

INSPECTION REPORT

SITWELL INFANT SCHOOL

Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106858

Headteacher: Mrs P Fletcher

Lead inspector: Mr F Ravey

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 April 2004

Inspection number: 257481

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	230
School address:	Grange Road Grange Estate Rotherham South Yorkshire
Postcode:	S60 3LA
Telephone number:	01709 531855
Fax number:	01709 701762
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Schofield
Date of previous inspection:	11 May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has a broadly average number on roll compared to primary schools nationally although as it covers only the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 it has more pupils in these year groups than found in most schools. The number on roll has grown since the last inspection. The school is popular in its local area and always has a waiting list of pupils whose parents want them to join. A significant minority of pupils come from outside the immediate local area. Few pupils begin or leave the school at other than at the start of the school year. Nearly a sixth of pupils do not have English as their first language. Eighteen receive additional language support, with nine pupils at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average whilst the percentage of statemented pupils is broadly average. Only a small number of pupils are entitled to free school meals, well below the national average. Most children starting school have received pre-school education but this is from a large and varied number of providers. Attainment on entry is broadly average. This is the first year that all children in the reception year group have begun school in September. Previously, the school had two intakes to reception, one in September and one in January.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11371	Mr F Ravey	Lead inspector	Mathematics, Information and communication technology, music, physical education
9883	Mr B Silvester	Lay inspector	
27777	Mr R Greenall	Team inspector	English, design and technology, geography, history, special educational needs
32128	Mrs A Hankinson	Team inspector	Science, art and design, religious education, the Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. It has a number of significant strengths. Pupils leave at the end of Year 2 with above average standards overall. All groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Teaching and learning are good overall but are mostly stronger in Years 1 and 2 than in the Foundation Stage, where they are often no better than satisfactory. The school takes very good care of its pupils. Leadership and management are effective. Governance is sound. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- All groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well because of good quality teaching and a well-structured curriculum.
- Standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2.
- Although achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, it should be better, especially for younger children.
- Effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs, reflecting the school's commitment to helping all pupils achieve to their potential.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The school cares very well for its pupils.
- It maintains an effective partnership with parents.
- Assessment is not used effectively in the Foundation Stage or sharply enough for assessing for the progress of pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since it was inspected in 1998 and in some respects it has improved well. Standards were judged to be average at the time of the last inspection but are now above average although the school's improvement in relation to the trend in national test results has been broadly average. The quality of teaching has improved significantly but more so in Years 1 and 2 than in the Foundation Stage. The school has responded successfully overall to the key issues raised at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	A	B	B	C
writing	A	A	B	C
mathematics	A	A	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievement is good overall. It is good for all groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those identified as having special educational needs. All groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress. As a result, standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2. In information and communication technology (ICT), standards are average by the end of Year 2 but pupils achieve well in lessons. Effective teaching and very good support from teaching assistants contribute most strongly to this good achievement in Years 1 and 2. In the Foundation Stage, the learning opportunities provided are not always best suited to younger children. This restricts their progress and limits their achievement to being satisfactory overall although most children reach the learning goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. The most recent national test results, shown above, indicate that in relation to similar schools, standards should be

higher, especially in mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that standards this year are higher than in 2003 and are moving closer to the better levels attained in 2002. **Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good overall.** Within this, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are particular strengths. Pupils are very positive both in their attitudes to school and to learning. They behave very well. Attendance is above the national average and is good. Punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides its pupils with a good quality of education overall. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is strongest in Years 1 and 2, where there is a good deal of effective teaching and some very effective teaching. Particular strengths include teachers' high expectations of what all pupils should achieve and the way in which they provide work for different groups of pupils that help them to achieve well. In the Foundation Stage, although effective teaching was observed, teaching sometimes lacks the effectiveness seen in Years 1 and 2. This is because the curriculum provided sometimes leads to less effective use of time and to a lack of the well-designed opportunities for children to learn through independent investigation.

The school makes a strong commitment to enabling all pupils to get the best out of their education, whatever their attainment. It enriches its curriculum well through clubs, visits and visitors. It takes very good care of its pupils and provides a very welcoming ethos for parents, with whom it works closely to support their children's learning. The school also works closely and successfully with a local special school, providing practical evidence of its commitment to inclusion.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The school achieves good educational outcomes for its pupils by the time they are ready to transfer to the next stage of education. This is due to the effective way in which staff are encouraged to work together and to develop their skills. Close analysis of test data helps focus attention on the main areas for improvement in pupils' performance. A strong commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils is combined with a warm, welcoming ethos that is very much promoted by all staff but especially by the headteacher. The work of the governing body is satisfactory, though not all statutory requirements are fully met. Its members are very committed to the school and show a sound understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, and a willingness to question school managers in order to hold the school to account for its performance.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express very positive views about the school. A small number feel that they are not kept sufficiently well informed about their children's progress. Inspectors found that the school largely provides parents with good information and enables them to have easy access to staff. However, annual reports on pupils' progress are not as informative in some subjects as they should be. Pupils express positive views about the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve provision in the Foundation Stage;
- improve the use of assessment data in the Foundation Stage and for children at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that annual reports to parents about their children's progress contain informative comments about all subjects.
- ensure that an adequate and safely accessible outdoor play area is provided for children in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards are **above average overall** by Year 2. Pupils' achievement is **good** in Years 1 and 2. It is **satisfactory** in the Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs **achieve well**. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language achieve **satisfactorily** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils make good progress in these subjects.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well in reading, writing, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) because of good teaching.
- Work that is well matched to pupils' learning needs ensures that all groups of pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- Children in the Foundation Stage should achieve more highly.
- The quality and effectiveness of support staff contribute strongly to pupils' good achievement and especially to the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (16.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (16.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 77 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. The school's 2003 national test results in reading, writing and mathematics were lower than in previous years. The best performance was in reading, the weakest in mathematics. Higher attaining pupils performed much better than average in reading but their performance in writing and mathematics was average. Compared with similar schools nationally, performance in 2003 was average in reading and writing but below average in mathematics. This was also a departure from the school's usual pattern of performance, being lower than usual. However, school and local authority data indicate that the 2003 cohort of pupils made good progress in all three subjects to reach the standards they achieved as their attainment overall was lower than usual for Sitwell Infant School when they began their schooling.
2. Inspection findings show that standards this year are closer to those achieved prior to 2003, being generally higher than those attained that year. This is particularly true in mathematics, where standards had declined from a high point in 2000 to be average in 2003. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in mathematics are now rising again and are above average. This is due to the school's good analysis of test data and to the action taken to rectify weaknesses. In reading and writing, whilst standards remain above average at the end of Year 2, elements of these subjects are now close to being well above average.
3. In science, the above average standards are influenced by the school's practical approach and to the strong links made with literacy. In information technology, good investment in resources, training for staff and effective teaching have ensured that standards remain average but that

pupils now make good progress in developing their skills and understanding. Standards in religious education and in art and design are average.

4. Pupils start school having had a wide variety of pre-school provision. Their attainment on entry to the reception year is average overall. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science and this represents good progress from average starting points. All groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 now work to their perceived capacities, achieving as well as they should. Teachers plan effectively to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils in their classes. All groups of pupils are given work that challenges them to think and as a result they learn and achieve well.
5. Taken overall, the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is good. The school works consistently well to understand and provide for their needs. Very good support helps each pupil to make good progress in relation to their individual learning difficulties and prior attainment. The school also identifies pupils who have particular gifts and talents and, in conjunction with other schools, makes equally effective provision so that they achieve all they can. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve well in Years 1 and 2, making at least the same good progress as other pupils and sometimes achieving very well in their work. A significant proportion of these pupils are higher attainers and their needs are met equally as well as those of other higher attainers.
6. The school generally gets the best out of its pupils although there are some areas where this is not the case. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress overall, and receive good support to help them acquire early language skills, but the school's systems for assessing their progress are not sharp enough to identify whether this is the best they could be doing. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress but the curriculum that is provided for them does not always enable them to develop the early skills of learning as they should. As a result, those who are younger or less mature do not always achieve as highly as they could. Older, more mature children generally achieve at least satisfactorily in the Foundation Stage because the curriculum is more suited to their learning needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. Their personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A culture of high expectations, respect for all and steady, purposeful endeavour helps all pupils to achieve well in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils behave very well, both in class and around school.
- Relationships and attitudes to learning are very good.
- The school has good strategies to develop pupils' personal qualities.
- The rate of attendance is better than in most schools nationally.

Commentary

7. The school has maintained and built on the good standards noted during the previous inspection and parents say they are very pleased with this area of the school's work. Children in the reception classes settle into school routines well. Staff help them to feel secure and confident, and to be aware of others and of right and wrong ways to behave. They share resources without fuss, and their imaginative play shows a growing understanding of relationships and responsibilities in different social contexts. Almost all pupils say that they like school and work hard, and that lessons and after-school clubs are interesting. They take responsibility willingly and deal with it in a mature and sensible way. This is the result of teaching that enables all pupils

to feel equally valued and included, irrespective of differences. The sensible way that Year 2 pupils organised the ‘timetable’ at lunchtime for classes to take their turn on some of the school’s exciting outdoor play equipment was a good example of how well pupils take opportunities to behave responsibly. There were no exclusions last year, a good reflection of the high standards of behaviour achieved in the school.

8. Pupils develop a keen sense of right and wrong, based on clear and well-understood rules. They appreciate the benefits of good order and harmony, and the respect, care and concern that they see in the example set by staff. Inspectors saw no evidence of bullying. The school promotes inclusion well and pupils with differing needs are fully integrated in all activities. Other pupils respect them and give sensitive help so that they do not feel at all different. Links with Newman Special School strongly benefit all involved in these respects.

9. Pupils’ personal development is good overall. Imaginatively planned assemblies develop themes that contribute well to pupils’ spiritual awareness. They provide rich formal occasions for reflection and celebration. The curriculum also contributes well, and pupils talked enthusiastically about the exciting opportunities they had had to watch chicks and tadpoles hatch from eggs, and also to study snails and to observe and draw the amazing designs and patterns on their shells. Social development is very good. Pupils appreciate what the school does for them and expects of them. They are polite, friendly and mutually supportive in work and play. They readily include and support pupils from the nearby special school who join their classes. ‘Circle Time’, when teachers encourage pupils to express and share their thoughts and feelings, helps them to see and respect other points of view. The playground at break and lunchtimes presents a scene of happy and well-ordered social activity. This is because of the good care and support given by staff and older pupils, and the good arrangements and facilities provided by the school to promote non-intrusive games and social togetherness. The school’s family ethos and openness to parents are very evident at start of day, when many parents chat happily with groups of pupils in each class, a time that sums up the school’s welcoming and effective ethos.

10. Cultural development is good. Imaginative planning of curricular topics and visits creates good opportunities for pupils to learn about their own local culture, about Western cultural traditions, and about other faiths and cultures. Pupils learn about and celebrate festivals and traditions such as Christmas, Eid and Chinese New Year. The pupils represent different faiths and cultures, and the school makes good use of this diversity as a resource for expanding pupils’ horizons. For example, pupils learned about Islamic art and beliefs from an Islamic artist who worked in the school as part of its celebration of Eid, and parents of Chinese pupils played a major part in its celebration of Chinese New Year.

11. Pupils like coming to school. The level of attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is slightly below average. The school has a good range of incentives to encourage attendance. If a pupil is absent, without any known reason, the parents are contacted on that same day. Pupils are very largely punctual with only a few arriving late. The educational welfare officer visits and takes up any concerns of non-attendance or lateness.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.8
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 school provides a **good** quality of education overall although provision is stronger in Years 1 and 2 than in the Foundation Stage.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good overall**. They are **good** in Years 1 and 2 and **satisfactory** in the Foundation Stage. Assessment is **satisfactory overall** but is **unsatisfactory** in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in Years 1 and 2 very largely have high expectations of what pupils should achieve and plan work that helps them do this. In the most effective lessons, expectations are very high.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage does not always provide pupils with the challenge and opportunities they need to develop their skills through play activities.
- A strong focus on practical and interesting activities in Years 1 and 2 ,with good use of resources, makes pupils eager to learn.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils provide a good ethos for learning.
- Very good management of pupils' behaviour further promotes this good ethos.
- Support staff play an important part in helping pupils to achieve well, and especially pupils with special educational needs.
- Occasionally, tasks in Years 1 and 2 are not sufficiently well devised to allow pupils to get the most out of them.
- Assessment is used well in reading, writing and mathematics to enable targets for improvement to be set.
- Assessment in the Foundation Stage does not always take sufficient account of information about children's strengths and weaknesses to help teachers plan the next steps in learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	6 (16%)	17(44%)	14 (37%)	1 (3%)	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.

12. Teaching is the main factor contributing to the good achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and to the good progress they make. Work is planned around themes or topics and a strong focus on learning through practical, related activities and of developing pupils' capacity to think and to develop strategies for exploration and problem-solving are at the heart of this process.
13. In most lessons, and especially in literacy and numeracy, work is planned closely and effectively to match the different levels of attainment in the class and where necessary it is tailored to individual needs. Teachers manage to introduce different levels of difficulty into a task so that whilst all pupils often receive a common grounding in the first part of the lesson, once they engage in independent tasks these are well matched to different levels of learning need. Hence, pupils are challenged by the tasks provided and have to think about their responses. The good quality of this match of work to learning needs means that teaching is equally effective in mixed age classes as well as those having a single age group of pupils. Good attention to providing an

ethos that encourages sensible co-operative work enables pupils to share ideas and develop ways of solving problems.

14. Teachers encourage pupils to think throughout a lesson. For example, in numeracy lessons, short, sharp sessions in mental arithmetic start lessons and lead into a shared session in which teachers question closely to check pupils' understanding and keep their attention. Sometimes these sessions are punctuated by 'talk partner' interludes during which pairs of pupils are guided to discuss a certain point between themselves. When pupils work in small groups they are sometimes supported by a member of staff who prompts and guides their thinking. Towards the end of a lesson, all will gather together and reflect upon what has been achieved. Right from the start, teachers tell pupils exactly what they will be trying to achieve and this is checked at the end of the lesson.
15. The very good quality of support assistants contributes strongly to pupils' learning throughout the school. Assistants are well prepared by teachers and know exactly what they are to do. They are confident enough to support any group of pupils to which they are assigned. They know that their role may be to guide or to prompt and, like teachers, they are confident in their knowledge of the subject content they must cover. The team of adults in the classroom (sometimes including parent helpers, who also provide useful support) sets a good tone for learning. Lessons are happy and relaxed occasions but ones that mostly have definite element of rigour about them. All adults relate well to pupils and in this provide a good example that is returned through pupils' often very good behaviour and attitudes to learning.
16. Very occasionally, in Years 1 and 2 an activity was not sufficiently well prepared or well structured, and pupils did not receive the clarity of instruction to tell them what to do. Then pupils did not achieve as much from their work as they should. Equally occasionally, noise levels in a lesson rose and this detracted a little from pupils' concentration.
17. In the Foundation Stage, some of the characteristics of effective teaching evident in Years 1 and 2 were also seen, and support for learning was good and sometimes very good. Teachers sometimes planned well to challenge children's thinking and to provide them with practical opportunities to practise skills. However, this was not always the case and teaching was sometimes too based on formal teaching of literacy and numeracy. As the inspection took place in May, such an approach was appropriate for some children but not for all. Lessons sometimes lost pace and vigour, with children losing concentration as they were ready to learn through play from more practical tasks. Very occasionally in the Foundation Stage, a lesson's lack of focus on a key objective led to unsatisfactory achievement by children and to unsatisfactory teaching.
18. Sometimes teachers' very high expectations are rewarded by pupils working very productively, acquiring skills at a very good rate and achieving very well. Such very high expectations are grounded in very secure subject knowledge and in warm relationships with pupils. This highly effective level of teaching was seen during the inspection in lessons in literacy, ICT, history and physical education.
19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because teachers and support staff work well together to assess and provide for their diverse and sometimes complex needs. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use pupils' individual education plans well to suit tasks and resources to known needs. Most teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. They give skilful, focused and encouraging support in different situations. Support and inclusion for pupils with statements of special educational needs are especially good. Teaching for pupils from minority ethnic groups matches that of other groups of pupils and is good overall.
20. The school analyses national test data in English and mathematics closely in order to identify areas of pupils' performance that need improving. This information is then used as the basis of plans for improvement and the impact of this process is evident in rising standards in these subjects. Subject co-ordinators for English and mathematics are very knowledgeable about their subject analyses and how they influence subject action plans. The school is refining and

improving its procedures for tracking pupils' progress and is close to having a coherent system of tracking and analysis that will help it guide improvement more closely. The use of procedures for tracking achievement is now enabling teachers to set learning targets for individual pupils. Parents are kept informed of the targets set for their children so that they can better support learning. Whilst this procedure is now in place, inspectors found that pupils were not always aware of their targets and it is clear that the system needs further development.

21. In the Foundation Stage, assessment is not used sharply enough to help teachers plan the next steps in children's learning. Although teachers meet regularly to plan the work this does not always result in a clear view of progress. This limits the effectiveness of teachers' planning to meet individual learning needs. Whilst the school's bi-lingual assistant provides able support and guidance, assessment procedure for pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language are not detailed enough to provide a clear picture of pupils' progress and what they should do next.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **satisfactory** overall. The school provides a **good** range of learning opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and **satisfactory** range overall for children in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is enriched with a **good** range of additional activities for all pupils. Accommodation and learning resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links are made overall between areas of the curriculum, and in science and literacy links are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Time is not always used as well as it should be in the Foundation Stage to promote a broad range of learning opportunities.
- Children in the Foundation Stage have limited access to the outdoor environment.
- Enrichment activities provide the pupils with good additional learning opportunities.
- Good provision of support staff has a strong and positive impact upon pupils' learning.
- Accommodation is used well to help pupils get the most out of their learning.

Commentary

22. The school meets all statutory requirements for the curriculum except in the provision of an adequate outdoor play area in the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experience a good range of learning opportunities with a strong emphasis on practical and investigational learning. In addition, they are provided with an interesting and exciting range of activities. This helps pupils to make good progress. Good planning to develop links across the areas of the curriculum enables pupils to use their developing literacy and numeracy skills well in work in other subjects. The school's approach to planning topics or themes of work is rigorous and well grounded in national guidance. This enables teachers and support staff to provide the practical and exciting work that enables pupils to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall although an over-emphasis on formal teaching of literacy and numeracy means that time is not always used well enough to develop a wide range of learning experiences for young children. These children are also provided with limited opportunities to develop the skills of independent learning.
23. The school makes good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. It assesses their needs rigorously and provides good opportunities, resources, programmes and support to enable them to achieve their demanding individual targets. A strength of this provision is that it gives these pupils full access to all learning opportunities at the same time as addressing their individual difficulties. Provision for pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language is only satisfactory overall because of weaknesses in assessment but the work of the

bi-lingual assistant in the Foundation Stage is of good quality. Provision for pupils from minority ethnic groups is of the same quality as that of other pupils or children their age and enables them to make similar progress to other pupils. The school has an effective racial equality policy in place, evident in the strong sense of racial harmony evident throughout the school.

24. The school enriches and extends the curriculum well through a good range of visits, clubs and additional activities. Visits to museums and local places of interest are well planned so that pupils make the most of their learning. A particular strength is the way in which the staff plan these opportunities to enable pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other areas of the curriculum. The provision of additional activities in physical education is particularly good for pupils this age and is more than is usually seen in other schools
25. The school provides a good number of well-qualified and well-trained support assistants. These staff play an integral part in lessons, working with individuals or groups of pupils as planned. The good quality of its support staff and the effective way in which they are used in lessons is a major factor in pupils' good achievement in Years 1 and 2 and in the strides made in early learning in the Foundation Stage.
26. Open planned areas within the school are used well, with attractive displays that encourage children's learning and well-designed areas for staff and pupils to work in small groups. The ICT suite is a good addition to the building and contributes strongly to pupils' good achievement in that subject. The very attractive school grounds are used well to extend and enrich learning across the curriculum. Teachers in the Foundation stage plan appropriate opportunities for children to learn outdoors but there is no regular access to an adequate outdoor area where children can learn independently and where they can develop some of their physical skills.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **very good** care of its pupils. It gives them **good** support, advice and guidance. It involves pupils to a **satisfactory** extent through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well cared for and supported by all staff.
- Regular health and safety checks are carried out.
- The pupils' questionnaire, prior to the inspection, shows that they are generally happy at the school.
- Pupils feel very safe and secure in the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good guidance and support.
- There has been no formal training for non-teaching staff in child protection procedures.

Commentary

27. The school is very successful in creating an ethos in which all pupils are valued and are made to feel secure. To a considerable extent, this is due to the very good relationships that exist between adults and pupils. Adults also relate very well to each other, providing a very good example to pupils. Parents very largely feel that their children are well cared for. An example of outstanding provision can be seen at lunchtime, when pupils are supported very well in order to make this part of the day a happy social experience. Great investment has also been made in the quality of the play areas and good attention is given to supporting pupils whilst they are playing. This support includes regular visits by pupils from the adjoining junior school to act as play leaders - a very successful idea.
28. Regular health and safety surveys are carried out. Risk assessments are completed for visits and the school is beginning to carry them out in curriculum areas. The school nurse visits regularly, carrying out health checks, helping with health promotion and holding a monthly 'drop-

in' session for parents. All staff have undertaken some first aid training and two will be fully trained later this year. Water is available to all pupils and healthy eating options are available at lunchtime. A successful 'Keep Healthy Week' was organised, when pupils were encouraged to exercise and eat healthy foods. There are good systems in place for administering medication and specialist support. The school makes suitable arrangements for disabled access. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Teaching staff have received training and non-teaching staff are informed about child protection issues at their induction. However, non-teaching staff do not as yet receive formal child protection training.

29. Well-written individual education plans form the basis of the very good support provided for pupils with special educational needs. They are kept sharp and up-to-date by thorough assessments and reviews, and by the influential involvement of outside agencies. These plans are carefully personalised and followed so that each pupil consistently experiences success and plays a full part in school life. Links with other schools are very effective. For example, good liaison with the junior school prepares pupils sensitively for transfer to Year 3. The link with Newman Special School not only benefits pupils from that school who join classes at Sitwell on a part-time basis, but also educates the school's own pupils in care, understanding and inclusion. Good support is provided for pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. However, the school's procedures for assessing progress for these children are not finely tuned enough to help plan as accurately as possible the next steps in their learning.
30. The school is developing sound procedures for helping pupils to monitor their progress by means of setting individual targets for learning. These are shared with parents, thus adding an extra element of support for pupils' academic progress. Thorough analysis of data, especially in literacy and mathematics, leads to the school identifying areas of weakness in pupil performance and taking action to secure improvements. All pupils have personal development records and these are useful in helping staff to provide appropriate support and advice. Pupils are very well known by teachers and support staff and this contributes strongly to an effective informal network of support that is very evident within the school. The school has effective induction arrangements involving parents although with children coming into school from approximately 20 different nurseries or playgroups, this makes the organisation of the process difficult.
31. The school takes satisfactory account of pupils' views, for example through discussions in personal, social and health education lessons. For example, pupils voted for what was included in school murals. The school does not carry out its own questionnaires for pupils and there is no school council, but one is planned. The pupils' questionnaires, completed before the inspection, were supportive of the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, other schools and the community are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school.
- The thriving Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is very supportive and helps to fund improvements in the school, which assists pupils' progress and achievement.
- Termly parents' evenings are well attended.
- Links with local churches are good.
- Transfer arrangements with the adjoining junior school are good.
- Annual reports on pupils' progress do not tell parents what their children know, understand and can do, in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

32. Parents are generally very supportive of the school. Regular, informative newsletters and letters are provided and good use is made of the parental notice board. The Parent Teacher Association is very active and holds a number of social and fundraising events. The money raised is used to buy resources, such as computerised whiteboards, which enhance pupils' learning.
33. The school provides a good range of information for parents, for example on subjects like 'Helping with Reading'. It also holds meetings for parents on a range of curriculum issues. A well-supported Family Learning programme is held in the school to help parents to support their children's learning at home. Parents' evenings are well attended. Parents are encouraged to help in the school. About seven, on average, help every week and provide good support in lessons. Parents are invited to special events, like Christmas celebrations and the leavers' assembly. The school's work with the parents of pupils with special educational needs is a strong feature of its partnership. Parents are fully involved in reviews of targets and in contributing evidence of progress and changing needs. Their access to targets means that they have a clear and vital role in helping their children to achieve well.
34. Annual reports on progress tell parents what their children know, understand and can do in English, mathematics and science but not in other subjects, where just ticks in boxes for effort, interest, understanding and progress are provided. This fails to meet a statutory requirement. The parental questionnaire, carried out as part of the inspection process, was very supportive of the school.
35. The school has the confidence of its local communities. It has good links with local churches and their clergy come into school to take assemblies. Pupils visit local churches and other buildings of religious worship in the local area as part of their studies. The school supports a good range of charities, including a local Children's Hospice and the Macmillan Nurses. A local football team uses the school's field and a weekly fitness class is held in the school. Local members of the community come into school to speak to the pupils. Islamic artists have come into the school to work with the pupils, enhancing cultural understanding.
36. There is good liaison with the adjoining junior school. Year 2 pupils go to junior school assemblies, as well as spending some time with their new teacher and in the playground, prior to transfer. Parents have a meeting with the junior school staff and the staff of the two schools have a close working relationship with regular meetings and transfer of information. There are also liaison meetings with pre-school providers, as well as visits to their premises.
37. Students are welcomed into school for work experience. A good partnership has been forged for students taking part in initial teaching training. One former student, who carried out her teaching practice at the school, wrote later, *'a fantastic school with a friendly and warm bunch of staff who are willing to accommodate students in any way'*. A link with a local specialist sports college supports extra-curricular gymnastics very effectively. The school has good links with the Newman Special School and the Arnold Centre (Enhanced Provision). Pupils from these schools are integrated into mainstream education at the Sitwell Infant School and they are supported well by staff and other pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. Leadership and management are both good, whilst governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and key staff motivate other staff well and create a team ethos in which all are striving to improve the school's performance

- The headteacher gives a strong lead to the school's commitment to inclusion and its welcoming ethos. The school makes good use of test data to help it secure improvements
- There is a strong and largely effective commitment to staff development and performance management, including support staff.
- This commitment is not yet having sufficient impact upon provision in the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

38. The school's leadership is successful in inspiring staff to work together effectively so that pupils leave the school with above average standards and good achievement. There is an evident sense of teamwork in the school. Staff clearly relate very well to each other and this transmits itself to pupils and is an important building block in the school's ethos. The headteacher's strong and practical commitment to inclusion, for example through active links with a local special school, provides staff with the example that results in good provision and good achievement for pupils with special educational needs. It also results in the very obvious willingness of staff and pupils to accept and value all pupils equally.
39. This sense of inclusion also permeates the performance management of support staff. School leaders recognise the important role to be played by support staff and include them fully in the development of work practices. The deputy headteacher, in particular, takes active and effective responsibility in this area. The impact is that pupils are well supported in lessons, and this improves the quality of their learning. Inclusion extends to parents: the school is a welcoming place – this is at the heart of its approach to education. Senior staff have made the start of the school day an event that, by welcoming parents into school, sets a tone for the sessions that follow.
40. Conscientious and accurate analysis of test data means that subject co-ordinators and senior staff are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. This is enabling them to implement plans to make improvements and is having a positive impact upon standards. However, the school's self-evaluation is not entirely accurate as weaknesses in the Foundation Stage curriculum have not been identified for improvement.
41. The co-ordinator for special educational needs leads and manages provision well. She conscientiously co-ordinates the roles played by the different parties involved, both in school and beyond. She knows her job well; keeps meticulous records; monitors learning plans and individual progress, and ensures, through good training and development, that staff and resources have maximum impact on learning. As a result, all requirements of the national Code of Practice are effectively met.
42. The governing body reviews data about school performance and its members show sound awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors is knowledgeable about areas for improvement and the actions being taken to secure these improvements. The governing body is largely successful in ensuring that statutory requirements are met although those relating to annual reports to parents about pupils' progress and to the need for an adequate outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage are not met. Its role in monitoring the progress towards achieving targets in the school development plan is satisfactory. Financial management is sound.
43. In view of its considerable strengths and few weaknesses, together with much lower than average costs of educating pupils, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	503782
Total expenditure	497402
Expenditure per pupil	2163

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	21525
Balance carried forward to the next	27899

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. Provision is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good although very occasionally it is unsatisfactory. Weekly planning meetings ensure that all six areas of learning are covered appropriately but this does not always take sufficient account of information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses to help teachers plan the next steps in learning. This limits pupils' achievement. The curriculum is planned in such a way that children move to more formal learning, within literacy and numeracy, at a very early point in the year. This is not appropriate for some children, especially those who are less mature or very young. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with staff working hard together as a team, although the co-ordinator does not have a clear enough overview of the progress made by children in all classes.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory** overall with good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour
- Good relationships are developed between children and adults.
- Very occasionally, a lesson's aim is not achieved.

45. When children start school their personal, social and emotional skills are generally average and attainment by the end of the reception year is similar to the expected level for this age. Achievement and teaching are satisfactory overall although sometimes they are good. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and children behave very well in most lessons. They develop good relationships with each other and with the adults in the class. They speak to each other politely, move sensibly around school and show consideration for the feelings of others. In one class, children are encouraged to take home a "class pet", which is a soft toy, and then they write a diary of the event. This is a very good caring experience and children report confidently about it the following day. Very occasionally, however, teaching is unsatisfactory when a lesson's objective to develop empathy with a rejected character is unfulfilled.

Communication, Language and Literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress in reading
- Too few opportunities are provided for children to develop confidence in speaking and listening in some lessons.
- Children spend too long sitting and listening to adults when they could be learning more actively.

46. Most children start the school with average literacy skills. They achieve well in reading and most will attain the early learning goals expected of children by the end of the reception year. This is higher than usual. Higher attaining children read with fluency and independence. From discussions with children, it is clear that they enjoy reading and understand well what they read. In writing and speaking and listening, achievement is generally satisfactory although in several lessons seen the opportunities for speaking were few and this restricted what children could achieve. Teaching is satisfactory. On several occasions, children were observed sitting for long

periods with little active participation and involvement. In these circumstances, learning was limited. However, in group activities such as imaginative play, purposeful adult intervention helped children to gain confidence and extend their vocabulary.

47. The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for children to develop their writing skills. However, progress is not checked sufficiently closely in order to plan the next stages of learning. This has an adverse effect upon children's progress. Overall, attainment at the end of the reception year is broadly average in writing. A small number of children, however, are able to write simple captions and speech bubbles and are already attaining at a level beyond the early learning goals. Children use their early writing skills satisfactorily in other areas of learning, for example by completing a 'plant diary'. A few children are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language and they are well supported by the bi-lingual assistant. However, assessment procedures for these pupils are not detailed enough for staff to have close knowledge of their progress in order to plan for their precise needs.

Mathematical Development

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Support staff contribute well to children's achievement.
- Good resources help to make children eager to learn.
- Children have insufficient opportunity to investigate and experiment with numbers

48. Initial assessments show that children start school with very variable levels of attainment. By the end of the reception year, attainment is broadly average. Most children reach and several exceed the early learning goals in mathematics. Most achieve satisfactorily. This is due in particular to the good ratio of adults to pupils and to the skills of teaching assistants as they support the children's learning. However, achievement could be better. The starts of some lessons are slow. There are few opportunities for the children to be actively involved and as a result there is sometimes insufficient challenge for the higher attaining children although on other occasions the level of challenge for these children is good, for example at the end of a lesson on 'doubling', when pupils explained their work. In the later part of lessons, teachers provide a wide range of appropriate group activities. Resources are good and good use is also made of the outdoor environment to stimulate children's thinking.

Knowledge and Understanding of the world

49. No lessons in this area of learning were seen and so no overall judgement can be made about provision or teaching. The evidence available indicates that the large majority of children are likely to meet the early learning goals in this area of learning. Achievement is satisfactory. In ICT, pupils show average skills, for example in controlling a computer mouse. They use appropriate scientific terms, such as 'habitat' and 'life cycle'. There are differences between classes in the way children record and present their work. Where there is a high standard of presentation, children are developing good literacy skills, whilst learning about the world and their place within it. The curriculum is well planned to make good use of the larger environment around the school, including visits to a local farm and a garden centre. The school grounds are used effectively so that children observe, respect and interact with the natural environment.

Physical Development

50. As little work was seen during the inspection, no overall judgement can be made about provision or teaching, although the lack of an adequate and easily accessible outdoor play area is unsatisfactory. Children are not able to access this area directly and this limits the range of activities available to help them to develop their physical skills. The outdoor area is very small,

with a flight of steps, which could be hazardous for young children. Planning indicates that this area is only used occasionally.

Creative Development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginative play activities are used well to develop children's creativity and imagination.
- The curriculum provides too little time for structured, independent creative activities

51. When children start school, their attainment is average. Achievement is satisfactory overall and attainment is average. Drama activities are used appropriately to develop children's creativity. Children enjoy producing puppet shows linked to well-known stories. They re-enact familiar and traditional stories and perform these with gradually increasing confidence. In each class, an area set aside for imaginative play provides good quality resources which children use to develop their ideas and imaginations. In a music lesson observed, children took part with great seriousness and a sense of real purpose. However, the curriculum is structured in such a way that opportunities for children to engage in independent play or other creative activities are limited and this in turn limits their progress.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the time they leave.
- Teaching and learning are good overall, with very good features in some lessons.
- Teachers use assessment well in reading and writing to track progress, set targets and adjust work to the needs of different groups.
- Pupils have good opportunities to practise and extend their skills in reading and writing to support their learning in other subjects.
- The co-ordinator has led good improvements in provision for English.
- These improvements have not yet extended fully to speaking and listening.

Commentary

52. Pupils of different capabilities achieve well because of good provision for their diverse needs, and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average overall. Attainment in reading is significantly better than at the last inspection and follows the pattern of test results over recent years. This is consistent with the school's sustained efforts to raise standards in reading.
53. In speaking and listening, standards are above average in Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory. Good relationships encourage the development of spoken English, and teachers set a good example and create many brief opportunities for pupils to use talk to support each other's learning in pairs or small groups. However, opportunities for pupils to develop a range of speaking skills suited to different situations are rare. In this area planning is less focused and methods more limited than in literacy. There is a relative lack of systems to assess progress, and of targets to help spoken English keep pace with the need for more exacting skills in thinking and learning. Recent moves to use talk to rehearse elements of each writing task begin to address this need.
54. Standards in reading are above average overall and many pupils are working well beyond the level that is typical for their age. All pupils achieve well. These standards are much higher than when the school was last inspected because resources, procedures and teaching are more consistently effective. The school identified and tackled the reasons why standards were not high enough. As a result, rigorous systems for assessment and planning now mesh strongly with improved book resources that are carefully organised to guide step-by-step progress. A stronger focus on comprehension skills and a better balance between using fiction and non-fiction materials have raised levels of motivation and skill, particularly for boys. These developments influence homework and give parents a fuller role as partners in the process.
55. In writing, pupils also achieve well. Standards are similar to those in reading and for similar reasons, though fewer pupils reach the higher level. The basic skills and systems of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure are taught consistently and well. Pupils' work shows the good impact on progress over time. As a result of good planning and teaching across subjects, pupils increasingly understand why and how texts vary. All pupils are learning to fit words and structures to a widening range of purposes, such as writing information reports on the appearance, behaviour, diet and habitat of the barn owl, using facts gained from books and an 'expert' visitor. Higher attaining pupils write at length, organising information logically and using interesting and appropriate words. Good procedures for tracking progress, setting targets, marking work and involving pupils in assessing their own writing promise better achievement and higher standards.

56. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In a third of the lessons seen, it was very good, mainly because teachers' high expectations and stimulating tasks enabled all pupils to achieve very well. Good leadership and teamwork have significantly improved teaching since the last inspection and some key strengths are consistently found in Years 1 and 2:
- all teachers set a good tone for learning so that working relationships are happy and pupils are eager and confident to learn and do their best.
 - teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is strong and, as a result, their roles are clear and all pupils have a good balance of challenge and support to help them progress through the same curriculum at their best rate of learning.
 - for reading and writing, teachers maintain individual assessments to track progress. They use the information well to set targets and to plan work at the right level of demand so that different groups can achieve their best level in lessons.
 - teachers have good methods for teaching new skills in reading and writing so that pupils have very clear models to work with and make their new learning secure.
 - consistently good support helps pupils with special educational needs to achieve as well as their capabilities allow in literacy.
57. No significant common weaknesses were observed, but several qualities are less consistent and effective than they should be:
- key learning intentions are not always clear enough, or kept in view during the lesson and reviewed at the end.
 - pupils have too few opportunities in lessons to evaluate their own and each other's work.
 - teachers' strategies for engaging and promoting pupils' speaking skills are inconsistent, and at times pupils lack opportunities to express, share and extend their learning in their own words and in specific contexts. Teachers' questions sometimes restrict interaction and thinking skills.
 - teaching assistants sometimes lack a clear role that uses their good skills when the teacher is teaching the whole class.
58. The few pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make good progress, achieving equally as well as other groups of pupils. This is because teachers are good at providing work that meets the learning needs of all groups of pupils. As a result, pupils develop the skills of early reading and writing successfully. Pupils from minority ethnic groups also achieve as well as other groups of pupils – and for the same reason.
59. English is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is very focused on higher achievement in literacy. She has strong expertise in the subject and a very clear vision that is shaped by continuous monitoring of provisions and rigorous analyses of pupils' performance, both in lessons and in tests. This vision is shared by colleagues and reflected in policies, programmes and resources. It drives consistent practice in teaching and in the planning of good links with other subjects. Spoken English is a relatively neglected area and, whilst reading and writing support each other well in lessons, discussion is not yet a full partner in the learning process.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The school has a strong and far-reaching commitment to extending its literacy strategy across other subjects so that English and the rest of the curriculum support each other as productively as possible. Pupils' work over time shows widespread and consistent evidence of well-planned and demanding opportunities for pupils to improve their reading and writing skills in pursuit of learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 have written a 'materials' encyclopaedia' in science; lovely booklets, complete with glossaries, about chicks; recounts of their historical learning at the mining museum, and biographical accounts of Florence Nightingale. This contributes strongly to high achievement in literacy and also to coherent learning across the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All groups of pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve as well as they should.
- This is because of good teaching, very good support from teaching assistants and helpers, and a stimulating curriculum.
- The school deals thoroughly with issues identified for improvement.
- Pupils show very positive attitudes to their work.
- The school shows great commitment to making learning fully inclusive of pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

61. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average. This indicates good improvement from the school's performance in national tests in 2003 and reflects the good levels of performance in 2001 and 2002. The school's performance in national tests reached a very high point in 2000 and has shown a decline since that time. However, inspection findings indicate that this decline is now being reversed. Overall, the school has made satisfactory improvement since its previous inspection and in some respects improvement has been good. An example of this good improvement is the way in which pupils are now actively and systematically encouraged to work together to discuss approaches to problem solving and the positive impact this is having on learning.
62. Good subject leadership ensures close analysis of test data and an effective whole-school response to areas of weaknesses identified through this process. This is backed up by strong and effective teaching and is leading to improvements in some key areas, for example in problem-solving. The main reasons teaching is effective are:
- good implementation of lesson plans that focus closely on the development of skills;
 - sharp, pacy and effective mental arithmetic 'starter' sessions to each lesson that get pupils thinking and eager to learn;
 - an effective approach to applying mathematical concepts to practical problems;
 - teachers' high expectations of what pupils should achieve and the evidence of this in the way work is well matched to the learning needs of individuals and groups of pupils;
 - the very good planned support for groups of pupils and individual pupils by teaching assistants and other helpers;
 - the very good relationships that exist in lessons, leading to a good ethos for learning.
63. Whilst teaching is very largely effective, just occasionally it is less so. This happens when pupils are not given sufficiently detailed instructions about how to perform a practical task nor the necessary amount of time to develop successful strategies to do so. Mostly, however, the opposite is the case and teachers and support staff focus strongly on getting pupils to think mathematically by developing different strategies for solving problems. High expectations of pupils working together, often in pairs, to discuss such strategies leads to pupils learning well and making good progress in practical sessions. Pupils are very responsive to these opportunities and behave in a very mature and responsible way during these sessions.
64. A notable feature of lessons is the way in which pupils with special educational needs are provided with the correct match of work to their needs and with the individual support to help them to complete it successfully.. This is all the more notable and successful when the level of a pupil's special educational needs is significantly high. On such occasions, the strongest attempts possible are made to ensure that the pupil gains the most socially, as well as academically, from a lesson and this provides good evidence of the school's great commitment to meeting the learning needs of all pupils. Pupils from minority ethnic groups also achieve well in

lessons, certainly as well as other pupils and sometimes better than most. This is because of staff's expectations that all pupils should have the opportunity to achieve as well as they can. Gifted and talented pupils receive additional provision twice a week at another school as part of a local programme to develop the skills of such pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The school has a good range of opportunities planned into its curriculum to allow pupils to develop their skills in different subjects. Within a rigorously planned topic approach to work, every effort is made to develop such skills 'naturally' within the chosen topic. For example, pupils in Year 2 produced charts in their ICT lessons to present data about the use of materials.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain above average standards.
- Very good cross curricular links are made with literacy
- Good enrichment activities motivate pupils and help to extend learning.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Assessment systems are not fully in place.

Commentary

66. Pupils in Year 2 show an increasing ability to report and record using correct scientific vocabulary. They present their work well. A particularly good feature is the high quality of the booklets which they produce, linking science and their well developed literacy skills. There are limited opportunities, however, to use different methods of recording results, with graphs, diagrams, charts and the use of ICT.

67. Teaching and learning are good overall and, as a result, all groups of pupils achieve well. Pupils take a positive interest in science. The main strengths in the teaching are:

- experiences that use the school grounds and local area are regularly planned and enrich the learning of all pupils;
- pupils investigate and explore their surroundings; pupils are encouraged to make predictions and to carry out fair tests;
- very good interactive use of display, for example that based on the topic of 'Birds', encourages pupils to pose scientific questions and to examine different environments.

68. The school has begun to develop a system for the assessment of pupils although this is not yet fully in place. The ways in which teachers mark pupils' work does not always result in pupils having the information that will help them to take their learning on that bit further. The school has identified this area as a priority for development.

69. Leadership and management of science are good and the two subject leaders are working together to develop planning and assessment systems across the school. Accommodation and resources are good. The school grounds and the pond in a neighbouring school are well used to extend and enrich the curriculum. The subject benefits from a number of appropriate excursions, which link with other areas of the curriculum, such as the visits to Eureka Science Museum to study "Our Bodies" and to a mining museum for their work on "materials".

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good improvements in resources and the training provided for staff to use them enable all pupils in Years 1 and 2 to achieve well in lessons
- A well-planned approach to teaching ICT means that skills are taught effectively within a stimulating approach for learning.
- This also results in pupils having very positive attitudes towards learning and this in itself forms the basis for further success.
- Support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' success in developing their skills

Commentary

70. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 although occasionally they are above average. All groups of pupils achieve well because of good teaching and a stimulating curriculum. The main reasons for this success are because:
- teachers are confident in explaining and demonstrating the skills and techniques to be learned in lessons. This is due to the training and support they receive and to the high quality of resources available, for example the interactive whiteboards that provide such an effective focus for the demonstration of new skills and for the presentation of successful work;
 - the number and quality of support staff mean that good advice is available to pupils when they need it;
 - work in ICT is linked very effectively and naturally to larger topics that are being explored. This means that the tasks pupils undertake arise from or complement another aspect of their work, for example when Year 2 pupils in the Year 1/2 class devised questions and answers about owls, as a result of information gained from a visitor as part of their work in science. In the same lesson, Year 1 pupils appropriately put text about owls into speech 'bubbles';
 - work is well matched to pupils' learning needs;
 - pupils receive regular ICT lessons and so build effectively upon previously learnt skills.
71. Occasionally, teaching is very successful. This occurs when a teacher combines a high level of subject skill and confidence with very good relationships and very good use of support staff to enable pupils to work on stimulating and challenging tasks. As a result, they rise to the challenge and work very productively, attaining standards that are above average for their age.
72. Pupils show great enthusiasm for their work. They work together with great enjoyment and purpose – and learn together very effectively. These very positive attitudes and the very good relationships between adults and pupils underpin a stimulating curriculum. Very good support for learning by teaching assistants means that special educational needs are handled sensitively and in a way that leads to good achievement. It was noticeable during the inspection how well significant levels of special educational needs were handled, to personal and social benefit of the pupil concerned and of others in the class. Pupils from minority ethnic groups are fully included in lessons and achieve at least as well as most other pupils.
73. Good subject leadership has led to the acquisition of very good resources and to good quality professional development for staff. This in turn has led to the good achievement that means improvement since the previous inspection is good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. The school is developing a sharply planned approach to using ICT to develop skills in other subjects. It was already present in work seen during the inspection and included examples of work in art, English, science and mathematics. The school's approach to planning work with a central theme enables it to integrate the development of ICT into appropriate aspects of a topic. This is done in a way that matches national guidance and which promotes rigorous development of skills and understanding.

HUMANITIES

75. In **history** and **geography**, insufficient work was seen to enable judgements to be made about provision or teaching but the following points can be made:
- the standard of pupils' work seen in Years 1 and 2 is typical for their age in both subjects. Achievement is satisfactory and interest levels are high;
 - good use of pupils' literacy skills makes a significant contribution to learning;
 - good planning creates learning opportunities through visits and links with other subjects. For example, when pupils used a range of fruits to prepare a fruit salad in design and technology, they consulted books and maps to find out where in the world each fruit was grown. A visit to Whiston church led to good learning and writing about the building's history;
 - pupils were enthusiastic about their recent visit to the museum of mining. Such experiences make a lasting impression and they complement studies of the local environment, its landmarks and industries, to contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development.
76. Pupils' secure knowledge and good writing about important figures such as Queen Elizabeth I and Florence Nightingale reflect their growing understanding of time, events and change. They also reflect the impact of the quality of teaching seen in a very good Year 1 lesson about the life of Pocahontas. The teacher's very good resources and methods for engaging pupils and bringing the story to life generated powerful interest. She used this well by setting tasks that challenged each group in its own terms to extract historical information from pictures in order to tell part of the story in their own words. As a result, all pupils achieved very well.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good uses of local resources
- Good knowledge and sense of direction of subject leader

Commentary

77. Standards observed during the inspection were average. Pupils cover an appropriate range of topics and achieve at a satisfactory level throughout school. Teaching in lessons seen was good. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 promote religious knowledge and a sense of spirituality well. Pupils occasionally get insufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas, thus losing the opportunity for class discussion. Pupils use non-fiction books well to carry out research, and visits to two different churches enable pupils to have good first hand experiences. Opportunities for pupils to record what they have learned are limited.
78. Pupils own religious and cultural backgrounds are used well to enrich the curriculum. For example pupils in Year 1 have studied Eid. Parents support these activities well. Assemblies effectively enhance pupils' spiritual awareness and this contributes positively to their personal spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The use of class assemblies to support the curriculum means that time for religious education is too limited in some classes.

79. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has a good knowledge and clear sense of direction. She is beginning to share ideas and expertise with other staff. She regularly checks on planning and preparation. Resources to support the curriculum are satisfactory and are used well by staff and pupils.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. In **design and technology**, lack of evidence of teaching and completed work rules out any overall judgements on provision or teaching. It is, however, clear from discussion and pupils' writings and drawings that teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to design, make and evaluate a range of products in food, textiles and more resistant materials. Their written work shows good use of their skills in literacy to explain their initial plans and, later, how their products could be improved. Good links with other subjects enhance their learning, for example about the properties of different materials or about factors of health and hygiene involved in choosing and preparing food.
81. Only one **music** lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection and so no judgements can be made about provision or teaching, but pupils were heard singing at other times, for example in assembly. In addition, Year 1 pupils in the Reception/Year 1 were observed taking part in a music lesson. Teachers have appropriately high expectations of what pupils should achieve and plan tasks well, for example to develop a sense of rhythm. Imaginative choice of resources leads to pupils being keen to learn. Pupils in Year 1/2 were fascinated when their teacher provided them with opportunities to identify and to respond to particular types of bird song in the 'Toy Symphony'. Those in Year 1 responded very sensibly and wholeheartedly to opportunities to shake a rhythm using instruments known as 'rhythm eggs', and good teaching helped them to begin to understand the importance of silence as a response to a conductor. Very good relationships between pupils and adults form the basis for the good working atmosphere that was formed in lessons.
82. In a singing practice held in the school hall, pupils sang well in response to confident leadership by the teacher in charge. They were quick to pick up the words and tune of a new song and did this in a way that suggested singing is a regular part of school life for all pupils; a pupil with significant levels of special educational needs took part with great enthusiasm. The quality of singing supports the school's evaluation that its musical productions are of good quality.
83. Insufficient work was seen in **physical education** to enable overall judgements to be made about provision or teaching. However, enough was seen to indicate clearly that good improvement has been made since the previous inspection. At that time, standards were below average and pupils' skills were limited; their progress was unsatisfactory. During this inspection, standards were at least average and sometimes above average. Pupils' achievement was never less than satisfactory and sometimes it was very good.
84. Where teaching was very effective, pupils were given challenging and sometimes complex tasks to perform. Teachers' confidence was evident through the clarity of their instructions – they know exactly what pupils should achieve and what strategies were needed for developing the required skills. This confidence rubbed off on pupils, exemplified by those chosen to demonstrate a skill, in dance or in gymnastics. In a Year 1 dance lesson, pupils explored shape and movement in a smoothly linked series of activities that enabled them to express stark contrasts. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils evaluated each other's performance, commending the strengths that caught their eye. Very good, enthusiastic support is provided by teaching assistants.
85. The curriculum for physical education is very well enriched by the provision of after-school clubs. Pupils have opportunities to be coached in football and basketball. During the inspection, a new gymnastics club started, led by a specialist teacher from a local secondary school. The school is

planning to achieve the 'Active Mark' badge of quality for physical education. All this represents strengths in provision and indicates the good improvements made in the subject in recent years.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop their skills well and their achievement is good.
- Good quality of teaching leads to good learning experiences.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to experiment creatively.

Commentary

86. Standards of work seen across the school are broadly average. Teaching and learning are generally good. Where there is an emphasis on the development of skills, pupils make good progress and are proud of their achievements. Pupils mix their own paints from an early age and by Year 2 they are very confident to mix shades of colours and use different brush sizes. Teaching gives good guidance to pupils and enables them to use new techniques successfully. The range of materials and equipment used by the pupils is limited and there are too few opportunities for them to experiment and use their developing skills in more independent or creative work.

87. Pupils have very good attitudes and their behaviour is good. Visiting artists enrich the curriculum. An Islamic artist visited the school before Eid and this experience helped pupils to have a deeper understanding when studying this celebration in religious education. Links between art and other subjects are good. In one lesson, pupils were learning how to observe and paint feathers, linking effectively with their work in science.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. Too little direct teaching was seen to make judgements about provision or teaching in this area. Teachers promote pupils' personal and social development effectively, however, in lessons in a range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to respond - and their responses are valued. A useful approach to developing social skills as well as promoting good learning is made in lessons when pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas as 'talk partners'. Pupils are also encouraged to work in pairs or other small groups in the activities sessions of literacy and numeracy lessons, again promoting social skills as well as those of learning. Teachers and support staff often lead these sessions for a while, setting the right tone, before allowing pupils to work independently.

89. Pupils' social development is much enhanced by the integration into lessons of other pupils with significant levels of special educational needs. The school's success in this was evident in the way in which such activity was such a natural part of school life. The benefits are two-way – for the pupil coming into this environment and for those accepting the newcomer. The school has yet to finalise its policy for personal, social and health education and as such this is an area for development. Plans are underway to form a school council.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
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	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	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).