

INSPECTION REPORT

PINEWOOD INFANT SCHOOL

Farnborough

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116158

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Harris

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 15th-17th September 2003

Inspection number: 257198

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	91
School address:	Pinewood Park Farnborough
Postcode:	GU14 9LE
Telephone number:	(01252) 511885
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Pinewood Infant School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Mildred Stocks
Date of previous inspection:	29 th November 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Pinewood Infant School serves a small community on a private housing estate which is bounded by woods, a main road and a motorway. There are 91 pupils on roll, with broadly similar numbers of boys and girls. The school's roll has been falling steadily over the past five years due to the changing nature of the local community, and it is now undersubscribed. Although socio-economic factors are broadly average, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is well above average. The school is designated to offer Resourced Provision for pupils with Language Impairment (RPLI) and currently has 14 pupils who have statements of SEN, which is also much higher than that seen in most schools. Another 28 pupils in the mainstream school have varying needs, including speech and communication difficulties, hearing impairment and moderate or specific learning difficulties. These factors affect the school's overall attainment on entry, which is much lower than that seen in most schools. Many pupils start school with poor language and communication skills. Approximately five per cent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds but none is at an early stage of learning English. The turnover of pupils is high, with the result that almost half of the pupils in Year 2 in 2002 and 2003 joined the school after the Reception year. The school received an Achievement Award from the Department for Education and Skills in 2003. It works in partnership with a local Beacon School. In March 2003, most of the school buildings, equipment and resources were destroyed by fire following an arson attack. The school was closed for four weeks, including the Easter holiday, before re-opening in temporary accommodation.

This inspection took place in the second full week of the autumn term. As a result of this and the recent fire, a very limited range of evidence was available for the inspection team in some subjects.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	English, information and communication technology, art, music, foundation stage curriculum
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14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, geography, religious education, special educational needs
15917	Bob Cross	Team inspector	Science, history, physical education, English as an additional language.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Pinewood School provides a sound education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and enable most pupils to make sound progress. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress but more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leadership and management are satisfactory in terms of raising achievement; their strength lies in creating a strong and caring ethos and a mutually supportive staff team. The school has suffered from difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, and, more recently, from an arson attack which destroyed most of its buildings, equipment and resources. It has benefited from the considerable support of the Local Education Authority and the local community in quickly re-establishing itself. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision for children in Reception is good and helps them to make good progress.
- Very good provision for pupils with SEN, especially those in the Resourced Provision for Language Impairment (RPLI), enables them to achieve well.
- The school's strong caring ethos and good provision for pupils' personal and social development are reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- Effective links with parents and the community support pupils' learning.
- Standards are below average in English, mathematics, science and history, particularly for more able pupils.
- The use of assessment information to plan work for all pupils is not rigorous enough.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not developed well enough across the curriculum.
- Pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is unsatisfactory.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the school was inspected in 2001, given the significant barriers that it has had to overcome. Improvements in leadership, management and governance, which were clearly well underway, have suffered a major setback as a result of the fire. Standards are lower than they were because of changes in the make-up of the school's population. There has been insufficient improvement in the achievement of more able pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In the table below, the comparisons with schools that have a similar proportion of free school meals show that the school was in the lowest 5 per cent. This does not give a full picture of the school's circumstances as it has a very high proportion of pupils with SEN and offers specific provision for pupils with language impairment. Data from the Local Education Authority show that the school performs as well as others in similar circumstances. National comparisons for 2003 are not yet available.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	C	E	E*
writing	B	C	E*	E*
mathematics	D	B	E	E*

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E - in the lowest 5% of schools*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Achievement is satisfactory. It is good in the Reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. A significant minority of pupils do not reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Achievement is good given that many start school with limited skills. Most children reach the goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development because these areas of learning are more practical. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average in Years 1 and 2, partly because of the very high proportion of pupils with SEN and partly because more able pupils do not reach high enough standards. Pupils in the RPLI achieve well because they receive very good support and teaching.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils have **good** attitudes to learning and behave **well** in lessons and around the school. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** because it is just below the national average, but the school does all it can to make sure pupils come to school regularly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Reception and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In Reception pupils learn well because teachers provide a rich variety of well-planned experiences across all areas of learning and use assessment information well to meet pupils' individual needs. In Years 1 and 2, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan work for pupils of different abilities, particularly in order to challenge the more able pupils. Provision for pupils with SEN, particularly those in the RPLI, is very effective in meeting their individual needs. Good levels of care help pupils to feel secure and happy in school. Effective links with parents and the community have a positive effect on achievement, especially in the Reception year.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Very effective leadership by the headteacher, staff and governors helped to get the school up and running quickly after the recent fire. However, leadership and management have not yet had a significant impact on raising achievement, especially for the more able pupils. Governance is satisfactory. Although the Chair is very experienced and effective in her role, most governors are new and not able to play a full part in strategic management.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the school. Pupils are also happy with most aspects, but many feel they are not shown how to improve their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the speed of improvement, particularly in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, in order to raise standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and history, especially for the more able pupils.
- Improve the use of assessment information in Years 1 and 2 to ensure that all pupils are given suitably challenging work.
- Create more opportunities for developing and using literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum.
- Increase pupils' awareness of cultural diversity.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is **good**, and for pupils in Years 1 and 2 it is **satisfactory**. Standards in English, mathematics and science are **below average** in Year 2. This is largely because of the very high percentage of pupils with SEN, but also because the more able pupils do not attain high enough standards, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve **average** standards in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and physical education (PE). Standards in history are **below average** because work is not planned carefully enough to meet pupils' differing needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because the quality of education provided for them is consistently good and meets their individual needs.
- In Years 1 and 2, the more able pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, do not achieve high enough standards because the work they are given is not sufficiently challenging.
- Standards in literacy and numeracy are not high enough across the curriculum.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress and achieve well because they receive very good support.

Commentary

1. The school's results in national tests fluctuate significantly from year to year because of differences in the number of pupils with SEN and the nature of their needs. In addition, the school's records show that the turnover of pupils has increased to the point where approximately 40 per cent of the pupils who took the tests in 2002 had joined the school since Reception. This is illustrated in the table below which shows that pupils' scores in 2002 were much lower than the previous year. This year group contained a higher than usual number of pupils with complex needs.

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.1 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	11.6 (14.7)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	14.2 (17.1)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Records also show that most pupils make at least expected progress during their time in school. The exception to this is the higher attaining pupils, who do not achieve as well as they should. The school has identified this and is putting strategies in place to address its shortcomings. These have already been successful in writing, where the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 (above average) in 2003 showed a marked improvement over 2002. However, not enough attention is paid to providing suitably challenging work for these pupils in other subjects.

3. By the end of the Reception year, records indicate that standards are below average in **communication, language and literacy** and **mathematical development**. This is mainly due to the high proportion of children with SEN, many of whom enter school with low levels of skill in these areas of learning. Teachers are good at developing children's language and communication skills in the Reception classes and this helps them to make good progress throughout the year. Children reach the standards expected by the end of Reception in **physical development, creative development** and **knowledge and understanding of the world**. These areas of learning involve children in more practical activities where they make better progress than in the more academic aspects. Children also achieve the standards expected in personal, social and emotional development, because teachers and assistants attach great importance to this aspect. Overall,

achievement is good in Reception, because children make good progress throughout the year to reach the standards they are capable of by the end.

4. In the current Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are below average. This represents a fall in standards since the previous inspection but is similar to the standards indicated by the provisional analysis of the 2003 national tests and assessments made by teachers. The fall in standards is partly due to the difficulties faced by the school in the period between the two inspections. It is also due to changes in the nature of the school's intake. In the previous inspection, attainment on entry to the school was average; it is now well below average as the intake contains many children with SEN, significant numbers of whom have statements of SEN. For these reasons, improvement since the last inspection is judged to be satisfactory.

5. The school has successfully identified those pupils who are more able in English, mathematics and science. During the inspection, some suitable provision for these pupils was seen in English and mathematics. However, the analysis of pupils' work shows that very little provision for able pupils was made last term. The school has identified the need to raise the attainment of more able pupils across the curriculum and boys in general, but has not yet introduced sufficiently rigorous procedures to ensure that these improve quickly. Some improvement in boys' reading has been achieved but the attainment of more able pupils remains a key issue for the school to address that was also identified by the last inspection.

6. Standards are also below average in history, where the provision is unsatisfactory. There are shortcomings in the quality of teaching and curricular planning which affect adversely the rate at which pupils can progress in acquiring historical knowledge and understanding. In art and design, ICT and PE, achievement is satisfactory and standards are similar to those seen in most schools. Pupils' language and literacy skills, especially in verbal communication, and their competence in mathematics are not high enough to enable them to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum, and are not developed well enough through subjects such as science and history. Their competence in ICT is sufficient to support learning across the curriculum.

7. Pupils who have SEN, both in the mainstream setting and in the RPLI, make good progress towards the targets set for them. This is because the targets in their individual education plans are specific to their needs, and they are achievable. The care and support offered by the adults who work with them furthers this good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their attendance is **unsatisfactory**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance is slightly lower than the national average and has fallen since the last inspection. Unauthorised absence is higher than the national average.
- Pupils show interest in learning and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are good and there is a high degree of racial harmony.
- Pupils have a good awareness of right and wrong and show respect for others' feelings and beliefs.
- Pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is too limited.

Commentary

8. Attendance is below the national median and is therefore unsatisfactory, although, during the inspection, attendance was good. Staff monitor attendance appropriately and receive support from

the education welfare service who visit families when requested. Children whose attendance is poor are identified and the school works hard to ensure that they attend school more regularly; however there are a small number of parents who do not ensure that their children attend school and who take their children out of school during term time for family holidays. The majority of children arrive at school punctually. However, during the inspection, some lessons were late starting following playtimes. There have been no exclusions during the past school year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.8
National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – any other mixed background
Black or Black British – African
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
87
3
1
2
1
1
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

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

9. Pupils show interest and curiosity in lessons and most concentrate well on their work. Behaviour is good in lessons, around the school and on the playground. There has been a good improvement in the way teachers manage pupils’ behaviour since the last inspection, and this is having a positive effect on their learning. Pupils are all aware of the school and class rules and fully understand the difference between right and wrong. Their moral development is good. At the pre-inspection parents’ meeting, parents confirmed that they thought behaviour was good and that there was no bullying at the school. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds mix together well.

10. Pupils do have some opportunities for taking on additional responsibility and they respond well to them; however these opportunities are limited. Year 2 pupils are consulted about their views of the school just before they leave. Most pupils are very happy at the school and feel secure and well cared for. However, they do not have a clear picture of what they need to do to improve their work.

11. Pupils have a good level of respect for the feelings and values of others and are given opportunity to reflect on these feelings. They are encouraged to think of others by raising money for charities such as ‘Jeans for Genes’ and collections for Harvest Festival. Pupils’ social development is good, relationships between pupils and with all the staff are good, pupils get on well and are able to work and play together collaboratively. They show understanding of and respect for other pupils who have complex needs and benefit significantly from being taught alongside them. Pupils have a sound understanding of their own culture but there is little opportunity for them to experience or have an understanding of life within a multi-cultural society.

12. Pupils in the RPLI show interest and are able to maintain concentration as a result of well planned teaching in withdrawal times, and good support in classes. Pupils who have special needs and who work in mainstream classes all the time behave well and work hard. They fit in well in all classes and receive appropriate support from the adults working with them.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. The strongest features of the provision are the quality of education provided in the Foundation Stage, the provision for pupils with SEN, including those in the RPLI, the levels of care for pupils' welfare and the school's links with parents and the community. Areas needing most improvement are the provision for more able pupils and the use of assessment information to inform planning and teaching.

Teaching and learning

- The quality of teaching and learning is **satisfactory**. It is **good** in Reception, and **satisfactory** in Years 1 and 2. Assessment in Year R is **good**; it is **unsatisfactory** in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the Reception classes have a good understanding of how young children learn and provide a rich variety of experiences across all areas of learning.
- All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage this well.
- Teaching assistants are used well throughout the school and work effectively in partnership with teachers.
- Throughout the school, the quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is good; for those in the RPLI it is very good. All are included well in all aspects of class lessons.
- Assessment for pupils in Reception and for those with special educational needs is good. For pupils in the RPLI, it is very good.
- In lessons in Years 1 and 2, teachers usually recognise and help pupils when they have problems with learning but the marking of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.
- In Years 1 and 2, assessment information is not always used effectively to plan the pupils' work.
- The pupils have little understanding of how to make their work better.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	14	11	0	0	0

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

13. There are a number of good features of teaching in the Reception classes that contribute to pupils' good achievement. The teamwork between teachers and assistants is very effective and ensures that each day's activities are well organised and run smoothly. All of the adults who work in Year R are knowledgeable about the curriculum for Reception children and are particularly adept at encouraging them and engaging them in learning. As a result, children acquire new skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate and develop their capacity for concentration. Teachers plan activities which provide opportunities for children to work and play both collaboratively and independently. A key factor which explains why teaching in Reception is stronger than in Years 1 and 2 is the effective use of ongoing assessment to track children's progress in each area of

learning and to plan the next stage in their learning. As a result, teachers know what children are capable of and have appropriately high expectations. Records show that the more able children were challenged sufficiently towards the end of the previous school year to prepare them well for the demands of the National Curriculum in Year 1.

14. A strong feature of the teaching throughout the school is the provision for pupils' personal and social development, including the management of behaviour. This is an improvement since the previous inspection in Years 1 and 2 and is having a positive effect on pupils' learning. It is helping to improve pupils' listening skills and their ability to concentrate and pay attention during whole class sessions.

15. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils in the RPLI is very good. Small groups of pupils are taught for 20-minute sessions, separately from the rest of the class. This enables specialist work to be done, and pupils benefit greatly from the manager's expertise, as well as that of the speech therapist. As a result of very good assessment procedures, the work is very well focused on pupils' needs and they make good progress as a result. Teaching and learning for pupils with SEN in the mainstream setting are good. They are given work that is appropriate for their needs and levels of attainment, and they receive good support from teachers and assistants, who work well together as a team.

16. In lessons in Years 1 and 2, teachers almost always support the pupils when they are given work to do and identify and help those who are having difficulties completing what they have to do. However, it is less common for teachers to recognise that the work given to pupils is too easy and to provide harder work for them. This was quite clear in some of the reading material given to pupils. In Years 1 and 2, the analysis of pupils' work showed that the teachers' marking of pupils' work is largely praise which is often unjustified. It is very rare for marking to show pupils how to make their work better and, as a result, pupils have little idea of how to do this. In addition, in Years 1 and 2, assessment information is not always used effectively to plan the pupils' work, particularly for the more able. However, there was evidence of this taking place in some lessons, notably in English and mathematics, during the inspection.

17. The analysis of pupils' work showed that tasks were often the same for pupils of all capabilities, except those with specific SEN provision. As a result, tasks were frequently too easy for the more able and too hard for the less able who frequently failed to complete the work they were given. A recent survey of Year 2 pupils' views showed that about a third of them felt that their work is sometimes too hard for them. There was evidence that pupils were asked to say what they thought they were good at. However, there was no indication that self assessment was based on understanding or that the pupils were asked to identify weaknesses and how to improve them. In the lessons seen, for example, in science and physical education, the evaluative aspects of the curriculum were generally under developed.

The curriculum

Overall, the curriculum provided at Pinewood Infants' School is **satisfactory**. It is good in Reception and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The school supports the pupils' learning outside of the school day and develops the range of their interests **satisfactorily**. Its accommodation and resources support the implementation of the curriculum appropriately.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Reception pupils make a good start and progress well because of the range of curricular activities organised for them.
- The school plans its curriculum well and adjusts it successfully in order to cater for the changes in organisation of classes and national requirements.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are not developed well across the curriculum.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good and aids the pupils' development well.

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs supports good achievement for those in the main school and very good achievement for those in the RPLI.
- The targets for pupils with SEN are very well matched to their individual needs.
- The school's staffing in terms of teachers and support staff is good and assists the teaching of the curriculum well.
- Overall, equality of opportunity is satisfactory but the needs of the more able are not fully met.
- The pupils' learning is enriched successfully through the range of visitors and educational visits provided by the school. However, there are no out of school clubs.
- The size and height of the hall mean that the full requirements of the national PE curriculum cannot be taught. All other statutory curricular requirements are met.

Commentary

18. The school keeps the effectiveness of its curricular provision under constant and effective review and implements changes well when necessary. For example, it has very recently introduced new planning to reflect the fact that the school is now organised in single aged classes. This planning is detailed and thorough and gives due weight to teaching subjects linked to themes such as transport whilst ensuring that individual subjects are taught in sufficient depth. In addition, further development of the already good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is planned. However, although the school has identified the need to extend the range of opportunities for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, these are still insufficient to be fully effective. The height and resource restrictions related to the school hall, which restrict some aspects of gymnastics, are addressed as far as possible by using the school's outdoor climbing equipment.

19. The curriculum for children in Reception is varied and interesting, incorporating all areas of learning successfully into broad topics and themes. It is well planned and carefully monitored by the lead teacher. It makes a significant contribution to the children's good achievement. A good management decision on where to site the Reception classes after the fire has ensured that the accommodation is well suited to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the children and includes a secure outdoor area which is still being developed and resourced.

20. The school supports the curriculum well through a good range of visitors and educational visits. For example, the transport topic is enriched by a visitor who talks to the pupils about flying and a visit to Brooklands. Other topics and subjects are similarly supported including personal, social and health education which benefits, for example, from a talk from local police constable on the theme of "Getting it Right" which covers a wide range of topics including drug abuse. This judgement supports the parents' view that the school provides a good range of extracurricular activities. However, there are currently no out of school clubs. Before the recent fire, recorder and football clubs were held. There are plans to start these clubs again. Nevertheless, this would still represent a limited range of extra-curricular activities. Conversations with pupils showed that they valued and enjoyed these activities and would support a much wider range of clubs if they were made available.

21. The school has a good number of teachers and teaching assistants which enables them to organise classes in a manner which supports the needs of the pupils well. As a result, most pupils receive good equality of opportunity. However, although the school has identified more able pupils in aspects of English, mathematics and music, the analysis of their work shows that these pupils do not always receive work which is sufficiently demanding for their needs.

22. Provision for pupils in the RPLI, is very good. Pupils are fully integrated into mainstream classes and are included very well in all activities. Individual education plans are of good quality and have clear, specific targets, which address pupils' complex needs very well. Pupils are withdrawn from classes for specialist help where appropriate, and these sessions provide very well for their speech and language difficulties. Speech and language therapy is both very well organised and given. Outside help is given by visiting therapists to individual pupils. The special needs co-ordinator gives her own specialist group work sessions. Pupils who have SEN but are not part of the RPLI

and are based in the mainstream classes are also fully included into the school's curriculum. They are given work that is pitched at appropriate levels for their development. Provision for them is good and they receive good support from teachers and assistants.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. In Reception they are very good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring of pupils' achievement is **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The induction arrangements for pupils in Reception are very good.
- There are good procedures for health and safety, child protection and first aid.
- Adults know pupils well and provide good levels of care for their wellbeing.
- The school has good systems to monitor pupils' academic standards and progress but these are not always well used to provide pupils with advice and guidance.
- Pupils in the RPLI receive very good levels of care, support and guidance.
- The involvement of pupils in the school's work and development is satisfactory but their views are only sought at the end of Year 2.

Commentary

23. There are very good induction arrangements for pupils when they start at the school, which are enhanced by the good relationship with the pre-school that is based on the school site. These procedures include opportunities for parents and children to visit the school in the term before they start, informative booklets and home visits, carried out by the teachers just before children come to school for the first time. These visits enable teachers to gather information about each child that is used well to prepare appropriate activities for them. As a result, children get off to a flying start at school, settle in quickly and happily and make good progress. There are good procedures for monitoring their achievement on a day-to-day basis.

24. The school has good health and safety procedures in place. Governors and staff make regular health and safety checks and are in the process of beginning full risk assessments. Regular checks are made to grounds, buildings and equipment. The Headteacher is the nominated officer for child protection procedures and other staff have also been trained. All staff are kept aware of the need to inform the Headteacher should they have any concerns. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for the care of children who are unwell are effective and help them to feel safe and secure at school.

25. All adults who work in the school form close and trusting relationships with the pupils. They know them well and provide good role models for behaviour. Discussions with pupils show that they feel safe and secure and can turn to a number of adults if they need help or comfort. However, there are no formal arrangements for seeking the views of pupils about different aspects of school life other than just before they leave.

26. The school's good systems to monitor the pupils' standards and progress include individual assessments of their standards in aspects of English and mathematics. They also include the identification of what pupils need to do to reach the next National Curriculum level. However, the accuracy of the standards pupils are assessed as having reached is not always secure. Furthermore, this information is not shared with the pupils who have no personal targets to improve their academic standards and therefore do not know what they need to do to improve their work.

27. Pupils in the RPLI are given focused, specialist help in group sessions with the special needs co-ordinator. Speech and language therapists come to the school weekly to work with individual and groups of children. The specialised and complex needs of the pupils are addressed well, and

suitable, achievable targets are set. The pupils' progress is monitored carefully as they progress through the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the community are **good**. The additional educational support programmes and services that the school provides are **good**. There are **good** links with other schools and pre-schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school provides parents with good information about the curriculum and how to help their children at home.
- Good links with the pre-school and other local schools provide many benefits for pupils.
- Written reports on pupils' progress do not always show parents clearly how well their children are progressing.
- Communication with parents of pupils in the RPLI is **very good** and home/school books are used **very well** for the daily exchange of information.

Commentary

28. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school; the school works well with parents, encouraging them to support the school through the Friends Association and to help their children at home. The parents have been particularly positive about the efforts made by the school to minimise disruption for the pupils following the fire earlier this year, and gave very good support to the school to help it overcome many difficulties.

29. The school provides a good range of information for parents about the curriculum and how they can help their children at home. The weekly 'Share' club for parents of children in Years 1 and 2 and the fortnightly parent partnership workshops for parents of children in Reception are effective and have a positive impact on achievement, supporting learning at home and helping parents understand how they can best support their children.

30. There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff formally and informally to discuss their children's progress. Written annual reports for parents are satisfactory, they inform parents what their children, know, understand and can do, and some give areas for development, but this is not consistent. The reports do not inform parents where their children are in relation to national expectations.

31. There are good links with the local pre-school group, which is based on the school site, and with the local junior school. Staff and pupils make visits to the school prior to transfer, which allows the children to adjust to the changes easily. The Headteacher and staff meet staff of other schools regularly as part of the local "cluster group" of schools. The school has also benefited from links with a Beacon School, which have helped teachers to improve their practice, particularly in the management and development of subjects.

32. The school has good links with the local community; this was particularly evident following the fire, when the school received many offers of support from members of the local community. Recognising the lack of community provision on the estate, the school works hard to provide additional services, such as a parent and toddler group and space for a playgroup. Members of the community are very appreciative of these efforts.

33. Parents of all pupils who have special educational needs have very good links with the school. The home/school book provides a valuable daily contact for parents of pupils in the RPLI. All parents of pupils with SEN are involved in setting and reviewing their children's targets and individual

education plans. There is good contact with the special needs staff of the junior school. The level of liaison is good and ensures a smooth transition to the next school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **satisfactory**. The headteacher provided very effective leadership in the aftermath of the fire, supported very well by the Chair of Governors, both in rebuilding the morale of the staff and rallying the local community, whose help was invaluable in getting the school up and running in temporary buildings within four weeks of being burned down. However, leadership, overall, is judged **satisfactory** because it has not yet had a significant impact on raising standards of achievement across the curriculum. The management of the school is **satisfactory** and has improved in a number of aspects since the last inspection, especially the role of subject leaders. However, developments have inevitably been hindered by the fire. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. Most of the governors are very new to the role but are being led by a very experienced and competent Chair.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has provided firm and sensitive leadership in rebuilding staff morale and re-organising the school in temporary accommodation since the fire.
- Members of the senior management team have many individual strengths, but their effectiveness as a team in raising achievement is limited.
- Good systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, but the outcomes of these activities are not rigorous enough to guarantee improvement.
- Monitoring and reviewing assessment performance data and acting on the results have strengths and weaknesses.
- The school improvement plan does not have a broad enough focus on raising achievement across the curriculum.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good.
- The leadership and management of the provision for SEN, including the RPLI, are very good.
- The school's financial resources are used well and efficiently administered.
- There is a strong commitment to the continuing professional development of staff.
- The chair of governors is very effective in her role, but governors do not, as a whole, have the experience to make an effective contribution to strategic planning.

Commentary

34. The strongest feature of the headteacher's leadership is her effectiveness in creating and maintaining a stable and cohesive staff team. When she took over as headteacher in 2000, the school was in special measures and faced significant difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff. Since the last inspection in 2001, which recognised the headteacher's effective and sensitive leadership, she has sustained staffing levels and created a strong team spirit amongst teachers and assistants. This proved invaluable to the school when it was destroyed by fire in March 2003. The headteacher and chair of governors worked very well together to build morale, to involve parents and the local community and to rebuild the ethos of the school, which they have done successfully. At this time, the main focus of the leadership and management was on the personal and emotional needs of the pupils, which were addressed very successfully. Inevitably, shortages of resources and adjusting to temporary accommodation caused difficulties for teachers in fully meeting the requirements of the curriculum during the summer term 2003. By the time of this inspection, much had been done to replace curricular planning and resources and to refocus on improving academic standards.

35. The headteacher has also created a senior management team with significant expertise, especially in the Foundation Stage and the provision for pupils with SEN. The deputy headteacher has recently taken on responsibility for able pupils, and works closely with the headteacher to improve and develop assessment procedures. However, the effectiveness of the team in raising

achievement throughout the school is limited. The role of subject leaders has been a key issue for improvement since the last inspection, and much has been done, under the leadership of the deputy head teacher, to develop their effectiveness in monitoring and evaluating the quality of

provision in their subjects. Discussions with subject leaders, together with the little paperwork that remains, show that most have a clear understanding of their role and how to carry it out. However, leadership, as a whole, is judged to be satisfactory because it has not had a significant impact on raising achievement, particularly for the more able pupils.

36. The leadership of the manager of the RPLI is very good. She is responsible for the RPLI and all other SEN work in the school. She leads a strong team of teachers and assistants who provide clearly focused and appropriate work and assistance for all pupils who have special needs. She knows the pupils very well and uses her considerable expertise to help them make good progress. This makes a significant contribution to the pupils' good achievement. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good, and has a good impact on the quality of provision for the children in Reception and on their achievement. The coordinator is knowledgeable and experienced and provides a model of good practice for other teachers and assistants in Reception.

37. The school improvement plan is based appropriately on regular analysis of the school's performance and individual pupils' progress. It focuses on relevant priorities for improving the leadership and management of the school and the quality of learning for the pupils. However, although there is emphasis on improving learning in general, this does not make specific reference to raising standards in other subjects. There is insufficient emphasis on what teachers need to do to improve their practice in order to raise the standards achieved by more able pupils across the curriculum.

38. All teachers are involved in discussing and determining the school's strengths and weaknesses, led by the headteacher, and in agreeing priorities for improvement. The headteacher and some coordinators have undertaken classroom observations and have made good use of Local Education Authority consultants to improve their own practice. However, the evaluation of teaching and its impact on learning has not been sufficiently rigorous to address the weaknesses in provision for the more able pupils.

39. The school successfully analyses national assessment data to improve its performance and to compare it with that of other schools. The progress of individual pupils is monitored carefully so that the achievement of different groups of pupils is known to the school. This has, for example, enabled action to be taken to eliminate differences in the achievement of boys and girls. The school also reviews the progress of individual pupils against the standards they are predicted to reach in Year 2. However, it does not adjust these predictions when the progress made shows that this action would be appropriate.

40. There are effective links between school development planning, performance management and the continuing professional development of all staff. The school makes very good use of external consultants and local cluster groups, and it has benefited significantly from its link with a local Beacon School. Teachers give many examples of how these links have improved their own practice.

41. Financial management and administration are good. The priorities in the school improvement plan guide the setting of the budget, which is carefully monitored throughout the year. The administrative officer has very efficient systems for financial control and keeps senior staff and governors well informed from month to month. As a result of these effective procedures, the curriculum is appropriately resourced and the school is well staffed. These factors have a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	569119
Total expenditure	544918
Expenditure per pupil	5449

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	70535
Balance carried forward to the next	94736

42. The school's expenditure per pupil is very high because of its RPLI designation and the small classes. The decision to re-organise into single-aged classes is benefiting the pupils as curricular planning is now tailored more closely to their needs. It also means that pupils with SEN receive more focused support and this helps them to make good progress. The high budget surplus of the previous year was designated for works to be carried out on the school buildings, which have since been destroyed by fire. Discussions with the headteacher and governors show that plans are in place to reduce this surplus considerably by the end of the current financial year, while still maintaining an appropriate contingency fund to cover unexpected costs of running the new temporary accommodation.

43. There has been a very high turnover of governors since the last inspection and most are relatively new to the role. They are supportive and committed to the school and are being led very well by an experienced and recently appointed chair who is guiding them towards a sound understanding of both their role and the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their involvement in strategic planning is limited, but the chair of governors works very closely with the headteacher to provide clear direction for the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**, as found by the previous inspection.

44. Good leadership and management, effective curricular planning and good teaching all combine to provide children with varied and interesting experiences which promote good learning and help them to make good progress. Very good provision for the high proportion of children with special educational needs, especially in developing language and communication skills, is reflected in their good progress. The Foundation Stage manager provides good leadership for teachers and assistants, who work together very effectively as a team. The quality of teaching is good across all six areas of learning, which are planned effectively to link together in order to reinforce learning and make it more relevant and meaningful for the children.

45. At the time of this inspection, the children were attending school in the morning and most had only been in school for two or three days. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to judge these children's achievement in each area of learning. However, assessments carried out at the end of the previous school year indicate that between two thirds and three quarters of the children who are now in Year 1 achieved the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. This represents good achievement given the low starting point of many.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement results from consistently good teaching across all areas of learning.
- Very good induction procedures and attention to children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Good teaching of language and communication skills.
- Many opportunities to develop children's physical capabilities.
- Well planned activities which involve several areas of learning.
- Very good teamwork between teachers and assistants.
- Good assessment procedures which are used well to plan the next stage of learning.
- Very effective links with parents which support children's learning.
- Very good provision for children with SEN, particularly those in the RPLI, and very good inclusion of all children in all aspects of school life.
- Good leadership provides clear direction for the continuing improvement of the provision.

Commentary

46. The school has very good induction procedures for children and parents which go a long way towards ensuring that children settle in quickly and happily. A strong feature of the teaching is the emphasis on pupils' **personal, social and emotional development**, which capitalises very effectively on this well structured start. This was evident in the way children had settled quickly into school and were already forming good relationships with all of the adults and with each other. Children are given good opportunities to work and play together in small groups and to develop independence by managing their own personal hygiene. At the same time, adults set clear expectations of behaviour and give praise and encouragement to reinforce these. A relative weakness was the lack of opportunities for children to initiate activities.

47. Many children start school with poor language and communication skills and their attainment in **communication, language and literacy is well below average** on entry. Improving these skills is central to the good practice seen in all lessons. Teachers and assistants model spoken language well, talk to pupils frequently, question them and encourage them to develop confidence in speaking. There was good teaching of phonics as teachers showed children the connection between the letter 's' and its sound. A variety of methods help children to learn and remember sounds. In one lesson,

they drew 's' in the air with a 'magic finger', some traced it in shaving foam on the table while others wrote in glue and sprinkled glitter on it. Children enjoy listening to stories and some join in with the words of familiar rhymes.

48. There is a good emphasis on children's **physical development**. Teachers make effective use of the hall and the outdoor area for a wide range of physical activities. In one lesson in the hall, children achieved good standards as they walked on tiptoe and took 'giant steps'. They showed good control and co-ordination when jumping. Most ride tricycles and scooters competently but some find it difficult to steer round a track. Teachers provide good opportunities for children to improve manual dexterity through drawing, painting, modelling and using construction materials and computers. They and the teaching assistants show children how to hold a pencil correctly when they are learning to write.

49. Effective curricular planning reveals a good understanding of how young children learn and of the need to plan activities that incorporate several areas of learning. One of the lessons observed provided a good example, as the planned activities enhanced children's **mathematical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world**. The children were engaged in role play with the teacher, and were laying the table for their puppets. They learned about colours as each had to find a plate, cup, knife, fork and spoon in red, blue, green or yellow. They also learned to recognise 'one'. They then drew the number one on the computer, using the mouse to select a different colour each time. While all this was taking place, the teacher constantly engaged the children in conversation and this contributed well to improving their **language and communication skills**.

50. These aspects of learning were developed well in other lessons. For example, when children were building towers from small pieces of construction equipment, the teacher extended their understanding of mathematical language by asking them, "Can you make it even taller?" A walk in the school grounds provided opportunities to learn about trees and plants, but also to increase children's knowledge of colour as they searched for different shades of green and made a collection of leaves to display in the classroom. The colour theme was carried through into an outdoor physical development session. While riding tricycles round a track, children learned the purpose of traffic lights and stopped at a red signal to allow an adult to cross the 'road'. This also taught them a valuable lesson about road safety.

51. Underpinning the good practice in the Reception classes are good assessment procedures. These are carried out on a lesson-by-lesson basis as teachers and assistants observe and note the children's progress. These observations are used well to plan the next stage in learning for each pupil. Another very strong feature is the very effective teamwork between teachers and assistants which helps all lessons to run smoothly and provides very good support and encouragement for all children. Very good provision for children with SEN ensures that they get off to a good start and that teachers know them well and quickly assess their needs.

52. Parents are involved very well in supporting their children's learning, especially through the Parent Partnership Course. Teachers and assistants communicate regularly with parents, who are welcomed in to school and involved productively in their children's learning. There are particularly good arrangements for keeping parents of children in the RPLI informed, on a daily basis, about how well their children are settling in.

53. The quality of the leadership provided by the Foundation Stage manager was evident in the way the provision was organised and in the quality of the curricular planning. Everything ran very smoothly, despite the temporary absence of the lead teacher, who has created an effective team with good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn. She provides effective support and guidance for all staff, and clear direction for the future development of the provision.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Detailed analysis and evaluation of pupils' achievement has led to a clear focus on raising standards in reading and writing.
- There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills, in lessons across the curriculum.
- Very good provision for pupils with SEN addresses their needs effectively.
- More able pupils and boys do not achieve as much as they can in reading.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent between classes and does not always show them clearly how they can improve.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop literacy in other subjects.

Commentary

54. Standards in reading are below average in the current Year 2, which is lower than at the time of the last inspection. This is because there is a high proportion of pupils with SEN, and higher attaining pupils, especially boys, are not achieving as well as they could. Pupils at all levels of attainment read simple texts accurately and know how to sound out unfamiliar words. More able pupils read confidently and independently and retell a story, capturing the main points of the plot. Their reading is expressive and they have a good grasp of the meaning. However, some are reading books that do not provide them with sufficient challenge. Average and lower attaining pupils lack confidence in talking about the books they read, but show a sound understanding of the story and characters.

55. Good teaching of phonics is helping pupils to learn letter sounds effectively. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher produced three pots of objects that began with 'ch', 'sh' and 'th'. After she had muddled them up, the pupils took turns to identify which pot each object belonged to by saying the name of the object and its initial sound. Pupils' work from the previous term shows that they use this knowledge effectively when spelling words independently in their writing.

56. Standards in writing are below the national average in Year 2. However, the school has worked hard to raise standards for the more able pupils, and this is reflected in the proportion of pupils who reached Level 3 in the 2003 national tests, which is higher than at the time of the last inspection. These pupils produced some good pieces of extended writing with mostly accurate sentence construction and good use of capital letters and full stops. The writing showed that pupils were able to sustain and develop ideas well, though their use of imaginative and adventurous vocabulary was fairly limited. A higher than average proportion of pupils does not reach Level 2. This reflects their weak language and communication skills on entry to the school. Most pupils' work is carefully presented and pupils are developing a neat handwriting style. More able pupils join letters fluently. Although writing skills are taught soundly in literacy lessons, they are not used and developed sufficiently in other subjects, such as history and science.

57. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Year 2. Many pupils start school with poor language and communication skills and are identified as having special educational needs in this aspect of learning. Teachers place a good emphasis on speaking and listening in all lessons and give pupils opportunities to explain, describe, discuss and ask questions. Higher attaining pupils express their ideas confidently and clearly and are quick to respond to questions. Average and lower attaining pupils are often reluctant to speak in front of the class, sometimes speak inaudibly and often in short phrases or sentences. A good feature of one Year 2 lesson was the use of pictures to stimulate discussion about what was happening or what might have happened. This engaged pupils'

interest and encouraged them to think creatively and to create a story scenario. Drama lessons in Year 2 are helping to develop pupils' confidence in this aspect of learning, but they do not always allow enough time for pupils to communicate with each other or with an adult to extend their use of spoken language.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school. Although lessons are well planned to incorporate all aspects of the subject and the National Literacy Strategy, the choice of texts for the whole class shared reading session does not always meet the needs of all the pupils. In one lesson, the text was very challenging and the teacher spent too long asking lower attaining pupils to sound out more complex words, which interrupted the flow of the story and slowed the pace of the lesson. Where this is done well, the teacher models expressive reading and pupils imitate this as they read aloud with confidence. There is still a tendency to spend too long on whole class activities with pupils seated on the carpet, which slows the pace of lessons and leads to restlessness. This weakness was identified by the previous inspection. Having identified the need to address weaknesses in boys' reading, teachers ensure that books match boys' interests and stimulate their imagination. Male role models have been invited in to read with and to the pupils, and a selection of non-fiction texts has been purchased. Good teaching of phonics helps pupils to spell simple words correctly, and effective teaching of reading strategies, such as using the context of the story or picture clues, helps less able pupils to make sound progress.

59. Pupils with SEN and those in the RPLI receive good support from class teachers, learning support assistants and the SENCO. Some very good, focused teaching was seen when the SENCO took small groups of pupils to develop basic speaking and reading skills. The teacher's high levels of expertise and her quiet patience enabled her to get the best out of each pupil as they read and articulated sounds and simple words.

60. The subject leader manages the subject well. She has carried out a detailed analysis of pupils' achievement, measuring their progress against their attainment when they started school. This analysis has led to a clear focus throughout the school on raising boys' attainment in reading and appropriate strategies are now in place to address this. A survey of pupils' reading choices was used to inform the purchase of new books following the fire. The subject leader has observed teaching throughout the school and fed back to each teacher three good points and three areas for improvement. She has also assessed pupils' levels of attainment in reading alongside class teachers in order to improve the consistency of teachers' assessments. This continues to be an area for development. The school has introduced a good system for tracking pupils' progress in reading and writing, but the process of setting targets for individual pupils to achieve is not yet rigorous enough. The marking of pupils' work is variable in quality: some is good and shows pupils clearly how to improve their work, while some gives praise inappropriately for work that could be better.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The development of literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although teachers' planning shows that effective links are being made in reading, as in the use of 'Joseph and his technicolour coat' as a shared text, writing skills are not developed sufficiently well in other subjects. Overuse of limiting worksheets and writing frames, particularly for the more able pupils, restricts learning. This was seen in pupils' science and history work from the previous term. The school has already identified this as an area for improvement.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning, while overall satisfactory, were good in the lessons seen.
- Support in mathematics for pupils who have SEN is good.
- Classes are well organised to take account of pupils' differing abilities.
- Teachers manage and control classes well, and this results in good behaviour and attitudes from pupils.
- Standards of attainment are below average, particularly for National Curriculum Level 3.
- There is an insufficiently sharp focus on investigative learning, and numeracy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Teachers' marking is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

62. Standards of attainment are below average in the current Year 2. This is similar to the unofficial 2003 test results, where the number of pupils gaining Level 3 was lower than in previous years. However, pupils' achievement, which takes account of their capabilities and previous levels of attainment, is satisfactory.

63. The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons seen was good, and teachers provided activities that were well suited to pupils' needs. For example, pupils in Year 2 began to grasp how to measure accurately in centimetres by using tape measures in one class, and rulers in the other. They measured wrists, waists and ankles in one lesson and recorded their findings. Each pupil in the other Year 2 lesson successfully constructed the drawing of a house by using accurate measuring skills.

64. Teachers use resources well. For example in the Year 1 lessons, they used Russian dolls to teach the idea of 'tall', 'taller' and 'tallest' in their work about measuring. In this way, pupils were able to learn well and see instantly the differences in height. In the Year 2 lessons, the focus on measuring was successfully linked to science, design and technology (DT) and religious education (RE) through the use of the story about Joseph and his multi-coloured coat. An excellent mock-up of a tailor's shop in one classroom helped to set the scene well, and pupils went inside to measure each other's waists and wrists. They recorded their findings in order to use them in the final making of the coat. Similar work was going on in the other Year 2 lesson, with one group using more advanced skills and working closely with an assistant helping them. They learnt well with this extra help.

65. In all of the lessons seen, pupils who have SEN were given good levels of support, both from teachers and assistants. Classes are organised so that pupils are grouped according to their levels of attainment. Pupils of all abilities are well served by this organisation, and are given appropriate levels of work. Those who have SEN are included fully in all activities and teachers and assistants see to it that all pupils can attempt the work. Pupils who have SEN make good progress towards their own targets.

66. Teachers have established good classroom routines and expectations, and as a result, pupils behave well, concentrate, and work hard. There were no instances of bad behaviour in any of the lessons seen. An example of pupils' good behaviour was seen in a good Year 2 lesson. The teacher held pupils' interest well by making deliberate mistakes. This encouraged everyone to join in and so they concentrated and behaved well, fully engrossed in the work.

67. A weakness in teaching is the marking of pupils' work, seen in the analysis of pupils' books. Pupils' written work that is either unsatisfactorily presented or is difficult to read is often marked as 'super' or 'excellent'. Teachers do not write what pupils should do to improve. Although

encouragement is important, there is a tendency for teachers to use only praise where it would be better to show pupils how to do better.

68. Leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory. Although there has been a focus on some aspects of English in the last two years, mathematics does not feature in the school development plan. However, in Year 2, planning for this term shows that there is an emerging focus on numeracy and other areas of the mathematics programme. In one of the Year 2 lessons, pupils were being pushed on towards higher attainment, but it is too early in the year for them to be at Level 3.

69. Standards at the time of the last inspection were reported as average or above, but since the school has had a number of major problems to face, the findings of this inspection are that there has been **satisfactory** improvement since the last report.

Mathematics across the curriculum

70. Although there are some examples in ICT and occasionally at registration times, provision for developing pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is **unsatisfactory**.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' understanding of life processes and living things is good.
- All pupils, including those in the RPLI, take a full part in all the work.
- The support given to the pupils by the teaching assistants.
- The good use made of information and communication technology.
- The standards reached by the pupils in Year 2 are too low.
- There is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills.
- The use of assessment information to plan pupils' work and teachers' marking are unsatisfactory.
- Insufficient use is made of the pupils' writing skills.

Commentary

71. Standards in science are below average. This judgement contrasts markedly with the findings of the school's last inspection which found that standards were at, or slightly above average, and improving. However, it is higher than the assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 2 in 2002 when standards were judged to be below average. It is similar to the standards indicated by the provisional analysis of the 2003 national assessments made by teachers. The fall in standards is partly due to the difficulties faced by the school in the period between the two inspections. It is also due to changes in the nature of the school's intake. In the previous inspection, the standards reached by children entering the school were average. This inspection finds that children start school at well below average standards as the intake contains many children with special educational needs, significant numbers of whom have statements of special educational need. For these reasons, improvement since the last inspection is judged to be satisfactory. Additionally, the satisfactory nature of teaching and learning is judged to be promoting satisfactory achievement.

72. The evidence shows that the pupils are taught all elements of the subject. Their knowledge of life processes and living things is extensive and includes, for example, the life cycle of a butterfly, simple classification of animals and work on minibeasts in the school grounds. The work on minibeasts was well linked with the use of ICT and other subjects as the pupils produced a graph of the type of creatures found and created "minibeast music". In other aspects of the subject, most of

the work set is at average levels which does not promote high standards. This is particularly the case in investigative work. The analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning showed that this type of work is largely directed by the teachers. Pupils themselves expressed the view that they rarely carried out "experiments". The evidence that pupils were encouraged to make suggestions or consider ways of improving their work was especially thin.

73. The analysis of pupils' work also showed that their writing skills are not being used well enough in this subject. The format of most of the written work was such that it limited the amount and quality of the work pupils could produce. Much of the work set was the same for all pupils. It did not challenge the more able and was not always completed by the below average. This indicates that assessment information is not always used well to match work to the pupils' needs. This judgement is supported by the quality of the marking of pupils' work. This was largely praise and virtually never helped them to progress. There was no evidence that the pupils were helped to assess their own work or that they had been set targets for improvement.

74. A good lesson in Year 2 addressed some of the weaknesses identified above. In this lesson, pupils investigated the properties of materials in work linked to the topic of Joseph and his many coloured coat. They worked in groups which undertook different tasks. The pupils were well supported by the teacher and the teaching assistant, for example, when practising the new skill of using a thermometer. In a generally satisfactory lesson, the way all pupils, including those in the RPLI, take a full part in all the work was well illustrated. The teacher and the teaching assistant helped pupils to suggest ways of sorting the classes into groups based on features such as height and helped them to organise themselves in this way.

75. There are significant strengths in the management of the subject particularly the revised curricular planning for the subject. Nevertheless, there are also important weaknesses including the use of assessment information. For these reasons, the management of the subject is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make effective use of ICT in the classroom.
- Pupils are developing good keyboard and mouse skills and confidence in using computers independently.
- Good leadership identifies appropriate priorities for improvement and ensures that teachers and assistants receive the training necessary to implement them.

Commentary

76. The school's computer suite, teachers' records and most pupils' work were all destroyed in the fire. Evidence of standards by the end of Year 2 was limited to a few pieces of work that were completed in the previous term. These indicate that pupils attain standards in line with those expected for their age. Pupils type out short pieces of writing and make simple graphs, for example to show how many different 'minibeasts' they found when they carried out a survey in the school grounds. They also made 'minibeast music' on the computer. Pupils use a painting program to draw fruit and 'minibeasts'. A discussion with Year 2 pupils showed that they knew how to program a toy robot to make it move around the classroom and could explain how they did this.

77. Having quickly adjusted to the loss of the computer suite, teachers make effective use of computers in the classroom. They report that this is making it easier for them to use ICT as a tool for learning across the curriculum. This was evident in the lessons observed during the inspection. For example, pupils in a mathematics lesson used a number program to reinforce their skills in

addition. In an art lesson, Year 1 pupils selected tools and colours to draw a face and used the mouse effectively to drag and click.

78. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have sound knowledge of the curriculum and have all received appropriate training. They place a strong emphasis on developing keyboard and mouse skills and give pupils adequate opportunities to work independently and build up confidence in using computers for a range of tasks. Work is carefully planned to build upon pupils' previous learning, but there is little evidence that different activities are devised to challenge the pupils whose skills are more advanced. Although the school is starting to introduce systems to assess and track pupils' progress more rigorously throughout the school, these are at an early stage of development. Current assessment arrangements are satisfactory and are sufficient to indicate broadly what pupils have achieved in the subject.

79. Effective leadership in the subject has ensured that all staff are equipped to teach all the different strands competently. A comprehensive three-year action plan shows clearly how standards will be raised by improving the quality of teaching, the use of ICT across the curriculum, assessment procedures and resources. All proposed initiatives have a deadline and are fully costed; however, the plan does not make clear how their effectiveness will be measured. The school has recently employed an in-house technician, who is also a member of the support staff, to ease the workload of teachers in maintaining computers and printers and troubleshooting when problems arise.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. The use of ICT across the curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is identified as a priority for further improvement in the subject leader's three year action plan. Links with literacy, numeracy and art are stronger than those in other subjects.

HUMANITIES

81. No geography and religious education lessons were seen. Inspectors observed one history lesson. Very little work had been completed in history and religious education and none in geography. Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils, looked at teachers' planning documents and held discussions with subject leaders. In geography, there is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of provision. In religious education there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards or the quality of teaching and learning.

82. Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**. The time allocated to religious education through the year is appropriate to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Lessons are taught in blocks of time each half term. Planning documents show that topics include Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Pupils hear Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments, such as the story of Joseph, or the Prodigal Son. From a discussion with some Year 2 pupils, it is clear that they have a detailed knowledge of the story of Joseph and his multi-coloured coat. Good links are being made with science, DT, mathematics, and English through the use of this story as a central theme. Pupils are preparing to make a coat, and this is involving measuring, testing materials, design work and making, as well as using the text. There is a good, comprehensive file about the subject that is very informative. It shows good planning by the co-ordinator and is full of ideas and help for teachers.

History

Provision in history is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a clear grasp of what history is.
- They have a firm understanding of how people know about the past.
- The work provided interests the pupils.
- Standards in Year 2 are too low.
- Teaching of aspects of the curriculum is patchy.
- Assessment information is not used well enough to plan work that meets pupils' differing needs.
- Marking does not explain how pupils can improve their work.
- Too little use is made of writing, numeracy and information and communication technology.

Commentary

83. Pupils' attainment is below average. The quality of teaching and learning seen in the lesson observed during the inspection was satisfactory. However, the analysis of work showed clearly that both more able and below average pupils were not doing as well as they could because of shortcomings in the teaching. This represents unsatisfactory achievement.

84. In conversation, pupils were quickly able to define history well for their ages as being "What happened long ago". They were able to say that we know about the past from what people tell us, visiting museums and "digging up bones". This understanding is extended, for example, by curricular enrichments such as a planned trip to Old Portsmouth and a visitor from a museum who will discuss artefacts with the pupils. In one of the lessons seen during the inspection, a family group ranging in age from a two week old child to his grandmother talked to Year 1 children. They found this very interesting, asked pertinent questions and understood who were the older and younger members of the family. However, the pupils' use of everyday terms indicating the passage of time such as 'years' and their understanding of chronology was not fully developed. The recording task of drawing the family group in sequence was undemanding and the same for pupils of all abilities.

85. The analysis of pupils' work showed that the pupils had undertaken work about the seaside in the past and the present. They were aware of some differences between the two periods, for example, changes in what people wear to swim. However, much of the work was identical for pupils of all capabilities because of unsatisfactory assessment. Work was often too easy for able pupils and too hard for the below average who did not always complete it. Marking was unhelpful in terms of assisting the pupils to do better. The pupils' abilities to use their writing skills were restricted by the use of too many mundane worksheets. There was little evidence that pupils used their numeracy or ICT skills adequately to help them to learn history. These factors restrict the development of their communication and historical enquiry skills. Furthermore, the evidence available showed little proof that pupils had been taught to understand either that the past can be represented differently or the social, cultural, ethnic or religious differences of the periods they had studied.

86. Valid comparisons about changes in the subject since the school's last inspection cannot be made because of the lack of significant comment about history in that report. Low standards and unsatisfactory achievement mean that the management of the subject is unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Inspectors did not see any lessons in DT and there was not enough previous work available in order to make a reliable judgement about standards. Two art lessons were seen, as well as a limited sample of pupils' work. One music lesson was observed, which was a singing lesson for all pupils in Years 1 and 2. Three PE lessons were seen. In addition inspectors talked to pupils about their work and held discussions with teachers.

The main DT topic for the term in Year 2, Joseph and his multi-coloured coat, is linked effectively to religious education and other subjects. Pupils were busy measuring, testing materials for suitability, designing and planning. The subject leader's file is good. It shows careful attention to planning for skills such as cutting, stitching, joining and evaluating. It also shows that pupils have used axles and wheels, made puppets and designed and made articles after investigation. Tools needed and materials to be used are listed in the file, and pupils learn how to choose which they will want. Some use is made of re-cycled materials.

In the music lesson, the quality of teaching and learning was good, as was the standard of pupils' singing. The lesson was taught by the subject leader, who ensured that it moved at a brisk pace to accelerate learning. This helped to hold pupils' interest and attention. Good emphasis on appropriate warm-up exercises and correct breathing enabled pupils to sing well and to learn a new song quickly. The pupils' performance was good, especially when they sang a song in two parts, each group maintaining the melody line and rhythm well. Makaton signing by the SEN co-ordinator ensured that all pupils were fully included and engaged in the lesson, especially those pupils with language impairment. Furthermore, the lesson made an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development as they reflected on the beauty of God's creation through the words of the songs.

Art

Provision in art is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good curricular planning places appropriate emphasis on all aspects of the subject and ensures progression in the teaching of knowledge and skills.
- There are good links with other subjects.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to experience a wide range of artists' work from different cultures.
- Sketchbooks are not used sufficiently to develop skills.

Commentary

87. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in Year 2. The previous inspection found evidence of higher than average standards in some aspects of art and design. At this early stage in the school year, there was little evidence of completed work but some samples of work from the end of the previous year showed that pupils had achieved good standards in drawing fruit and vegetables from observation. Satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils are taught basic skills in drawing, painting, printing, collage and three-dimensional work. In Year 2, pupils are able to draw accurately from observation and to use a variety of objects to print repeating patterns and designs. Discussions with pupils show that they have a good understanding of how to create different shades by mixing colours when painting. The use of sketchbooks to practise and refine skills is underdeveloped and has been identified as a priority for improvement.

88. Teachers make effective links with other subjects, which make pupils' learning more relevant and meaningful. For example, towards the end of the summer term, pupils took part in a grounds project, which involved work in literacy, science, mathematics, ICT and art and design. As part of this project, teachers planned effectively to develop the pupils' imagination and creativity through using a variety of materials, including textiles, to make tree sculptures, wind chimes and fence weavings. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn about the work of artists from cultures other than European.

89. Of the two lessons seen, one was satisfactory and one was good. The main differences were the pace of learning and the opportunities for pupils to develop creativity as well as learning skills. The good lesson had a number of effective features. The teacher had assessed pupils' capabilities from the previous week's work and planned activities to meet their needs. Some needed

further practice at developing modelling techniques to create a face and features. Others were building on these skills by using paper and paste to create a three dimensional image of a face. Good teaching of techniques by the teacher and assistant, combined with opportunities for pupils to incorporate their own ideas, extended pupils' knowledge and understanding of three dimensional art work. In a very effective plenary session at the end of the lesson, the teacher's carefully phrased questions checked pupils' understanding of what they had learned as they explained the processes they used.

90. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership in the subject and good support for teachers. She has run workshops for staff on different aspects of the art and design curriculum and checks teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure progression in the teaching of knowledge and skills. However, she has not had the opportunity to observe lessons or work alongside teachers in the classroom. There is a well constructed action plan for the subject which sets out clearly appropriate priorities for improvement during the coming year.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers' control of lessons and their emphasis on safety.
- The way lessons are structured and developed.
- The contribution made by teaching assistants.
- The way all pupils, including those in the RPLI, take a full part in all the work.
- Accommodation and resources do not allow all aspects of the National Curriculum to be met.
- Over direction of the pupils' work and the failure to develop their evaluative skills.
- The pupils' limited understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies.
- Organisation of lessons which results in unsatisfactory learning.

Commentary

91. Pupils reach similar standards to those found in most schools. This represents satisfactory achievement which is promoted by the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning in the subject.

92. In Year 2, pupils show suitable coordination when travelling on the floor by, for example, pushing and turning. They are also able to devise appropriate sequences of movements when travelling across mats. Year 1 pupils show average control when passing and receiving a ball. No teaching of dance was seen although the curriculum has been enhanced by a visit from an interactive dance and music workshop. Strengths in the teaching include good control of the pupils, a strong commitment to safe practice and well structured lessons. All lessons began with suitable warm up activities followed by development of the main objective of the lesson and a suitable cooling down session. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in lessons. For example, they were seen to provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and to deal sensitively with a child who sustained a minor injury. This resulted in all pupils, including those in the RPLI, being able to take a full part in most lessons.

93. In most of the lessons seen, the pupils' work was very directed by the teachers and they had little chance to apply their skills individually or to use their imagination. Additionally, there was little discussion of the reasons for warming up before exercise or the effects of exercise on the body in most cases. The pupils' evaluative skills were rarely used to help them to find strengths and weaknesses for improvement in their work. This was not the case in a good lesson seen in Year 2. In this lesson, pupils were encouraged to perform movements of high quality through direction, experiment, practice and evaluation of their work. This resulted in good achievement.

94. The small size of the hall and its low ceiling do not allow important aspects of the National Curriculum gymnastics curriculum to be met, for example, those involving the use of some apparatus and jumping. The school is well aware of this and tries to overcome the matter by ensuring that pupils have access to the school's outdoor climbing equipment.

95. Much good work has taken place in planning the curriculum, training and working with a Beacon School. However, the decision to teach two classes in the small hall at the same time means that learning is unsatisfactory when this occurs. The management of the subject is, therefore, satisfactory. Valid comparisons about changes in the subject since the school's last inspection cannot be made because of the lack of significant comment about physical education in that report.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

One lesson of personal, social and health education was seen during the inspection and the written work available was analysed. Discussions were also held with staff and pupils.

Personal, social and health education

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

Commentary

96. The subject was only introduced to the school in its own right two terms ago. Nevertheless, the school has comprehensive planning for the subject which is both linked to other subjects and taught in its own right. For example, the topic "Caring for the Environment" contains work in personal, social and health education under the thoughtful heading, "Who is in charge?" This topic is supported by a planned visit by a representative from the local council's recycling department. All aspects of the personal, social and health education curriculum are fully planned for. In the lesson observed, teaching, learning and achievement were good. The pupils discussed the importance of rules and had helped to devise the rules applying in their class. They also considered the right thing to do, for example, when they saw someone who had no one to play with. Links with literacy were established as the pupils considered their own and others' feelings in this type of situation. The success of the school's personal, social and health education programme is demonstrated by the pupils' reaction to its teaching. This is reflected in the good attitudes and relationships evident in the school. Nevertheless, the already good provision is to be further improved. To achieve this improvement, the school's arrangements for "circle time", where pupils discuss matters of interest to them, are to be developed further.

97. PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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