

INSPECTION REPORT

RAVENS CROFT COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kirkby

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104444

Headteacher: Mrs S Rosser

Lead inspector: Mr P T Hill

Dates of inspection: 26th – 28th April 2004

Inspection number: 257272

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:	197
School address:	Ebony Way Tower Hill Kirkby Liverpool Merseyside
Postcode:	L33 1XT
Telephone number:	0151 477 8290
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs K Upfold
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ravenscroft Primary School is situated in the Tower Hill area of Kirkby. Currently there are 197 full-time pupils between the ages of five and eleven on roll. There are 53 part-time three and four year olds in the nursery. Most pupils live on the Tower Hill estate which is comprised of mainly local authority housing. The majority of pupils come from backgrounds that are well below average in social and economic terms. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and all pupils speak English as their first language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is 60 per cent, which is well above the average for schools nationally. Over a third of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to physical and visual impairment. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the autumn term of the year in which they reach the age of five. The vast majority of pupils in the main school previously attended the nursery. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average including, for many pupils, in language development. The school achieved the Investor in People award in 2002 and Healthy Schools award in 2003 and was awarded a School Achievement Award in 2001 and Activemark in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6642	Mr P Hill	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, geography, history, English as an additional language.
9348	Mrs M Le Mage	Lay inspector	
19386	Mr T Watts	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, music, religious education, and special educational needs.
7838	Mr A Cross	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology.
1678	Mr D Peckett	Team inspector	English, art and design, physical education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school working successfully in challenging circumstances. It has many strengths. Children start school with very low levels of attainment. They achieve well as they progress through the school and by the time they leave they attain standards which are approaching the national average. Indeed, pupils' standards in mathematics are in line with the national average. All pupils achieve very well, including pupils with special educational needs. Teaching and learning are both good, and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. Leadership and management are very good and have some excellent features. This is a highly inclusive and very caring school, providing very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils make good progress in the school as a result of the very effective provision.
- Leadership by the headteacher is excellent and overall leadership and management are very good.
- The inclusive nature of the whole school and the equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is a great strength.
- Teaching is good and as a result all pupils achieve well.
- Pupils are cared for and supported very well.
- Considerable improvements have been made in the provision for the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and in resources throughout the school and this is a strength.
- The examples of good practice that exist relating to marking and assessment are not applied consistently across the school.
- Although not significant weaknesses, the school is aware of the need to continue to focus on pupils' language development and especially their writing.

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in March 1998. All the key areas for development have been successfully addressed and improved, and standards have risen as a result. Standards have clearly risen in English; ICT has improved throughout the school, with increased levels of resources and an ICT suite; assessment has developed into a strength and governors are very successfully involved in all aspects of planning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	B
mathematics	C	D	C	A
science	C	D	D	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 overall** and is **very good in the Foundation Stage**.

The table above needs to be interpreted with care. There are several reasons for this. The work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils' attainment is just below average overall in the core subjects of English and science and is just above average in mathematics by the end of Year 6. Overall standards are well above those of pupils in similar schools. This is a good level of improvement over time and is a significant improvement on the grades shown in comparison with all schools shown in the table. Pupils of all levels of ability achieve well in all other subjects and they achieve very well in the Foundation Stage. Results show an impressive level of improvement from

the very low average level when children enter the Foundation Stage to when they leave at age eleven. The school has a significant number of pupils with special educational needs, and all make good progress and achieve well as they progress through the school. The number of pupils with special needs varies from year to year.

Pupils' personal development is good and is very well supported through the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very happy at school and have very positive attitudes towards learning. Their behaviour in lessons and at playtimes is good. Attendance is below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good education. Teaching is good throughout the school. As a result of good teaching, supported by very good teamwork, very good relationships and classroom and behaviour management, learning is good, with pupils making good progress. The quality of assessment is good and information is well used to match lessons to the needs of pupils, although there remains some unevenness in this aspect. The curriculum is very good, with a very good level of enrichment and additional activities. The care, support and guidance of pupils are good and a significant and very positive factor in teaching. Partnership with parents is very good and the school works hard to involve them in their children's learning. The school council is effective and a strong feature of the school's work providing pupils with an influential say in school life. The school has established very good links with parents and other schools and colleges. It has good links with the local community. The effectiveness of extended school services is very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are both very good, and have some excellent features. The headteacher provides leadership of the highest quality. Her strong sense of purpose reflects her ambitions for the school to provide the very best possible education for its pupils. A very effective deputy head and senior management team support the headteacher and governors in their work. The governing body is very well informed and fully involved in shaping the vision and direction of the school. It carries out its statutory duties very well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents have a high regard for the school and are very satisfied with its work. They have no significant concerns. Pupils like coming to school and enjoy lessons. They feel secure and very well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant areas of weakness: however, the most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in English and especially pupils' writing, building on the very good level of improvement already achieved.
- Ensure that the good practice already developed in marking and assessment is used consistently throughout the school to identify clear targets to bring about improvement in standards for individual pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below average overall. However, all pupils, regardless of background or ability, achieve well and their attainment in English mathematics and science, when compared with similar schools, is well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school.
- Attainment is well above average when compared with similar schools.
- Although the attainment of pupils is below average overall, it is average in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A significant number of pupils have difficulty with language and especially with written work and this still hinders standards.

Commentary

1. The majority of pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are well below average. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, they have attained levels, which, while still below average, have improved, and they have made good progress as they move through the school. In comparison with similar schools, based both on free school meals and on prior attainment, attainment is high. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented have made good progress and achieve well. Across the school, pupils' written work is below average and this affects other subjects. The school has a number of strategies in place to focus on writing and the use of language generally and they are beginning to raise standards.
2. Overall, all pupils achieve well throughout the school in English, mathematics, science, religious education, information and communication technology (ICT), and music. They achieve very well in English in Key Stage 2 and in the Foundation Stage where they make good progress in their development in the areas of learning. There is no area of the curriculum in which pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. In all subjects, pupils of all abilities achieve well because of the skilful and very effective way that teachers meet individual needs, for example in their questioning techniques and in the work set for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional and effective support to enable them to make very good progress and achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. Similarly, those pupils who are particularly able are presented with additional challenges that ensure they are extended in their learning.
3. The difficulties of pupils with special educational needs are often in language and social skills, and in these particular areas, children mainly make very good progress, especially in their early school life, in the nursery and reception classes. Throughout the school, pupils' good achievements in most subjects are ensured by careful monitoring of progress, planning of suitable activities, and extra support in and out of classes.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.9 (11.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.2 (10.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.4 (13.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The table above shows that standards, by the end of Year 2 in 2003, were well below the national average in all three areas. However, considering the very low average levels of attainment of pupils when they enter the school, this represents a very good level of achievement overall.
- The table below shows that, in 2003, standards for all pupils in the tests at the end of Year 6 were well below average in English and below average in science and average in mathematics. When compared with the above table for the end of Key Stage 1, this represents good progress and shows that levels of achievement overall are approaching the national level. This is a very significant improvement in attainment as pupils pass through the school and is directly as a result of very good management and good overall teaching. The trend since the last inspection has been one of improvement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.3 (23.4)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (26.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.2 (27.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The overall improvements represent a considerable accomplishment on the part of the school, especially as, in some classes, there is a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. There is no overall significant difference between the standards attained by boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Throughout the school pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**, enabling maximum time to be spent on learning. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also **good**. However, attendance is below average and is therefore unsatisfactory, although punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well managed in a consistent way by adults and there is a clear structure for managing unacceptable behaviour; this enables pupils to demonstrate good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are eager to learn and show interest in all activities.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good.
- Attendance at the school is unsatisfactory, although the school has very good initiatives to improve levels of attendance.

Commentary

7. All adults in the school know the pupils very well, manage them in an appropriate way and help them to learn acceptable patterns of behaviour. Clear strategies are followed consistently at all times and across all areas of the school. The behaviour code is very well known by pupils and they are very well motivated by the rewards they can earn for behaving well. They also understand, and respect, the sanctions which are applied for unacceptable behaviour. Developing self-control is a key focus of the behaviour code and pupils are encouraged and supported to become more independent and to take responsibility for themselves. Consequently, the behaviour code makes a significant contribution to pupils' social and moral development. For those pupils whose behaviour is challenging and for whom concentration is difficult, the clear strategies employed encourage them to respond well.
8. The learning mentor is well respected by the pupils and works with individuals and groups of pupils to resolve issues that may be making learning difficult for them. This improves their attitudes to school. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged and supported to understand themselves and their feelings. The school is very responsive to the needs of pupils. It is currently addressing the needs of a class who are having some difficulties in supporting each other. The school has embarked on a series of lessons, over a number of weeks, to help pupils come together as a supportive group. Staff work very well together as a team and consistently reinforce good behaviour. They also work very well with pupils to reduce unacceptable responses. Pupils think this is a fair school.
9. Pupils of all abilities are very interested in their lessons and the extra activities offered. Across the school, pupils are eager to learn, are very enthusiastic to join in practical activities, co-operate with each other well, concentrate well and work hard. The school has a wide range of additional activities after school and these are very well supported by the pupils.
10. Pupils' personal development is a high priority and underpins all activities throughout the school day. Pupils are encouraged and supported to understand themselves, even recognising and understanding different styles of learning. As they progress through the school, more and more opportunities are presented to them to enable them to show initiative and take some responsibility for their learning. This is a school which encourages pupils to aspire and realise that they can be whatever they want to be in adult life. By Year 5, pupils are already recognising the landmarks they need to achieve in order to meet their ambitions. Pupils develop a clear awareness of what is acceptable behaviour and conform to the high standards set by all adults in the school. Older pupils have opportunities to consider major moral and social issues beyond life in their own community.
11. Pupils also have opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative in the wider aspects of the life of the school. The school has its own radio station and small groups of pupils make a short programme of their own choice which is broadcast to the whole school weekly. Pupils as young as those in Year 3 have the opportunity to make radio programmes. Pupils volunteer readily for tasks around school and look forward to the opportunity to become school councillors in order to have a direct influence on some element of school development. Pupils respect and understand that everyone is different and have opportunities to learn about different faiths and cultures through religious education lessons and assemblies. Overall, the spiritual, social and moral development of pupils across the school is very good.
12. Attendance at the school is below average and therefore unsatisfactory. Some of the absence is due to pupils taking holiday in term time and some by persistent poor attendance from a very small number of families. The school monitors attendance very closely and has a range of initiatives in place to encourage continuing good attendance from the majority of pupils, and give high quality support to pupils who find regular attendance difficult to sustain. The 'Walking

Bus', which brings pupils to school each day, and the Breakfast Club have improved standards of punctuality.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.1	School data	0.8
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
Mixed – White and Black African

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
160	6	0
3	0	0
2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

This school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils. All pupils **achieve well** because they are consistently **taught well** throughout the school. Pupils are offered an **enriched** curriculum and pupils' learning benefits from **strong** links with parents and the community. **Good** quality resources contribute to the quality of education provided.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. In a significant number of lessons it is **very good and sometimes excellent**. Teachers and support staff work very well together to provide a challenging and supportive atmosphere. The school's assessment system has improved considerably and is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of both teaching and learning is good overall and in almost a third of lessons is very good.
- The school's assessment system is good and contributes significantly to improvement.
- Lessons are very inclusive, meeting the individual needs of all pupils very well.
- Teachers set very high standards for behaviour and have high levels of expectation of what pupils can do.
- Teamwork and relationships are very good.

Commentary

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. It is good or better in three-quarters of lessons and there is some excellent teaching. Teachers have a very clear view of exactly how well their pupils are progressing and regular reassess their teaching methods and

activities to challenge and support individual pupils. Assessment is strongly linked to pupils' personal development and underpins the growth of self-esteem as well as standards.

14. Teaching is good in mathematics, science and ICT and is very good in English in Key Stage 2. Typical of this good teaching is the very high quality of relationships between all adults and pupils, good planning and classroom management, and high expectations. This results in high pupil motivation and good learning. Teachers are very good at encouraging and engaging pupils, who are challenged to do well. Teachers expect pupils to behave well, and, as a consequence, most listen and learn well.
15. This is very inclusive school, meeting the needs of a broad range of pupils. Classes are made up of a wide range of pupils, some of whom are higher attainers, as well as pupils with a variety of individual needs. The way teachers combine teamwork, relationships, high standards and expectation with good planning and often very good classroom management, to the considerable benefit of all pupils, is a significant strength of teaching.
16. As a direct result of the good teaching of all ages of pupils, their learning is good. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. They make good gains in knowledge and understanding, concentrate well, are well behaved and have good relationships between themselves and with adults.
17. Assessment, which formed a part of a number of key issues identified in the last report, has developed well. It is now consistent throughout the school, is thorough and is very well used to respond to pupils' individual needs. Besides improving individual standards, the good use of assessment data allows teachers to identify areas of strong teaching and learning and those areas where improvement is needed.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and as a result their learning is good and they make good progress. Staff throughout the school use a good range of resources to support learning by pupils with special educational needs, whether it is a machine for writing in Braille, or simple table-top games to help pupils learn numbers. Teachers and support staff know their pupils and their needs well. Lessons are well planned to provide extra support for the pupils who need it. Support staff are particularly good at prompting and encouraging pupils, without doing too much for them. The learning mentor provides very valuable general support and advice to pupils who have learning difficulties, and also gives help in clearly identified areas where some pupils are having most difficulty.
19. Pupils who have a high level of skill and interest in particular areas are well provided for by the school. Pupils' skills and needs are identified by the time they come into Year 3, and staff decide what they can do to nurture the pupils' skills as much as is practicable. Teachers are well aware of higher attaining pupils, and the areas in which they excel. They often provide extra and harder work in some lessons to challenge them at a suitable level.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2.5%)	11 (27.5%)	21 (52.5%)	6 (15%)	1 (2.5%)	0	0

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

The curriculum

The school provides a **very good** curriculum that covers all the statutory requirements and provides a range of stimulating experiences. Children in the Foundation Stage experience a very good curriculum. Since the last inspection, all schemes throughout the school have been rewritten and the

school has drawn on a wide range of resources and expertise to tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils. The curriculum provides many **very good** quality additional activities. Accommodation is limited and this does have a negative effect on the scope of some practical activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very good, being broad and balanced and meeting the needs of all pupils.
- The curriculum reflects the needs and interests of pupils very well.
- Extra-curricular opportunities are very good.
- The school draws effectively on a range of outside agencies.
- Limited accommodation reduces the scope of practical work in some subjects and opportunities to work with parents.

Commentary

20. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. A whole-school review, held two years ago, included an effective evaluation of the curriculum which is continually modified and where necessary, updated. The school has made very good use of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. National and other published schemes, in mathematics for example, have been adapted and altered to emphasise practical approaches to learning and to focus on pupils' development of English.
21. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils participate in all activities. Teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants actively involve all pupils in all lessons. The school's highly inclusive approach means that all pupils participate in visits and events, for example the creative festival held in June. Music features strongly, led by an enthusiastic member of staff.
22. The curriculum is well organised and presented in a range of different ways. The infant classes regularly collaborate together on design and technology projects. All pupils benefit from a wide range of visitors to school.
23. The school's personal, social and health education is very effective and taught throughout the curriculum and in specific lessons and projects. Parents are consulted about a programme of sex education for Years 5 and 6. The focus of these lessons, taught by the school nurse, is on preparation for puberty. The school's work in such areas has been recognised as the school has 'Healthy School' status. Teaching includes a useful emphasis on emotional health and extends to inform the pupils about healthy lifestyles including diet and how to avoid drug misuse.
24. Pupils are well prepared for entry to the next stage of education. Reception children visit older classes and play areas before entry to the infant classes. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 take care to adapt their work to suit pupils moving up from reception. The older juniors have the opportunity to visit the local high school and meet teachers, including the headteacher. A transitional curriculum allows work started in Year 6 to be followed up at the high school.
25. Pupils with special educational needs have a great deal of support from teachers and support staff, giving them full access to the school's curriculum. Help also takes the form of specialist teaching for individuals and small groups, often for extra language and reading skills, or mathematics. Many pupils benefit from a regular series of extra lessons taught by support staff for boosting their skills in reading and writing. Pupils with particular difficulties in their behaviour have attended regular sessions at another school, in which specialist staff are able to help them to see their problems, and find ways of overcoming them. Visiting staff also provide valuable extra support with the 'Portage' system of learning social and language skills.

26. Pupils benefit from other initiatives including Kerbsafe, a series of lessons for Year 1 and 2 pupils which are delivered by parents who have been trained by a local co-ordinator. This scheme aims to ensure that pupils are safer around and crossing roads. The school makes very good use of such schemes, which extend to the formal curriculum. Pupils enjoy Radio Ravo, the school radio station, in which all pupils have the opportunity to make a live radio broadcast to the whole school.
27. Extra-curricular activities are varied and of high quality. These include athletics, tag rugby, football, jewellery making, chess and art. These clubs are attended by large numbers of pupils. Nineteen pupils were observed enjoying a drama club where they used masks and were asked to 'strike a pose' showing feelings, including happiness, anger and sadness. Pupils make visits to local sites including, for younger pupils, Formby beach. A wide range of visitors is invited to the school to meet and work with the pupils; this includes visiting artists, dancers, poets, musicians and theatre groups, including one which performs Shakespearean plays. Older pupils have the opportunity to participate in a residential trip to Cumbria. Pupils participate in a 'Can Do' club organised by the school in partnership with local schools.
28. Accommodation is limited but recent developments, such as the ICT suite and the imaginative and creative use of available space, mean that the school operates very effectively. The school is active in dealing with this issue and is about to see the construction of new facilities. All areas of the school are attractive and well cared for by the staff and the pupils.
29. Staffing provision is good. This includes the level and expertise of support staff and the contribution that all adults make to pupils' learning.
30. The school's resources have steadily improved, driven by a focus on priorities such as literacy. There are, however, areas such as design and technology where resources for aspects such as control technology are limited.

Care, guidance and support

The school's standards in the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils are **very good**. It provides **good** support, advice and guidance for its pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The extent to which pupils' views are taken into account is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is excellent, adding to the pupils' self-confidence and trust in staff.
- Throughout the school, pupils receive very good support to help them make progress in their personal development which leads to progress in their learning.
- Arrangements for pupils' care and welfare are very good.
- The school council has had a clear effect on the development of the school.

Commentary

31. All through the school there are excellent relationships between pupils and adults. Adults are patient, kind and very supportive which means pupils feel very secure and results in them being keen to contribute ideas in lessons. This has a very positive effect on pupils' feelings of self-worth, their attitudes to their learning, and school life in general. Pupils are unanimous in saying there is at least one adult in the school they feel they can confide in. The consistent, supportive way in which the pupils are dealt with at all times underpins the quality of these relationships. Pupils know they will be treated fairly according to the school's behaviour policy. Adults in the school work particularly effectively at helping pupils understand how they are feeling when they misbehave and helping them to control these feelings.

32. The school has a range of initiatives to maximise the benefit pupils can gain from the educational opportunities offered by the school. Beginning the day with the Walking Bus (a strategy which collects pupils at points along the route to school) and the Breakfast Club enables pupils who were reluctant to come straight from home and into a classroom to adjust to the school environment before they have to go into the classroom. These pupils now come to school happily, with identified benefits in their learning. The bus and club have also had a positive effect on punctuality, support pupils to be properly prepared for the day with kit for physical education and homework, and provide the opportunity for pupils of all ages to socialise before school with obvious benefits to their social development. The bus and club are run by the learning mentor together with school staff and several dedicated family helpers. They cater for about 30 pupils every day.
33. The learning mentor operates a number of other initiatives across the school to raise self-esteem, develop self-confidence and improve pupils' motivation. Most of these initiatives are targeted at pupils with identified needs in these areas but also includes other pupils. This broadens the impact of the initiative and respects pupils' confidentiality in sensitive areas. All pupils benefit from the learning mentor initiative through circle time where pupils learn to recognise their feelings and talk about them. Over time, they begin to understand how they react to situations and whether their reactions are appropriate. They also begin to understand the impact their behaviour has on others. The successful implementation of these initiatives gives a clear indication of the trust pupils have in the adults who work with them.
34. Throughout the school, pupils are very well known by all members of staff and there is a consistent focus on meeting the specific needs of each individual. There is systematic monitoring of children's personal and social development in the Foundation Stage and those working on an identified difficulty with the learning mentor. Almost all pupils have a personal development target in addition to their academic targets.
35. All statutory checks are carefully undertaken. The school is rigorous in its assessment of risk for major school visits, and is expanding formal risk assessments into more and more areas of school life. Effective child protection arrangements are in place and all adults working in the school are aware of them. All incidents and accidents are recorded thoroughly and parents are fully informed. Close scrutiny of these records ensures that where patterns are emerging, further initiatives are developed to improve the circumstances for specific pupils. By ensuring that the care and welfare of pupils is given a very high priority, the school maximises the benefit pupils gain from the educational opportunities offered.
36. The school works hard to seek and take account of the views of its pupils. All adults in the school listen to pupils, valuing and supporting their ideas wherever possible. There is a vibrant, well-established school council. The school council meets very regularly and they discuss all aspects of the life of their school. All Year 6 pupils get the opportunity to serve on the council. Over time, the council has had significant influence on the development of the school, including the organisation of lunchtime food choices, the installation of a 'healthy' drinks machine in the school and an initiative to improve attendance. They also operate the school's 'Bully boxes' in a very responsible and totally confidential way. Pupils post any concerns they may have with other pupils in the bully boxes. Members of the school council then take these concerns to the appropriate member of staff. These are always taken seriously by adults and always followed up, either directly with the pupil if they have identified themselves, through circle time or through a specific sequence of lessons. On occasions, more than one route is followed.
37. The school provides good guidance and advice to parents of children who have special educational needs. Based on careful assessment of progress, staff work with parents and pupils to arrive at a set of targets for pupils. These targets are brought together into an individual education plan. Sometimes, they are very clear, and pupils' progress can be seen and measured easily. At other times, they provide only a general guide in some areas of learning, especially for behaviour improvement and management. The general targets often remain the same for a year or more. This makes it difficult to see exactly what progress is

being made. The individual plans include good ideas for how best to approach some needs, what can be done in class, ways of coping with difficulties, or what different equipment or activities might be best. In this way, teachers, support staff, parents and children all know what the targets are, and what they need to do to achieve them.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established **very good** links with parents and other schools and colleges and has **very good** links with the local community. The effectiveness of extended school services is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided for parents is very good.
- The school values the views of parents and responds positively to them.
- A Family Literacy project involves parents in their children's learning very well.
- The links the school is developing with a range of other schools are very good.

Commentary

38. The school prospectus is very attractive and informative. It really conveys the feeling of a vibrant, purposeful school. The many photographs and quotes from the pupils underline the message that this is a school about children!
39. Regular newsletters inform parents of all day-to-day happenings and frequently contain examples, from pupils of all ages, of work that is judged to be of a very high standard. This is an excellent way of letting parents see what can be achieved by their children. Annual reports about pupils' progress are clear and informative. However, they do not contain any means of placing the pupils' achievements in context, except when the results of any statutory assessments are reported. Twice each year the school dedicates a Review Day to discussing a child's progress with their parents. Parents are very appreciative of this system. Parents, teachers and pupils review the progress the child has made against their targets and agree the next targets. Parents are given all the assessments relating to their children, placing their attainment in a school and national context. This fully involves parents in the learning of their children. Teachers use the meeting to advise parents as to how they can support their child and arrange any specific support the parent may need because of the different ways in which their children are being taught. This is a very effective means of giving parents information about the progress their child is making.
40. The school values the views of parents and actively works to discover them. The school undertook a complete audit two years ago in order to produce the framework for school development: 'Planning Our Future'. All parents were surveyed as part of this review. To continue the influence of parental requests on the life of the school, newsletters frequently ask for parental views and parent governors attend all Review Days to listen to any ideas or concerns parents want to raise with the school. All parents who expressed a view during the inspection process were very supportive of the school. They find it very open, approachable and they feel valued. These views are endorsed by the inspection. The school is also responsive to parents who express concerns over their children, and works with parents to resolve them. There is a very active Parent-Teacher Association which raises significant funds for the school each year and contributes to the social life of the school.
41. The school works very hard to enable parents to become involved in the learning of their children. They give high quality commercially produced information to parents about how to support learning away from school and also run classes for parents. The classes vary from year to year but there is a Family Literacy course running in school at present. Parents attending the course are finding it enables them to be much more involved with their children's

learning and some are hoping it is a step along the way for them to achieve qualifications and employment. Several are finding it so useful that they are already planning the course they would like to attend next.

42. Parents are well informed about the curriculum through regular newsletters and information going home. A high proportion of parents attend twice-yearly parent meetings to discuss their child's progress. Groups of parents contribute directly to the curriculum. A small group have been trained to monitor literacy throughout the school and other parents lead in the Walking Bus scheme.
43. The school has developed very good links with a number of local schools, both primary and secondary. At one level, these links involve members of staff in exchanging ideas with colleagues from other schools and in learning from good practice identified in other schools. This has obvious benefits to the pupils. At another level, staff from Ravenscroft and another school are developing music and enterprise activities and materials to provide extra challenge for pupils who have been identified as having specific talents in these areas. The school also has very effective links with outside agencies associated with the school, especially the Primary Learning Support Unit and the Northern Primary Support Centre.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are both **very good**. The governance of the school is **very good** and the governing body meets its statutory duties fully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.
- The leadership of other key staff is very good.
- The governing body carries out its duties very well.
- Management is very effective.
- Planning is highly effective in bringing to life the school's aims and values.
- In all aspects of its work, the school successfully promotes inclusion and equality of opportunity.

Commentary

44. The headteacher provides leadership of the highest quality. Her strong sense of purpose reflects her ambitions for the school to provide the very best possible education for its pupils. The headteacher has drawn together, and inspired, a very effective team who share her commitment to raise standards. Planning for improvement is very good. Rigorous monitoring and the careful analysis of results support the headteacher's clear overall vision. Her approach is one of involving all the school team in every aspect of planning and implementation. This, and her skill in inspiring improvement, has enabled the school to improve the quality of teaching, enrich the quality of the pupils' education and raise standards.
45. A very effective deputy head and senior management team support the headteacher and governors in their work, contributing ideas and working hard to help to bring about improvements. Subject leaders work very well together as a team and are united in their commitment to sustained improvement. They manage their subjects well. The effectiveness of subject management is reflected in the improving standards that pupils achieve, in the consistently high quality of teaching and in pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Leadership in the Foundation Stage is very good.
46. The governing body is fully involved in shaping the vision and direction of the school. It carries out its statutory duties very well. Governors are very well informed, through daily involvement in the school and regular contact with the senior staff, about all aspects of the school's work. They have a clear, accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for

improvement. Drawing on a wide range of expertise, governors support the school and its staff very well in their work, combining support with very constructive challenge. They share fully in the school's commitment to raise standards and are rightly proud of its achievements. Through their interest and commitment the exciting plans for development in the near future will move the school even closer to the heart of the community.

47. The school's shared vision and purpose are successfully fulfilled by means of very effective management. The arrangements for self-evaluation are rigorous and detailed. Governors and school staff draw on full, concise, up-to-date information about pupils' attainment, for example in literacy and numeracy, to track progress and identify areas for improvement. They respond purposefully and effectively. Teachers continue to target the quality and range of pupils' writing. As a result of carefully planned action, standards in writing are improving. Procedures for the professional development of staff are very good and closely linked with agreed priorities for improvement. Strong teamwork and professional support are key strengths of the school. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and then using the information gained to make improvements, are very good. Teachers' performance management is well linked to school improvement priorities and their own professional needs. The high quality of teaching and learning, the excellent quality of relationships and positive ethos enable the school to make a very valuable contribution to teacher training. Very detailed and secure financial management underpins the school's very good planning for improvement.
48. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well organised. An experienced and well-qualified teacher has a clear overall view of pupils' needs. She has overseen training for many teachers and support staff in managing behaviour as well as specific areas such as visual impairment and dyslexia. Much of the school's spending is allocated to providing extra teaching by specialist staff from a local support centre. A register is kept of all the pupils who have additional needs, whether their needs are severe and require a formal statement of special educational need, or are less severe, and can be met within the normal running of a class.
49. The school's success in bringing about inclusion and equality of opportunity is a real strength. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled, by means of the good provision, to share in the achievement of all pupils. This reflects the school's complete commitment to inclusion and the skill of teachers, support staff and governors in achieving it.
50. The headteacher, bursar and the finance committee of the governing body manage the school budget very well. There are very efficient systems in place to make sure that the finances are carefully controlled and expenditure regularly reviewed. There is a very good understanding of the principles of best value, which helps the school to achieve educational priorities.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	786455	Balance from previous year	26213
Total expenditure	767409	Balance carried forward to the next	19046
Expenditure per pupil	3120		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. When they begin in the Foundation Stage, most children's attainments are extremely low, especially in their social and personal development and in their language and communication skills. Although they achieve very well in these most important areas, children do not attain the expected goals by the time they leave reception. In other areas, children make good progress, learning to count, knowing about other places, becoming more active physically, and learning to play together. Even so, they do not reach the expected standard by the time they leave reception and begin Year 1. Children with special needs are well identified, and a great deal of help is provided for them, to make sure they make progress that is just as good as their classmates.
52. Children achieve so well in all areas because the teaching is always at least good, and is often very good. Lessons are planned very well, with very clear aims for what children will learn, and what activities they will do. The planning for social and language activities is excellent. Teachers work very well together and, with the support assistants, form a very good team.
53. Children learn well in a wide range of subjects, or 'areas of learning'. All of the required areas are taught in separate lessons, and also the targets from one area are included in lessons for other areas. The way that staff encourage children's social and language skills in all lessons is especially good. Many of the children's activities are organised in this integrated way with clearly identified targets for their learning. This very good level of organisation is reflected in every aspect of the Foundation unit. Staff work very well together as a team, deciding what will be taught, who will take a lesson one day, who the next; who will support the learning in a group with the less able children, or who will help the early reading group.
54. The Foundation Stage is housed in purpose-built accommodation and is quite new. Staff use the different areas very well to organise different activities such as literacy and story times, water play, painting, and a home corner. There is a very good range of equipment indoors and outside for staff to use with children. Staff keep a very close watch on children to see how well they are making progress in all the different areas of learning.
55. Very good arrangements are made to ease children's transfer into the main classes of the school when they leave reception: they have attended assemblies with the rest of the children, have had their lunches and games lessons in the main hall, and have used the playground with the others. Teachers come in to see them, and go over the records; and the children visit their new class.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress.
- A very good range of activities is planned and carried out.
- The teaching and overall staff support are very good.

Commentary

56. Children's very good progress lifts them from an extremely low starting point. When they start in the nursery, children do not know how to behave together, how to share things, or how to sit and pay attention. The very well focused teaching helps them to learn to sit next to each other,

to begin to play together and to co-operate with adults without fussing. They become very sociable and pleasant youngsters who are keen to join in and learn together. Children enjoy their lessons, playtimes, snack and lunchtimes, and look forward to their days in school. They feel warm and secure in this environment, and it is a very positive start to their school lives. The very good teaching by all staff, whether leading or supporting the activities, is what inspires the children. Staff focus on this area of learning more than any others, especially in the early times in the unit. Every activity is organised so that social and personal targets are encouraged; opportunities to work and play together are arranged throughout the day as part and parcel of the whole learning experience. Each day starts with a greeting time, answering the call of the register, taking messages, and discussing the weather and what they will be doing for the rest of the day. It all builds up to encourage children's co-operation, attention, and ability to get on so well together for the rest of the day. Children behave very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make very good progress in their language development.
- The teaching is very good and leads to very good achievement.
- Many extremely good activities make up the whole learning experience.

Commentary

57. Children make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills and achieve well. Many can speak very few words when they first arrive, and are not used to listening to anyone speaking to them. Through very well planned and taught activities, teachers and support staff concentrate their efforts on getting children to pay attention, to listen to what is being said to them, to follow instructions, and to answer questions. By the time they are ready to leave Foundation Stage, they are used to paying attention and joining in literacy lessons like the older pupils in school; they talk to each other clearly; and listen to what they are being told. They also make very good progress in learning how to write, and to read.
58. About half of the children learn to read 40 or more words by the time they go into the main school, and they often sit together to read simple storybooks with staff. In writing, most children form recognisable letters, and put words together when writing about what they have been doing, or about a story or rhyme they have heard. The spelling is not perfect, and letters are all different sizes, but the writing is readable and sensible. Lower attaining children learn to make marks on paper, or in sand, and know that they can have meaning. They look at books, and make up stories about what they might be about. Children with particular needs, such as visual impairment, are given a great deal of support, learning, for instance, to read Braille, and to use a Braille writer. Their progress is very good in both their attitude to learning, and their actual communication skills.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good, and sometimes very good, progress in their mathematical development.
- The teaching is good, and is often reinforced in other activities.
- Resources are used very well to help children's learning.

Commentary

59. When they first come into the Foundation Stage, many children do not understand anything about numbers or counting. Through very well targeted teaching, however, they rapidly begin to make good progress, realising that it is possible to count things, and that numbers have 'names' and can be drawn like letters. Through many different activities, including counting songs and rhymes, and games on the carpet or the table-tops, they learn to count each other in the mornings, how many are having milk to drink, how many children are going out to play, or how many speckled frogs there are, or currant buns there are in the shop. Staff use a great variety of different toys and equipment to help children's counting skills, and in developing their wider understanding of mathematics, including knowing about different positions, such as 'on top', 'underneath', 'full' and 'empty', 'in front' and 'behind'. Very often, these counting and understanding skills are learned in other activities, as well as in the separate mathematics lessons. A lesson might centre around, for instance, Old MacDonald's Farm, with a lot of little songs, counting games, or working out how many sheep or goats there are on the model farm. The more capable children learn to count to ten without simply chanting the numbers, recognise all the numbers to ten, match eight horses with the number 8, and so on. Lower attaining children need a lot of staff help and repeated activities to understand the whole idea of counting, and in recognising the numerals 1, 2, 3. Some children are beginning to add numbers together, and to take away, in very simple ways.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in developing their knowledge of the wider world.
- Teaching is good.
- Use of resources is good, including the use of visitors.

Commentary

60. Children make good progress across a wide range of knowledge. When they first start in the Foundation Stage, many children have very little awareness of anything beyond their own home. The teaching, however, is well planned and very well organised to increase their knowledge of, for instance, different areas of the school being for different purposes – such as lunch and physical activities in the hall, the outside play area, the office area and other classes. They learn that people do different jobs, both in school and outside, for example with visits by community policemen, firemen, nurses, and a helicopter and its crew. Children have visited shops, the supermarket, and the zoo. Each visit or visitor adds greatly to children's wider understanding, perhaps of how other people live, such as when an Indian dancer came, or when a Welsh story-teller visited. In these activities, children's language skills develop well: they are practising their social skills, having exercise (in the dance) and learning stories about Jesus, as well as stories from other cultures. Their understanding of time develops well, realising that days can be split into mornings and afternoons, that mornings can be split into play, number work, snack, literacy lessons, a prayer before lunch, and so on. Higher attaining children understand that the clocks on the wall are used in telling when the different activities are due to start or finish.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress.
- The teaching is good, varied and imaginative.

Commentary

61. Children have some satisfactory physical skills when they begin in the Foundation Stage. Most are quite active and fit. However, they find it very difficult to play together, or use toys and equipment independently. Teaching is imaginative, encouraging children to explore their own abilities in different ways, allowing them to let off steam sometimes, get out of breath, demonstrate their skills to each other, and watch and learn from each other. This very well organised teaching enables children to make good progress, and many of them gain a lot of confidence, learn to follow instructions, play and exercise with a partner, climb on equipment indoors and outside, ride the trikes and pedal cars, play simple team games, and move in different ways, perhaps to music. As in other subjects, the lessons are also used very well for developing children's language skills and their social skills in relating to each other. By the time they are old enough to move into the main part of the school, most children have reached the level of skills and general fitness that is expected of children of this age. They enjoy their games and exercises, playing together and gaining great confidence in themselves.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for children's creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in a good range of creative and play activities.
- Good teaching provides some very good opportunities to develop children's creative skills.

Commentary

62. Many children have a very low level of skill and awareness when they first come to the nursery. Many, for example, do not know how to hold a crayon or paintbrush, or how to make marks on paper. They may not know what scissors are used for, or how to make sounds with different musical instruments. Through many different activities, teachers and support staff work with children in play sessions, music and singing groups, and painting and modelling topics. Often, the songs are to do with counting, or about different animals, or different times of the year, such as Christmas or harvest. Children achieve well as they take part in all of the different activities, using play dough, textiles and cardboard to make models; they paint simple pictures and patterns; and they learn a range of songs, and how to use several different musical instruments to accompany their singing.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well so that, by Year 6, standards are above average compared to similar schools.
- The standard of pupils' handwriting in Key Stage 1 and spelling in all classes is below average and should be improved.
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good.
- Very good subject leadership has brought about very good improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils write confidently.
- Pupils are good at listening but need to improve their speaking skills.

Commentary

63. Pupils' attainment in English is generally well below average when they start at the school. Pupils achieve well in English and, by the end of Year 2, standards in 2003 show a significant improvement. Progress is good so that by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with the national average. Higher attaining pupils are doing well and the percentage achieving above expectations is higher than in similar schools. This very good level of improvement from the last inspection is the result of improved teaching and better use of assessment information to guide planning, as well as to track pupils' progress over time.
64. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, although the standard of work in Year 2 is below average overall when compared with all schools nationally. The focus on improving writing is beginning to show the improvements expected by the teachers. Pupils' work is planned well and teachers generally expect the most from all their pupils. Reading and writing test results in 2003 were well below the national average but compare favourably with those in similar schools. The current Year 2 has half the pupils on the special needs register so it is unlikely that the outcomes of the tests will show any improvement in 2004.
65. Standards in listening are in line with expectations throughout the school but the standards in speaking are below average, especially amongst the younger pupils. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, most pupils reach average standards in speaking and listening but lack the wider vocabulary and experiences that will help with their writing. Pupils listen and converse confidently and show good consideration for listeners.
66. Reading is taught thoroughly and given a high priority so that pupils build on the skills learned in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils enjoy reading and know several ways of finding out what the unfamiliar words are. A discussion with older pupils shows that they can read independently, and have access to a wide choice of appropriate literature, but do not read for their own pleasure outside the demands of the school. Often the pupils' vocabulary is restricted through a lack of experience and this lowers standards in writing and spelling. Teachers are good at helping pupils to learn to use correct grammar and spelling. Handwriting is not taught consistently in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils do not develop a legible and joined style by the age of seven.
67. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. The examples of very good teaching occur because of the high motivation of pupils who are fully engaged in improving their writing skills. Lessons are planned carefully with clear purposes, and teachers make sure that

pupils understand what they are going to learn. Support staff work closely with the teachers and fully understand what is expected of them and they make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the extra help they receive. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and as a result pupils settle to work readily and quickly. Teachers are very good at using imaginative ideas to interest and motivate the pupils to improve their writing. It is the very good teaching that has raised standards and as a result, all pupils approach writing confidently. Good use of assessment information helps to make sure that teachers focus on the targets they have set for individuals and for groups of pupils. This makes teaching more effective and is helping to push up the standards achieved. However, marking of written work does not make sufficient reference to the planned learning and individual targets to ensure that pupils have a better understanding of their progress and of how to improve.

68. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader is well informed, sets very high standards and is very effective in bringing about improvement. Thorough, systematic monitoring of teaching and pupils' work and the detailed tracking of pupils' progress and careful analysis of results provide the co-ordinator with good information about what is working well in the subject and what needs to be improved. The school uses this information very well to build on strengths and to target areas for improvement. There has been a very good level of improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

69. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and there are many well-planned and exciting activities in which pupils use their reading and writing skills in other subjects. Teachers often encourage them to make their own choices about how they present their work in subjects, such as science, history and geography. Teachers consistently use good questioning across the subjects to encourage pupils to discuss ideas and to extend their answers. This also helps to improve the standard of pupils' writing. The school recognises the need to further develop pupils' language and literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum and has well-planned strategies in place to bring this about.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- The assessment of pupils and the use made by the school of that assessment are good.
- Target setting for pupils is a strength.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work varies in quality: it does not always provide sufficient information for pupils to improve their work.
- Whilst all teachers communicate learning objectives to pupils, insufficient use is then made of these for assessment, including pupil self-assessment.

Commentary

70. Standards in mathematics by Year 6 are in line with national expectations. When the very low level of pupils' attainment on entry to the school is considered, this represents very good achievement. The 2003 national test results for Year 6 pupils were average when compared to all schools and well above those of similar schools. The 2003 national test results for Year 2 pupils were below those nationally and, as with Year 6, well above those of similar schools.
71. Teaching is good in both key stages and results in good learning. The attitude of pupils to mathematics varies from satisfactory to very good. Overall attitudes are good. Pupils' behaviour

in mathematics lessons was good. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very highly influenced by the teaching. In the best lessons, teachers emphasise mathematical language and use this language correctly. Where teaching was lively and involved pupils, they responded well. The Year 6 class enjoyed a question and answer session on sequences of numbers: they enjoyed the challenge and their personal success when explaining by exactly how much 0.75 was a smaller than 1. Such teaching demonstrated high expectations for all pupils.

72. Classroom assistants working with the class teachers make a significant contribution to pupils' mathematical achievement, particularly those with special educational needs. This involves support of specific pupils during lesson introductions, oral and mental sessions and high levels of interaction during activities so that pupils were expected to verbalise their understanding of mathematical ideas.
73. Teachers ensure that pupils use computers in their mathematics work through writing and the presentation of data. The electronic whiteboards are having a positive impact on teaching and learning, enabling teachers to give very clear demonstration and examples of lesson content and ensuring that all pupils are able to see the examples. For example, one teacher made good use of the speed and clarity of graphics on the screen to explain, in an exciting and motivating way, the point being made. This, coupled with well-led discussion between the teacher and the pupils, enabled all pupils to recognise patterns in tables and charts.
74. Good feedback to individuals and the whole class is a common and effective feature of teaching. Personal targets are regularly set and reviewed by teachers and pupils. Such strategies have a positive effect on pupils' achievement, on their attitude to mathematics and their personal self-esteem. However, the marking of pupils' work by teachers is inconsistent. Better practice gave pupils clear indications about what they had done well but these were not always tightly linked to the lesson content.
75. Provision in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. The subject is well led and managed by a subject co-ordinator who is enthusiastic and who monitors standards, planning and resources. The results of regular testing are analysed. This leads to the identification of groups experiencing problems and of aspects of mathematics causing difficulty. Monitoring of teaching has occurred but less so recently owing to the school's concentration on the need to raise pupils' achievement in English.

Mathematics across the curriculum

76. Good use is made of mathematics in other subjects. For example, the close links made between mathematics and ICT help develop pupils' numeracy and computer skills. ICT and mathematics are very closely linked in a number of areas of the curriculum through the use of spreadsheets and database work. Similarly, pupils' skills in measuring are applied well in science, for example awareness of estimation of size and distance when studying the solar system, and when accurately measuring and recording data in experimental work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good with a significant amount of very good teaching. This results in good learning.
- Standards are in line with the national average by the age of eleven.
- ICT is used very well in science
- The management of science is very good.
- Pupils' use of scientific language is a weakness which the school is remedying.

- The number of pupils attaining higher levels is below average.
- Improvement since the last inspection has been good, especially in implementation of manageable systems for assessment of pupils' progress.

Commentary

77. The results of the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 were below the national average but were well above average when compared with similar schools. Lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work indicate that by Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations and are clearly improving. Overall there has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection. Standards attained by seven year old pupils as measured in the teachers' assessment for 2003 are below the national average. Currently standards in Year 2 lessons are average and pupils' achievement is good.
78. Teaching is good overall and has some very good aspects. Lessons are very well planned and teachers use a very good range of strategies to ensure lessons run smoothly and that pupils understand the lesson content. The use of ICT is very good, both in the classroom and when classes move to the ICT suite, as, for example, when a Year 5 class researched information about the solar system. In this lesson, pupils attained expected standards both in the science and in the ICT content of the lesson.
79. Teamwork between all staff is very good and is an important factor in the good learning that occurs in lessons. All staff share in the very good classroom and pupil management that makes lessons so successful and ensures that all pupils, whatever their individual needs, are fully involved in the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in all lessons. Work is matched to their individual needs and level of attainment. Very good relationships, high expectations and respect that teachers have for pupils and that pupils have for all adults in the school are typical of many lessons. These factors, together with very good planning and good overall classroom management, result directly in good learning. Pupils concentrate well, they share equipment and computers sensibly and most make good use of scientific facts and information they have learned in the past.
80. Pupils' behaviour is very good. Besides good levels of concentration, they are very considerate of others, listen well and are aware of others' points of view. This ability to share and to get on with others enables them to work very successfully in groups and whole-class activities as well as individually.
81. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is the deputy head and so is in a very good position to monitor standards and teaching and learning in science. The response to the key issue of the last inspection, which was to improve the assessment of pupils work in science, has been very good and systems are securely in place. Very good and thorough analysis of performance has resulted in a focus on the development of pupils' language in science. This is linked to the whole-school drive to improve pupils' language to ensure that they can understand and respond to written questions and provide appropriate written answers.
82. Some of the classrooms are quite small and do have an inhibiting effect on investigative work. Investigative and experimental work is a strong feature of science in both key stages and is well taught. However, the physical nature and small size of classrooms, for example the Year 6 classroom, do restrict pupils' movement and access to equipment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a very good level of improvement since the last inspection.
- Although standards are below the expected levels, they are improving rapidly.
- Teaching is good overall and results in good learning.
- Resources are very good.
- Whole-school co-ordination and support are good and are improving the quality of provision and standards.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good when using ICT.
- The school recognises the need to improve further teachers' expertise.
- The provision for demonstrating software to a whole class presents some problems and needs to be reviewed.

Commentary

83. The school has made considerable strides in the development of its facilities for ICT since the last inspection. The new ICT suite, which is timetabled for all classes, is very well equipped. This is having a significant effect on standards, and, although these are still below the national average by the end of both key stages, they are improving and pupils of all ages are achieving well. Pupils in both key stages are appropriately conversant with how to use the expected range of software and facilities, including searching for information through the Internet. They make good use of ICT in many subjects, thus reinforcing and developing their skills.
84. As a part of the schools' ICT strategy, besides whole classes using the suite, on occasions groups of pupils work with a specialist teacher in the suite while the remainder of the class continue with their work in the classroom. This is having a good effect on standards as it allows teachers and support staff to provide almost individual attention and support for each pupil in the class. Pupils with special educational needs are developing their ICT skills especially well using this strategy and are achieving well, making good progress.
85. Whole-class teaching with a shared focus, as for example in a Year 6 lesson concentrating on history and ICT using the Internet to research and use facts and information, is raising standards in both subjects. In one such lesson, approximately a third of the class attained standards that were in line with the national expectations.
86. Teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching. This results directly in pupils' good learning. Lessons are well planned and make very good use of the improved facilities. Teamwork between support staff and teachers is very good and is a very important factor in the good learning. Relationships are very good between adults and pupils and this, together with the good level of planning to meet individual needs, places pupils in a secure environment where they want to learn and make good progress. The large number of pupils with special needs, as well as those who have been identified as higher attainers, are well catered for and have full access to all the school has to offer.
87. On a small number of occasions, the excitement of working in the ICT suite results in pupils losing concentration and not learning as well as they might. The school is aware of a need to review classroom and resource management to ensure the smooth running of lessons, especially in the ICT suite. Although the suite is provided with some very good systems whereby the teacher can control all computers at once, for example for demonstration, this does not always have the immediacy and appeal of an interactive whiteboard or some other form of large-scale display.

88. Subject leadership is good. The school has made a very good level of improvement since the last inspection when the use of ICT, especially in Key Stage 1, was found to be key issue. A major factor in this has been the determination of management to improve provision, raise standards and provide pupils with access to as high a level of good quality use of ICT as is possible. The co-ordinator, who is also the specialist ICT teacher, plays a significant part in this strategy, not only through teaching but also through the support and advice that he provides for colleagues. The development plan is good and is well structured to further raise the quality of provision and standards throughout the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

89. ICT is an integral ingredient of a wide range of subjects and the shortfall in provision reported in the last inspection has been fully remedied. During the inspection very good use was made of subject-specific software, word processing and graphics and the Internet. Many of these aspects were illustrated in mathematics, history, English and science lessons. The interactive whiteboards in the Years 5 and 6 classrooms were very well used as a teaching tool in many subjects besides ICT. Overall the use of ICT is enhancing pupils' learning in many subjects across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

90. History and geography share the same timetable time with either a history or a geography topic being covered at any one time by each class. A small number of lessons was observed in both subjects. From this, and from a discussion with the co-ordinator, it is clear that humanities are well taught and managed and that all pupils cover the National Curriculum.

Geography

91. In the lessons seen teaching was mainly good with very well planned and resourced lessons motivating and encouraging pupils. Geography lessons are very well structured to take into account the local environment and to make the lesson relevant to pupils. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils examined aerial photographs, maps and a model of the proposed development around the school. Pupils demonstrated a good level of awareness of their surroundings and the differences that the new development would make to the landscape and to their school. Learning in this lesson was very good.

History

92. Similarly, in the one history lesson observed, pupils made very good progress in understanding of the lifestyle of a range of people in Tudor times. The showed an appropriate understanding of time scale and the social and economic differences between, for example, the king and a range of 'ordinary' people.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' knowledge about religions is below the level expected nationally, but their awareness of moral and ethical matters is sound.
- Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about religions, and their learning about moral issues is good.
- The teaching is good, especially in encouraging discussions between pupils.
- Organisation of the subject is good.

Commentary

93. Most pupils in both key stages reach standards that are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. However, they have achieved well in their time in school.
94. As well as the main stories and principles of Christianity, pupils also learn satisfactorily about a range of other religions, such as Hinduism and Judaism. They understand that religions are very often the basis for how people live and behave. Pupils satisfactorily learn some of the differences in dress, food and customs in the major religions. What pupils learn well, however, is to think about their own values and beliefs, and how many of these are common to different religions. In discussions, pupils talk about what they and other people find precious, and what might be most precious, or 'sacred', to religious people and their churches. Much of the teaching begins with a 'seed' from a religious story, then goes on to explore how the principles can apply to the pupils' own lives. This is often done well, and it is a very good support for pupils' skills of discussion, in knowing how to organise their thoughts and express themselves sensibly in public. Pupils generally find this a positive way of learning, without feeling the need to write about what they have done. Teachers plan their lessons well in the main, and give pupils satisfactory opportunities to reflect on their own lives through these discussions. Worksheets are used too much when pupils do any written work.
95. The co-ordinator is capable and well organised and leadership and management of the subject are both good. The co-ordinator has modified and introduced a new syllabus of what should be taught in the long term, and has built up a good selection of books, topic ideas and artefacts from different religions. Assemblies are good additional occasions when pupils learn about Christian values and beliefs, often well led or supported by the vicar from the nearby church. The school does not yet have a good system of checking how well teachers are teaching, but staff have begun to use a satisfactory new system for assessing pupils' learning. Pupils' standards have been satisfactorily maintained since the last inspection; the emphasis on how religions affect the children's own lives has developed well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

96. Physical education was inspected in full, but due to the timing of the inspection and timetable constraints it was only possible to sample art and design, design and technology and music.
97. In **art and design**, pupils throughout the school have many opportunities to record their ideas using a good range of materials, including computer programs. There are some examples of careful artwork with good use of colour, sketching and drawing but other work lacks this quality because the pupils do not have sufficient experience of working with paint. They have opportunities to respond to the work of famous artists. Such work makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development and multi-cultural understanding. Pupils use sketchbooks to experiment with ideas and materials but have insufficient opportunity to develop and practise their knowledge and skills in mixing colours. The scheme of work and the lesson planning show that teachers take good account of the National Curriculum requirements and make sure that lessons have a clear focus on learning skills and techniques. Teachers value pupils' work and display it carefully around the school. Some of this work is of a good standard, such as the pencil sketches from all age groups, following the study of Van Gogh's *A pair of boots*. Good opportunities are taken to link art with other subjects to extend the range and quality of the studies.
98. In **design and technology**, only one lesson was sampled during the inspection.
99. Based on the lesson observed in Year 6 and the scrutiny of pupils' work, pupils are judged to be making good progress and achieving well by the age of eleven. Pupils were very positive about this lesson and the previous one where they had examined a number of shelters used to keep people dry and shaded from the sun. The class coped well with the production of design ideas. Teaching in the lesson observed was good as the teacher was confident about her approach

and her personal knowledge of the aspects being taught. Pupils responded well to the opportunity given to generate ideas for a lightweight shelter for parents at sports day. They could identify suitable materials and methods for construction and were challenged when asked by the teacher to consider the size of the structure and how it would be made.

100. Pupils in both key stages research existing products and draw designs before they begin making products. They are taught about materials and a range of skills using paper, card and textiles. In Years 1 and 2, pupils collaborate on design and technology topics such as puppets and produce worthwhile products. All pupils respond well to design and technology, including pupils with special educational needs.

101. **Music** is a strong subject within the school. Lesson planning is creative and imaginative, based on a good long-term plan, and staff encourage pupils to play a good range of musical instruments. All pupils have regular music lessons in which they sing a wide variety of songs, play percussion instruments, and hear different styles of music. Many pupils also have opportunities to learn to play more complex instruments such as electronic keyboards, flute, trombone, cello, violin, clarinet and trumpet. These sessions are taught well by visiting teachers. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, and the resources have been built up well.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and occasionally excellent.
- Standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 6.
- The pupils' response is very good in lessons; they work hard and achievement is high.
- The subject leader has good knowledge and ensures the curriculum is rich and varied.
- Extra-curricular provision is very good.

Commentary

102. By the end of both key stages, pupils' standards in dance, gymnastics and games are average. In dance, pupils' self-confidence, imagination, skills and understanding are good. The school values the physical aspects of the curriculum and has a very strong tradition in developing the pupils' skills in this area. This happens in lessons, clubs and sport both in and out of school. As a result, the school was awarded the Activemark in 2003.

103. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and occasionally excellent. Teachers plan their lessons well, providing a good variety of activities that keep pupils highly motivated and busy. Teachers help pupils to learn by demonstrating new techniques themselves or by getting them to watch other pupils. Teachers manage their classes very well, achieving high standards of behaviour and very good co-operation from the pupils. In an excellent gymnastics lesson in Year 6, for example, groups of pupils worked together very well in developing a sequence of movements and balances.

104. The pupils' response in lessons is very good. They all change into the expected kit, leave their clothes tidy and move to lessons very quickly. Once they arrive in the hall or outside, they are ready to learn and begin immediately. They participate with enthusiasm, behave very well and collaborate well with a partner or other members of a group. In almost every lesson, pupils work very quietly, often silently, and show long periods of concentration. The combination of good teaching, very good discipline and pupils who listen well and try hard, results in good learning and progress.

105. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons. They make the same good progress that all pupils make and are fully involved in every aspect of the subject.
106. All pupils participate in the warm-up activities and understand the effects that exercise can have on the body. Teachers have a good awareness of health and safety issues and remind pupils of the need for safety in the use of equipment. A very good proportion of pupils participate in extra-curricular activities and represent the school in a range of sports. The school teams achieve a good degree of success in competition with other schools. The school's arrangements for swimming are good and a large majority of pupils achieve the expected standard of swimming 25 metres. Older pupils also have the opportunity to engage in outdoor and adventurous activities during their residential visit.
107. Leadership and management are good. The subject benefits from an enthusiastic leader who plays a significant part in undertaking the planning and organisation of the curriculum so all teachers are supported in planning their lessons. In addition, teachers help to provide a very good range of extra-curricular activities that extend the pupils' experiences and contribute to the high achievement. The curriculum is very well balanced. Assessment procedures are good and help teachers plan for the different groups. Resources for physical education are good.
108. Since the last inspection the school has improved the quality of teaching and learning and introduced a more structured scheme of work. Pupils' attitudes have improved so that all pupils join in and enjoy their learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

109. This area is a very significant part of the school's work and a lot of effort is put into developing children's personal and social skills. The school, which is at the centre of the community, is rapidly expanding with the new building and community provision being developed around the school site. The area around the school is one with significant levels of disadvantage, both economically and socially. This is recognised in all aspects of the school's work and especially in the caring nature of the education it provides. Personal, social and health education is central to all that the school is trying to do, including raising pupils' expectations, their sense of responsibility, consideration for others and a feeling of self-worth. This permeates all lessons and aspects of the school and is very carefully planned for.
110. The school works very closely with a wide range of other initiatives and professionals in a co-ordinated and very effective way to ensure that personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs awareness, is effective and central to its work and the development of its pupils. Personal, social and health education is very well managed and taught, and as a result, learning is good.
111. The school's ethos is very much centred on the school as a caring, valuing community and it is very successful in this aspect of its work.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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