

INSPECTION REPORT

ROWANS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117257

Headteacher: Mr R Boulton

Lead inspector: Mrs J Coop

Dates of inspection: 20th - 23rd October 2003

Inspection number: 257363

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:	122
School address:	Rowans Welwyn Garden City
Postcode:	AL7 1NZ
Telephone number:	01707 321203
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Richardson
Date of previous inspection:	14 th September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small primary school serves a large mixed housing estate on the edge of Welwyn Garden City. There are 122 pupils on roll between the ages of three to eleven. Since 2000 the school has experienced a significant period of instability. There has been a heavy turnover of staff, the quality of education declined and the school's standing within the community dipped. As a result there has been a significant fall in pupil numbers since the last inspection. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is average. There is evidence to show that this is not a true reflection of the school's socio-economic circumstances which are below average. Most pupils come from a white United Kingdom background and the very few pupils from ethnic minority groups are not new to speaking English. Twenty-two percent of the pupils have been identified as having learning problems, which is above the national average. Three percent of pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is also above the national average. A significant number of pupils have complex learning, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery varies each year but is below average overall. The recruitment and retention of staff are continuing difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM]

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
31862	Mrs J Coop	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design technology Music Physical Education Information and communication technology Special educational needs.
31729	Mr B Harrington	Lay inspector	
16493	Mr N Sherman	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Geography History Religious education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The leadership and management of the school by the recently appointed headteacher are very good. Given the very high income the school receives, the school provides **satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is led and managed very effectively by the headteacher who is well supported by governors and senior staff.
- Children have a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards in science are below average at the end of Year 2.
- Standards are above average in science and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Girls do not achieve as well as boys, especially in mathematics and English.
- Standards in writing could be higher; pupils' spelling and their ability to write at length are weak.
- The monitoring and checking of pupils' attainment and progress are not fully developed in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Pupils behave well and have good relationships with their teachers and each other.
- The school cares well for the pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- The school has good links with parents, who greatly value the recent improvements made.

The school has made **good improvement** since the last inspection. Leadership and management are now very effective compared to the previous leadership of the school, the provision for children in the Foundation Stage has improved significantly. Most of the key issues have been addressed well, and pupils are now making better progress than they were.

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	C	C	C
mathematics	E	C	C	C
science	E	A	B	A

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

Children start in the nursery with below average skills. Their progress is good because of the consistently good quality of teaching. By the time they start in Year 1, they reach the standards expected in most areas of learning. The exception is in their communication and language skills which remain below average.

In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2, there has been a significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher level is low and this affects the overall standards attained, which are below average overall. Inspection findings show that current

standards are average in English and mathematics. They are below average in science, because the progress of more able pupils is too slow. In the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils reached standards that were average in mathematics and English and above average in science. Inspection findings show that current standards are above average in mathematics and science. Standards in all other subjects including English, Information and communication technology and religious education are average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory but improving.

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. In the past there have been weaknesses in teaching and learning. As a result, pupils made unsatisfactory progress and there are gaps in pupils' learning. Evidence from the inspection shows that pupils are now making satisfactory progress overall. This reflects the recent improvements to teaching, the curriculum and use of assessment, implemented by the headteacher and his colleagues. Girls do not achieve as well as boys in English and mathematics. The girls appear to have been affected more than the boys by the previous difficulties in the school. As a result they generally lack confidence, but this is improving due to the school's efforts to develop their self esteem. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates in lessons and achieve well in relation to their abilities.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social education are good. Pupils have **good attitudes** to learning and **behave well**. **Attendance is below average** mainly due to illness and medical appointments and some pupils arrive late each day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory and improving rapidly.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but it is improving due to the good quality guidance and support that inexperienced teachers receive. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and children enjoy the interesting activities that are provided for them and learn well. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good, because staff are more experienced. Consequently pupils in these classes make more rapid progress. In all classes teachers and pupils are supported by hard working assistants who make a valuable contribution to the progress that pupils make.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is enhanced by a good range of additional activities. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and staff provide a wealth of interesting activities. The care of pupils is good. The school is sensitive to the needs of each individual and provides good advice and support. Partnership with parents is good and has much improved. There are satisfactory links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management provided by the recently appointed headteacher are very good. He has worked tirelessly to develop the school and improve its standing within the community. He has very high expectations and is supported well by a small but effective team of senior staff who share his ideals. Management of the school is very effective, with very clear educational priorities focussed on raising pupils' achievements and attitudes to learning. Consequently much has been achieved in a short time. The governing body takes its role seriously and governance is good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very high opinion of the work of the school and express great confidence in the headteacher. They speak with some passion about the very recent improvements and are highly appreciative of the hard work of all the staff who have made the school like a 'family community'.

Pupils share their parents' views. They are enthusiastic about the school, especially the support they receive from the headteacher and staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in science by the end of Year 2, particularly investigational skills and ensure that the more able pupils are challenged.
- Build on the work started to improve girls' attitudes to learning and their overall achievement.
- Raise standards in spelling and pupils' ability to write at length.
- Develop assessment procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics.

All statutory requirements are met.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses.

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Standards in mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6 and average in English.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and are in line to attain the Early Learning Goals¹ except in communication skills.
- Standards in science are below average at the end of Year 2.
- Standards in science and mathematics are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Girls do not attain as well as boys in the English and mathematics national tests, but the gap is closing.
- The quality of spelling is unsatisfactory and pupils' limited ability to write at length prevents standards from being higher.
- Pupils are making good progress in their learning in Years 5 and 6 and progress is improving rapidly.
- Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their friends in lessons and achieve well.
- In the core subjects in Year 3-6, the rise in standards is above the national average despite many changes of teaching staff.

Commentary.

1. The school is recovering from three years of disruption when pupils in all year groups experienced several changes of teacher and where the quality of education fell from that reported during the last inspection. The number of pupils attending the school has decreased as a result, and in most classes there are an above average number of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom who have complex learning, social emotional or behavioural difficulties. Together with the small numbers of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, this makes any comparison of standards in different years unreliable.

Standards in the Foundation Stage.

2. The attainment of children who start in the nursery varies each year, but overall it is below the expected level in all areas of learning for children of this age. Children make good and often very good progress in the nursery and reception class. They are provided with a wealth of interesting learning activities that are well matched to their level of ability. Staff are supportive and caring, so that children settle quickly to the routines and achieve well in relation to their individual capabilities. Most children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning except in their communication, language and literacy. Despite the good level of support most children's speaking skills remain immature and despite the best efforts of staff many will not attain the expected level when they start in Year 1.

¹ Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in connection with communication language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

Standards at the end of Year 2.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003		
Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.8(13.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.1 (11.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.8 (14.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2003 were below both the national average and those of similar schools. This is because few more able pupils attained the higher level 3 especially in science. There has been a downward trend in standards compared to the national picture. This is despite there being a significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science in 2003. This year group had a difficult and unsatisfactory start to their education in a class where the teaching had been judged unsatisfactory by the local education authority and also by the headteacher upon taking up his appointment. The evidence from the inspection is that pupils' level of attainment has continued to improve especially in reading, writing and mathematics, where standards are now in line with expectations. This is the result of the decisive intervention of the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, standards in science remain below average because pupils' investigational skills are not developed fully and the progress of more able pupils is too slow.

Standards at the end of Year 6.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003		
Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.7(27.7)	26.8.(27.0)
mathematics	27.3.(26.7)	26.8.(26.7)
science	29.8(30.3)	28.6.(28.3)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Results in the national tests in 2003 were average in mathematics and English and above average in science. In comparison to similar schools, pupils' attainment is average overall. Science is the most successful subject, where pupils' attainment is above average compared with similar schools. This is because the school is more successful at challenging more able pupils to attain the higher level 5 in science. Inspection findings show that the pupils' level of attainment in science and mathematics is above the national expectations. Standards are higher in mathematics and science because pupils enjoy the practical aspects of these subjects and try hard. In addition, girls prefer mathematics to English and in this subject the gap between the attainment of girls and boys is less evident in lessons. As a result standards are rising more quickly in mathematics than in English.
5. Standards in all other subjects inspected in detail, including information and communication technology and religious education, are in line with expectations at the end of Year 6. The school is working hard to improve overall standards. There is now a

more stable staffing situation and inexperienced staff are being well supported by the headteacher, senior staff and temporary additional support teachers, so that they can develop their skills for the benefit of the pupils in their class.

Girls' attainment.

6. Despite this positive picture in Year 2 and Year 6, girls in general do not attain as well as boys in the national tests. Their self confidence and motivation appears to have been knocked by the disruptions to their education and the unsatisfactory teaching they experienced. They do not appear to have coped as well as the boys with the past difficulties in the school. As a result, in many, but not all lessons, older girls do not appear as eager to learn as the boys. The careful evaluation of test results undertaken by the headteacher has alerted the school to this issue. Inspection evidence indicates that the school's efforts to increase their motivation and develop a belief in themselves are beginning to bear fruit and the gap is narrowing. The school is not complacent and although there has been some improvement, it correctly recognises that there is still some way to go before girls catch up with boys and develop confidence in their own ability.
7. The difference between the attainment of boys and girls is particularly marked in English. When asked, many girls stated that this was their least favourite subject, and they found it difficult to think of ideas when they were asked to write. Observations show that girls are more reluctant to participate in class discussions and are often quite shy when asked about their work, many finding it difficult to express themselves in extended sentences. This, together with pupils having limited recourse to a range of spelling strategies, affects their ability to write at length. Pupils, especially girls, often start off writing well, but cannot sustain their ideas. They tend to choose simple words that they can spell rather than choosing more powerful words that add interest for the reader. These factors have a direct impact on overall standards attained which are lower than mathematics and science and are not rising as significantly as other subjects.

Pupils' level of achievement.

8. Because of weaknesses in the past due to unsatisfactory teaching, and the limited use of assessment to match activities to pupils' abilities, there are gaps in pupils' learning. As a result pupils' achievements are only satisfactory overall. Due to the very good leadership of the headteacher and good commitment from staff, teaching has improved and this is leading to a rapid acceleration of pupils' progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. In these classes teachers are working hard and to good effect to redress some of the previous weaknesses in teaching and learning. Consequently this is having a positive effect on the pupils' overall level of achievement when they leave school in Year 6. Although teaching is satisfactory there is still room for improvement. The school has recognised this and has already initiated sensible plans. Through the good support from additional teaching staff employed to provide good role models, and the mentoring and perceptive evaluations by the headteacher, less experienced teachers are also ensuring that pupils now achieve well in many lessons.
9. Pupils with special educational needs and those with more complex learning difficulties are well supported in lessons. Their individual efforts are valued and they receive sensitive yet relevant support. This ensures that they make the same progress as their friends in lessons and are achieving well in relation to their individual capabilities. The small number of pupils from ethnic minority groups also achieve as well as their

classmates. They are valued members of the school community and enjoy school as a result.

10. The headteacher has high expectations and has acted decisively to address weaknesses and improve the quality of education provided by the school. As a result, despite a period of disruption and significant staff changes standards have risen above the national trend in Key Stage 2. Recent initiatives such as teaching pupils in groups according to their ability, improving resources and providing small group support for less able pupils is having a positive effect on the pupils level of achievement. As a direct consequence of all these efforts the school is on course to attain the challenging targets it has set in mathematics and science in 2004, but may not quite attain them in English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Their personal development is also **good**; with their spiritual, social and moral development the stronger features. Attendance is **below average** and punctuality is **unsatisfactory**.

- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and work hard in lessons.
- Girls are less enthusiastic about their learning in some subjects.
- Behaviour in and around the school is good, and pupils are polite and courteous to each other and visitors.
- Provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good.
- Attendance is below the national average. Not all pupils are punctual.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

Commentary

11. In the main, pupils work hard in lessons and are keen to produce work that reflects their capabilities. They are interested and curious about their learning. They sit and listen with interest to both what their teachers may have to say or explain and what their classmates have to offer. Pupils' written work is well presented, and attendance at the wide range of extra-curricular activities is good. They work well in small groups, and work independently of the teacher when they are asked. Pupils appreciate the efforts taken by the school to increase the opportunities they have to voice their opinions. Many pupils feel that the school has improved since the appointment of the current headteacher. The girls, however, are less enthusiastic about some subjects of the curriculum. The school is aware of the need to improve the attitudes of the girls towards their learning in order to enhance their levels of achievement. Early measures designed to achieve this appear to be having some success.
12. Behaviour in and around the school is good. The school's rules, which the pupils have helped develop, are followed and pupils have a clear understanding of how their behaviour may impact on the well being of others. Pupils are friendly and polite to visitors and treat other pupils with more complex learning needs with kindness. There is no evidence of any racial tension in the school, relationships between pupils are good and in the main, pupils are kind and helpful towards one another.
13. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and personal development. They are encouraged to collect for others less fortunate than themselves. This successfully enhances their understanding of the responsibility towards others in different and challenging circumstances. Pupils have a well-

developed understanding of what is right and wrong. Those few pupils who find the school's moral code more difficult to follow are given good support to explore why their behaviour is sometimes inappropriate and what they should try to do to improve it. Assemblies are used well to develop a sense of school community and to provide moments where pupils are encouraged to ponder on the beauty and wonder of the world around them. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development. Subjects such as history and geography are used well in this respect. However, while some provision is made to develop pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural aspect of the society in which they live more could be done, religious education for example is under-used in this respect.

Attendance.

14. Attendance is below the national figure. Most absences arise through sickness or medical visits. There is no evidence to indicate that this has a significant effect on standards and the school goes to great lengths to promote good attendance and punctuality. As a result most pupils are keen to come to school. A small number of parents and carers are unaware of the need for pupils to arrive on time in the morning. Their late arrival disrupts lessons and pupils often miss valuable teaching points at the start of morning lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)				
Authorised absence			Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.8		School data:	0.0
National data:	5.4		National data:	0.4
The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.				

Ethnic background of pupils	Exclusions in the last school year		
Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	81		
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2		
Chinese	2		
No ethnic group recorded	25	1	
The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.			

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. This judgement is based on satisfactory teaching, satisfactory use of assessment in English and mathematics, and an acceptable curriculum. There are good features exemplified in the good levels of personal support offered to pupils and the effective links with parents, which encourage pupils in their positive attitudes to school.

Teaching and learning

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	18	7	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons

The headteacher, with the support from the local education authority, employed temporary additional support teachers for a period of six weeks. This was part of the school's initiatives to improve the quality of education and to assist in the professional development of less experienced teachers. As a result, although the quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good or better in 20 out of 28 lessons seen, this picture is not a true reflection of teaching in the school which is satisfactory overall. However the improving quality of the teaching reflects the good quality of the initiatives to strengthen teaching and its impact on learning. Teaching is more effective in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6, so that pupils make rapid gains in their learning. As a result the gap between the achievement of girls and boys is less marked in these classes.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff in the Foundation Stage understand the learning needs of young children well, so that activities are interesting and children try hard.
- The pace at the start of some lessons is too slow and lesson ends are not always used effectively to support learning.
- Teachers use a limited range of activities to motivate and interest pupils, especially girls.
- Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning in all classes.
- The school now has effective procedures in place to monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has yet to develop effective ways to monitor the pupils' progress in other subjects.
- The marking of pupils' work is good

Commentary

15. Children in the Foundation Stage learn well because they enjoy their lessons which are well planned by the staff. The teacher and well qualified assistants form an effective team that ensure lessons are interesting, and activities are relevant and clearly explained. As a result, children's confidence develops well, and is nurtured effectively by the good relationships between staff and children. Children feel safe in this warm and supportive learning environment. They try hard to win the praise of the staff and make good progress as a result. Parents state that they are delighted in the

way their children have settled and have already noticed an improvement in their children's abilities. They know the school is committed to ensuring that children have a good foundation to their future learning and value the recent improvements made to the classroom area.

16. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4, and good in Years 5 and 6. New staff are well supported to develop their teaching skills. There are some areas that require further development, especially the pace of lessons which is sometimes a little slow, especially at the start. Although learning objectives are well explained, some teachers tend to spend too long talking about activities and explaining concepts. This leads to some restlessness which although handled well means that many pupils especially girls tend to 'switch off'. This affects the progress they make. This slow pace at the start also affects the rest of the lesson. Consequently pupils have less time to practise their skills. As a result lesson ends tend to be a little rushed and not as effective as they could be as a tool to assess what pupils have learned, or to involve pupils in evaluating their own learning.
17. Teachers have a good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy and follow the lesson structure closely. Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of mixed-age classes and the decision to teach pupils in groups according to their ability is proving to be successful. However this still leaves teachers with the challenging task of meeting the needs of a wide range of abilities in each class. Although teachers successfully plan an acceptable range of group and independent activities, in some literacy lessons teachers lack confidence to use a wide variety of resources and teaching activities to make learning more interesting and relevant to pupils. Many pupils, especially girls, find it difficult to express themselves and lack confidence in their own abilities. They do not appear to enjoy learning especially English. Teachers are trying hard to address this factor and when asked, older girls in particular commented favourably that lessons were now more interesting. As a result their progress and motivation are improving.
18. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good overall. It is better in these classes because staff are more experienced, have a more secure subject knowledge and have the confidence to inject a little fun and excitement into teaching. They are working hard to redress some of the gaps in pupils' learning and as a result progress is more rapid in these classes because pupils are generally more interested in activities and try harder. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs and those with more complex learning difficulties are sensitively supported and are valued members of each class group. The work of teaching assistants is invaluable and they are enthusiastic and professional in their work. They make a valuable contribution to learning and help ensure that pupils can work at their own pace. They are supportive and encouraging without directing things too closely. The assistants are well briefed by teachers who use them well during whole class sessions or when supporting individual or small groups.
19. Since the appointment of the headteacher, good progress has been made in improving how the school monitors and tracks pupils' progress in English and mathematics. A range of procedures has been implemented and consistently applied in order to build up a fuller profile of the progress pupils are making. In Year 3-6 pupils are tested at regular intervals during the year. This information is used well by teachers to place pupils in different groups and to plan work that best fits the pupils' abilities. However the school has yet to develop consistent ways to monitor the pupils' progress in other subjects of the curriculum where teachers have a patchier picture of what pupils can do, making it more difficult for them to plan the subsequent steps in pupils' learning.

20. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is effective. In all subjects, work is marked in a helpful and supportive manner which celebrates pupils' efforts and points clearly to how they can improve their work. Pupils find this helpful and appreciate the effort teachers take to help them. Their work is neatly presented as a result and it is evident that pupils respond well to suggestions made.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory, but enhanced by an interesting range of additional activities. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and the accommodation has improved since the last inspection. There are now adequate resources for all subjects, and resources have improved significantly in English and information and communication technology since the last inspection.

- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils.
- The accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

21. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the school implements the locally agreed syllabus for religious education satisfactorily. Upon his appointment, the headteacher ensured that the curriculum was improved, followed national guidelines and was consistently planned and followed. Schemes of work based on the guidance given to schools nationally are now used well to support planning and where necessary the school's own materials are used to supplement teachers' planning. This improved planning helps to ensure that the pupils' learning is sufficiently developed as they move through each of the mixed aged classes. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and there is a wealth of interesting learning activities planned that ensure that their education gets off to a flying start.
22. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and is effectively led and managed. The quality of the pupils' individual education plans is good and they support teachers' planning well. Pupils' needs are identified early and their progress is monitored closely. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all curriculum activities and have effective individual support. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity is supported well through its catch up programmes, such as booster groups, small group specialist teaching sessions and teaching in ability groups. It is alert to the achievement of all groups of pupils. Consequently, it recognises the under-achievement of girls and is working hard to redress this situation. Their achievement as a result is satisfactory and improving.
23. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities for all pupils, which they enjoy and which also support the development of their social skills well. Lunchtime and after-school activities, which include pop lacrosse, country dancing, drama, computer, art, rugby, football and netball, encourage pupils to play together harmoniously.
24. The accommodation is good and has been improved well since the last inspection. Pleasant courtyards, adventure playground areas, improved Foundation Stage area and the provision of a large airy computer suite have enhanced the already spacious accommodation. As a result the school provides a pleasant learning environment. A

large, well stocked library and much improved range of reading resources have also had a positive impact upon pupils' enjoyment of literature. As a result, pupils' reading progress and confidence are improving. Although learning resources are adequate and there has been a considerable investment in new computers, the school recognises the need to develop the resources available for other subjects to enable teachers to use a wider variety of teaching strategies and activities to increase pupils' motivation and enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

The care, guidance and support for pupils are **good** overall and the school involves pupils well in its work and development. The procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety are given a high priority.
- The school monitors personal development well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in monitoring their progress.
- Pupils' views are valued.

Commentary

25. This is a caring school where the health and safety of pupils is a high priority for all staff and governors. The site manager conducts regular risk assessments of the premises, the findings of which are formally reported to the governing body, who act quickly if any issues arise. He is very diligent and ensures that all staff are aware of safe practice. The headteacher deals well with any issues of child protection that may arise and has received recent training. Individual pupils are well known by all adults in the school and there is a close working relationship with outside agencies. This ensures that the needs of individual pupils are well met and advice is always acted upon. In this way pupils with more complex learning needs are welcomed and successfully included in the life of the school. Parents value this good quality care that their children receive and value the time and care taken by staff to ensure that their children are happy and settled.
26. Pupils' well being, personal and educational development are whole school priorities. The school provides good quality support, advice and guidance for pupils based upon an awareness of their achievements and personal development. There are good procedures in place to monitor personal development and pupils value the guidance that they receive. They enjoy school and are confident about whom to approach if they have any concerns. The headteacher in particular is very dedicated and takes time to work with individual pupils and their families. The involvement of pupils with special educational needs in setting individual targets and reviewing their progress is a key factor in the good quality of the provision, and has a positive effect on their progress, attitudes and achievement.
27. Pupils' views are valued and taken into consideration. They are asked about their work and school life, and the school council also provides pupils with good opportunities to present their views on what could be improved in school. Following a suggestion from pupils they now choose music for assembly and take responsibility for running a school shop. They enjoy these opportunities and take their responsibilities seriously, ensuring that they develop confidence in their own capabilities and feel valued members of the school community in their own right.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **good** links with parents and makes efforts to involve them in the life of the school. There are **satisfactory** links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Parents are very pleased with the work of the school.
- There is a good level of communication with parents.
- Few visitors share their skills and experiences with pupils to enhance their learning.

Commentary.

28. The partnership with parents is good and they are very happy with the recent improvements made to the quality of education and school leadership. Parents receive good quality information about the life of the school through formal publications, informal exchanges and the weekly newsletter. They are invited to attend workshops relating to curriculum topics and regular consultation evenings. This has a beneficial effect on the school's provision. Parents consider that they now feel more like partners with the school, and thus they are more able to support their children's learning at home. This can be seen in the good support that many parents now provide when hearing their children read, and this is having a beneficial effect on pupils' enjoyment of reading and the improving standards.
29. There are good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils' transfer to high school runs smoothly and successfully. There is a satisfactory but developing link with community partners. The sharing of the nursery provision by the playgroup during the afternoons and renting of space to their YMCA partners helps to provide good quality extended care for young and older children alike. Whilst pupils visit theatres, museums and other places of interest, and have interviewed local residents, there are limited shared activities with other schools and very few visitors to school and hence opportunities are missed for extended activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides **very good** leadership and is well supported by his staff. The management of the headteacher is also **very good**. Governance of the school is **good** and governors support the school effectively.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- The headteacher provides the school with very effective leadership.
- Staff support the school well and there is a clear focus on improving the quality of education and the ethos of the school.
- There is a highly positive team spirit where the views of all parties are valued and acted upon.
- The school is very effectively managed.
- Very good use is made of assessment information as a basis for moving the school forward.
- The school's improvement plan provides a very clear overview of where the school is heading, and planned initiatives are firmly rooted in raising pupils' achievements.
- The management of arrangements for pupils with special educational needs is effective.
- The governors now play a full and active part in the school.

Commentary

30. Since his appointment to the school the headteacher, has provided astute and very good leadership. He quickly identified important shortcomings in provision, and took robust action in order to tackle them. This was followed by a number of important staffing changes and appointments. The new staff has gelled well together. A key feature of the leadership style is the way in which the headteacher has promoted a climate where the views of all are valued. A strong sense of teamwork is now very much evident. A culture of ensuring that the pupils are provided with the skills and attitudes to succeed is now in place. Expectations are now high and embedded in the belief that pupils of all abilities have the potential to achieve and that the school has a direct responsibility to provide a climate where pupils can thrive.
31. The small team of senior managers in the school provides the headteacher with good support. The senior managers are developing their skills well. They meet regularly to discuss school development and are actively involved in evaluating and improving the quality of education in the school. A further group, consisting of the senior managers, the caretaker and leading teaching assistant, meets on a monthly basis to review and discuss the school's progress. This new structure provides a way for all associated with the school to voice their opinions and ideas. Many staff, parents, pupils and governors agree that the lines of communication are very much improved since the appointment of the headteacher. This has contributed well in creating a strong sense of 'ownership' and commitment to the school by all concerned.
32. The headteacher has established very effective procedures to monitor the school's work. These have included radically overhauling and refining the school's assessment procedures and taking clear action to improve provision based on the evidence gathered. As a result, teachers now have a clearer idea of the pupils' progress and greater use is made of the information gathered to plan the subsequent steps in their learning in English and mathematics. The school is aware, for example, of the need to boost the performance and attitudes of the girls and is monitoring their work very carefully. It recognises that it now needs to develop assessment procedures to include other subjects and relevant plans are in hand.
33. The role of the co-ordinator is now firmly established. In a small school, experienced and fully qualified staff have many responsibilities. As a result many subjects are led by recently appointed staff. Whilst making a promising start they have not yet been able to make a significant impact on subject development. Key co-ordinators, such as those for English and mathematics, have good opportunities to view for themselves the impact of teaching on learning in their subjects of responsibility. The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, and local education authority advisors fits together well with the school's arrangements for performance management, and staff training is regularly and effectively merged with planned developments in the school's improvement plan. This is a very clear document and provides a clear rationale as to the school's future development. The plan is rooted in lifting pupils' achievements, and at the same time continues to develop the improving links with the local community as well as the refurbishment of the school.
34. The work of the governors is greatly valued by the headteacher and they have developed their skills well since the last inspection. The governors are now much more effective in the way they undertake their roles and responsibilities. Many governors talk positively about the support and encouragement that the headteacher has given them to perform their role as a 'critical friend.' There are clear and open lines of communication between the school and the governors, and the governing body values the clear and regular information about the school that is provided for them by the

headteacher. It has a regular programme of visits to the school and the governors who undertake this feedback the results of their work at full governing body meetings. This work enables the governors to gain a clear overview of what the school provides. This includes the provision that is made for the pupils with special educational needs. There is a nominated governor who oversees provision and who meets regularly with the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. Together with the visits that are made to see first hand the quality of provision this enables the governing body to fulfil its responsibilities for those pupils with particular learning needs.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003			
Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	373,421.53	Balance from previous year	38874.74
Total expenditure	333,777.48	Balance carried forward to the next	78518.52
Expenditure per pupil	2,902		

35. The headteacher inherited a school that was in severe financial difficulties and heading for an anticipated deficit of fifty seven thousand pounds. With the support of the local education authority a three year plan was instigated. The change in staffing, and the decision not to replace the deputy headteacher helped alleviate the situation. Together with careful financial management the situation has been reversed. There is now a very high balance which currently stands at almost twenty-one percent of the total school income. This has been set aside to make much needed improvements to the pupils' toilets, which they find uncomfortable to use, and to improve the school's entrance hall which currently opens immediately onto the dining area. In addition, the governors have a commitment to keep levels of staffing at their current level, despite a predicted fall in pupil numbers. This decision is based on a desire to maintain the rise in standards, by ensuring that teachers do not have to teach a larger age range in each class.
36. The school follows the principles of best value well and good financial systems are in place. The school tries to avoid unnecessary maintenance expenditure by making the best use of the skills of the site manager. Governors oversee the budget very carefully and they ensure that the school has competitive quotations to enable the school obtains best value for its spending. A good example of this is the careful thought that went into the purchase of new reading resources, which are already helping to raise standards. The school now has sufficient local and national data in order to compare itself with other schools and has begun to consult parents and pupils in the decisions it makes.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Foundation Stage

37. There is very good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. Since the appointment of the headteacher and a new Foundation Stage leader in January 2002, improvement has been very good. The children enter the nursery part-time on a morning only basis. They then join the reception class in the year in which they become five. The curriculum is well planned to meet the children's varying needs and assessment of their progress is good. Teaching is consistently good and the children achieve well as a result. All the staff in the Foundation Stage work well together and focus strongly on providing the children with a good start to their education. The accommodation has improved to provide a well resourced and purpose built Foundation Stage unit. This is further complemented by an attractive outside play area that is used at many points of the day to support the children in their learning. Relationships with the parents of the children are good and many parents work alongside the staff. As a result, children settle quickly into the school and quickly become aware of the school's day-to-day routines.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in this aspect of their learning and teaching is good.
- Children are provided with good opportunities to play together, developing well their skills of co-operation and how to use equipment properly.
- Children are given good support and are not afraid to make mistakes.

Commentary

38. Good attention is paid to promoting the pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The children achieve well in this aspect of their learning and will reach the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. There are good opportunities to share the equipment and help each other, and snack time is used particularly well to encourage polite manners and caring attitudes.
39. Relationships between staff and the children are warm yet purposeful, and ensure that the children settle quickly into the school's routines. Older reception children are sensitive to those with a high level of special educational needs, who are fully included in the full range of activities provided. Children make good progress in their ability to work independently of an adult, and in many lessons they are eager to learn and discover things for themselves. Staff promote this aspect of the children's learning well. They openly encourage the children not to be disappointed in any errors they make and the warm praise and encouragement that the children receive boosts their confidence in trying again and eventually to succeed.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide the children with good opportunities to develop their early confidence and skills in their communication, language and literacy development.
- Children achieve well in this area of their learning.

Commentary

40. Children enter the nursery with well below average language skills. They are provided with rich and interesting activities that prove effective in promoting their early enthusiasm for speaking and listening, reading and early writing skills. Teaching is good and is characterised by teachers providing the children with an attractive learning environment that is very much focused on promoting the children's early interest in books. They are provided with good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, however, few of them are able to talk at length or add more detail to the rather simple answers that they give. In writing, children are also given good opportunities to practice the writing of letters, particularly those that make up their own names. However, most of the children are at the stage of copying letters or simple statements that have been written out for them by an adult. As a result of good support, the children know how to handle books and enjoy stories, however, few older children are at the stage of being able to read simple words. Although the children achieve well, and make good progress, they do not attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Mathematical development

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Staff make good use of other areas of learning to promote the children's mathematical development.

Commentary

41. By the time children enter Year 1, they achieve the Early Learning Goals. Achievement from a low starting point is good, as is the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers make effective use of the many activities during the day to promote the children's early understanding of number, shape and space. Good use is made of the creative area of learning to promote the children's early understanding of number. Children, for example, begin to recognise number shapes because they use a range of malleable materials to form numbers. Equally good use is made of the sand and water areas to promote the children's perception of terms such as 'full' or 'empty' especially when staff join in this 'play'. Teachers also make good use of simple computer programs which are successfully helping to develop children's recognition of simple shapes such as circle, square and rectangle.

Knowledge and understanding of the World

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of the local environment to promote the children's understanding of the world around them.
- Teachers make good use of different themes to support the children's learning.
- Children are provided with good opportunities to use the computer.

Commentary

42. By the time they enter Year 1, the children achieve the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of their learning. Children achieve well, aided by the good teaching they receive. Teachers make particularly good use of themes such as 'Homes' to promote the children's learning. Good use is made of practical resources and experiences such as visits by a nurse, policeman or fire officer to develop the children's knowledge of the world around them, which they enjoy and learn from well. Effective support also ensures that children use computers with growing confidence. Teachers make good use of stories such as 'Handa's Surprise' to promote an early understanding of how children of their age in other parts of the world have different homes to theirs and may live their lives and celebrate special occasions in different ways. As a result of effective teaching, the children develop a healthy curiosity about the world around them and the part other people play in their lives.

Physical development

Provision for physical development is **good**.

- Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to take part in outside play.
- Good use is made of a range of play equipment which successfully fosters the children's finer physical skills.
- Teaching in this aspect of the children's learning is good and helps to promote children's learning in other areas.

Commentary

43. The children are on course to achieve the Early Learning goals in this aspect of their learning by the time they start in Year 1. Children achieve well, because teaching is effective and this is characterised by the rich and varied opportunities that children are provided with to develop their skills. Children use a wide range of small equipment well and experiment keenly in making models or different shapes. At many points of the day, children are provided with good opportunities to participate in outside play. They eagerly use larger equipment such as bikes and trikes and can operate them safely taking into account the space that others may be using. Reception children use the school hall for more structured physical education sessions. They use space well, moving in different ways that include running, skipping and hopping. The children develop confidence to move across benches because relationships with staff are good and children are not afraid to 'have a go'.

Creative development

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well as a result of the good teaching they receive.
- Teachers make good use of structured imaginative play to develop the children's speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

44. Children achieve well in this aspect of their learning and by the time they leave the Foundation Stage they achieve the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is good and the children are provided with interesting activities that are effective in promoting creative abilities. They are given good scope to participate in imaginative play. Children very much enjoy dressing up and enter freely into the imaginative worlds they create for themselves. Such work also helps to develop their speaking and listening skills well as staff who join in the activities are encouraging and supportive. Good scope is given for the children to sing songs and rhymes and children develop the early skills of singing in unison. Teachers provide the children with frequent opportunities to use a wide range of different arts and crafts and the children devise a range of simple pictures and models which they are proud of. As a result, they gain confidence, enjoy learning, and this makes a positive contribution to the good progress that they make.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing would be higher if pupils' spelling was improved and pupils sustained their ideas when writing at length.
- Girls do not achieve as well as boys, although the gap is closing.
- Reading resources have improved and pupils make good progress.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support learning, but the pace of lessons is slow.
- The quality of teachers' marking is good.
- The subject is well led and managed and there are good systems for tracking pupils' progress.

Commentary

45. Attainment in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 shows that standards are below the national average in reading and writing. This represents an improvement from the standards attained in 2002, which were well below average, and is due to a significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining expected levels. Standards are not higher because there are few pupils who attain the higher level, especially in writing. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 remain in line with expectations. Inspection findings are that at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average and are similar to those found at the previous inspection. Standards are not as high in writing as pupils abilities indicate they could be. In all year groups many

pupils use a limited vocabulary when speaking and tend to use short sentences and phrases. This affects the quality of their written work. Consequently, although there is evidence of some lively and interesting starts to pupils' writing, many pupils in Year 6 are unable to build on their good beginnings, and ideas tend to fizzle out.

46. Spelling is a particular weakness in all year groups. Pupils make basic errors and have an insecure grasp of spelling patterns and letter sounds. Older pupils are confused by spelling rules and tend to choose words they are able to spell confidently. Consequently even when ideas are developed, the significant number of spelling mistakes and the limited vocabulary prevent higher standards from being attained. The school recognises this and is working hard to develop pupils' skills. 'Have a go', spelling books are a useful tool, and are ensuring that pupils are developing confidence to spell more difficult words, but there is not yet a consistent whole school approach to the development of spelling.
47. Overall pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils who have specific language difficulties make good progress because of the school's effective support and individual programmes. However, girls in particular make slower progress and do not achieve as well as boys. Many girls state that they do not enjoy the subject, and did not like their previous teachers, who have now left. This appears to have affected their confidence, and the effort that they make in lessons. The school is alert to this issue and is striving hard to develop the girls' interest and thus raise their level of achievement in national tests. Older girls state they are now enjoying lessons more, and in many lessons they are making the same progress as the boys.
48. Within the last year the school has greatly improved the quality and quantity of reading resources. This is having a significant impact on the pupils' level of enjoyment, and standards attained in reading. Parents are very happy with the improved resources and guidance they have received, stating that hearing their children read is 'now a pleasure and not a chore'. Pupils also share their parents' views. Pupils are heard read regularly, both at home and at school, and this good monitoring of progress ensures that increasingly pupils see reading as an important and interesting activity. However, although more able and older pupils are attaining expected standards they often do not check the meaning of words that they read and find it more difficult to infer meaning from the text. This prevents higher standards being attained.
49. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but good in Years 5 and 6. In all classes teaching assistants are well deployed and are professional and effective in their work. They offer good support to pupils with special educational needs and are particularly encouraging of girls during independent activities. Teachers' marking is of a consistently good quality. Individual learning targets are set, regularly reviewed and used effectively to monitor pupils' progress. Pupils appreciate this good level of support which is ensuring that they have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. Teaching is stronger in Years 5 and 6 because teachers are more experienced and have good subject knowledge. They use this effectively to develop pupils' confidence and plan activities that ensure that pupils improve their basic skills. Where teaching is not so effective, lessons lack pace and pupils do not have sufficient time to practice the skills being taught.
50. The subject is now well led and managed by a recently appointed co-ordinator, but the improvements she has made have not yet fully impacted on standards and teaching. Supported by the headteacher, she has carefully evaluated and monitored the provision and has implemented a number of relevant priorities that in a short time have improved the provision significantly since the last inspection. These have including improved links with parents, target setting, improved resources, staff monitoring and

training. In addition, a detailed system of tracking the progress of individuals and groups of pupils has been established. This has ensured that the school is alert to the issue of girls' underachievement and it has begun to tackle this issue. As a result the gap between boys and girls attainment is narrowing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. There are a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills in other subjects, including writing personal accounts in history, note taking in science, reading for research and producing newspaper articles about their findings. However opportunities are not consistently planned. This is a missed opportunity to show pupils that that literacy is a 'key skill' that can be practised and developed in a variety of ways.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is good overall.

- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are higher than expectations.
- Girls perform less well than the boys in national tests.
- Teaching is good and particularly effective in the upper part of the school.
- There are good systems in place to assess and monitor pupils' progress.
- Effective leadership and management of the subject have resulted in standards being raised.
- There are missed opportunities in lessons for pupils to use computers to support their learning

Commentary.

52. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 in the 2003 national tests is in line with the national average. At the end of Year 2, the test results for 2003 show that pupils reached standards that are below average, because fewer than average pupils reached the higher level. The evidence from inspection is that pupils reach above average standards at the end of Year 6. In relation to their individual capabilities and the unsatisfactory start to their education in a school that was in difficulties, pupils are achieving well. At the end of Year 2, standards are average and pupils' achievements in their understanding, confidence and enjoyment of mathematics are satisfactory.
53. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of all aspects of the subject. Pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stage 2 but progress is more rapid for the older pupils.
54. Girls do not achieve as well as boys in the national tests. Inspection findings could find no firm evidence why girls perform less well than the boys in this subject, although discussions with them suggest they have less favourable views than the boys about mathematics generally. Teachers work hard to ensure that they are motivated in lessons and this is most successful in Years 5 and 6 where teachers are more experienced and relationships are more secure. As a result, the gap is closing.
55. The quality of teaching is good, although the most effective teaching is in Years 5 and 6. Introductions to lessons are generally effective and are most successful when learning is brisk because activities are fun and interesting. When this happens it helps to focus pupils' interest and this effectively supports learning in the remainder of the

lesson. For those with special educational needs, teachers make good use of practical equipment to help the pupils learn. Teachers manage pupils well, ensuring lessons have brisk pace and keeping pupils' levels of motivation high. Throughout the school, teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good. However, sometimes lesson ends are too brief and not as effective as they might be to support or extend learning even further.

56. Teachers use assessment information well to group pupils in different year groups and varying abilities and plan learning that they find interesting and suitably challenging. Pupils' learning is carefully monitored, so that staff are alert to the achievements of different groups. This has been an important factor in the improvement in standards since the last inspection. In addition, pupils' work is marked well, so that it is made clear to pupils what they have achieved and where they need to improve. Pupils respond to this good level of support, which ensures that they make good progress.
57. There is effective leadership and management of the subject. The co-ordinator gives a good lead and has worked hard to improve aspects of provision over the past two years. Assessment procedures have been developed and effective monitoring of teaching has successfully identified where improvements in teaching needed to be made. This has had a significant impact on raising standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Staff use other subjects well to develop pupils' numeracy skills. For example they use graphs and charts to record data in geography and science, or measure materials in design and technology, consequently pupils develop their skills well in practical and real situations. However, a shortcoming in teaching is that teachers do not use computers enough in daily mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is satisfactory overall, because it is not as effective in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards above national expectations.
- At the end of Year 2, standards are below expectations. Pupils, especially those who are more able, do not achieve as well as they might.
- Teaching is good for the older children but teaching over time in Years 1 and 2 has been unsatisfactory.
- There is no whole school approach to how teachers assess pupils' progress in science.

Commentary.

59. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are on course to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of key scientific ideas. They make good progress as a result of the clear and regular opportunities to set up investigations, pursue answers to questions that they have devised and write up their investigations in a clear and concise way. Pupils develop positive attitudes to the subject which acts as a further spur to their learning. At the

end of Year 6, there has been good improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

60. Inspection findings are that standards in Year 2 are below expectations and achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils have gaps in their learning and more able pupils are not being challenged to attain the higher level 3. Although pupils have a satisfactory understanding of some aspects of the curriculum, their understanding of other aspects is weaker.
61. One of the main reasons why pupils' achievement is higher at the end of Year 6 than at Year 2 is the greater emphasis by teachers on developing pupils' investigation skills. As a result, older pupils make better progress in developing their scientific enquiry skills as well as their understanding of different scientific terminology. In Year 2 pupils' understanding of how to set up and undertake a scientific investigation is unsatisfactory. Teaching is too strongly focused on subject knowledge, rather than the necessary skills to enable pupils to follow their own lines of scientific enquiry. Thus opportunities are lost to which would allow pupils to develop their level of understanding. This prevents standards from being higher.
62. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the need to use different strategies to support their teaching. A good balance is achieved by teachers in conveying scientific knowledge and letting the pupils test the validity of this through investigation work. This allows the pupils to discover things for themselves and when they make mistakes, to learn from them. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils should present their work. This results in pupils presenting their work neatly, making it easier for the reader to follow their line of thinking. The failure to organise investigation work in Years 1 and 2 has led to pupils having gaps in their knowledge and understanding. While teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory, the impact of teaching over time is unsatisfactory because of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding.
63. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the subject. Because of the identified shortcomings in provision in other areas of the school, the subject has not been a major focus for development. The subject leader has improved resources so that teachers can develop a more practical approach to teaching. This has ensured that standards are rising by the end of Year 6. There is no consistent approach to assessment throughout the school making it difficult to monitor pupils' progress or use the information gained more precisely by teachers to decide what pupils need to do next in order to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for Information and communication technology is **satisfactory**, but improving quickly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are good so that pupils enjoy learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence have improved.
- Assessment is not yet used to plan activities matched to pupils' abilities.
- There are missed opportunities to use information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary.

64. Standards are in line with the national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and similar to those reported in the last inspection. The school's improved resources have not been in place long enough to have had a positive impact on overall standards and levels of achievement, which are satisfactory. In Year 2 pupils are rapidly gaining in confidence and work well together. Most can log on and with little fuss click on and drag icons, use the key board to create labels, and with support, change the font, size, and colour. By the end of Year 6 most pupils have a satisfactory level of ability. They are beginning to use data handling devices such as spread sheets confidently to identify, record and evaluate information. Pupils enjoy the subject and this is evident in the good quality multi-media presentations of 'Joke Books' that used their developing skills well. Their use of modelling and control, however, is at the early stages of development. This is a relatively weaker aspect of their learning, because resources have only just been provided. Pupils greatly enjoy lessons in the new computer suite and because they are interested and keen to improve their skills, they are now making better overall progress.
65. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but recent training and improved schemes of work have had a positive impact on the confidence of staff and have enhanced and increased their skills. Specific subject skills are taught well and teaching assistants who have also benefited from training make a valuable contribution in lessons. Where teachers are more confident in their own ability they are able to motivate and challenge pupils of all abilities and this ensures that they make good progress in lessons. However, assessment procedures are underdeveloped; as a consequence work is generally planned for topic coverage and not to match the skills of individual pupils. This affects the rate of progress made, and achievement over time, which could be higher.
66. The subject leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who is new to her post, is working hard to develop this aspect of the provision and relevant plans are in place. Through the great energy and commitment of the headteacher and supported by all the staff the quality of the provision is improving rapidly.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum.

67. There are some good links made with other subjects, which enhance the quality of pupils' work and make an important contribution to motivating all groups of pupils to write or develop their mathematical skills. However, these are planned activities that use the computer suite. Computers in classrooms are not used sufficiently to enhance learning and this is an aspect that the school recognises requires further development.

HUMANITIES

68. In humanities, work in geography and history was briefly sampled but no lessons were observed. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgment about the provision in these subjects. The indication from pupils' work is that standards are broadly average in both subjects and similar to those reported in the last inspection.
69. In geography older pupils have enjoyed their project concerning the local environment. They spoke enthusiastically about interviewing local people concerning their views about the local shopping amenities. This also developed their speaking and listening skills well. In history pupils have studied the Ancient Greeks and older pupils have researched the causes of illness in Victorian times. The newspaper reports they

produced in the 'The Daily Scientist' not only made a valuable contribution to pupils' knowledge of this era, but also helped the development of writing skills and their scientific knowledge and understanding. However, opportunities to develop links between geography, history and other subjects, such as English, are not identified and structured into the medium term planning. This is a missed opportunity to enhance the curriculum and to ensure that pupils make links in their learning.

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

- The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal and moral development.
- There is a good range of reading books in the school library to support pupils' learning.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

Commentary

70. By the end of Year 2, and Year 6 pupils reach standards in religious education in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. However, pupils make greater progress in their understanding of the Christian faith than they do of the customs and beliefs of other faith groups.
71. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory understanding that Jesus is an important person to Christians and that the Bible is the main source of evidence to learn about what Jesus did. They understand the main events of the Christian calendar and why, for example, Christmas and Easter are important to Christians. They enjoy learning and talk with interest about the Church being a special place where people gather for various religious events that include christenings and weddings. As they move through the school and by the end of Year 6, they have developed a secure understanding of the Christian faith. They understand what is meant by a 'parable' and understand that these are stories with a moral that strengthen their meaning. This forms a good basis for pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes towards others. Pupils have a basic understanding that other faith groups practise their faiths and beliefs in different ways. They know for example, that a Hindu wedding is different in structure and tradition from a Christian one but that it holds equally important religious significance. Overall, however, pupils do not achieve as well in this aspect of their learning as they do in their understanding of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith.
72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils have regular religious education lessons and the planning for these is effectively linked with the guidance materials given in the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and understanding and in lessons give pupils plenty of scope to discuss religious issues. This helps to develop pupils' understanding of the relevance that religion can have on their day-to-day lives and this supports their personal and moral development well. A shortcoming in teaching lies in the lack of emphasis that the school has given in the past to developing the pupils' understanding of the multi-cultural aspect of society. Although the school has begun to strengthen this aspect and has invited a drama group in to the school to enact a Hindu wedding, pupils' learning in this aspect of religious education is patchy. Consequently, the subject is making too little a contribution to the pupils' cultural development.
73. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the subject and the school has maintained standards in the subject since the previous inspection. The range of reading resources in the library is good and support pupils' learning well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. Art and design was inspected in depth, because the school recognises that standards are not as high as those reported in the previous inspection. Design and technology and physical education were sampled. Work was analysed, discussions with pupils held, and three lessons were observed. Provision in these subjects is satisfactory, and evidence suggests that standards in design and technology, and aspects of physical education observed were in line with expectations and similar to those reported in the last inspection. It was not possible to make a judgment about the provision for music because no lessons were observed and the school had not recorded any of the pupils' previous work. Pupils' singing in assembly was joyful and in tune. Pupils who are learning the violin are making a sterling effort to master the instrument.
75. In design and technology, pupils experience an acceptable range of opportunities to use a range of materials when making products. In Year 3 and 4, pupils designed and made sandwiches before evaluating their final choice. Pupils in Year 6 enjoyed designing a toy that moved. They used their technical knowledge in their designs and used terms with understanding when discussing the work in progress. They plan each step carefully and evaluate their finished designs. It is evident that pupils enjoy this practical subject and take care to ensure that the finished products are well made. Girls, however, are not as confident as boys and take time to commit their designs to paper.
76. In physical education, pupils benefit from a large playing field where they are able to develop their games skills safely. Evidence from planning and discussions with pupils indicate that all elements of the subject are taught and that a wide range of additional activities enhance the provision well. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 tried hard to create a 'River Dance' and recognised why they needed to warm their muscles before exercise. Their movements, a little stiff and awkward at first, soon improved because of the encouragement of the additional teacher who was demonstrating a model lesson for an inexperienced teacher. Pupils learned to evaluate each others performances and used this well to develop their own dances.
77. In these subjects the role of the co-ordinator is not yet fully developed. Teachers are enthusiastic and keen to develop their skills when they gain more experience. They are benefiting from the good support from other experienced staff and the headteacher's initiatives to improve teaching.

Art and design

Provision in art is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Standards are not as high as in the last inspection, but pupils enjoy learning and try hard to improve.
- Sketchbooks are used, but not yet fully developed as a tool to aid learning.
- Subject leadership is purposeful and focussed on improving the provision.

Commentary

78. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were reported to be above average across the school. Since then there has been a significant turnover of staff, and inspection findings are that standards, although average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are not as high as they were. This is because staff generally lack confidence and

more detailed subject knowledge to teach specific subject skills and techniques in order to really challenge pupils. Most pupils for example are aware of colour mixing, but lack a clear understanding of how to mix different shades and tones and to create a depth in their work. Where teachers' subject knowledge is good they are more effective at teaching new techniques. For example in Year 5, pupils have spent some time researching how to show movement in their drawings. They have used a good range of techniques to show speed, and through careful evaluation of their own and others' work have reached decisions about the most effective method. Pupils' individuality is encouraged and because pupils selected their own starting point such as 'cars', or 'ballet dancers', this was a very appropriate vehicle to motivate both boys and girls. It is evident that all groups of pupils enjoy the subject, try hard and concentrate well and lessons are purposeful. Pupils in all classes state that art is one of their favourite subjects and girls in particular take great care with their work and try hard to improve, delighting in their achievements.

79. Until recently pupils did not use sketchbooks and they are not yet a useful tool to develop learning. For example, whilst pupils are using them to practise their skills, they are not yet using them to refine, develop and evaluate their ideas or finished pieces of work. Work in them is, however, marked well by many teachers and this is effective in helping pupils to evaluate and improve their techniques and is beginning to have a positive impact on the progress that pupils make.
80. Art and design is a current area of development for the school. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a good level of expertise and experience and plans to develop the subject as appropriate. She has made a satisfactory and promising start in developing her colleagues' skills but recognises that there is still some way to go before the subject is once more a strength of the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are valued and respected.
- Pupils have a good range of opportunities to take personal decisions.
- The use of outside agencies to support pupils learning is good.
- Parents and pupils value the high level of personal care.

Commentary

81. The school places a good deal of emphasis on the importance of creating an environment where pupils can develop confidence, self esteem and feel valued and respected as individuals. There are regular opportunities for pupils to meet where they can discuss their innermost feelings and air their views. Pupils in all year groups have the opportunity to participate in the school council and there is a good range of opportunities to take responsibility around the school. Increasingly pupils' views are listened to and they take all their responsibilities seriously. They consider that the school treats them fairly and provides relevant training and support. Older pupils, for example, staff the phones at lunchtime, run a small school stationery shop and look after younger pupils. This not only supports their personal and social development well, but is a significant factor in pupils' positive attitudes to school.

82. The school has a satisfactory scheme of work and often uses other subjects to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Work in science, for example, supports pupils' knowledge of developing a healthy lifestyle and the value of exercise is reinforced in physical education. The school makes good use of outside expertise in raising pupils' awareness of issues relating to their health, safety and well being. Pupils are given clear guidance on the dangers of drug misuse for example, which enables them to move onto the next stage of their learning able to make the right choices.

83. The headteacher knows individual pupils well and takes time to ensure that each pupil is happy and settled. Pupils know that he is always available if they need advice or just someone to talk to. Their questions concerning sensitive issues relating to personal and health education are answered in a tactful manner taking into account the age and maturity of the child. Parents and pupils alike value this high level of personal care.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2
<i>Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).</i>	