by *Bizet*. They distinguish the rhythms within a piece, using the correct musical terms. They follow the piece with their own notations, before compiling a graphic score.
96. There is a growing enthusiasm for music in the school and the subject is very well led and managed. The choir, which performs locally, is led by two experienced and knowledgeable teachers. Pupils are encouraged to seek extra instrumental tuition. Supportive links with the local schools increase the opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills and confidence in performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education and citizenship make a very significant contribution to pupils' overall very good attitudes.
- The course is structured well and covers drugs and sex and relationships education.
- Citizenship is a strong theme.
- The overall provision is enhanced by the school's very positive ethos.

Commentary

97. Standards are appropriate for the age of the pupils and pupils generally achieve well. Overall, teaching is good. Lessons are planned well. In one lesson the teacher led a discussion, drawing from the class how struggles and frustration can lead ultimately to a sense of achievement. The teacher encouraged extended answers by using open-ended questions, 'How?' 'Why?' 'Tell me more...' A good range of strategies was used and pupils know and respect the rules within circle time so that they respect the pupil speaking and listen courteously. The lesson made pupils aware of their achievements and successfully fostered their sense of self-esteem. There was also a sound reinforcement of literacy skills.

98. In another lesson, which used the context of the Wembley rebuilding project, aspects of citizenship were well planned. Pupils assumed specific roles within the company and worked within their teams to requisition building items within a budget, appreciating that they had to work together effectively to create the best team effort.
99. Personal, social and health education and citizenship have a clear structure and cover the required elements. Year 6, for example, cover themes such as: managing conflict, the world of work, taking responsibility for safety, changing relationships and managing change. Sex education and relationships are taught and parents are invited to view materials in advance. The subject co-ordinator is a member of a county drugs education working party and drugs education is a theme, taught in an appropriate manner for the age group of the pupils. The school is preparing for assessment as part of the healthy schools initiative. There is evidence of good leadership and management by the subject co-ordinator.
100. The school operates class and school councils and pupils are regularly consulted through questionnaires as to their views on specific subjects. Assemblies reinforce the values of the school. The 'Park Gate Way' provides a powerful context for the personal, social and health education and citizenship programme. This is further developed through the good enrichment opportunities. The 'Red Nose Days', headteacher awards, special table invitations, the opportunities for residential experience along with the differentiated teamwork involved in the school productions, all reinforce pupils' roles and the responsibilities of working together within the community of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The effectiveness of management	2
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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).