

INSPECTION REPORT

Sauncey Wood Primary School

Harpenden

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117102

Headteacher: Mrs Jackie Stephenson

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th November 2003

Lead Inspector: Mrs Jean Harding
21378

Inspection number: 257410

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 87

School address: Pickford Hill
Harpenden
Hertfordshire
Postcode: AL5 5HL

Telephone number: 01582 621514
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr. David Murdock

Date of previous inspection: 1st – 5th October 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small primary school serves a community of mixed private and rented housing on the less prosperous side of Harpenden. Almost all pupils are white, and very few speak English as their second language, although several speak another language at home. Numbers on roll have been falling in recent years and the school has lots of spare places, but that decline has now stopped. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class varies widely with each group joining, but often is below average, and several children have weak communication skills. Over the whole school a well above average percentage of pupils have special educational needs. The percentage with statements of special educational needs is much higher than average because the school has a special unit for pupils in Years 3 to 6 who have speech and language difficulties (the Base). At present the Base has a full complement of ten pupils, and they spend some of their time in the main school classes. In the main school the special needs cover a wide range of difficulties, mostly to do with learning and behavioural problems.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21378	Mrs Jean Harding	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Mathematics Religious education Art and design Music The Foundation Stage The work of the Speech & Language Unit
11418	Ms Donya Urwin	Lay inspector	
22704	Mr Garry Williams	Team inspector	English Science Information & communication technology (ICT) History Geography Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education for its pupils and gives **satisfactory value for money**. Children in the reception class and pupils in the speech and language unit do well. In the other classes pupils' achievement is satisfactory due to the satisfactory teaching. Pupils have below average standards in English, but average standards in mathematics and science. Standards in most other subjects are in line with national expectations. The curriculum is satisfactory. The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory, overall, but the leadership of the new headteacher is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children in the reception class and pupils in the speech and language unit (the Base) achieve well because the teaching is good.
- Standards in English are below average and pupils do not use their literacy skills well enough.
- Pupils make insufficient use of their key skills of learning, such as numeracy, ICT and writing.
- Pupils achieve well in science and in art and design in Years 1 and 2, and in history in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards of art and design are too low in Years 3 to 6 as the curriculum provided is unsatisfactory.
- The leadership of the new headteacher is good and she has fostered a supportive ethos in which pupils try hard, behave well and build caring relationships.
- The management of many subjects is not good enough.
- The school has been given lots of money to improve, but the governors cannot be sure if it has been used prudently enough.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school.

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. Much of this is due to the very good improvements to the leadership over the last five terms. At least satisfactory improvements have been made to pupils' achievements in core subjects and some good improvement in ICT and religious education. Standards in art and design have declined in Years 3 to 6. The teaching and curriculum provided for pupils in Years 3 to 6 have improved, as has assessment across the school. There has been insufficient improvement in the monitoring of standards in some subjects.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Children start in reception with below average skills and understanding in important areas. **Most children do not achieve the goals that they are expected to reach, in communication, by the end of reception, but many have achieved well in other areas of learning.**

The overall **standards achieved by pupils in Years 1 and 2 are as expected**. Standards are below average in speaking, reading and writing. They are average in mathematics and science and as expected in all other subjects, except for art and design in which pupils do better than most other pupils of the same age. In 2003 pupils at the end of Year 2 did not do as well as in the national tests in English, mathematics and science than pupils from similar schools, because they started from a low base. **Pupils' achievement, overall, is satisfactory**, but it is good in science and art and design.

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

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 in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and standards are average overall, except for English. Standards overall are below average in English. They are average in mathematics and in most other subjects. They are better than expected in history, in which progress is good, but worse than expected in art and design, in which progress has been poor. Results in the national tests from 2000 to 2003 have varied depending on the abilities of the cohort. The trend is upwards, but care should be exercised when interpreting these statistics, as the numbers of pupils involved are often very small.

Pupils' achievement in speaking and listening is good. Pupils in the speech and language base achieve well. The achievements of boys, and pupils of non-white ethnic origin, are no different from that of other pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils make satisfactory progress, but their achievements could be better if they were consistently given work that was appropriate to their needs.

Pupils' **personal development is good.** The provision for pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good** overall, but for their spiritual development it could be better. Most pupils have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

In the speech and language base and the reception class the quality of education provided is good. In the main school the quality of education provided is satisfactory. Apart from in the speech and language base, and in the reception class, where it is good, the teaching is satisfactory. The support staff are effective in their contribution to pupils' learning. The positive relationships mean that behaviour in class is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and their learning is satisfactory, but they produce very little written work, as this is not well planned into lessons by teachers. They do not have enough chance to practise the literacy, numeracy or ICT skills that they have acquired, and this is a real weakness.

Except in the speech and language base, and in the reception class, where it is good, the curriculum is satisfactory. There is a good range of activities to enrich the curriculum. Pupils receive good care and support. Induction arrangements for children in the reception class are good. The school effectively canvasses pupils' views on the running of the school and then addresses well the issues raised. Most pupils love school. The school has good links with parents and the community, but few parents take part in school life and this is a concern of the staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership and management are satisfactory** overall. **The leadership of the new headteacher is good.** There are weaknesses in the management of subjects and in the rigour of the systems to ensure continuing improvement but, overall, **the management is satisfactory.** Development planning is satisfactory, but should be longer-term. The input of the current governors is satisfactory and this has contributed to rising standards, but a few statutory requirements are not met. The governors are supportive, but they do not have good enough systems in place to ensure best value for the large amount of money that they have received to make the necessary improvements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents feel that the school has improved recently, and are very supportive of staff. They think that the school has a poor reputation locally and they are concerned about this. Pupils are generally very satisfied with what goes on. They take part enthusiastically in all the activities and feel that they get a good deal. They feel secure and safe.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English.
- Ensure that pupils use their learned skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT to better effect.
- Improve pupils' achievements in art and design in Years 3 to 6.
- Improve the management of subject co-ordinators.

- Ensure that the governors have a full grasp of the implications of all spending.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that all pupils take part in an act of collective worship every day.
- Ensure that sufficient information to parents is given in the prospectus and governors' annual report.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are average in most subjects by the time the pupils leave the school. Pupils' **achievement is satisfactory** overall. Pupils' achievement is good in the speech and language unit (the Base), and in the Foundation Stage (the reception class). Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are below average, overall, but improving.
- Standards of writing are not good enough because pupils do too little writing in English and in other subjects.
- Standards in mathematics, science, ICT and religious education have improved since the previous inspection, and are now average by the time pupils leave the school.
- Children in the reception class make good progress in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding.
- The achievement of pupils with speech and language impairment is good.
- Standards in art and design are high for pupils in Years 1 and 2, but below those expected in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' progress through Key stage 2 is poor in this subject.
- Pupils' achievement in science is good in Years 1 and 2, and also in history in Years 3 to 6, where standards attained are high.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. Achievement is good overall. Many children start in the school with below average levels in some key areas, such as communication, personal and social skills. They make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress during their time in reception and many will be working at an appropriate level by the time they start in Year 1. They make especially good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world. Their skills in communication, language and literacy are, overall, still below the expected levels when they leave reception. Most children of all abilities make the same sort of progress, but the provision for those very few children with known problems of a behavioural nature is not always good enough for them to access the whole of the curriculum provided. The school is aware of this and is taking appropriate advice from staff in the local education authority.

Key Stage 1

2. Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory** through **Years 1 and 2**, and so the standards they achieve are generally as expected, except for reading and writing, where they are below average. The grades obtained in the National Curriculum tests are not a reliable indicator of the trend in pupils' overall progress over time, as the cohorts each year are so small and pupils' prior attainment varies so widely. However, the results for maths and science last year were not as encouraging as they might have been, as the monitoring systems in the school were not tight enough to pick up pupils' slow progress early enough. This has now mostly been remedied. Pupils' speaking and listening improves a great deal during Years 1 and 2, and this is a result of careful teaching by staff and the good relationships that exist. Pupils make good progress in science, considering their attainment as they joined Year 1, where they have good understanding of scientific principles. They produce work in art and design that is advanced for their age and can discuss what they did, and why, in a manner that displays maturity and appreciation of the genre. Standards are higher in art and design as pupils are taught by staff who have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and the curriculum is better. Standards in religious education are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Little or no geography, design and technology, physical education or music were able to be seen in Years 1 and 2, so no overall judgements can be made about standards and

pupils' achievements. Few records are available to indicate pupils' achievements, especially in music or physical education; this is a weakness.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.0 (14.5)	15.9 (15.8)
Writing	13.0 (12.3)	14.8 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.3 (15.8)	16.4 (16.6)

There were 17 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

- Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory** through **Years 3 to 6**. Standards in core subjects have improved since the previous inspection. For the five years from 1999 to 2003 the National Curriculum test results varied widely depending on the abilities of each group. The statistics are affected by the number of pupils in each cohort, and there were only nine pupils last year, nearly all boys. However, the move towards better grades is positive, when all the relevant factors are taken into account. The main factor in the better achievement is the improvement in the teaching. For 2003 the overall results reflect the national average. The progress of pupils currently in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory in most subjects, but good in history. Standards are higher in history than the other subjects because the curriculum is better planned. Pupils' speaking and listening skills improve significantly through the key stage. Pupils' achievement in art and design is poor as they have not had good enough work provided. The group targets, in English and maths, for 2004 are appropriate.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English		27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics		27.0 (26.7)
Science		28.8 (28.3)

The figures have been omitted as there were only 9 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- The school has identified several pupils who are more able, or who have particular talents in some subjects. This identification is valid, although there are no formal documents recording how this has been done, and this is a weakness. That said, more able pupils do make appropriate progress. The achievements of pupils with special educational needs are also generally satisfactory, and this is due to the extra help they receive. However, the pupils with special needs in Years 5 and 6 do not have sufficiently detailed individual education plans to enable the school to measure their progress. Pupils in the speech and language base achieve well because of the careful teaching and well thought out curriculum.
- In Years 3 to 6 the standards in non-core subjects inspected, including religious education, are average, overall, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Much concerted work has gone on in religious education and ICT since the previous inspection and the results are clear to see. Pupils know, understand and can do much more. Because little or no teaching was seen in geography, design and technology, music and physical education, no overall judgements about standards and achievement are possible. The aspects of physical education seen and recorded, however, indicate above average standards because pupils are taught by specialists. Insufficient time is devoted to music and, with so little work done, the indications are that standards must be below average in some respects.

6. Most pupils think they are learning a lot. Most parents think that their children are making satisfactory progress. They are convinced that standards are rising and they are right. However, the lack of practice in basic skills, particularly literacy skills, is hampering pupils' improvements in these areas. The lack of emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum was pointed out last time, and the school has made too little improvement in this aspect.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is **unsatisfactory**. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good** overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enthusiasm for the school is very high.
- Children in the reception class make good gains in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Relationships are very good and collaboration is a consistent feature of school life.
- There are lots of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative.
- Pupils' moral and social development is well promoted.
- There is a higher than average level of absence, both authorised and unauthorised.
- There is a higher than average number of fixed term exclusions.

Commentary.

7. The school creates an environment where friendliness and helpfulness is apparent in every setting. There is an atmosphere of order and calm and, as a result, the interactions between pupils, school staff and visitors are lively, appealing and articulate. In the best lessons, particularly in science and history, pupils are focused on their work, respond enthusiastically and are keen to make progress.
8. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted, overall, and so their personal development is good. The provision for spiritual development is better than was reported at the previous inspection, but still is only just satisfactory, and this does not sit well with the school's aims to develop each pupil fully in all respects. Lessons in religious education make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development, but opportunities are missed to explore religious and cultural influences in other areas of the curriculum.
9. There was no evidence of bullying or vindictive behaviour during the inspection. When bullying was discussed with pupils, they were keen to point out that, despite some '*silly bits and pieces*', this sort of behaviour is largely absent. They were very enthusiastic about the friendliness of their school and the fun they have whilst learning with their teachers. Behaviour around the school is very good. Although there was a significantly higher than average number of exclusions last year, this was due mainly to one pupil who required specialist support and has since moved on.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
87

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
13	1

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

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	6.2
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	1.4
National data:	0.4

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

10. Although attendance is unsatisfactory overall, judged against national statistics, the attendance of most pupils is satisfactory. Both authorised and unauthorised absence is caused by just a very few families and, due to the small size of the school, these do affect the statistics significantly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **satisfactory** in Years 1 to 6, **good** in the reception class, and **good** in the Base (the speech and language unit). The curriculum is satisfactory, but there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Staffing levels are generous. The accommodation is spacious and resources are good; there are plenty of books and computers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. They are **good** in the Base and reception class and **satisfactory** in Years 1 to 6. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Assessment and its use are **satisfactory** through the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of pupils with speech and language impairment is good, and so these pupils make good progress.
- There are many good elements to the teaching in the reception class.
- The good relationships that exist ensure that pupils' behaviour is often very good.
- Too little use of ICT, or of literacy and numeracy skills, is planned in other subjects, and so the skills pupils have are under-used.
- Although assessment is generally satisfactory, some marking is not as constructive as it should be.

Commentary

11. The teaching is best in the Base, where the teaching is consistently good, and so pupils with speech and language impairment achieve very well. Good teaching is also in evidence in the reception class, especially in the work promoting children's personal, social, emotional and communication skills. Teaching has improved in this class since the previous inspection. Staff in the reception class have a good understanding of the needs of young children. They are encouraging and children respond well to all the activities. The teachers insist on high standards of behaviour and, as a result, the children achieve well and play happily.
12. In the rest of the school teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although some good teaching was seen. The teaching of art and design in Years 1 and 2, and history in Years 3 to 6, is especially good because staff have good knowledge and understanding of these subjects, and great interest. There is evidence of good teaching in science. The teaching in the lessons observed was at least satisfactory and much of it was good. Evidence of teaching over time shows that it is satisfactory and this is an improvement in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is now not as good as it was reported to be before, due to staffing problems. The teaching delivered by temporary staff during the inspection was at least satisfactory and sometimes good, and these teachers give the school good service.
13. In Years 1 to 6 teachers generally have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, but more training is needed in some subjects, such as art and design for staff in Years 3 to 6. Staff's skills in teaching ICT have much improved since the previous inspection and standards are rising as a result. The strongest aspect of teaching is the good relationships that staff have with their pupils, which encourages pupils to concentrate and work hard. The ethos encourages pupils to work collaboratively and also independently. Classroom assistants give good support to teachers and their input to the pupils' learning is significant.
14. The aspect of teaching which most constrains the quality of learning is the lack of emphasis on pupils' use of their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information technology in other subjects. There is an over-dependence on worksheets and teachers plan far too little writing across the curriculum. Pupils even do too little writing in English. This most certainly affects their achievement in the national tests, and also constrains their independence. In some cases, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the individual education plans for pupils with special needs are unsatisfactory. They are not helpful for staff to plan appropriate work and are far too general. More able pupils mostly have suitable work to extend them, but this could be better.
15. There is satisfactory planning of lessons based on satisfactory assessment. There is plenty of assessment done in English, mathematics and science, and the school has done some detailed analyses of this data resulting in improvements in pupils' achievements. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, but more rigorous analysis needs to be done in maths. The assessment of achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is, at best, sketchy. In this respect the school has made insufficient improvement over the last two years. The school is aware of this and has started to put into place appropriate procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in these subjects. Marking is satisfactory overall. It is sometimes good in Years 3 and 4, but often is not helpful in Years 5 and 6. Ticks are not constructive enough to enable pupils to know what to do to improve.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	2 (6%)	18 (55%)	13 (39%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. There are good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad, with lots of opportunities for the enrichment of pupils' lives, but it is unbalanced as some subjects are allocated too little time.
- There have been improvements to the curriculum in English, maths, science and religious education since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory in art and design in Years 3 to 6.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is good, and this supports pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education.
- There is a good number of experienced teaching assistants who contribute well, especially in raising the standards of English and maths.
- The staffing levels are high, and this has helped in the raising of standards.

Commentary

16. The curriculum is satisfactory, but it does not meet the statutory requirement to provide all pupils with an act of collective worship every day. The work planned for core subjects is sound, but there are no up-to-date policies for some non-core subjects. Staff have not sufficiently customised the schemes of work from the government-approved guidelines for the needs of their pupils, so teachers do not always have enough guidance when planning lessons. This has an adverse impact on the quality of the teaching and learning in subjects such as art and design in Years 3 to 6.
17. Since the previous inspection much more work is done in the investigative aspects of science and this has driven standards up. Some improvements have been made to the problem-solving aspects of maths, but more could be done here. The curriculum for religious education has improved and the school has good plans for further improvement. The main focus of this should be the recording of pupils' achievements when work is mostly in the form of discussion.
18. The organisation of the curriculum does not ensure that pupils make sufficient progress from year to year in music through the school, or art and design in Years 3 to 6. The additional time given to French means that there is less time for other subjects. There is no reinforcement of the learning of French after the brief lesson taken by a visiting specialist, which makes the time devoted to it inefficient. The planning of the curriculum means that geography is not taught for six months and this means that pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Overall, the humanities and creative subjects are given too little time, and this affects pupils' personal development as well as their achievements in these subjects.
19. There is good provision for the personal, social and health education of the pupils, with suitably planned provision for sex and relationships education, and against drugs misuse. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Good use is made of visitors and visits to extend the curriculum. All these aspects of the curriculum add substantially to the ethos of the school and pupils' learning.
20. The school is very well staffed. This is because it was the policy of the local education authority to support the school with extra staff in order to make necessary improvements after the previous inspection. The results are clear and measurable; good improvement has been made. There is a high number of teaching assistants in Years 1 to 6, but not a generous number in reception, and there is not one full-time, permanent assistant to back up the reception class teacher. This is not the best practice. Support staff make a good contribution to supporting the learning of pupils. Resources are good and play facilities for the youngest children have improved over the last two years.
21. The accommodation is good overall. The school benefits from a large amount of space and, due to recent investment, much improved facilities, such as an ICT suite and library, leading to improved learning opportunities for pupils. However, maintaining a large amount of space can present

problems and some corridors and rooms appear bleak and shabby as they wait to benefit from the attention that has been given to those areas higher up on the list of priorities. The accommodation for children in the reception class is limited, but staff make the most of the space. More needs to be done in this area.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' general care and well-being is **good**. The quality of care, guidance and support given to pupils is **satisfactory**. Despite some inconsistencies in the organisation of academic assessment, **very good** close and trusting relationships between pupils and adults exist throughout the school, and there is **good** regard for the welfare of all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements for young children are good.
- All staff know the pupils very well, even the tiniest details are noticed
- Assessment and monitoring are inconsistent
- Formal and informal support networks are well developed

Commentary

22. Children in the reception class settle in quickly because of good induction arrangements. Pupils with speech and language impairment are well integrated into the school.
23. Most arrangements to look after pupils work well. Despite some historical challenges, the school has worked hard to build a strong sense of community and security for all pupils and, consequently, they are enthusiastic about coming to school and *'really like it here'*. Close relationships exist between pupils and staff, and a strong school ethos provides pupils with safety and stimulation and a *'happy environment where everyone can learn'*.
24. Pupils have access to good personal support, advice and guidance as they progress through school. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal progress, although target setting and the quality of assessment are inconsistent, and more could be done to use the strength of the relationships between staff and pupils to encourage the best academic performance.
25. Staff know the pupils very well and good school networks ensure that all essential information is captured and used to strengthen the support provided to individual pupils. There is effective, well-informed advice and support for pupils with special educational needs, but there is insufficient expertise in the school to cope with the odd case of severe behavioural difficulties, and so these pupils are not able to have full access to the broad curriculum. Child protection procedures and health and safety arrangements are reliably applied and induction arrangements are methodically planned and regularly reviewed. All these systems ensure that pupils feel secure and that parents trust the staff.
26. There is an effective School Council, which has assisted the school as it makes progress in seeking, valuing and acting upon pupils' views. However, yet more could be done systematically and consistently to involve pupils in the development of school activities and facilities.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**. Since the previous inspection the school continues to have the confidence of parents. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is consistent parental involvement in the resolution of specific issues.
- Annual reports are detailed and comprehensive.
- The reputation of the school in the local community is undeservedly poor.
- The contribution of many parents to pupils' learning is not as good as it could be.
- There are good links and regular sharing of communication with parents of pupils in the speech and language Base. This helps these pupils to achieve well.
- The school does not include the full range of legally required information in the prospectus and the annual report to parents from the governors.

Commentary

27. The range of information and consultation events provided by the school for parents is good and successfully keeps them reliably informed about the school's standards and their children's progress towards both learning and behavioural targets. Annual reports are very comprehensive, although targets could be more explicit.
28. A small group of interested parents makes a good contribution to pupils' learning through comments and topics highlighted in school planners, and by offering practical support. But such a small level of active interest is disappointing, and the school knows that yet more should be done to attract and encourage parents into the general life and its day-to-day business. The school continues to try to involve parents, especially in its attempts to resolve difficult issues involving particular pupils, and this produces good results.
29. The staff, governors and parents say that the school has a poor reputation in the local community and, based on current evidence, this is undeserved. The school actively seeks to build a wide range of community links and these are used thoughtfully to supplement the curriculum. The school has reliable links with other schools and many parents have positive views about what the school does to help pupils make good progress.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **satisfactory**, overall, and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher provides **good** leadership. The leadership of other staff is **satisfactory** overall. The management is **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is satisfactory in most respects, but as several statutory requirements are not met, it has to be judged as **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new headteacher provides good leadership.
- Commitment to improvement is clear at all levels of management and from all support staff.
- The management of some subjects is not good enough to ensure rising standards.
- The governors are supportive and influential, but they have not planned well enough to reduce costs when the budget is reduced.
- The cost per pupil in the Base is very reasonable and pupils with speech and language impairment achieve well. The value for money for this provision is good.

Commentary

30. The school is on the way up after a period of great difficulty. There have been five headteachers in post since January 2002. The current headteacher is doing a good job and has motivated and influenced staff and pupils well. She has forged a common purpose and commitment from all who help the school. She provides a good role model with her own teaching. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher, who also acted as headteacher and provided stability during a time of turmoil for the school. Both have a fair grasp of what has been accomplished and what needs to be done to move the school forward. The school uses outside consultants and expertise from other schools well, and is well placed to continue the improvements already made.

31. The management is satisfactory, overall. There has been some essential re-jigging of procedures and systems to ensure good management and accountability. Currently there is insufficient conformity to set procedures, which the head knows. There has been some effective monitoring of performance, but this could still be better. The headteacher's monitoring of teaching has produced clear improvement. The management of the provision in the Base, science, religious education and ICT has also produced good results. The co-ordinators of subjects other than English, ICT and science do too little monitoring, and in some cases do not know the deficiencies in the planning or achievements in the subjects. This means that pupils' achievements are not always as good as they could be. The curriculum, overall, could be better managed. Most teachers in the school have not had enough training for their management roles. The head knows this and there are firm plans to remedy this situation.
32. The headteacher has worked closely with governors to improve the school and to ensure that it provides well for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. This is working, but there is some way to go for the school to realise its aims totally. Current priorities for improvement are appropriate, but perhaps a little unrealistic, as they have set themselves high profile targets to address in a short time. The improvement plan needs to be longer term and include more rigorous management of the overall curriculum. The headteacher has had to face several long-standing problems and recently a significant change in teaching staff, which has affected pupils' achievement in the short-term. These difficulties have been overcome with good humour, and growing teamwork on the staff. Support staff are well-trained and valued members of the education team and are treated as respected fellow professionals in terms of appraisal and responsibilities. This is good.
33. The current governors are mostly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have set ambitious aims and are determined to achieve them. They are on the right path. There is a lot of catching up to do and some new governors need more training to ensure that the school complies with all legal requirements. Governors give good support to the senior management team, but also play 'Devil's Advocate', and this is good. They know where they want to go, but not always how to get there. The deployment of staff, especially support staff, is not always efficient, and this is because staffing resources have not been well analysed. The principles of best value are known, but not always applied effectively. This is because governors are not aware of practice in the best schools. The governors have had to overcome difficulties produced when the school went into debt during 2001/02 because of a badly managed speculative venture. There has been no financial audit since before the previous inspection, and so governors do not have a full enough analysis of the state of school's financial procedures to be able to put the best practice into place. During the previous audit issues were found that needed to be put right; these have now been addressed. The governors have worked effectively with the officers of the local education authority to spend money judiciously to raise standards. The school benefits from having good administrative staff, who keep an eye on the finances, and governors with professional expertise. There is now sufficient management expertise for the school to have straightened out the finances and for a small carry forward in funds to next year. There are a few minor accounting procedures that still need to be tightened up. The governors are now in a much stronger position to face the tough decisions that may be needed if there is a reduction in funds for the school.
34. The school has spent a great deal more money per pupil than most schools, even taking into account the high expenditure necessary on the pupils with speech and language impairment. The governors were given extra money by the local education authority in order to preserve staffing levels and raise standards. This has worked. The value for money given by the school is satisfactory because the staff and governors have done what was required by the local education authority, standards are rising and parents are pleased.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	479,401	Balance from previous year	-2,663
Total expenditure	468,868	Balance carried forward to the next	10,553

Expenditure per pupil	5,516

year	
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The provision in the unit for pupils with speech and language impairment – the Base

The provision is good. The provision for pupils in the Base, where the environment is caring, secure and happy, adds to the ethos of the whole school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching that is planned to meet the needs of the individual pupils.
 - The planning of the inclusion into mainstream classes is good.
 - Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave very well, due to the very good relationships that exist between the staff of the Base and the pupils.
 - In comparison with similar establishments elsewhere, the provision is inexpensive, but the formal procedures for pupils' admission and to ensure their entitlement, are not secure.
 - There has been a significant improvement to the provision since the previous inspection.
35. The pupils in the Base have a wide range of quite serious communication difficulties. All have a statement of special educational needs. In relation to their degree of difficulty, the pupils achieve well. These good gains in learning are a direct result of good teaching, and full advantage is taken of opportunities in the whole curriculum to reinforce pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This is especially noticeable in pupils' ability to integrate with their peers in lessons. Pupils' attitudes towards their specialist lessons, and also the lessons in the main school classes, are very good.
36. Although what goes on is good, it is not based securely on an up-to-date policy which specifies exactly what will be provided, how it will be funded, or what sort of difficulties can be catered for. The headteacher and the Base teacher are aware that this is an area that needs looking at. The cost per pupil is very reasonable, considering the work done. The high staffing ratios mean that pupils can integrate with suitable support into main school classes for many lessons, and this works well, for all the pupils in the school as well as those with difficulties.
37. The quality of teaching and learning in the Base is good. The teachers and support staff have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the problems of the pupils and work well with the speech and language therapist to provide appropriate work for all pupils. The work is challenging, but supportive, and is based on suitable individual education plans, which are of better quality than was reported at the previous inspection. These plans still could be improved, to be more specific and to spell out targets in a wider range of work and for the promotion of social skills. Although the Base teacher and class assistants have sound knowledge and experience, they would all benefit from further training in this field, as they do not hold relevant professional qualifications. This would enable them to extend the range of the strategies they employ and improve the depth of analysis before they devise new individual education plans.
38. Although the teaching is planned to foster pupils' independence, and the staff can show sound evidence of the success of this, there is insufficient use of ICT, especially computers, to aid pupils' learning. There are too few computers in the Base, and some of those in place are rather old. Further training in ICT is likely to improve the teaching still further.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall **provision for children in the Foundation Stage (the reception class) is good**. There were good aspects to the provision at the previous inspection, and satisfactory improvement has been made, especially in the provision for children's physical development during outdoor play. The children are now in a separate class from the older children and their needs are well catered for. They are well prepared to join the Year 1 class. Most have attended the adjacent nursery, with which this school has productive links. Attainment on entry varies widely. Overall, it is better in the mathematical area of development than other areas, and the area of communication, language and literacy children is less well developed. Current attainment on entry is below the level expected.

Children achieve well because the teaching and curriculum are well planned. The staff have good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and have planned an imaginative range of activities to cover all the required areas of learning. There are plenty of good opportunities for play. The play activities are monitored by the teacher, but insufficient records are kept about how much time individual children spend on each activity, and how well they are progressing. The play is constrained by the layout of the accommodation. The two adjacent rooms are not ideal and the main teaching room is a bit small for the 20 children who will be on roll next term, as they are hard to supervise. The staff cope well with the varying needs of the pupils. However, they are insufficiently well trained to address all the needs of the most able children and those with the most demanding special educational needs. They are aware of this, and have started to arrange further training. When there are children who need individual attention for much of the time, the accommodation and staffing levels are not good enough. The reception teacher has a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve the provision. She works well with the headteacher to improve it.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are making good progress and most will achieve the expected level by the end of reception.
- Children are well behaved and conform well to the routines in the class.
- Children show independence in their work due to the staff's efforts to allow them to do things on their own.

Commentary

39. The good teaching produces good learning for the children. Children are given appropriate choices and most stay with one activity for a reasonable time. A few, however, flit between rooms and games, and do not really get involved in any activity. Staff are aware of this and have appropriate strategies to increase children's concentration span. Staff allow children to play and experiment without intervening too soon. They encourage children to share and to talk about why they want to take part in activities. Children clear up toys well and have satisfactory skills in looking after themselves. There are sound opportunities for children to find out about other cultures and religious practices.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are likely to be below the expected level by the end of reception.
- Children make good progress in the acquisition of speaking skills, but many lack the vocabulary that is expected for children of the same age.
- Children enjoy listening to stories and many can re-tell familiar tales with reasonable accuracy.
- The most able children use pencils confidently to produce simple writing.
- The teaching is good.

Commentary

40. Given their level of skills when joining the school, children's achievement is good in this aspect. Children enjoy listening to stories, and staff capitalise on this interest, providing imaginative activities to help them develop a love of reading. The teacher tells stories well and the children are gripped. Even the most distractible listen well. Children have a limited vocabulary when speaking. They tend to talk in very short phrases or even respond to questions with single words. Several still rely on gesture rather than words when they want something.
41. Children's literacy skills are below those expected for children of the same age, but their learning is good because the teaching is good. Even the more able children have been slow in acquiring early reading skills. Many are still at the stage of only pointing to pictures, and responding to questions about a story with one-word answers. The teacher makes learning fun with an imaginative use of a wide range of activities to make stories come to life. More able children enjoy making their own books and are starting to write their own name with confidence. Many children know that sentences begin with capital letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff take every opportunity to introduce mathematical concepts into children's play.

Commentary

42. Children's achievement is satisfactory and they are likely to be at the expected level by the time they leave reception. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to count and so children's learning is satisfactory. Most children can count up to ten with understanding, but a few cannot, and several cannot match numbers and objects correctly. The correct use of mathematical language is encouraged and children benefit from practical activities that expose them to mathematical thinking. Children know the names of some simple shapes and can tell the shape of things they have made in dough. Children are interested in number games and many can tell if the patterns are incorrect.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is imaginative and leads to **good** learning.

Commentary

43. Children's achievement is good because teachers provide suitable activities and experiences that enable them to learn about the world. Children are likely to be at the expected level when they enter Year 1. Children show interest in work that extends their experience, such as the session on Hindu weddings, which was part of their work on 'Festivals'. Many can explain the celebration of Diwali and the use of incense, at a level above that expected for four-year olds.
44. Children have made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of computers. They are confident when using the computers in the suite. Most use the mouse correctly and can use very simple programs. Most have access to computers at home and more could be done to extend their experience on the computer in the classroom. The teacher uses ICT effectively to develop children's literacy skills, for example, a digital camera was used to good effect to recap a 'Hansel and Gretel' walk undertaken the previous day. This also develops children's appreciation of the use of ICT.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are on course to achieve the expected level, overall, by the time they leave reception.
- They use a range of tools and equipment with increasing dexterity and confidence.
- They have sound control of their bodies when playing outside.

Commentary

45. The teaching is satisfactory and leads to sound learning by children. Children benefit from the range of activities provided daily. There is active teaching of physical skills, such as riding a tricycle. The resources for outside play have much improved since the previous inspection, and so children have more opportunities to develop their physical skills. When playing outside many children display above average skills, such as when they play hopscotch. All are careful when playing with wheeled toys and there are very few bumps and accidents.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT.

The provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are presented with a good range of activities in art, technology, music and story-telling, to which they respond well.
- Children enjoy role-play activities with staff, but tend to play on their own, rather than with other children.

Commentary

46. Children are on course to reach the expected level by the end of reception, and their achievement is satisfactory. Children make models in a range of materials with enthusiasm, but mostly at a basic level. They join in the singing well during assembly. More able children re-create the walk through the woods using models and a play-house, and show appreciation of the story on which it is based. Although children like to dress up, few are able to play a role. It is the 'dressing up in fancy clothes' that is important to them, rather than the acting out of the story with others.

47. There are children who are working at quite high levels in this area of development, including one who has been identified as talented in art. Although activities are appropriate, more could be done to extend these children and record their progress.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' standards in reading and writing are below average by the time they leave the school, but improving.
- The teaching has improved since the previous inspection and has resulted in sound learning by pupils.
- Pupils do too little writing, and they do not use their literacy skills well enough in other subjects.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are improving, and are mostly as expected by the end of Year 6.
- There is no effective assessment of speaking and listening.

Commentary

48. Although standards are below average by the end of Year 6, this is an improvement since the previous inspection when they were judged as well below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, through Years 1 to 6, due to the sound quality of the teaching. Pupils' achievements in English are now satisfactory, and many have achieved well in their speaking and listening skills. The time given to the development of speaking skills is an improvement since the previous inspection. A lot of effective work is done through discussion and pupils show sound, and often good, listening skills. Staff ask probing questions and insist on pupils giving answers in full sentences. The discussions during the introductory and summing up sessions of English lessons are effective. The good relationships between staff and pupils encourage lively debate. Good examples were seen in history and science, and this work also benefits pupils from the Base. The improvement of pupils' communication skills enhances their self-esteem, and pupils appear mature and confident in social chat and in deep discussion of issues of importance, when talking in small groups. However, few opportunities are provided for formal debate and to speak to larger groups, and this is a weakness. Although pupils make satisfactory, and often good, progress in developing appropriate speaking skills, there is not a sufficiently detailed curriculum for this, and so the teaching is a bit 'hit and miss'. There is no real assessment for pupils' skills in speaking and listening, and no proper recording of their work in this aspect. This is unsatisfactory.
49. The curriculum for the teaching of English is satisfactory, overall, and the National Literacy Strategy is well embedded in the teaching. The system of teaching some lessons in ability groups is effective. Staff are confident when teaching literacy skills. The teaching of English is satisfactory and based on satisfactory procedures for the assessment of reading and writing. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' learning, currently, is best in Years 3 and 4; it is often good because the teaching is more thorough than in some other classes, and is based on better on-going assessment. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 has varied over the last year, and pupils' learning has not been as consistently sound as it could have been. This has now been addressed. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy English and are now making satisfactory progress in the subject.
50. The work that is done in English lessons is not properly reinforced in other subjects, and too little use is made of computers for pupils to word-process and present their work. Pupils do too little writing in any subject, and teachers do not ensure that work is well written and presented in other lessons. There is an over-emphasis on worksheets in many subjects, and this does not help pupils to write at speed and in their own way. Pupils' writing skills are improving and this is the result of

improved teaching, assessment and monitoring by the co-ordinator. In all year-groups many pupils do have satisfactory skills of spelling, punctuation and handwriting, but they are not used well enough. This lack of reinforcement of learning is a deficiency in the teaching that has not been improved since the previous inspection.

51. Standards of reading are below average in all year-groups, as they were at the last inspection. The difference in attainment between the most able pupils, and the average and least able, is marked. Pupils enjoy reading, and there are plenty of books in the school. Older pupils use their research skills well, and are able to use the library effectively. Sufficient reading is done in school, but few pupils have the opportunity to read to an adult regularly on their own. The school is striving to involve more parents in the development of their child's reading.
52. Pupils of lower ability are well supported by the well-qualified classroom support staff. They make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with known special educational needs make satisfactory progress, but, in some cases, they could make better progress if their targets for improvement were more specific and covered a wider range of work in literacy. Pupils who sometimes speak in languages other than English do as well as other pupils of the same ability. Many do well. The achievement of more able pupils is satisfactory. However, the lack of time for writing is a disadvantage and does not give them sufficient opportunity to extend their writing skills by writing at length and in depth. Through her sound monitoring, the co-ordinator knows that this is a problem and current plans focus more on the improvement in writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Teachers take too few opportunities to teach literacy skills in subjects other than English. The amount written in English lessons is too little. Pupils write very little in other subjects, and what is written is quite often untidy and badly presented. This is unsatisfactory and is evidence of teaching that needs to be sharpened up.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics have improved in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' progress through Key Stage 2 is much better than it was and their achievements are now satisfactory.
- The monitoring of pupils' attainment in Years 1 and 2 is not good enough.

Commentary

54. The current pupils in Years 1 and 2 have average standards, but results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 last year were low. This was because a significant number of pupils did not do as well as they could, and is the result of weak monitoring of standards. The headteacher and subject co-ordinator have now started to remedy this situation. The management of mathematics is satisfactory overall, but the co-ordinator does not know enough about what is going on in Years 1 and 2. This is a current focus of his work. Across the school sound analysis of tests results is made, but test papers have not been analysed to see where pupils have the greatest difficulties, and this is not the best practice. This insecure evaluation of difficulty particularly disadvantages more able pupils.
55. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a wide variation in their prior attainment. They make satisfactory progress. Currently over half the pupils in this class are working above the expected levels in their understanding of money and more able pupils possess a good range of strategies to work out answers to calculations. Pupils have average standards by the end of Year 6. This shows

improvement since the previous inspection in Years 3 to 6. The acquisition of an appropriate mathematical vocabulary has been an emphasis for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and this is coming on. However, once they have acquired the vocabulary, older and more able pupils could now do more work on their own. Pupils with higher ability in mathematics, as well as less able and average pupils, have satisfactory knowledge and understanding, but a significant number lack confidence, often asking for reassurance from staff that their answers are correct. This reflects too much support in the classes and disadvantages pupils when they are on their own doing tests.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some good teaching was observed, but evidence shows that teaching is satisfactory over time. The best aspect of teaching is the thorough grounding in basic numerical skills. That said, a significant number of pupils still are not secure in their multiplication tables. The areas that require most improvement are marking, especially in Years 5 and 6, and in the use of ICT in the subject. Some appropriate use of ICT is made when pupils work on data handling, but there is insufficient use in other areas of the curriculum. Marking does not show pupils how to improve their work, and opportunities are seldom provided for them to correct it.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Pupils' numeracy skills are insufficiently developed in other subjects, for example, science or geography. Teachers do not often plan where it can be used. This reduces the opportunities to raise standards further.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**, with some good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are average, with some higher levels of performance in the area of investigations.
- Improvements to pupils' achievements since the previous inspection have been good.
- Pupils' learning is satisfactory because teaching and assessment are at least satisfactory, and sometimes good.
- The management of science has ensured effective emphasis on investigative work, but has not ensured consistent improvement in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary.

58. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, considering their attainment on entry to Year 1. They have a sound grasp of scientific concepts. Standards were not so high last year, as indicated by the teachers' assessments, because there was too little checking of the pupils' achievements. The school knows about this and has instigated appropriate action. The improvements to the standards in Years 3 to 6 are significant since the previous inspection, when standards were below average, and particularly low in experimental and investigative science. This area has made a dramatic improvement and is the result of a great emphasis given to this subject and firm management by the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has undertaken some effective work in analysing older pupils' test results and this means that he knows where the weaknesses are.
59. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is at least satisfactory, and often good in the investigational aspects of science. This is due to the quality of teaching. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, with some strong elements, but the teaching seen during the inspection was of good quality. Teaching is imaginative and teachers make effective use of the good resources. As a result, pupils enjoy their work in science and respond well to the challenges presented. Some very good teaching was observed in which the teacher had a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This security with the subject allowed the teacher to question pupils effectively and to promote their

understanding through careful observation and focused discussion. In all year-groups pupils have acquired a useful scientific vocabulary, which they use appropriately. They work well together on tasks that are well matched to the concepts that are being taught. This subject is used very well to promote pupils' thinking skills, as well as their speaking and listening. Teachers are not as good at recording pupils' day-to-day achievements and there is little evidence of diagnostic marking to ensure that pupils know what to do next and how to improve.

60. The impact of the management of the subject is significant. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of what is needed and how to improve pupils' achievement. However, there has been too little monitoring of the work done by pupils in Years 1 and 2, and so some inconsistencies have crept in.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are as expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 with some strong elements
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory over time, but the recent progress of pupils of all abilities has been good.
- Not enough use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects.
- Resources are good.
- All teachers and support staff have received suitable training, and this has improved their teaching.

Commentary

61. Standards are as expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and this is a good improvement since the time of the last inspection, when they were judged to be below expectations. This improvement is due to the effective training of staff and the acquisition of the computer suite. Some good teaching was observed during the inspection, but the overall quality is satisfactory. The new computer resources have not yet had time to have the best impact on pupils' learning.
62. Pupils' learning is satisfactory and improving. Pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory progress, but the learning of pupils with special educational needs could be better if the school possessed a wider range of specialist software. Pupils with speech and language impairment could profitably use much more ICT. Some good learning is evident in Years 1 and 2, where pupils displayed secure skills using the computers and approached the tasks set with confidence. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have sufficient skills to use computers for research, but little use is made of them.
63. The leadership of information and communication technology is improving. The co-ordinator has ensured that pupils' skills are developed systematically through the school, and that staff know what to do. He has not, however, ensured that ICT is an integral part of all lessons.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is unsatisfactory. During the inspection very little use of ICT was observed in other subjects. The classroom computers are not often used. The use of ICT is not often planned into lessons and, when it is planned, it is not always done. Resources such as digital cameras and audio-equipment are insufficiently used. The new suite is not used all the time. This is an inefficient use of expensive resources and is a weakness for the management to address.

HUMANITIES

The inspectors concentrated on checking the standards in religious education and history. **Geography** was not a focus of the inspection and no lessons were being taught. It is not possible, therefore, to make

a firm judgement about standards, the quality of teaching and learning or the leadership and management of the subject. But evidence shows that provision is likely to be satisfactory. Pupils talked knowledgeably about the work they had covered previously and enjoy the subject. However, the planning of the curriculum, with long gaps between courses, does not ensure that there is constant reinforcement of geographical skills.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are as expected; they have improved in Years 3 to 6 since the time of the previous inspection.
- The attitudes of the pupils towards the subject are good.

Commentary.

65. The school has put much emphasis on the development of this subject since the previous inspection, and this has been beneficial. Money has been pumped into resources and useful visits made to places of worship. Standards are rising, but the school cannot be sure of pupils' attainment as there is no real assessment of their knowledge and understanding.
66. The curriculum is now satisfactory and still improving, as the new co-ordinator attempts to link the locally agreed syllabus with the government guidelines. The co-ordinator has done some effective monitoring and has identified some shortcomings in the provision. More evaluation of procedures is needed in order to ensure the proper extension of work for those pupils who are most knowledgeable about religious education. There is too little recording, by staff and pupils, of work covered during lessons that have concentrated on role-play or discussion. The school has started to address this issue.
67. The teaching and learning are satisfactory, and have improved since the previous inspection in Years 3 to 6. There has been a sensible move to have the subject taught by staff with the greatest interest. This interest, and the linking of lessons in religious education to the curriculum for the creative arts, has stimulated pupils and encouraged them to think more deeply about the purpose of religion. It is the aspect of learning from religion that the school knows needs further development. However, the work done has proved successful in encouraging pupils to think about the spiritual aspects of life, and pupils have been stimulated by aspects of faith other than their own, and by the visits they have made to different places of worship.

History

Provision for history is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are higher than expected. Pupils' achievement is good.
- The development of historical skills is promoted well.
- The curriculum is good, with many opportunities for pupils to undertake research.
- There is effective use of resources.
- The attitudes of the pupils towards the subject are good and are the result of good teaching.

Commentary

68. From the limited evidence available it is likely that standards are average by the end of Year 2. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 due to the good progress made through Key

Stage 2. High standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. During their time in school many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their enquiry skills in history. Pupils enjoy the challenges and they address the tasks set with energy and enthusiastic discussion. Throughout the school the teaching of history has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and very good use is made of the subject to promote pupils' speaking skills.

69. It was not possible to observe history being taught in Years 1 and 2. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and so pupils of all abilities learn well. Teachers involve pupils well in lessons and challenge them to empathise, for example, with Victorian household staff. The quality of preparation and very good pupil-teacher interaction create a very good environment for learning, which therefore promotes good achievement. Teachers develop pupils' historical research skills well, for example, in a lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils analysed a household inventory from Tudor times to good effect to find out information about the owner. Such activities promote pupils' interest through first-hand discovery, and enhance their skills of enquiry. This leads to more effective learning, whilst bringing the subject alive.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

70. The inspectors concentrated on checking the standards in **art and design**. A little evidence was gathered about **physical education**, but as it was not a focus of this inspection there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in physical education in Years 1 and 2. However, from consideration of the one lesson observed in gymnastics at Key Stage 2, the records of the success rate in swimming, the opportunities provided to extend their range of different skills in residential experiences, visits for physical education lessons to the local secondary school and the good range of extra-curricular activities, the provision would appear to be good and so standards are likely to be higher than expected. If this is the case, then this is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be as expected.
71. Almost no work was seen in design and technology, and only a little singing was heard in music. However, the **design and technology** curriculum appears to be not well developed, as there is no up-to-date policy or assessment. **Music** is taught to all classes by a visiting specialist, but the time allocated to these sessions is inadequate to cover all the required aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth. The singing heard was satisfactory, but there is no evidence of pupils' achievement in other aspects of music, as there are no assessments or records. There is no policy to ensure that all the staff know what to do to extend pupils' knowledge, understanding and performance. A few pupils take part in extra lessons, such learning a musical instrument, but there is no regular choir or orchestra to promote pupils' interest and personal development. This subject has too low a profile in the school and does not make the contribution it could to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The headteacher is aware of this and plans to acquire more expertise on the staff.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good in Years 1 and 2, but poor in Years 3 to 6.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below expectations in Years 3 to 6, and pupils' progress has been poor through the key stage.
- Standards are high in Years 1 and 2, and pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum for older pupils is unsatisfactory and does not provide a sufficient input to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- The leadership and management are good for the curriculum for Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory for Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

72. The low standards of older pupils' work in art and design in Years 3 to 6 are of concern, as they were judged to be as expected at the previous inspection. This decline is the result of a curriculum that has not been well planned, with too little work done and insufficient time allocated to the subject to be able to foster pupils' skills at an appropriate level. There has been a lack of attention given to art and design as an academic subject. This is a shame, because the school aspires to high quality work in this field, and values the input of the creative arts to pupils' development. Time and money have been devoted to special 'arts weeks' and these have stimulated pupils, but such additions to the curriculum are 'one-offs' and do not lead to a progressive development of skills and knowledge.
73. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are high. Some very good work is on display around the school and pupils talk about it with understanding. The subject is linked well to other aspects of the curriculum, such as personal and social education, and so it has a good input to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The current quality of teaching and learning is good.
74. The good work seen in Years 1 and 2 is not continued into Years 3 to 6. Art appears only to support other subjects at Key Stage 2, with some satisfactory work related to historical or religious topics. There is no progressive development of skills, knowledge or understanding. There is little use of ICT, for research, as well as design. Pupils know very little about art and famous artists and there is no evidence of the use of sketchbooks in Years 5 and 6. The lack of monitoring of the teaching and pupils' achievements, and no real assessment of their attainment, has contributed to pupils' poor progress.
75. The co-ordinator has good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and her influence is clear in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2. She has not, however, been given time to have sufficient input to the teaching or to the training of staff in Years 3 to 6, and standards have slipped. There is no school portfolio and pupils do not visit art galleries. There is no up-to-date policy for art and design, and the government guidelines, which the school has decided to adopt as a scheme of work, have not been customised for the needs of the older pupils, given their current low level of skill. Even with this low level of skill, pupils enjoy the subject and are unhappy that they do not know more.
76. The display of pupils' work is satisfactory overall. It would be better if work was named and dated in order to celebrate pupils' achievements. The display is imaginative in the reception class and areas used by pupils in Years 1 and 2, but dull and almost non-existent in the corridor used by pupils in Years 3 to 6. In these corridors there is very little stimulus material and almost no evidence of pupils' recent work.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal and social education has contributed to the ethos of improvement in the school.
- The programme of work is good, including all the required elements such as education in sex and relationships, drugs awareness and safety.
- The long-standing School Council is pro-active in bringing forward pupils' ideas.

Commentary

77. The school aims are reflected well in the policy for this subject. Good use is made of visits and visitors and from the contribution of outside professionals. The management of the subject is satisfactory and improving.

78. No overall judgement can be given about the teaching as only one lesson was seen, but the evidence of pupils' learning would suggest that it is good. The lesson observed, which was of good quality, generated thought about moral issues and promoted pupils' speaking skills well. The lesson used imaginative strategies to get pupils to think about the problems of modern life. Pupils tackled the social dilemmas with sensitivity and enthusiasm. However, many lack a wide enough vocabulary to be able to discuss feelings in the most meaningful way.
79. The School Council, consisting of members from all classes except reception, shows a good grasp of the realities of running the school. Members of the Council administered the pupils' questionnaires for the purpose of gathering information for this inspection, for example, and showed good sense and maturity when discussing the results.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
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	2
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	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school*	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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

** The work of the governing body is generally satisfactory. Governors have ensured good improvement and rising standards. However, as they do not ensure that there is a proper daily act of collective worship, and provide all the information they should to parents, governance has to be judged as unsatisfactory.*