

INSPECTION REPORT

SHARNFORD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sharnford, Hinckley

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120157

Headteacher: Mrs M Thornton

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 2nd - 3rd February 2004

Inspection number: 257437

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 52

School address: Hensons Way
Sharnford
Hinckley
Leicestershire
Postcode: LE10 3PN

Telephone number: 01455 272456
Fax number: 01455 272456

Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Ross

Date of previous inspection: 18th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is much smaller than average with most of the children coming from the village. There are currently 52 pupils on roll, including six children in the Foundation Stage. The number of pupils on roll has been stable for the last few years, but is fewer than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds, but all speak English as their first language. One pupil is of Chinese heritage, but all of the others are of white British heritage. The attainment of the children on entry is broadly average although there is considerable variation from year to year. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is much higher than usual and the proportion with a statement is double the national average. A part time teacher left the school at the end of last term to take up a full time post. The school has extended the hours of two other teachers and the headteacher now has a teaching commitment in two classes. This arrangement is temporary until an appointment can be made.

The school received an achievement award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Christopher Parker	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology physical education, special educational needs
9510	Christine Murray-Watson	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	English, history, geography, religious education, music, Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was :

Inspire Educational Ltd

The Coach House
132 Whitaker Road
Derby

DE23 6AP

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	15
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective school** with a strong commitment to further improvement. The teaching is good and as a result the pupils achieve well. The good leadership and management give a clear direction to the school. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good
- The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is particularly strong
- There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use and extend their writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum
- The pupils' progress is very well monitored
- The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage
- The pupils are actively involved and play a confident part in the life of the school
- The information provided for parents is good

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards are higher, the pupils now have positive attitudes and their behaviour is better than it was. The management of behaviour has improved although this is not entirely consistent in all lessons. The resources for information and communication technology have improved, but need further enhancement. The pupils now have a much better curriculum for art and design and design and technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

The grades in the above table should be viewed with considerable caution as cohorts are very small. In 2003, the results were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. However, when compared with schools where results are similar at the end of Year 2, the pupils' achievement in 2003 was average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. The inspection findings show that current standards in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, with all of the pupils on course to attain the expected level and a good proportion are likely to exceed it.

The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 have been either average or above for the last few years, but here again cohorts are very small. In 2003 they were well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the results were average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. Overall, the rate of improvement was above the national trend. The inspection evidence shows that most of the present pupils are working at the level expected of them in English, mathematics and science. Overall, their **achievement is good** and they are making good progress.

In the Foundation Stage, most of the children are on course to reach the goals expected by the end of reception year.

The pupils generally behave well and are positive about learning. Relationships are good and the pupils work well together and independently. The school cultivates their personal development effectively. The levels of attendance dipped in the last year, largely because of a few parents taking their children out of school for holidays during term time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is good** and the pupils are achieving well because **the teaching is good**. The lessons are well planned, well organised, often lively and have an appropriate level of challenge to which the pupils respond well. The assessment arrangements are very good and details of the pupils' progress are comprehensively recorded.

The school provides a broad and interesting curriculum that is presented through a range of activities. The pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills across the curriculum, but it is not sufficient to extend and broaden their learning. A lively programme of extracurricular activities enriches the daily curriculum to which the pupils' response is enthusiastic.

Increasing use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The resources have improved, but the software needs further enhancement and, in some cases, the furniture in the computer suite is inappropriate.

The provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils is very good. The pupils are actively involved in the work of the school, and their views are valued and contribute to the development of the school. The school maintains effective links with parents and carers, many of whom are actively involved in the life and work of the school. Local amenities are well utilised and there are productive links with other schools in the area.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Strategic plans set out the school's ambitions and goals very clearly. The headteacher leads the teaching team very effectively and there is a strong commitment to continuing improvement. The governors are effective in helping to shape the direction for the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of the parents think highly of the school and are appreciative of the provision made for their children. They think that their children are making good progress and most of the children feel they learn new things in lessons, which are interesting and fun. Some parents commented favourably on the recent improvements made to the school premises and on how happy their children are in school. A few parents felt that the pupils were set too much homework but inspectors found it to be well organised and in line with the current guidance. The pupils are pleased with the improvements, for example to the hall, and welcome the opportunities they have to have their views represented at the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide more frequent opportunities for the pupils to explore, extend and broaden their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum
- Further enhance the resources for information and communication technology to support the increasing use of ICT across the curriculum

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are currently above average by the end of Year 6. The pupils are achieving well throughout the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The pupils are making good progress

Commentary

1. Most of the youngest pupils will reach the goals set for them by the end of the Foundation Stage because they have good opportunities to learn from a good range of activities. There is an appropriate balance between those that are directed by the teacher and those that they chose themselves.
2. The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 have been either average or above for the last few years. These fluctuations represent the variations within small cohorts of pupils. In 2003, the results were well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the results were average in reading and writing, but below average in mathematics. Overall, the rate of improvement was above the national trend. The inspection evidence shows that the pupils are achieving well and most are working at the level expected of them in English, mathematics and science.
3. The results at the end of Year 6 fluctuate considerably, and their rate of improvement at this point is below the national average. Here again, however, the number of pupils in each cohort is very small and in 2003, for example, a significant proportion had special educational needs. Furthermore, over half of the pupils joined the school at various times after the reception year. Consequently, the results were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. However, when compared with schools where results are similar at the end of Year 2, the pupils' achievement was average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. The inspection findings show that standards are above average in English, mathematics and science this year with all of the pupils on course to attain the expected level and a third likely to exceed it.
4. The headteacher has concentrated much of the school improvement activity on raising standards in the core subjects. This is clearly benefiting the pupils' achievements, which have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good overall. However, the pupils are given a broad enough range of opportunities to use and extend their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Standards have improved in information and communication technology and in the quality of the work seen in art and design and design and technology. The pupils' work in art and design is of a good standard.
5. Over the last few years, there have been variations in the results achieved by boys and girls. At the end of Year 2, the boys usually outperform the girls overall, but there are years where the girls do better than the boys. At the end of Year 6, the position is reversed, but the number of pupils in all cohorts is very small and in many cases there is a gender imbalance. However, there is no evidence of any variation in the opportunities offered to boys and girls. Those pupils with special educational needs are achieving satisfactorily although there is some variation from class to class. Where, for example, pupils with behavioural difficulties are well managed,

their learning benefits. Conversely, where their behaviour is not as effectively managed in some lessons in Years 3 and 4 they lose concentration and don't do as well as they could.

6. The vast majority of the parents feel their children are making good progress. Some who attended the pre-inspection meeting were particularly pleased with the degree of challenge provided for their children, for example, in mathematics. Most of the children feel they learn new things in lessons, which are interesting and fun.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils generally behave well and are positive about learning. The school cultivates their personal development effectively. Attendance is below the average found in primary schools nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils work well together and independently
- Relationships are good
- The pupils play a confident part in the life of the school
- Attendance dipped last year to below the national average

Commentary

7. The pupils are generally well behaved, settling quietly to their work and moving sensibly around the school. They work well together at all ages; the older children in particular are acquiring a mature approach to working in pairs and small groups. A few individuals find it hard to match the consistently good behaviour of their peers, but in most lessons they are well managed and are rarely a distraction to the others.
8. Across the school, the pupils' relationships with other children and with adults are consistently good. There is a mutual appreciation of each other's achievements. Sporting prowess, for example, is readily commented on and admired. Within a small school community where everyone is known well, each child feels valued and secure, and even minor incidents of "falling out" or deliberate unkindness are rare.
9. The school is committed to encouraging its pupils to be reflective about their personal behaviour as well as their work. The morning assemblies provide good opportunities for the pupils to consider issues that transcend the daily activities of the school. A good example was observed in an assembly where the pupils enacted a visit to a cathedral, creating a sense of a transcendental being and the awe and wonder inspired by the soaring architecture of a place of worship. The school grounds also provide a tranquil, rural setting where the pupils can play happily and safely and develop an awareness of the beauty of the natural world.
10. The pupils appreciate the way their views are taken into account and see themselves as active members of the school community. As a result, they are developing an appropriate sense of responsibility for their surroundings. Many were seen cheerfully undertaking routine tasks without fuss, such as tidying away equipment or putting out chairs in the hall. The older pupils are able to talk confidently about school life and their enjoyment of both their lessons and the extra curricular activities.
11. The levels of attendance have dipped in the last year. This is largely due to a few parents taking their children out of school for holidays during term time. In a small school, even a few absences of this sort can have a major impact on the overall attendance figures. There have been no exclusions.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.5
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good because the curriculum is interesting, the pupils are well taught and their progress is carefully monitored.

Teaching and learning

The teaching is good and the assessment procedures are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is strong
- The lessons are well planned and well organised
- The teaching assistants provide effective support for the pupils.
- Homework is used effectively
- The assessments of the pupils' attainment and progress are comprehensively recorded

Commentary

12. All of the pupils in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 are taught in the same class. Here the teaching is good because the situation is very well managed and the activities for each group of pupils are thoroughly planned to ensure they are well matched to the needs, ages and abilities of the pupils. The teacher and classroom assistant manage their time well to give the youngest children the support and direction they need to make good progress.
13. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching is satisfactory overall. In good lessons, for example design and technology taught by the headteacher, the pupils with behavioural difficulties are well managed and both they and the rest of the class learn well. However, when the class is taught by a part-time teacher, the management of those pupils is less effective and, although never disruptive, their behaviour has an unsettling effect which slows the pace of learning in some lessons. The lessons are well planned, and the activities are challenging and interesting, but their effect is reduced because the classroom management strategies do not ensure that a rapid pace of learning is maintained. This was the case, for example, when the pupils were investigating air resistance in science.
14. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching is very good. Its high level of expectation, lively presentation and rapid pace ensure that the pupils are continually engaged, learn effectively and achieve well. This was particularly evident in a literacy lesson on the construction of arguments. The pupils were moved quickly from one task to the next by the use of a range of strategies that involved them discussing in pairs, using writing frames and concentrating on their own writing. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by engaging them in ways that maintain their concentration and fully involve them in all activities. It also ensures that any behavioural difficulties are minimised.
15. The teaching assistants are effectively deployed and used well in lessons. As a result, the pupils with special educational needs play a full part in lessons and make good progress except in Years 3 and 4 where their progress is satisfactory. Homework is used effectively. For

example, in Year 5 and 6 an interesting range of tasks extending beyond literacy and numeracy are set for the week. The information provided for the pupils and their parents makes clear what is expected of them.

16. The assessment arrangements are very good. The teachers are increasingly making effective use of marking. At this stage, there are many examples of useful comments and questions for pupils to respond to and correct their mistakes. In all subjects, the pupils' progress is carefully assessed and recorded giving useful information for the teachers to use to plan the next stage of learning. In some cases, for example in information and communication technology, the older pupils are involved in assessing and recording their own performance. At the end of many lessons, the pupils are asked to evaluate their own learning and are aware of their targets that give a coherence and purpose to the school's assessment strategy.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

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

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

The curriculum

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is delivered through a range of interesting activities. A lively programme of extracurricular opportunities enriches the daily curriculum. The pupils' participation is very enthusiastic.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned to ensure that new learning builds upon what has gone before
- There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use and extend their writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum
- The range of extracurricular opportunities broadens the pupils' learning experiences.
- The environment for learning is attractive and used well

Commentary

17. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has improved because it is now well managed by the staff team who share the same aims. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is well planned and presented through a range of purposeful, interesting activities appropriate to prepare these children for the first stage of the National Curriculum. The National Curriculum is carefully planned to ensure that the needs of mixed age classes are met. The religious education programme follows the guidance provided by the locally Agreed Syllabus. The pupils with special educational needs are well catered for because the teachers and teaching assistants communicate well at the planning stage and also share information about how well the pupils are achieving. The school has fully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies which form the cornerstone of the teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Although the range of opportunities provided for the pupils to use and apply their knowledge and skills across the curriculum is satisfactory, it is not sufficient to extend and broaden their learning. For example, their mathematical skills are not used widely enough in science or geography.
18. The pupils are encouraged to exercise their individuality and to take responsibility for the way they approach the curriculum. This was evident, for example, in the way the oldest pupils embarked upon a historical enquiry using post-war artefacts. Photographic evidence shows

pupils responding well to a “Roman” experience and to a dance opportunity with an Indian visitor.

19. The pupils use information and communication technology with increasing confidence to support work across the curriculum. Although the resources have improved, some software needs further enhancement and, in some cases, the furniture in the computer suite is inappropriate.
20. A visit to a newspaper office inspired some older pupils to use a desktop publishing programme to produce their own newspaper. Work in history and geography is supported by use of the Internet. The school is actively building links with the local community who, for example, wrote warmly after attending a harvest festival in school. Its provision of sporting opportunities is also good. The pupils enjoy a variety of environmental activities and have contributed to the attractive redesigning of areas of the school grounds. Some attend after school clubs, such as the French and chess clubs.
21. The teachers and the support staff are well qualified. The classrooms and public areas are attractive and positively reflect the wide variety of activities in which the pupils and adults engage. The classrooms are of adequate size and well used, but the two ‘temporary’ classrooms have propped ceilings and the exterior of both is worn and unattractive. Both of these classrooms are about to be replaced. The youngest pupils benefit from having a designated safe area where they can use wheeled vehicles and engage in a range of outdoor activities when the weather permits.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils is very good. Their progress is very well monitored. The pupils are actively involved in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff are well trained and well-informed to provide for the care and well-being of the pupils
- The pupils’ progress is effectively monitored
- The pupils’ views are valued and contribute to the development of the school

Commentary

22. The provision the school makes for child protection and the pupils’ welfare is underpinned by a very good level of informed support and the training of all members of staff. Appropriate procedures for risk assessment are in place and the cleanliness, safety and security of the school site and buildings are well maintained.
23. Within a small school, the pupils are well known and their work is well tailored to their individual needs. Their progress is carefully monitored to ensure that every pupil is encouraged and given the necessary support. This applies not only to academic areas but also to the pupils’ personal development. As a result, the pupils are growing in confidence and have a realistic awareness of what they can achieve. The developing sense of teamwork amongst the teaching and support staff is a positive factor in the care provided for all pupils.
24. The views of the pupils are readily taken into account and they appreciate the way that their wishes influence the decisions that are made on their behalf. A newly formed School Council has quickly become an established part of school life, with the elected representatives actively involved in canvassing and passing on the views of their classmates.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains effective links with parents and carers, many of whom are actively involved in the life and work of the school. The various local amenities are well utilised and there are productive links with other schools in the area.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents have a positive view of the school
- The information provided for parents is good
- Many parents offer active help

Commentary

25. The great majority of the parents think highly of the school and are appreciative of the provision made for their children. They appreciate the welcome they receive and the ease of contact with the teaching staff although a few have not engaged as fully as they might in the home/school partnership. Some commented favourably on the recent improvements made to the school premises and on how happy their children are in school.
26. The school is working hard to involve the parents in their children's learning and provides a good level of information about the curriculum and the progress individual pupils are making. Regular newsletters keep parents up-to-date with school events and the governors' lively, annual report presents the longer-term view. Many, though not all, of the parents make full use of this good level of information and are supportive of the school by backing up their children's learning at home. A few parents feel that the school sets too much homework, but the inspectors found it to be compatible with the published guidance and that the oldest pupils are provided with a very clear schedule of what is expected.
27. The school benefits from much active help from parents. There is a lively Parent Teacher Association, which raises valuable funds for the school, as well as organising social events for the children. Some parents come into school to help with activities and to listen to children read. This help also extends to the after-school clubs, sporting fixtures and out-of-school trips.
28. The school works productively with other local schools to extend the range of social, sporting and curricular projects available to the pupils. Shared training is also of benefit to the staff. These links extend to the local secondary school to ensure the smooth transfer of Year 6 pupils to the next stage of education. The curriculum is enriched by visits to the local churches and other buildings of interest in the area. Local residents also come in to school on occasion, to help with history projects, for example.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and the school is well managed. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher leads the teaching team very effectively
- The governors are effective in helping to shape the direction for the school
- The strategic plans set out the school's ambitions and the goals very clearly

Commentary

29. Since taking up her appointment, the headteacher has tackled a range of issues and has placed ongoing school improvement at the top of her agenda. She has a clear vision for the school and is providing the drive and direction to bring about the improvements that are

needed. Her vision is articulated through the aims and expectations set out in the strategic plan. The goals for the year are developed through project plans that are designed to achieve the long-term expectations. The strategic plans provide a very well considered and coherent structure for moving the school forward. The headteacher is also developing a strong teaching team by going through several rounds of interviews to appoint a strong candidate. The core teaching team is now settled and providing good support for a newly qualified teacher. Similar determination has been put into improving the accommodation. Working with the governing body, the headteacher has also been able to bring about improvements to the main building and the imminent replacement of two 'temporary' classrooms.

30. The governing body has an effective structure that allows its work to be conducted through formal meetings, development meetings and working groups. The governors clearly feel that this system is working well and allowing them to play their role in mapping the direction that the school is taking. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when the governors were not playing such an active role in the decision-making processes. The governors now make visits, observe lessons and talk to staff and children so that they build up a clear picture of how well the school is doing. One governor is heavily involved in the school's training for 'Investors in People' status.
31. The governors are helping to establish priorities for improvement and in some cases are instigating particular initiatives. They also monitor the development activities to evaluate their impact. They are very careful to balance the budget so that a stable staffing situation can be maintained.
32. The headteacher undertakes a range of self evaluation measures; some in collaboration with the local education authority and others through the subject co-ordinators who work closely as a team. Comprehensive data analysis is used to track the progress of individual pupil's progress and provides information for the teachers to set targets for further improvement which are linked to their performance management targets. The staff team work very closely together to monitor the planning and to check that the pupils' work is of the standard that it should be. The headteacher also checks the pupils' work and uses any emerging issues to further school improvement.
33. The school has just changed its budget management system and is now purchasing the local authority services. The large credit balance carried forward from the previous year is earmarked for the imminent replacement of the 'temporary' classrooms. The governors monitor expenditure effectively. The spending per pupil is above the national average for infant and junior schools. However, given the pupils' good achievements, the good teaching and the strong leadership, it is clear that the school provides good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	199,855
Total expenditure	187,513
Expenditure per pupil	3,178

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	22,206
Balance carried forward to the next	34,578

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well because they are sensitively supported by the adults.
 - The well planned curriculum ensures that the children develop socially and make good progress
 - The children respond well to directed activities, but also have ample opportunities to exercise choice
34. The six children in the Foundation Stage are taught alongside Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. They have good opportunities to share activities with the older children but also others that are specifically designed to ensure good coverage of all the six designated areas of learning. For example, a safe outdoor area allows the youngest children to use wheeled vehicles. Some of the youngest children are confident enough to respond during a whole class story telling session. The children's literacy and numeracy skills are developing well, and their speaking and listening skills are a little above what is expected at this stage.
35. The children are achieving well in **personal, social and emotional development** because expectations are made very clear. They are sensitively supported to enable them to work amicably and co-operatively with others. Most are adept at putting on and removing garments, for example, when they use the role play area or go outside for breaks. They frequently help each other in these tasks. They are consistently encouraged to share and take turns, for example, when the morning fruit is distributed. The adults are very consistent in their insistence that children listen to what each has to say.
36. The children make good progress in **communication, language and literature** because they have many opportunities to speak to adults and to each other. Their early writing skills are also being systematically fostered. Most can now overwrite letter shapes accurately and a few are beginning to make the joins when they write whole words. Their awareness of full stops and capital letters is growing as they copy write sentences written by the adults. Similarly, their phonic skills are regularly practised so that the children make good progress in associating the sounds of letters with their corresponding names. They turn the pages of books correctly and are very eager to relate their content to adults.
37. The children are well on course to achieve the early learning goals in **mathematical development**. They confidently associate numerals with a quantity. They can count spots on dominoes and are developing confidence in recognising, for example, that $2 + 2 = 4$ or that $4 + 0 = 4$. They can relate this to counting coins, for example $2p + 2p + 1p = 5p$. Their understanding of the language of position is satisfactory. For instance, most had successfully matched drawings to the phrases "on top of", "at the side of" and so on.
38. In **knowledge and understanding of the world**, there are many opportunities to engage in construction activities. The Lego houses constructed by the youngest children showed considerable ingenuity as well as the satisfactory development of their manipulative skills. They recognise the difference between "now" and "then" because they have observed objects from different time periods and also discussed features of the seaside in the past. As they use a variety of computer programs, they understand that the mouse can control images on the screen, and that "paint" effects can also be reproduced. They have taken part in an interesting range of science activities about the senses and understand that food can be either safe or harmful.

39. No lessons in **physical development** were seen, but the children were very adept at moving around for a variety of activities in the classroom and when handling a range of equipment requiring various motor control skills. During outdoor play, they are energetic and have sufficient physical co-ordination to use the playground safely. They hold pencils, felt pens and brushes comfortably and know how to manipulate scissors correctly. In **creative development**, the good variety of art on display demonstrates the children's developing sense of colour and composition. Musical activities are greatly enjoyed. The children sing well and are able to handle untuned percussion instruments appropriately.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well and standards are above average at the end of Year 6
- The literacy curriculum is well planned and taught
- The pupils with special educational needs are well supported
- Opportunities to write at length in other subjects are not sufficiently exploited

Commentary

40. The pupils are achieving and progressing well because the lessons are well planned and lively. Currently, standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2, and above average by the end of Year 6. A careful analysis of the pupils' achievements has identified the areas needing attention. Consequently, the teachers are now systematically developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills.
41. The school's literacy strategy is now well established and the programme of work is planned efficiently and coherently to ensure that the pupils develop competence in all areas of English. For example, the pupils have many and varied opportunities to talk with adults and with each other in pairs or groups. The teachers know how to question the pupils effectively so that they have to give thoughtful, interesting replies. This was evident, for instance, in a class where the pupils and teachers were discussing a text containing an argument. The class discussion provided a sound foundation for the pupils then to work in pairs when planning an argument representing different points of view. Discussion skills are fostered at an early stage and develop well because relationships between the pupils are very good.
42. The pupils achieve well in reading because it is a skill that is well taught, and a good variety of reading materials is made available to them. They encounter not only an interesting range of fiction but also a good supply of reference books, pamphlets and newspaper reports. Opportunities for individual reading and shared reading promote confidence and enjoyment. The library area and the attractive displays of printed material in the classrooms invite the pupils to respond positively to text. Fables, poems and factual writing ensure that the range of reading material is sufficiently broad.
43. In an attempt to achieve more consistent standards, the school made writing a focus for development. As a result, the teachers have been successful in raising the pupils' attainment in aspect of English. By the end of Year 2, the pupils now reach average standards and achieve well. The pupils in Year 6 are achieving above average standards and are acquiring the necessary skills to evaluate their own writing. In key stage 1, the pupils write regularly, though some of the more able need encouragement to write at greater length. Their writing is generally clear and well structured, but now requires greater emphasis on the correct use of some grammatical features. They include the basic use of speech marks within a narrative

text, more discerning vocabulary selection and further refinement of sentence structures. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are aware of the different styles of texts and recognise that language varies according to the nature of the piece. Their purposeful approach to writing tasks springs directly from the lively, purposeful teaching they receive. As a result, they take pride in their work, always seeking to present it well and ensure that it interests the readers. The pupils take note of the teacher's constructive marking and, therefore, it influences their subsequent work. Those with special educational needs achieve well because their requirements are carefully assessed and appropriate support is provided.

44. The schools' literacy strategy is developing well. The teachers and support staff are very committed to raising standards of in this aspect of the work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. The teachers provide a satisfactory range of writing activities, but there is room to extend the writing opportunities in a range of subjects. For example, in history and science too much of the pupils' work is in note form or in response to prepared worksheets. Currently, the pupils are not given sufficient freedom to record their observations or the results of their investigations in a manner that allows them to use and extend their writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

The provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving
- Pupils of all abilities are being appropriately challenged and, as a result, are achieving well
- The pupils are not applying their numeracy skills sufficiently across the curriculum

Commentary

46. The pupils are achieving and progressing well because the lessons are well planned and lively. Currently, standards are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection brought about by strong teamwork and common teaching approaches.
47. The results of the national tests have fluctuated from average to well above average at the end of Year 2 and from well above average to below average at the end of Year 6. These fluctuations are due to the small cohorts tested each year and the varying proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Another significant factor is the proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school. Of the Year 6 cohort in 2003, only three of the seven pupils who took the national tests spent all of their primary years at the school. These factors illustrate well the degree of caution with which the data should be viewed. Nevertheless, the school tracks the progress of individual pupils very thoroughly and sets challenging targets in order to increase the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels.
48. The teachers use lively mental warm-up activities, good direct teaching, appropriately challenging tasks, good support for all groups, whole-class sessions where they assess how well the pupils have learned. Furthermore, in Years 5 and 6 the pupils are given good opportunities to assess the extent of their own learning. In Year 2, a scrutiny of previous work shows that the pupils are acquiring skills and knowledge at the expected rate, and are achieving satisfactorily. In one lesson, for example, they displayed good ability in the use of different strategies to add two-digit numbers. They did well in this lesson because the teaching was clear and the tasks provided appropriate challenge. Similarly, in Years 5 and 6, a well-managed lesson helped the pupils to visualise three-dimensional shapes from two-dimensional diagrams. The teacher set a good range of interesting tasks that were well

matched to the pupils' ages and abilities. The pupils with special educational needs were well supported. Consequently all pupils achieved well.

49. The teaching is good overall. The teachers are knowledgeable and confident in their presentation of mathematics. They plan thoroughly, structure the lessons very well, manage the work of different year groups effectively, and assess and record the pupils' progress. In various ways, they are actively encouraging the parents to become more involved in their children's mathematical learning. For instance, they organised a curriculum evening and have circulated information booklets showing examples of the methods used to solve problems. The parents are appreciative of these efforts.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. At present, the mathematical investigations are often too constrained and do not allow the pupils sufficient opportunity to explore a range of possible solutions. This is particularly so in the case of the older pupils. In a science lesson, for example, the pupils have measured shadows and have used graphs and charts to display their observations and findings from experiments, but too often this is done on prepared worksheets. In their designs for bird feeders, they have used measurement, but overall the range of opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills is not as extensive as it should be.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of science is good overall
- The curriculum is well planned and organised
- The pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to determine how to record their findings

Commentary

51. Standards in science are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. This marks an improvement since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall and making good progress in their knowledge of life processes. They have an appropriate range of opportunities to investigate and experiment, but too often the recording of their observations is restricted by the use of prepared worksheets. This is also the case in some of the work in Years 3 and 4, where good standards of presentation are not consistently maintained. In Years 5 and 6, greater freedom is evident in investigative and experimental science but opportunities for the pupils' to make maximum use of their literacy and numeracy skills are sometimes curtailed because the activities are too tightly focussed. There are few instances, for example, where the pupils' skills in either ICT or numeracy skills are utilised to record or present their findings.
52. Nevertheless, the pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding in science as they move through school. In the present Year 6, all of the pupils are on course to reach the expected level and a third are likely to exceed it. This is because the key areas of knowledge are well taught, and they carry out a reasonable range of experiments. However, there is room for more extensive investigation. The teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen, the teaching was particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where the pupils are challenged, questioned rigorously to articulate their understanding and engaged in purposeful activities. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils were engaged in an investigation to find out how they could see objects in box. They successfully used a light source and coloured filters to discover and identify the objects.

53. The school is successfully extending the range of investigative and experimental activities in science, but the pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are not sufficiently applied and extended in this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for ICT is well planned
- The resources are adequate but not well sited for the pupils to use

Commentary

54. Standards in ICT are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils acquire a good range of skills through a coherent programme of lessons that build well on their previous experiences. In a lesson in Years 3 and 4, the pupils successfully replied to emails sent to them by children at another school. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils were able to organise text and images as a preliminary exercise to setting up a homepage for a school website.
55. The teaching is satisfactory. In the lessons seen, the teachers were confident and secure in their knowledge of the software, but the use of different word processors, for example, creates some difficulties. They could be easily overcome by ensuring that all the computers had the same versions of the software. This would make instructing the pupils and dealing with their questions much easier than is currently the case.
56. The curriculum and the lessons are carefully planned to ensure that the pupils have a broad range of opportunities to develop their capabilities. The pupils are involved in the assessment of their skills and knowledge. Each pupil has a booklet containing criteria against which progress can be recorded at the end of each unit of work.
57. The school has a useful development plan to extend the use of ICT across the curriculum. The present hardware resources are adequate although some are ageing. The school has a number of laptops that offer greater flexibility in their use and application, but some of the furniture for the ICT suite is not appropriate. Some of the seating is not at the correct height for the pupils to use the keyboards and view the monitors comfortably.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. The pupils are making satisfactory use of ICT across the curriculum but there is scope to extend the opportunities offered to the pupils in, for example, science. However, the school is actively seeking to increase and broaden the range of opportunities for pupils to use ICT in all subjects of the curriculum. In art, for example, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 have created portraits using a painting program, and in Year 5/6 the pupils have created pictures in the style of Matisse. The oldest pupils have also used word processing to write interesting character studies and they searched the internet to find information as part of their historical enquiries.

HUMANITIES

59. One lesson in each of **geography** and **history** was seen during the inspection. The pupils' recorded work was scrutinised and work on display in the classrooms was also examined.

60. The pupils' work shows there is a growing emphasis on enquiry as they move through the school. They have visited the local area and been required to observe features, such as buildings. The youngest pupils have been asked to use their observation skills, to evaluate good and bad features and to express their likes and dislikes. In their history lessons, the oldest pupils have been examining artefacts and making historical deductions from them. They have also learned to gather information from sources such as the Internet, illustrated material and interviews. Local residents provided a rich resource for pupils seeking to discover what life was like from the 1940's onwards. Consequently, as they move through the school, the pupils make good progress to realise that printed material is not the sole source of historical evidence.
61. The teaching is lively and the activities interesting, well supported by a range of resources and materials of good quality, such as maps, plans, photographs and artefacts. The level of discussion among the pupils when they evaluate their local area is above average, but their written recording is limited in its depth and range. The higher attaining pupils, in particular, could well be encouraged to apply their literacy skills to record their observations and express their opinion more fully.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' interest is aroused through a well planned programme of topics
- The resources are good and are used effectively

Commentary

62. Standards are average, but many pupils achieve well and acquire sound knowledge of aspects of Christianity and of features of other world faiths.
63. The younger pupils are beginning to understand well the concept of "special" in relation to times and places. One young child confidently wrote, "Your birthday is a special day because you were born on that day". They have learned about special books such as the Torah and festivals such as Hanukkah and Sukkoth. The use of artefacts has contributed well to their recognition of objects associated with faiths such as Christianity and Judaism. By the end of Year 6, the pupils expand their knowledge and understanding of the significance of special books, such as the Bible and the Qu'ran.
64. The content of the teaching is well planned, and many topics encourage the pupils to reflect on some of the spiritual aspects of religion. The pupils' recorded work is carefully done and reflects the pride they take in it. However, the recording is too often in pictorial form only. The older pupils, in particular, have insufficient opportunity to write extended personal responses to what they learn and understand.
65. The good displays of work around the school reflect the fact that religious education is an important aspect of the curriculum. The teachers plan and prepare work carefully to include artefacts that help the pupils to understand the importance of religious practice in the lives of believers.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

66. One lesson of **art and design** and one of design and technology were observed. The pupils' work on display and in their folders was scrutinised. No physical education or music lessons were seen.

67. The artwork on display is of a good standard and reflects a broad range of experiences provided for the pupils. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 have produced portraits that show careful observation and painting of facial features and successful representation of skin tones. They are displayed alongside similar portraits created by the use of a computer programme, producing an interesting visual comparison. Recently, the pupils have also been working with materials such as felt, ribbon and lace to produce effective woven patterns. In the one lesson observed, the teacher provided the pupils with a very good range of materials including watercolours, collage and crayon to experiment with colour to create 'dream' effects by blurring edges and blending colours. Most of the pupils enjoyed the freedom to try out a range of possibilities, but a few boys with behavioural difficulties found the responsibility of working in this way hard to accommodate. Consequently, they did not benefit from the lesson to the same extent as the other pupils. Scrutiny of the older pupils' sketch books shows that experimenting with line and colour helps the pupils to develop a range of techniques. This is evident in their aboriginal art, the very effective pastel drawing of animals, block printing and the hats they designed and made in connection with the theme of 'What a Performance'.
68. The provision in **design and technology** has improved significantly since the last inspection. Although only one lesson was observed, there is clear evidence that the pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, are using their skills to design and make products that meet the needs of the end user. In the lesson seen, the pupils made annotated drawings of a lamp using what they had learned about simple circuits before making models to test their ideas. All of the pupils responded well to this well-structured lesson. The work of the older pupils shows that their designs become more detailed and their products are of the standard expected by the end of Year 6. The bird feeders and shelters and the advertisements that include cam mechanisms illustrate this well. The pupils have also evaluated their products and in some cases have identified how they can make improvements. The curriculum planning for music and physical education and indicates a full and varied programme. In **music**, for example, it covers performance, listening and appraising and composition. The pupils were heard to sing tunefully during school worship. Good quality resources were available for instrumental work. The school has good facilities for **physical education**, including a good sized multipurpose hall, hard play area and a playing field.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

69. No personal, social and health education lessons were taught during the inspection although the schools promotion of healthy eating was very evident at break times when fruit was available for all pupils. The school has introduced a scheme of work to provide the pupils with a comprehensive programme of activities, aligned to a whole-school strategy to improve co-operative working. Good examples were seen of pupils working well together on a range of tasks.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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