

INSPECTION REPORT

PLOVER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 131265

Headteacher: Mr N R Britton

Lead inspector: Mrs R Andrew

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th May 2004

Inspection number: 257203

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	313
School address:	Coniston Road Doncaster South Yorkshire
Postcode:	DN2 6JL
Telephone number:	01302 361450
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Burbanks
Date of previous inspection:	July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a bigger than average urban primary school with 313 boys and girls aged three to eleven on roll. It is situated in a deprived area of Doncaster and the proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is above the national average. Numbers have grown steadily with the school's reputation over the last six years and more than half the pupils are drawn from outside the catchment area. Most of the pupils are white but several other racial groups are represented in the school. One pupil is in the early stages of English language learning. Fewer than average pupils are identified as having special educational needs although attainment on entry is below average overall and language and literacy skills are poor. Ten of the pupils have statements because of the extent of their special educational needs. Of these four are hearing impaired. The school has a recently developed, small resource dedicated to their needs. Four other pupils have physical difficulties and use wheelchairs. The school received achievement awards in 2001, 2002 and 2003. It is involved in international, national and local initiatives.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21460	Rachael Andrew	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education Personal and social education
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24895	Kath Hurt	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Design and technology
33225	Elizabeth Greensides	Team inspector	English Information and computer technology Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that provides good quality education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good and contribute to good achievement, although there are weaknesses that hinder progress throughout the school in writing and in Years 1 and 2 more generally. Pupils behave well and try hard and, particularly in Year 6, put in considerable effort. The leadership of the headteacher is good and has ensured that there is an effective learning environment where all pupils are valued and the vast majority do well. Management, although satisfactory overall, does not enable the school to keep a close enough eye on how well it is doing so weaknesses are not always dealt with quickly and effectively. Taking into account pupils' achievement the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher has established a purposeful and inclusive learning environment and a strong and successful emphasis on raising standards.
- Achievement in mathematics and science is very good because of the quality of teaching. Pupils also do well in aspects of music, physical education and design and technology.
- Provision for special educational needs, including the work in the resource for hearing impaired pupils, is very good.
- Children get a good start in the nursery and reception classes.
- There is underachievement in writing.
- Pupils behave well and try hard.
- The school misses opportunities to improve the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum because the checks it makes are not systematic or rigorous enough.
- Work is not always well matched to the needs of different groups within the class and this hinders progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2.
- Links with other schools benefit both pupils and teachers.

The school has improved significantly since the last inspection, especially the standards attained and pupils' achievements. The school has made a good response to the key issues in the last report although insufficient improvement has been made in using assessment to ensure more consistent progress through the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good. It is good in the nursery and reception classes, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, particularly so in Years 5 and 6, where pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, do very well. Children in the nursery and reception classes make good progress and most are on course to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. Few are on course to reach the goals set for communication, language and literacy where starting points are particularly low. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average but broadly in line with similar

schools. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English and above average in science and mathematics. Throughout the school pupils do less well in English, particularly writing, than in other subjects. The table above shows outstanding results achieved last year in mathematics. Compared with all schools standards were well above average, and compared with similar schools standards were in the top five per cent (A*). By the end of Year 6, standards in religious education are broadly in line with the expectations of the syllabus agreed locally. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 but below national expectations by the end of Year 6.

Pupils' personal qualities are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils behave well, try hard and are interested in all the school provides for them. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory because a small minority of parents do not comply with the school's requests. Pupils understand the need for rules and get on well together, showing respect for other pupils' views. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual and cultural development, although satisfactory overall, are not sufficiently well planned into different subjects to extend their understanding to the full.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. It is good in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 3 to 6 where it contributes to good gains in learning and achievement. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 where progress is slower. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is very good and leads to a lot of hard work and a significant surge in progress before pupils leave. The curriculum is satisfactory and there are good opportunities for broadening pupils' experiences and developing their skills through clubs and activities outside normal lessons. Links with other schools in the area benefit pupils' learning further.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership is good. The work of the governing body and the management of the school are both sound. Although governors support the school well, they are not sufficiently critical of its work. Management does not give sufficient importance to checking how well the school is doing in each area of its work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the school and many seek it out because of its reputation, including its reputation for work with pupils with special educational needs. They are particularly pleased with academic standards and pupils' behaviour. Pupils like school and say they work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve teaching and learning in English, especially the development of different writing styles, and provide more frequent opportunities for pupils to use their skills and to write at length in all subjects.
- Strengthen the systems for checking how the school is doing so that action can be taken to share strengths and deal with weaknesses in teaching, learning, the curriculum and pupils' progress.
- Use the information available from assessing pupils' work to provide tasks that match different levels of attainment within the class, especially but not exclusively in Years 1 and 2.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve well overall. Achievement is good in the nursery and reception classes, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Achievement is better in mathematics and science than in English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and science in Key Stage 2.
- Children do well in the nursery and reception classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good gains in learning.
- Pupils underachieve in writing.
- High standards were observed in aspects of music, design and technology and physical education.
- Standards are below average in ICT at the end of Year 6.

Commentary

1. Children in the nursery and reception classes do well and most of them are on course to reach the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. Although they are making good progress in language, literacy and communication their low starting points mean that most of them will not reach the expected standards.
2. The table below shows that the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 are well below the national average. Standards in writing were particularly low. However, in spite of a slight dip last year, standards are rising faster than in other schools. In comparison with similar schools, standards are average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, except in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (14.9)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	12.6 (11.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.0 (17.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 52 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The table below shows that standards at the end of Year 6 were below the national average in English, above in science and well above in mathematics. Standards are rising faster than those in most other schools. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in English, well above average in science and in the top five per cent in mathematics. Pupils' achievements are good overall. They are very good in mathematics and science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.8 (27.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (27.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (29.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve very well in mathematics and science. This is because teaching is good overall but more significantly there is a surge in progress in Year 6, where the school has invested in a second teacher to support the teaching in the mornings. In mathematics, good use is made of assessment to identify areas of weakness and to give high levels of individual support. The amount of time devoted to science and the quantity of work produced are also factors behind the school's success. In both mathematics and science there is a high level of teacher expertise in Years 3 to 6 and very good coverage of most aspects of the curriculum, contributing to better teaching and progress in these subjects than in English.
5. Children in the nursery and reception classes do well. Good teaching and thorough planning for the six areas of learning ensure rapid progress. Teachers' careful assessment of individual needs and the tracking of progress are significant factors in children's good achievements.
6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, achieve well in the nursery and reception classes and Years 1 and 2, and very well in Years 3 to 6. This is because their individual needs are recognised and assessed early, and suitable provision is made for them. Pupils with dyspraxia in Key Stage 2 make rapid and measurable progress by the end of their eight-week course. Hearing impaired pupils achieve very well in Years 2 and 5 as a result of good teaching and support, both individually and in class.
7. There are too few opportunities for pupils to put their writing skills into practice. Examples of extended pieces of writing are rare in any subject and there is no systematic planning for the development of different styles of writing throughout the curriculum. The overuse of worksheets further inhibits the development of skills. Many pupils have better skills in reading than in writing and the difference for some pupils is considerable. These pupils, in particular, are not doing well enough.
8. The judicious use of teachers' subject strengths in Years 3 to 6 leads to good progress. Teachers with expertise in music, design and technology and ICT take other classes as well as their own and so spread their influence to good effect. In aspects of music, design and technology and physical education pupils reach high standards as a result.
9. In ICT, standards are average at the end of Year 2 but below average at the end of Year 6. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Recent improvements are gradually raising standards but older pupils still have some gaps in their knowledge. Most pupils reach average standards in word processing and graphics but other aspects of the work lag behind. The school does not make good enough use of the opportunities presented in other subjects to develop pupils' skills, for example in control technology and data handling.
10. In religious education achievement is satisfactory. Pupils reach the standards expected by the end of Year 6, although at the end of Year 2 pupils' understanding of the work is rather tenuous. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. Attitudes and behaviour are good overall, with the greater majority of pupils trying hard. The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall but good in the nursery and reception classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and emotional skills are developed well in the nursery and reception classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs are confident learners.
- Rates of attendance are well below average and a number of pupils are regularly late.
- Pupils are generally interested in what the school has to offer and respond well to the high expectations of behaviour.
- Pupils have a good understanding of moral codes and what living in a community entails.
- Pupils' cultural development is not planned carefully enough.

Commentary

11. The modified 'High Scope' approach in the nursery and reception classes gives children good opportunities to organise their own learning and to review what they have achieved. There are also very well planned activities that contribute to children's self-confidence and self-esteem and contribute strongly to learning.
12. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to school as a result of the high quality support they receive. They are confident, are keen to work and voice their opinions well. Attitudes of other pupils towards them are also very good as a result of the example set by the senior management and all staff. Occasionally in Years 1 and 2, pupils are less enthused when learning styles and resources are not varied and adapted sufficiently to help them learn.
13. Attitudes of pupils with hearing impairment are good. Their limited communication skills make it more difficult for pupils to communicate with each other but the willingness of staff and pupils to learn new communication skills and the very good level of inclusion give hearing impaired pupils confidence and help them to do their best.
14. Attendance rates are well below average. The school has good systems for monitoring attendance and does what it can to encourage pupils to attend. Not all parents fully support the school in this regard. The school works closely with the education welfare officer to follow up absences and to tackle lateness but there are still too many pupils who arrive late and interrupt the start to the school day. Attendance is a continual problem that seriously affects the learning of a significant minority of pupils and takes up valuable time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

15. Most pupils have good attitudes to work and try hard. Behaviour is well managed. A comprehensive policy is consistently applied with the result that behaviour throughout the school at break and lunchtimes is usually responsible and mature. Most pupils respond well to the rewards for good behaviour which accumulate as house points. There are a small number

of pupils with challenging behaviour. This is generally well managed within the school, but there have been five temporary exclusions this school year, when the school acted appropriately to safeguard the well-being of others. Some pupils have been successfully integrated following exclusion from elsewhere. No unacceptable behaviour was seen during the inspection week.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	275	3	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

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

16. Pupils are willing to undertake a variety of duties such as class and register monitors. They are generally happy at school and are keen to take part in a number of clubs, for example choir, netball and football, which are well supported by members of the teaching staff. Throughout the school relationships are good. Pupils welcome the integration of disabled and hearing-impaired pupils and rise to the challenge of communicating through signing. There are mutual benefits to pupils' social skills arising from the school's policy of including pupils with severe difficulties in its life and work.
17. Most pupils clearly distinguish right from wrong and consider the consequences of their actions. Assemblies and class displays are helpful in this regard. Although religious education provides opportunities for pupils to learn about the major faiths, opportunities to promote cultural awareness through the curriculum are not well developed.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. It is good in the nursery and reception classes and in Years 3 to 6 where it leads to good gains in learning. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, where progress is satisfactory but not as good as in the rest of the school. The curriculum is satisfactory and clubs and out-of-school activities enrich it well. Links with other schools in the area benefit both pupils and teachers. Pupils are well cared for but their progress is not tracked carefully enough.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall, although there is some unsatisfactory teaching in Years 1 to 6, particularly in English, that slows the rate of learning. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and Years 3 to 6 and leads to good gains in learning. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 where progress is slower than elsewhere. There is a marked increase in the pace of learning in English, mathematics and science (the core subjects) in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in Year 6 use assessment information well to focus on areas of weakness and to overcome difficulties.
- Planning for the nursery and reception classes is effective because it arises from teachers' good understanding of individual needs.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve very well.
- Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught thoroughly all they need to know to succeed in national tests in mathematics and science and get through a lot of work to consolidate their understanding.
- Assessment is not used well enough, especially in Years 1 and 2, to ensure that pupils of different ability within the class move on quickly enough and there is too much reliance on work sheets.
- Areas of weakness persist because the school's approach to checking the quality of teaching and learning is not systematic or rigorous enough.
- There is significant expertise amongst teachers in science, mathematics, music, ICT and design and technology that contributes to good achievement.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good so pupils are keen to do well.

Commentary

18. In Year 6 there is a strong and successful focus on raising standards. Two teachers and a classroom assistant, working together, use assessment information very well to deal with misconceptions and areas of weakness. The high ratio of adults to pupils enables them to intervene quickly to help pupils overcome difficulties and to move the learning on. This contributes to the significant boost to progress, especially in mathematics and science in this class.
19. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes keep a careful check on the progress of individual children. They make running notes which they discuss as a team so that they ensure that all adults are aware of children's needs. They use the information well to build up the nursery and reception classes' Profile (a record of individual progress towards the early learning goals) and to plan for the next steps in children's learning. Planning for individual needs contributes strongly to children's good achievements.
20. In Years 3 to 6, and especially in Year 5 and 6, pupils completed work shows a very high work rate. Pupils accomplish a lot during the year, particularly in aspects of mathematics and science. This reflects teachers' high expectations and a strong drive to enable pupils to do well in national tests at the end of Year 6. The work is well supported by homework and thorough revision of what pupils need to know to succeed. The analysis of previous test data is used effectively to concentrate revision on previous weaknesses.
21. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching, although it is better in Years 3 to 6 and nursery and reception classes than it is in Years 1 and 2. Where teaching is good, learning styles are varied and pupils have suitable tasks to help them learn. Throughout the school, teachers and support assistants know the pupils very well and devise ways of helping them to overcome their difficulties. Occasionally in Key Stage 1, tasks are monotonous and tedious for these pupils; there is not enough variety in the way pupils are taught or in the range of resources, particularly in books and games, to help them learn. However, all staff are always sensitive to pupils' needs throughout the school. Teachers are very aware of pupils' barriers to learning. Teaching of hearing impaired pupils is good, with very good features. The assessment of their needs and achievements is thorough, effective and realistic and used well to plan teaching sessions so hearing impaired pupils can be sensitively included in lessons. The needs of these pupils are complex and subtle. The school has made a good start in meeting the needs of these pupils, and adults and pupils alike are beginning to learn some basic signs, to support spoken English word order.

22. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed and there was evidence of weaknesses in pupils' work especially in English in Years 3 to 6 and all subjects in Years 1 and 2. Weaknesses usually arise because teachers do not use information effectively about what pupils know and can do to set work that moves on the learning of different ability groups within the class. Work in books and in lessons is too often the same for all and teachers rely too much on worksheets that generally offer insufficient challenge, especially for higher attaining pupils. Worksheets are sometimes well chosen to consolidate new learning but do little to develop pupils' thinking skills or encourage an individual response. These weaknesses are not addressed adequately because the school's approach to checking the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' completed work is not systematic or rigorous enough. However, there is some effective use of assessment to provide additional support for lower attaining pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4, that enables them to improve basic skills. The marking of pupils' work does not give them helpful information about what they do well or how they can improve and there is little in the way of group or individual targets to boost learning.
23. Good use is made of subject expertise to raise standards in Years 3 to 6. Science and mathematics teaching is generally strong and the best provision and progress is made in these subjects. Teachers take other classes other than their own in music, ICT and design and technology. This sharing of expertise leads to good gains in learning and high standards in some aspects of the work, for example the making element of design and technology.
24. Teachers and pupils get on well together and there is mutual respect. As a result pupils try hard because they want to do well. Classes are generally well managed so pupils can get on without interruption. They respond particularly well to opportunities to do challenging practical work and show real enthusiasm for their tasks. This was particularly noticeable in science in Year 3/4 where there is a stronger emphasis on investigative work than in other years.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	9 (18%)	22(44%)	16(32%)	2(4%)	1(2%)	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall and meets statutory requirements. There is good provision for the nursery and reception classes. In Years 1 to 6 the school provides a **satisfactory** range of curriculum opportunities. Planned enrichment activities are **good** and the **very good** accommodation is well used.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes enables them to make good progress.
- There is insufficient monitoring or review of the curriculum and so the approach to curriculum innovation and development is not cohesive.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their developing literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers and other staff make very good use of the school's accommodation.
- The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the range of learning activities.
- The school provides good opportunities for enrichment.

Commentary

25. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are relevant and up to date, but are not always specific enough. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the way pupils learn and make the best of the school's learning resources. Special equipment, such as laptop computers, standing frames and other special resources are consistently well managed and available for use and this helps pupils to be able to take part in lessons and have good opportunities, not only to learn, but to enjoy learning.

Example of outstanding practice

Provision for pupils with dyspraxia is very effective and helps improve pupils' self-esteem as well as their motor skills.

The school, through its deputy headteacher, has evolved a highly successful programme for these pupils and is known nationally for its work. The programme is very well run by teaching assistants. Pupils' self-esteem and motor skills improve rapidly and measurably during the eight-week programme and these gains add substantially to progress in other areas of their learning. The simplicity of the procedures and high quality of the assessment techniques mean that the school has been able to share its success with other primary schools, local education authorities and the local secondary school.

26. The school has introduced signing lessons for all its pupils as an additional mode of communication since profoundly deaf pupils joined the school, and this helps all pupils to express themselves better. Pupils with hearing impairment have good access to the curriculum through the additional help they receive and skilled individual teaching. Individual hearing aid systems are well managed, but not all teachers yet use the sound field systems which would reduce noise in Years 4, 5 and 6, and help all pupils hear and listen better. Provision for hearing impaired pupils attending the resource is still at a fairly early stage of development but has made a good start.
27. The planning for the six areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes is relevant to the children's needs and interests. Teachers use themes to combine and consolidate effectively learning in different areas. This is especially useful in extending children's vocabulary. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is woven into each area, forming an integral part of every activity. National guidance is used well and contributes strongly to good progress.
28. Since the last inspection the curriculum has not been monitored or evaluated effectively to support the most effective learning in all subjects. Consequently, there is no clear whole-school approach to improving the curriculum, although in the nursery and reception classes and in some subjects, such as religious education and ICT, leaders have introduced some initiatives and adaptations. The effectiveness and impact of curriculum improvement therefore largely depend on the individual efforts of curriculum leaders.
29. The school has made good progress in raising standards in many areas of the curriculum. However, there is as yet insufficient attention paid to adapting and tailoring the curriculum to the school's specific needs. For example, the school has identified both speaking and listening and writing as major areas for improvement, but there is not enough emphasis in planning to fulfil these intentions. As at the last inspection, there is no curriculum overview plan to show how links between subjects can improve learning.
30. The school's extensive and very good accommodation gives full scope and support for a wide range of curriculum opportunities. The accommodation is very well used by all staff, and gives especially good support for withdrawal groups and pupils with special educational needs. The specific area set aside for science and design and technology is well equipped and well used but the ICT suite but is currently underused. Attractive and well-considered displays support pupils' learning well.

31. The school has very good procedures to ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the range of learning activities. All pupils are learning to sign, and this has a significant effect on the inclusion of pupils with hearing impairment and enhances participation in lessons. As at the last inspection however, appropriately adapted work is not always provided for different ability groups, and this means that achievement is not always consistent in different subjects and classes.
32. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of activities at lunch time and after school. These include the musical activities of choir, recorder, handbells, and tuition of a range of other instruments, sporting activities such as football and basketball, and the model aircraft club. The science club for younger pupils in Year 3, led by a visiting teacher from the high school, makes a very good contribution to the pupils' scientific skills, knowledge and understanding, with expert tuition, exciting activities and good opportunities for challenge and experience at a higher level. Older pupils also have the opportunity to visit a residential centre each year. Each of these activities has a positive impact on pupils' academic achievements and personal development, and considerably enriches school life.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a good standard of care and looks after pupils well. Support for pupils' personal development and academic achievement is satisfactory overall although there are weaknesses in the systems for tracking pupils' progress through the school. The school could do more to involve pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a high regard for the care, health and safety of pupils.
- There is a strong commitment to the well-being of pupils with special educational needs.
- There are developing systems for the monitoring of academic performance but these do not provide a clear overview of progress through the school.
- Although teachers listen to pupils and value what they say, there are no formal systems for taking their views into account and this limits pupils' involvement in the life of the school.

Commentary

33. The school's procedures for ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils are good. This is a welcome improvement since the last inspection, mainly through the efforts of the conscientious caretaker. With his staff, he provides a high level of daily maintenance. All the first-aiders in the school have had recent updated training. Minor injuries are carefully recorded. The site and equipment are regularly checked. Fire drills are held regularly. Child protection procedures, vested in the head teacher, are very well understood. All staff have had awareness training in this important aspect. Induction arrangements ensure that older children move on smoothly to secondary school, whilst young children feel happy and secure when first joining the school.
34. Pupils with special educational needs are very well cared for and induction arrangements are very good. Pupils are well known and advice from visiting specialists is monitored and implemented carefully and effectively. Assessment is not always specific enough to recognise how pupils learn and is not always reflected in teachers' planning, especially in Key Stage 1. Pupils with hearing impairment are very well cared for, and the different agencies connected with them receive very good communication and support from the school so that pupils benefit as much as possible from their input. Induction is sensitive and effective so that pupils feel part of the school and have developed trusting relationships with staff and other pupils. The continuing daily assessment to monitor progress minutely is still, though useful, at an early stage.

35. Teachers know pupils and many of their families well. Pupils' personal development is considered at staff meetings and any concerns are shared. The school offers guidance and support as necessary. Although individual teachers keep a check on pupils' progress and indicate levels of attainment when they proceed to the next class, there is no clear overview of progress through the school to enable patterns to be identified. This makes it difficult for the school to identify individuals and groups of pupils who do not do as well as they should and, for example, has an adverse effect on standards in English.
36. As yet, there are no formal processes, such as class and school councils, to gather pupils' views and to involve them in the work of the school and its development. Older pupils say they feel confident in expressing their ideas to teachers. Pupils in Year 5, for example, sometimes use 'circle time' for this purpose

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are satisfactory overall. They are good in the nursery and reception classes. The rising role and attraction of pupils from beyond the catchment area reflect parents' confidence in the school. Links with the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are good and benefit pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents of children in the nursery and reception classes have a good level of involvement in children's learning.
- Good links with other schools provide opportunities to extend pupils' experiences and for the shared professional development of teachers.
- The school does all it can to involve parents of pupils with statements in their children's education and welfare.

Commentary

37. The school provides good information about the school to parents of children entering the nursery and reception classes. Parents are aware of the work undertaken and are fully involved in supporting their children because they discuss termly targets with teachers. The 'Talk, Think, Write' project provides activities for parents to share with children at home.
38. The school's links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good and parents are always welcomed and kept properly informed. The school uses home/school books to maintain a dialogue. Parents of pupils with statements attend annual reviews and have good opportunities to be involved in their children's education. Links with other school are good, and the specialist work on dyspraxia is shared with other institutions. Arrangements for pupils going on to the next stage of education are effective. Parents and carers of pupils with hearing impairments are kept very well informed through home/school books, visits, meetings and telephone calls. There are very good links with other schools and institutions, and arrangements for the next stage of education are made in good time.
39. The school has developed an effective technology link with some local businesses, which has enhanced learning opportunities. Retired local residents visit the school at harvest celebrations and share in the distribution of produce. There are long-standing links with a community learning provider and for some years a small number of parents have enjoyed courses, particularly for computer skills.
40. There is a well-developed link with the main receiving secondary school, with subject links being strong. A science club led by the secondary science teacher is developing a strong interest in science and pupils say how much they enjoy it. The school benefits from the 'pyramid' of local schools. They work together effectively to provide opportunities for pupils and

parents and to further the professional development of teachers. The school is also involved, through the international Comenius project, in sharing its experiences and understanding of educational inclusion.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. Leadership is good. Governance and management are both satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership by the headteacher means there is a strong drive to raise standards, and high levels of inclusion, so that pupils achieve well.
- Effective leadership by those with responsibilities for the nursery and reception classes, mathematics and special educational needs means that provision is good, and this reflects very well in pupils' attainments in these areas.
- Improvement planning provides a good steer for the school, but its implementation is hampered because staff with responsibility for developments have too little time out of the classroom.
- Governors are closely involved and supportive of the work of the school, but their role in steering it forward is less effective because they do not evaluate and question sufficiently.
- Senior managers and those with responsibilities for areas of the curriculum do not check the effectiveness of teaching rigorously enough to deal with inconsistencies and ensure that all teachers adopt the best teaching practice.

Commentary

41. The school has achieved much since its last inspection due to good leadership by the headteacher. He is strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils do as well as they can. Parents and governors particularly value his enthusiasm for education and his success in establishing a well-ordered community where pupils are respectful, co-operative and well behaved. He has established a very inclusive school where pupils, sometimes with significant special educational needs or behavioural difficulties, achieve well. Standards have risen sharply since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics and science. This is largely due to some bold decisions that have placed a heavy emphasis on providing extra staffing to teach pupils in Year 6. These have successfully boosted the teaching and pupils' attainments. Because of all these strengths, the school is popular, and has more than doubled its pupil numbers since its amalgamation. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory overall.
42. The governing body is supportive and closely involved in the school. It has an effective committee structure. Governors are still not as proactive as they should be in steering the school forward. They have some awareness of the school's strengths, pupils' achievements and school development priorities, but they do not check and evaluate these thoroughly enough. Their roles in questioning the headteacher, and checking out the information they receive, need to be strengthened so that they are in a better position to judge achievement.
43. The leadership and management of provision for pupils with special educational needs are good, with very good features. The headteacher is committed to the inclusion of these pupils and his infectious enthusiasm and interest in this area pervade the school so that staff and pupils expect to treat pupils with special educational needs fairly and equitably. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has set up very good provision for pupils with dyspraxia and many pupils have benefited from this. In addition to the programme, during the last four years, the special educational needs co-ordinator has developed a significant body of knowledge about different disabilities such as visual impairment and emotional difficulties, and through consistent in-house training this has become part and parcel of the management of pupils with special educational needs throughout the school.

44. The leadership of the recently appointed teacher in charge of the resource for hearing impaired pupils is very good. The teacher in charge has a clear vision of what needs to be done. The hearing impaired resource is recently established, and relationships and specialist knowledge throughout the school are developing well.
45. The leadership of the nursery and reception classes is also effective. From some lesson observations, regular team meetings and thorough systems for checking how well children are doing, there is a good overview of its strengths and development needs. The introduction of target setting shared with parents is an example of the determination to speed children's progress further.
46. The senior management team is developing, but is not yet as effective as it might be. It has been expanded to six members of staff, all with clear roles and responsibilities. They meet fairly regularly and are beginning to share more fully in identifying developments and setting about improvements. One area of success has been school improvement planning that was found to be weak in the last inspection. Senior managers have now established a clear and manageable plan with the right priorities for further improvement, like the urgent need to improve the procedures for checking and recording pupils' achievements that was a weakness in the last inspection. A more rigorous system is currently being introduced. Although it has only been developed recently and is still in its infancy, the school is now beginning to gather useful information about how well pupils are achieving in reading and some aspects of mathematics as they move through the school.
47. However, senior managers and others with management responsibilities are hampered in the speed with which they move developments forward. Their management is unsatisfactory when they do not have enough opportunities or time out of the classroom to oversee curriculum developments and to check the effectiveness of teaching and pupils' achievements. As a result of this, and the lack of rigorous checks by the headteacher, the checking of planning, teaching, pupils' work and performance is not thorough enough. This means that no one has an accurate or complete view of the strengths and weaker aspects of teaching. As a result, the slower progress in some year groups goes undetected.
48. The financial management systems are satisfactory. The budget has been finely balanced, but the school has managed to keep a small surplus. The emphasis on allocating funds to providing additional teaching staff in Year 6 has been successful, but it has had a detrimental effect on other areas, like providing funds for staff training and time out of their classes for those staff with management responsibilities to oversee developments.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	782,650
Total expenditure	785,003
Expenditure per pupil	2,393

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18,638
Balance carried forward to the next	16,285

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. Children generally enter the nursery in the September before their fourth birthday, transferring to the reception class a year later. On entry to school the range of abilities is wide but children's attainments overall are below those expected for their age and particularly low in communication, language, and literacy. The children are taught in a nursery and two reception classes that benefit from good resources, and very good accommodation that provides space for all the activities necessary for this age group of children. The staff have a good understanding and expertise in teaching young children and work effectively as a team. They work together closely on planning and sharing information about how well children are doing.
50. Children get off to a good start in the nursery and reception classes. There have been significant improvements in teaching since the last time the school was inspected. The co-ordinator for the nursery and reception classes provides good leadership and management and supports other staff very well. She is very well organised, energetic and ambitious for the children. Together with other staff she has set in place a very thorough system for checking and recording what children can and cannot do. The information this gives is used well in effective planning for each of the six areas of learning that make up the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents are fully involved in supporting their children in all the classes. They always know what children are working on because targets are shared with them at termly meetings. Staff work hard through such initiatives as the 'Talk, Think, Write' project providing activities for parents and children at home. Where parents support these activities, children's progress in learning to read and write receives a good boost. Hearing-impaired children and others with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are carefully checked and good support given. Parents rightly appreciate the good teaching and achievements of their children that ensure that most reach or come close to reaching the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1, except in communication, language and literacy where starting points are particularly low.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good routines so classes run smoothly and children are confident.
- Children play happily alongside others and respond quickly to adults because they are clear about what is expected of them.
- Children's self-esteem and relationships with others develop particularly well because there are very good strategies for personal development.
- More could be done to help children concentrate for longer periods when working independently.

Commentary

51. Children achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development because teaching is good. Most are on course to reach the goals set for children by the end of the reception year. They are settled, confident and behave well because adults are well organised and make sure that children understand the routines in each class. Most come happily into school because they enjoy the interesting activities set out for them, and teachers are welcoming and interested in what they have to say. Teachers make their high expectations clear and they have good strategies that help children listen, watch and concentrate, ready for the next activity.
52. Adults praise and encourage children so their self-esteem grows and they learn to value others. Children enjoy taking their place when chosen to be 'Today's Special Person' in the reception

classes. Their pride is evident when others praise them and point out the things they do well. Planning sessions in the nursery challenge children to organise and take responsibility for their own activities. In all the classes, children move around activities confidently, but do not always persist for long when adults are not involved. More could be done to improve this by better explanations, supervision and highlighting good work in review times.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in reading and writing because teaching is good.
- There are good opportunities for children to speak and listen to others, but teachers do not do enough to improve the speech and language skills of many children.

Commentary

53. In this area of learning the skills of many children are low on entry to the nursery, particularly in their speech and language development. Good teaching and learning mean that children's achievements are good. However, because of their low starting points, few securely reach the goals in each aspect of this area of learning.
54. Children do well in reading and writing. From the nursery on, teachers take every opportunity to strengthen children's knowledge of letter sounds. This thorough teaching means that children in the nursery pick out the first letter in their names and other words and make good attempts at writing them. Children in the reception classes listen carefully to letter sounds in words and make good attempts at spellings. Good opportunities to write, and regular practice in writing letters correctly, help children improve their writing in the reception classes. Teachers note carefully what children can and cannot do and make sure they know what to work on next through the targets they set and written comments on children's work. More able children respond particularly well to this determined approach and their writing exceeds the goals. They write independently and neatly, showing a good use of full stops and capital letters. Others make good progress, but weak pencil control sometimes means they find it hard to shape their letters correctly and they rely heavily on adult help.
55. Children enjoy listening to stories and they handle books carefully. Although some children read regularly at home, not all do. Some parents need to do more to support their children's reading. Children's good knowledge of letter sounds stand them in good stead, and they often look at the first letter of a word as a clue to reading it. Only the most able read independently, for instance reading the many captions and labels around the rooms. Others rely more on the repetitive text in the early books in the reading scheme. However, children are enthusiastic and ready to have a go at reading their books because teachers praise their efforts and choose interesting books. Children often struggle to talk about their reading because of their limited speech and language skills.
56. Teachers have rightly identified the need to boost these skills as a crucial part of their drive to raise standards in the nursery and reception classes. In all classes there are very good opportunities that challenge children to speak and listen to others. Greeting and circle times, and 'Review' and 'Busy Bee' sessions are managed very well, giving children good opportunities to take turns in explaining and describing their decisions, ideas and experiences. The use of a mobile phone gives an added incentive in the nursery. Adults are tireless in talking to children as they work together, prompting them to talk about activities. However, adults should do more to encourage children to extend their sometimes brief and indistinct answers by further open-ended questions and prompts. Play in the nursery 'baby clinic' successfully stimulates speaking and some good communications as they play with the dolls, but when

adults are not present many children are silent. They are hampered in their speech because they do not remember the names of the equipment chosen to support their play.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because there are good explanations and practical activities that strengthen their knowledge and understanding.
- Children's progress is slowed when they do not persist with the activities set out for them to work on independently.

Commentary

57. Good teaching in lesson introductions means that most children achieve well and generally attain the goals in their mathematical development by the end of reception year. Their speech and language skills sometimes hold them back in talking about activities. Teachers are good at making sure that children learn and remember the new words they meet. In all classes, constant repetition and thorough explanations with lots of practical examples considerably strengthen their knowledge of shapes. Children in the reception classes confidently name basic shapes, such as triangle, square and circle, and recognise the number of corners and edges each one has. Their knowledge of solid shapes is limited. They count and add numbers to 10, but their recording skills are less well developed. Their writing of numbers is sometimes fairly shaky, with number reversals a problem.
58. Teachers in the reception classes set out a wide range of activities, all carefully planned to strengthen and extend children's skills. Children sometimes flit around these, and do not persist or concentrate enough when working independently. Sometimes they find the work too hard, as when their reading skills and knowledge of solid shapes means they cannot match the right label to the shapes. When this happens children soon lose interest and drift away.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children do well because teaching is good and there are effective links with other areas of learning.
- Children concentrate well and show a keen interest in activities because they are practical and interesting.
- Limited speech and language skills hold children back in explaining what they know.

Commentary

59. Children do well in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world due to good teaching that helps them progress well. Good planning for this aspect provides a wide range of rich experiences so that children are eager to learn. There was great enthusiasm for planting seeds in the reception classes. Plenty of compost, tools and equipment available to each small group meant that everyone was able to handle tools and plant their own seeds. Teachers are good at talking with children about such activities. Some of their questions challenge children to think hard, so they make reasonable suggestions as to which size seeds might grow more quickly. They have a good knowledge of what seeds need for growth and are learning to name different kinds of flowers and the different features of a plant. The classroom assistant

strengthens this further with good discussion as they paint flower pictures, so they pay good attention to details like the stem, leaves and roots in their pictures.

60. The nursery teacher makes good use of the outdoor area in this area of learning. Her effective planning means that children enjoy such activities as digging in the garden for mini-beasts, with magnifiers put to good use in scrutinising the tiny worms and other creatures they find. Children show a keen interest and knowledge of babies because a parent has visited with her baby, showing them how to bathe and care for it.
61. A well-chosen story about dinosaurs, read dramatically by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator in a very good lesson in her reception class, stimulated many good ideas about how to make the world a better place. Children know that happy people, a beautiful environment and plants and animals are all important, but their suggestions are often limited to one word and do not do justice to the sound knowledge and understanding they clearly have. Whilst they are on course to reach the goals in this area, they often find it hard to show others the extent of their knowledge because they find speaking difficult.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery develop their skills well in outdoor play activities.
- Good direct teaching develops skills well in the reception classes, but children have too few opportunities to use their skills in simple games.
- Good support for children with special educational needs means they participate fully and achieve well.

Commentary

62. The teaching and children's achievements are satisfactory overall. Children in the nursery make good use of the outdoor area in their physical development. They use space well, running and riding with good control. They pedal, ride and steer the wheeled toys confidently, following the marked road carefully. They happily help each other, for instance towing another child behind in a cart. Girls in particular sometimes show very good control in their movements in activities like walking skilfully on the mini-stilts in the nursery. In a lesson in the school hall, girls in the reception class also showed good skills in controlling a ball. Teachers in these classes demonstrate effectively and provide plenty of opportunities for children to practise their skills. They control classes well, so that children quickly follow instructions and work hard. However, they sometimes miss opportunities to help children improve further by encouraging them to watch good examples of work and exploring what they can learn from them. They could do more to encourage children to use their skills in simple ball games.
63. Learning support assistants support children with special educational needs well. The encouragement and practical help of one assistant meant that a child developed finer control in manoeuvring a toy car around the road on a play mat. Whilst children's finer motor skills in activities like writing are sometimes less well developed, in all other aspects children are on target to reach the goals in their physical development.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- No significant strengths or weaknesses

Commentary

64. Few direct observations were made of this aspect during the inspection. Based on these and examination of teachers' planning, the teaching and children's achievements in this aspect are at least satisfactory. Children in the nursery clearly enjoy singing a range of well-known songs and do so enthusiastically. The teacher provides plenty of opportunities for children to practise, so they sing a growing repertoire of songs tunefully. Their role-play develops soundly and some children develop simple story lines when playing in the baby clinic. However, they often play alongside, rather than collaboratively with others. They experiment with paint, creating shades of yellow and green to create stripes of colour. Their pictures of 'grandma' show a good awareness of facial features. This is true of paintings in the reception class where children paint accurate pictures of plants. Sometimes, however, the emphasis on accuracy in ensuring all the features are correctly placed limits children's imagination and creativity. Whilst children are on course to reach the goals in aspects like singing, they are not always as imaginative or creative as they might be in other aspects.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in reading is good overall but in writing it is unsatisfactory because teachers do not give pupils enough opportunity to practise their skills in longer pieces of writing in any subject.
- Teachers do not always plan in detail to ensure that all pupils have appropriate support or challenge within lessons and this has led to unsatisfactory achievement for some groups.
- Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in basic skills.
- Good teaching is not shared with other staff to improve the quality of teaching overall, nor are weaknesses identified.
- There are effective new procedures to check pupils' progress in reading and writing throughout school but these are not yet being used to analyse the developmental needs of the subject.

Commentary

65. Standards in English have not improved at the same rate as those in other subjects. By Year 2 pupils attain well below national expectations in both reading and writing, and more than one in three pupils fail to achieve the expected level. This reflects a similar pattern over the last few years. Lower attaining pupils are not doing well enough in either reading or writing but the achievement of higher attaining pupils is good in reading. Standards at the end of Year 6 rose quickly until 2002. The rise has not been as rapid or sustained as in science and mathematics. Standards are below average but better than similar schools. Girls tend to do better than boys in all aspects of English. In Years 3 to 6 a successful system of intervention or withdrawal of small groups of pupils, with work to match their specific needs, is having a positive impact, especially on the progress of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.

66. Standards in writing for all ages of pupils remain below, and sometimes well below, those in reading because of the lack of opportunity pupils have to practise their skills in longer pieces of writing, both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum. Lesson plans do not give sufficient emphasis to longer pieces of writing, both factual and creative, and pupils are not taught in sufficient detail about different structures and styles of writing. In many lessons activities are led by worksheets as the only resource, and this further limits opportunities to write as pupils cannot explore their own thoughts and are too dependant on the printed sheet. This affects the achievements of higher attaining pupils in particular.
67. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are wide variations in quality through the school. This was evident in pupils' completed work and in lessons, where examples of good and poor teaching were observed. The completed work of pupils in Year 1 and 2 shows little of quality. However, innovative work was observed in Year 2 where the teacher provided a wide range of appropriate activities for a very large group of pupils that led to good gains in learning. Pupils were able to develop their speaking and listening skills in pairs as they practised using the past tense aloud in preparation for writing. They moved around the classroom sensibly to sit in small groups for writing practice and used mime to help them to develop their ideas still further. Time was very well used, and the design of the lesson ensured that all pupils succeeded. In lessons where teaching was not effective, pupils either worked without much guidance from the teachers, relying on written instructions, or the work was much the same for all and provided little challenge for higher attaining pupils who said they found the work easy. Although some teachers plan extension work this is very often in the form of additional worksheets at the end of a lesson and there is not usually time for the completion of the task. Teachers keep their own assessment records but they do not always use this information to plan sufficiently for the needs of all pupils. The accent on work activities is often on drills and exercises which practise skills out of context and allow little application to other work. These variations in quality and the underlying strengths and weaknesses are not being identified and tackled because of a lack of systematic checks. This is slowing improvements in standards in Year 1 and 2 in particular and in writing throughout the school.
68. Leadership is unsatisfactory because of a lack of investment in time for the subject leader to fulfil the role. There has been little opportunity for self-evaluation and development in recent years. As a result, planned improvements lack cohesion. New procedures to check pupils' progress in reading and writing throughout school are not yet being used effectively to analyse and tackle underachievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills in other subjects. In most classes teachers do not display key subject words to advantage and this can slow pupils down. Too often work is copied from the board or from notes with little opportunity for pupils to make choices about the content and style of their writing. In Year 6 there are some good opportunities for pupils to use and develop their skills in researching and writing about mountains.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 ensures pupils of all ability do well.
- There is a significant surge in progress in Year 6 supported by careful use of assessment.
- Pupils like mathematics and try hard.
- There is little use of ICT to support the work and few opportunities for practical work.

- The checks made on the quality of teaching, learning, pupils' completed work and their progress over time are not systematic or rigorous enough to ensure pupils do their best in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

70. Teaching is good overall in Year 3 to 6 and pupils make good gains in learning. Pupils achieve well, and very well in Year 6 to reach above average standards by the end of that year. Boys and girls of different levels of ability do well. Pupils get through a lot of work in many areas of mathematics with a reasonable balance across different aspects. The only area where the work is thin is in the solution of problems, especially those that require practical work. Pupils' understanding is helped by a good emphasis on the vocabulary of mathematics; for example pupils in Year 6 have their own mathematics dictionaries so that they can check meanings as they work. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching in Year 2 but pupils' completed work indicates that tasks are often much the same for all and not always well matched to the needs of different abilities. This slows progress. Achievement is satisfactory overall but some average and higher attaining pupils should do better. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below the national average although pupils do as well as those in similar schools. Standards have risen faster than national standards in recent years and are considerably higher at the end of Year 6 than at the time of the last inspection.
71. Two teachers work together very effectively each morning in lessons in Year 6. They make good use of what they know of pupils' skills and understanding to improve areas of weakness. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress. When pupils find work difficult, they intervene quickly and make sure understanding is secure before pupils move on. They are well supported in this work by the classroom assistant. The three staff between them give a very good ratio of adult to pupil support. Extension work is provided to move higher attaining pupils on further, although there are occasions when pupils spend too much time on unchallenging tasks before moving on. The class teacher, who leads the subject well, has high expectations for mathematics and has successfully led the drive for improved standards. A thorough analysis of Key Stage 2 test and assessment data has shown where there are areas of a common weakness and these have been tackled effectively.
72. Pupils work hard and, particularly in Years 5 and 6, this contributes strongly to their achievement. Teachers expect them to record their work neatly and they respond well, taking a pride in their work. Pupils persevere when they find things difficult. They say that teachers help them to overcome difficulties and they are not afraid to have a go. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' work-rate is commendable and is supported by regular homework.
73. There is little evidence to show that pupils use ICT regularly and systematically to support the work in mathematics. Pupils have used control programs to follow a route and this supports their understanding of turns and angles. There are a few examples of computer-generated graphs but overall there are many missed opportunities to consolidate basic skills and to extend pupils' understanding in a wide range of mathematics.
74. Pupils' progress over time is somewhat erratic. This is caused by variations in the quality of teaching and learning, especially teachers' expectations and the level of challenge for different groups and classes. The school does not have a clear enough picture of what is happening, especially in Years 1 and 2. A significant boost to progress has been achieved in Year 6 and this has contributed to high standards and very good achievement. The investment in an extra teacher in the mornings has contributed to this. The intervention programme established in Year 3 and 4 is helping to improve the basic skills of lower attaining pupils. However, a lack of challenge observed in Year 1 and in pupils' completed work in Year 1 and 2 is hindering progress through these years and this has not been dealt with adequately because of a lack of investment in time to check on and evaluate the work. The tracking of progress is at an early stage and does not yet show up peaks and troughs in achievement in different parts of the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

75. This is satisfactory overall. There are some good examples in science in the older classes, where pupils use measuring and data-handling skills to support the work, and a few examples in geography when pupils compare climate in different parts of the world.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are very good and standards in Year 6 are above average.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good, with very good teaching in Year 6 giving pupils a significant boost in their knowledge and understanding of science topics.
- Good teaching of investigative skills in Years 3 and 4 extends pupils' understanding well but pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not develop enough independence in planning, organising and recording their own scientific investigations because teachers direct these too closely.
- The science co-ordinator has too few opportunities to check the effectiveness of teaching and how well pupils are doing so that weaknesses in teaching go on too long, and opportunities to share the best practice are missed.

Commentary

76. Standards in science in Year 6 have risen significantly since the last inspection and are now above average overall. They are well above average in pupils' knowledge and understanding of science topics, which confirms the very good results in the 2003 standard tests when all the pupils reached the expected level 4. Pupils' scientific skills are average. They do not become as independent as they should in planning their investigations, deciding which methods and resources to use, recording the data and writing a detailed report. Standards in Year 2 are below average. Pupils do not gain a secure enough knowledge of science topics and they do not learn to record their work independently enough. Whilst pupils' achievements are very good overall, they are barely satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
77. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6. This is an improvement on the satisfactory teaching found the last time the school was inspected. Thorough coverage of science topics, carefully planned to strengthen gaps and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding, is a strength in Years 5 and 6. Teachers check what pupils can and cannot do and this forms the basis of their effective lesson planning. In Year 6, pupils work extremely hard in science lessons. Good use of time, high expectations of work and behaviour, clear explanations and demonstrations mean that pupils concentrate and make rapid progress. Teachers and learning support assistants effectively supervise less able pupils and those with special educational needs. Their extra explanations and encouragement mean that these pupils achieve very well, and often reach the expected levels in their learning. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, but the coverage of topics is not so thorough or systematic as in other classes. Worksheets are used too heavily, and these are not organised well enough to enable pupils to be proud of their science work. Some of these lack challenge so that more able pupils are not spurred on to work at higher levels.
78. The best teaching of scientific skills is found in Years 3 and 4. Through collaborative planning of good investigations, the science co-ordinator and other teachers encourage pupils to structure their experiments, and to think about the resources they will need and what they will do. Pupils enjoy their work because teachers aim high, with interesting investigations, for example in friction and in the separation of solutions, that challenge pupils to think hard. There is a good emphasis on helping pupils to develop a structured approach to writing their reports, so they learn to record their tests logically and neatly. The science club taken by a specialist teacher

from the local high school gives a powerful boost to the progress of those pupils in Year 3 who attend. They listen intently, and her expertise and enthusiasm mean that pupils enjoy some challenging and stimulating experiences. Whilst pupils have valuable opportunities for investigation in other classes, teachers often direct these too closely so that older pupils do not learn to organise and run their own tests. Their written reports lack detail and structure because they have too few opportunities to develop their own recording skills. Throughout the school, pupils make good use of their mathematics skills in producing graphs and charts to report their results.

79. The leadership of science is good overall and there is a determined and successful drive to raise standards. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to improve provision further. However, as in the last inspection, he has too few opportunities to check how well pupils are doing in their work, or the quality of science teaching throughout the school. This means that the school does not have a clear enough view of the weaknesses in teaching, and the good practice of the best teachers is not identified and shared.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of teachers' expertise.
- Pupils achieve well in the skills of word processing and graphics.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT in other aspects of the curriculum.
- There is insufficient attention to the balance of different aspects of the subject

Commentary

80. There has been good improvement in overall provision since the previous inspection. Standards are in line with those expected nationally for pupils in Year 2 but below expectations overall by the end of Year 6, although standards in word processing and graphics are as expected. Younger pupils are developing good skills in using the mouse to click and drag, and by Year 2 they can enhance text by changing font, colour and size. By Year 6, pupils use word processing and graphics in combination to produce a good range of work, and can import pictures from clip art, photographs and the Internet. However, standards in other strands, for example data handling and modelling, are below average, because there is an imbalance in provision which shows in pupils' work portfolios where there is little work in areas such as data handling and control.
81. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator ensures good teaching in Years 1 and 2 because she teaches much of the subject herself. This also gives her a good overview of standards and enables her to ensure good progress. Similarly, a teacher with significant expertise in ICT teaches most classes in Year 3 to 6. Lessons taught by this teacher during the inspection were of high quality, and progress and achievement were very good. Lessons concentrated on the teaching of skills, with small tasks to enable pupils to apply their skills towards the end of the lesson. For example, a large group of pupils exploring a new graphics program were able to quickly get to grips with some of its complexities, because of clear explanation and attention to the needs of them all. They were enthusiastic and attentive. This good use of teacher expertise is a strength of the subject. However, some teachers rely too much on this good support, and do not give pupils the opportunities to use the skills they have learned in other lessons throughout the week. Not all pupils have sufficient time in the ICT suite, which is currently underused. Leadership is satisfactory. Improvements are tangible. The co-ordinator is aware of the gaps in provision and development plans identify a variety of strategies and new software to fill them. However, there is no clear picture of achievement and progress throughout the school in different strands.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. Opportunities are missed to enable pupils to use their skills to support learning in other subjects, such as handling data in mathematics or science. This is because planning for other subjects does not identify where ICT would be effective so that pupils put what they have learned to good use. For example, Year 6 pupils are being taught how to create multi-media presentations, but do not have the opportunity to apply this to the history or geography topics currently being studied in order to enhance their learning and to develop their skills.

HUMANITIES

83. Two lessons were observed in religious education. It is not possible to make judgements about the quality of the provision or standards in either **history** or **geography** because no lessons were observed. In **history**, pupils in Year 6 have gained a thorough understanding of work in Victorian times although much of the work is book based, lacking the vitality of using a range of sources of evidence such as museums, local census returns, personal accounts and work in the local area. Pupils in Year 5 have a good grasp of life in Ancient Greece. A stimulating display in Years 3 and 4 has engaged pupils' interest in Ancient Egypt. In **geography**, the work on settlements in Year 4 helps pupils to make a good start in acquiring the skills of drawing and interpreting maps but this is not developed well in successive years. In Year 6, pupils' work indicates an in-depth study of rivers but this is not supported by first-hand observations. There was little evidence in the work sample provided for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to indicate the range and quality of the work undertaken. Pupils have little recall of the work in either **history** or **geography**.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work in Year 5 gives pupils good opportunities to make individual responses to what they have learned.
- In Year 4, preparation for questioning a visitor helps pupils gain an insight into Christian belief.
- A new scheme of work is helping teachers to plan with more confidence.
- There is little recorded evidence of work in Years 1 and 2 and pupils have little recall of recent work.

Commentary

84. Pupils in Year 5 respond well when invited to discuss music to accompany worship. They learn about how music can establish an appropriate atmosphere, influence mood and provide opportunities for singing together. As part of the topic on harvest, pupils write their own prayers and decide whether they fit into the category of need, greed, poverty or plenty. The work has produced thoughtful responses and given pupils the opportunity to consider global issues.
85. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 prepared well for the visit of a local priest. They thought about what they hoped to gain from the visit and wrote their own questions. This helped them to gain understanding about the belief and practices of Christians. Other work in Year 3 and 4 makes good use of links between pupils' own experiences, for example of authority and things of value, and the experiences of religious people.
86. Teaching is sound in Years 3 to 6. The subject leader has responded to teachers' anxieties about the existing scheme of work and developed a new one which supports the syllabus agreed locally and provides guidance for lesson planning. Teachers have gained confidence and the teaching observed in Years 3 and 4 showed that they have a good grasp of subject

matter. This is helping pupils to make good gains in learning. Achievement in Year 3 to 6 is sound. Pupils' completed work indicates that by the end of Year 6 standards are broadly in line with expectations.

87. Little evidence was provided of pupils' completed work in Years 1 and 2 and no teaching was seen. In discussion with pupils their recall of work in religious education is weak. They know some of the stories told by and about Jesus, including those associated with Christmas and Easter, but have little memory of the other work seen in the scheme of work for these years. Forthcoming work includes a whole day programme of work about Islam with visitors and opportunities to explore Muslim beliefs and practices.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

88. No lessons were observed in **art and design**, but two were seen in **design and technology**, three in **music**, in Years 3 to 6 only, and two in **physical education**. It is not possible to report on **art and design** in depth. However, the work on display indicates that standards in art and design are at least average. Pupils' imaginative art work is displayed well to show silhouettes, use of a computer graphics program and symmetrical pictures, as well as some good observational drawing in Year 4. Pupils have the opportunity to explore the properties of clay and to learn about colour mixing. Satisfactory use is made of sketchbooks.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because teaching is good.
- Standards in pupils' making skills are above average in Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy their work and take care to produce a good finish because projects are interesting.
- Standards in designing and organising their own projects are not so high because these aspects are not always emphasised enough in teachers' lesson planning.

Commentary

89. Standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils' achievements are good overall, particularly in the making aspect of design and technology. The school makes good use of the spacious and well-resourced area set aside for the subject and pupils enjoy the interesting activities teachers provide. Their behaviour is good and they work hard on their projects, persisting well to ensure they create firm structures. They are precise and accurate when measuring, cutting and folding materials like card. Teachers provide further practice for those who find it hard, and this brings their skills up to those of others in the class. Pupils take pride in finishing their projects to a high standard, like the marble runs in Year 6 and the model playgrounds in Year 4.
90. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 with a successful emphasis on teaching the skills that pupils later use in their projects. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise and their enthusiasm is infectious. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in designing and planning their projects. Interesting and well-constructed playground models were produced from intricate playground designs. However, progress in designing has improved little since the school was last inspected. Sometimes, when teachers over-direct activities and pupils work to a prescribed plan, opportunities are missed for pupils to decide what they will make and how they will make it. They do not have enough experience of drawing up a detailed design and organising the work. Their skills in these aspects, though satisfactory, are not as good as their making skills. No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, but discussions with pupils and examinations of photographs of their work indicate that teaching is satisfactory.

91. The leadership and management of design and technology is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator provides good leadership in promoting interest in the subject and has good personal expertise. However, the systems for checking what pupils can and cannot do and the effectiveness of teaching are not thorough enough. This means that the school's view of its strengths and development needs is not clear enough as a basis for planning improvements.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of musical experiences is available to pupils, who show interest and good competence in composition in Years 3 to 6.
- Extra-curricular activities enhance learning opportunities well.

Commentary

92. Standards in music exceed expectations by the end of Year 6 and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of music in response to well-planned teaching and a lively curriculum. Pupils have very good attitudes to music. They are confident and enthusiastic because of teachers' good delivery of lessons. They perform short pieces they have composed and listen carefully to each other's creations. By the time they are in Year 6, they read simple conventional notation and this is encouraged by the provision of sheet music, for example when they sing new songs. Pupils learn quickly and work together well because teachers instruct them clearly and make lessons fun. For example, pupils compose atmospheric music to accompany the news reports they have written in their literacy lesson, after considering how to achieve different musical effects.
93. Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 by a specialist. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expect pupils to achieve highly. They use appropriate technical vocabulary, such as 'chords' and 'dynamics', and demonstrate the difference between major and minor, using the words 'glad' and 'sad' to describe them. Teachers make music accessible to the pupils and enable all to enjoy it.
94. The subject is well led and managed, and the curriculum provides a satisfactory range of activities with adequate resources. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to take a full part in musical activities. The school has a strong tradition of music and standards of singing are high by the time pupils are in Year 6. There is an enthusiastic lunchtime choir, a recorder club and a small hand bells club. The school has succeeded in increasing the number of pupils who have individual lessons and learn to play wind, brass and string instruments. Music is enjoyed and taken seriously by pupils and teachers alike, and it is a much valued part of the curriculum.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of good teaching of skills.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.

- Teachers provide a full range of activities within lessons.
- Pupils participate in a wide range of enrichment activities.

Commentary

95. Achievement is good because of the emphasis teachers give to teaching and improving skills. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their skills, are encouraged to get better, and in some cases demonstrate what they can do to other pupils, who evaluate what they have seen. For example, in a very good lesson observed, pupils watched each other practise skills in using a cricket bat, and were encouraged to talk about their performance and discuss ways in which they could improve. Achievement is very good where skills are taught and then applied to and refined in a small game or sequence.
96. Teachers have high expectations of the behaviour of pupils, especially important in this subject because of health and safety reasons, and good reference is made to this throughout lessons. Pupils are well behaved, and also show good attitudes, because they are interested in the wide variety of lessons, and activities within these lessons. For example, during the inspection Year 5 pupils were learning skills to help them to improve their own performance in indoor athletics using a wide range of resources, pupils in Year 2 were learning about the skills and laws of the game of rugby, and pupils in a Year 3/4 class showed considerable improvement when practising their skills in cricket.
97. There is a good programme of enrichment, and a range of extra activities for pupils to join in. These include both boys' and girls' football and other sporting competitions with local schools. There is a good balance across different aspects of the subject, and teacher knowledge and confidence are also good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. The school does not have a separate taught programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship. Specific elements are taught as part of the science, physical education and religious education curriculum. Circle time, when pupils sit around their teachers to discuss personal and social issues or aspects of the school life that affect them, is a relatively new departure for the school. Teachers have been involved in training to ensure it is introduced effectively and sensitively. Only one lesson was observed so it is not possible to make judgements about its impact on school life but, in the lesson in Year 1/2, pupils were learning how to listen carefully to each other and to follow the rules for circle time.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
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	3
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).