

INSPECTION REPORT

ST ANDREW'S (BARNSBURY) CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barnsbury, London

LEA area: London Borough of Islington

Unique reference number: 100448

Headteacher: Mrs M Thomas

Lead inspector: Mr M Beale

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 June 2004

Inspection number: 257559

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	177
School address:	Matilda Street London
Postcode:	N1 0LB
Telephone number:	020 7837 4049
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Beverly Briggs
Date of previous inspection:	17 June 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average primary school situated near to Kings Cross in the south of Islington. The school has been through a difficult period at senior management level over the last two years. The previous headteacher left not long after the last inspection. Subsequently, there have been various interim arrangements at headteacher and deputy headteacher level before the current headteacher took up post in February 2004. A permanent deputy headteacher is due to start in September 2004. The number of pupils has fallen slightly since the last inspection, although indications are that this trend has been halted and numbers will increase in September 2004. The school suffers from high pupil mobility, in part because a significant proportion of the local housing is temporary accommodation. The number of pupils entitled to a free school meal is well above the national average and has increased over the last year. The intake represents a wide range of ethnic groups with less than half being of white-British backgrounds. The other major groups represented are of black-Caribbean and black-African heritages. In spite of this, only three pupils are at an early stage of learning English. An average number of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and one has a formal statement of special educational need. Entry to Reception is once each year in September; many children have little pre-school experience. The attainment on entry is generally well below average, but is below average for the current Reception class. The school is part of a small Education Action Zone (EAZ) based around Kings Cross. This has brought considerable information and communication technology resources, including interactive whiteboards and a new computer suite.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19385	Martin Beale	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education
32696	David Smith	Lay inspector	
22147	Anne Holland	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs
22831	Clive Lewis	Team inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This reasonably effective school is improving rapidly under the strong leadership of the headteacher and key governors. It provides satisfactory value for money. Following a decline in pupil numbers and its popularity in the community, the school has quickly regained the confidence of parents and numbers are set to rise next term. A considerable number of teaching staff changes have produced some instability in classes this year. Consequently, although most pupils are now achieving well in lessons their progress over the year has, at best, been satisfactory. The school now has a good team of teachers in place who share the headteacher's commitment to raise the achievement of all pupils and who are in a strong position to do so.

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are improving but are lower than they should be, particularly in writing.
- There is much effective teaching now in Years 5 and 6 that is enabling the pupils to make more rapid progress than was the case earlier in the year.
- The strong focus placed on promoting the pupils' personal development is leading to improvements in their attitudes, behaviour and attendance, although not in their punctuality.
- Teachers use new technology well to enliven their lessons and to retain the interest and concentration of the pupils.
- Highly effective leadership is providing a very clear direction for the school and has resulted in improvements being made of considerable benefit to the pupils' achievement.

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected, although improvement over the last six months is much more rapid. Standards and test results are higher in all areas except for writing. Teaching has also improved considerably. The key weaknesses at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. The curriculum is well planned and organised and teaching and the provision in Reception are now good. Assessment procedures are now secure in the key areas of English and mathematics, but the information is not used to set targets for teachers and pupils to use to raise achievement. Rigorous and systematic procedures have been introduced to monitor the work of staff and to evaluate how well the school is doing.

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	D	E	D
mathematics	D	E	E	C
science	E	E	E	E

*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.*

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children achieve well in Reception and make good progress in all areas of their learning; most are on course to reach the national goals for their age by the end of the year in all areas of learning. The achievement of pupils elsewhere in the school is satisfactory, but is improving now that a more stable staffing position has been reached. Pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those capable of high attainment also make satisfactory progress. Standards are average in information and communication technology and just below average in reading, mathematics and science. Weaknesses in writing pull down overall standards in English to well below average. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements in other subjects. Indications are that the fall in test results for Year 2 pupils in 2003 are more than offset by improvements in 2004 and that standards in Year 6 have also risen.

The pupils' personal development is good. The school promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall, although a small but significant number in most classes have not fully embraced the school's requirements and cause some low-level disruption in lessons. Attendance has steadily improved and is satisfactory this year; however, several pupils cause concern by their lateness to school.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are also satisfactory overall, but good in Reception and Years 5 and 6. Teachers' planning is informed well by national guidance. The high quality new technology is used very effectively to retain the pupils' interest. However, there are occasions when the pace of learning slows because teachers have to spend excessive time ensuring that a small number of pupils in each class behave as required. Strong and productive links have been established with other schools and with the community, partly through the Education Action Zone. These links are exploited to provide a wide range of clubs and other activities, extension opportunities for gifted and talented pupils as well as to support the development of reading. The school is also successful in promoting the health, welfare and safety of the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the governors are providing a very clear direction for the school and have introduced significant changes for the good of the pupils in a very short time. Statutory responsibilities are met with the exception of some minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents. Teaching staff changes over the last year and the small number of experienced teachers have resulted in disruption to the co-ordination of subjects and have limited the impact of developments planned such as for improving pupils' writing.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents very much support the work of the new headteacher and all that is being done to improve the school. Parents of pupils in Year 5 have concerns about the decline in the class over the year, but inspection evidence is that the action taken to change the teaching arrangements is having a beneficial effect. Pupils generally enjoy school but have been unsettled by the changes of teachers over the year. They value being involved in making decisions about the school's future.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards, particularly in writing;
- introduce a rigorous process of target-setting;
- continue the drive to improve the punctuality of identified pupils;
- continue the work to improve the attitudes and behaviour in lessons of a small number of pupils in each class;

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- for the governors' annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory overall and in Years 1 to 6, but is good in Reception. Standards are starting to rise and are now just below average in mathematics and science but well below average in English. This is largely because of shortcomings in the pupils' writing. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Similarly, pupils of different ethnic groups generally achieve as well as each other.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is successful in ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met and consequently achievement is satisfactory for virtually all pupils.
- The improvements in teaching and provision in Reception are enabling the children to make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- Test results have fluctuated quite considerably in recent years, and had not kept pace with improvements nationally up to 2003.
- Pupils are not making sufficient progress in writing and standards are well below average throughout the school.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.8 (14.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.2 (11.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.9 (15.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Test results for Year 2 pupils in reading and mathematics were well below average in 2003 and they were very low in writing where barely half the pupils reached the nationally expected Level 2. Results in all three subjects were also well below the average of results in similar schools (based on a comparison of pupils entitled to a free school meal). Teacher assessments in science were also well below average for the number of pupils reaching Level 2. Initial indications are that results have improved in 2004 because of better teaching and a more able group of pupils. Standards in Year 2 are now just below average in reading, mathematics and science but well below average in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.3 (26.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.5 (24.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.7 (26.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. While Year 6 test results in mathematics improved in 2003, those in English and science fell sharply. In spite of this, an analysis of the data indicates that these results represented quite

reasonable progress from the pupils' earlier performance when in Year 2. Overall results in 2003 were well below average, but were only below average when compared with results in schools where pupils achieved the same level of results when in Year 2. Indications are that standards have improved further in mathematics and science and are now just below average in the current Year 6. While reading standards have also improved, writing still pulls down overall English standards, which are well below average in Year 6.

3. There were major shortcomings in the Reception class at the last inspection and in subsequent reviews of the school. These have been eliminated through the action taken by the school, particularly in moving a teacher to the class who had been trained for this age group. This has resulted in a dramatic improvement in provision, teaching, achievement and standards in the class. From below average attainment when they entered the class, most are now on course to meet the national goals for children of this age in all areas of learning by the end of their year in Reception.
4. Providing sessions of guided reading outside literacy lessons throughout the school has resulted in more rapid development of reading skills. Planned developments to improve writing had not had the same beneficial effect until the headteacher took up her post in February 2004. Consequently the pupils are not making the progress they should be in writing. This has wisely been identified as an area that needs further attention. Giving numeracy lessons the prime slot of first session of the day has ensured that the pupils are alert and ready to learn. This, along with improvements in teaching over the course of the year, is resulting in improving achievement in mathematics. The pupils' achievement in developing information and communication technology skills is good overall and standards are average throughout the school. The high quality resources are used well for teaching these skills and to make lessons interesting. Teachers link the development of information and communication technology skills to learning in other subjects and there are valuable examples of pupils using their skills to support and extend their learning. However, these are not consistent and systematic, so that pupils do not learn sufficiently how to apply their skills in different contexts. Better achievement in general has come about because of higher levels of attendance throughout the school and improvements in attitudes and behaviour, although there is scope for further improvement here.
5. Each class contains pupils in varying numbers who are capable of high attainment. These pupils are challenged well and others are extended further through their participation in the gifted and talented programme. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily because of the good level of support, a well-trained team of learning assistants and the school's strong commitment to inclusion in all of its work. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress overall because their individual needs are understood and tackled effectively by teachers and other staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is satisfactory, but several pupils are regularly late for school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are improving, but there is a need to improve further in order for better and more consistent progress to be made in lessons.
- Pupils are increasingly valuing and respecting others and developing a clear understanding of right and wrong.
- Procedures for improving attendance are effective, but have met with less success in improving punctuality.

Commentary

6. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show a satisfactory level of interest in school life and the range of learning opportunities provided for them. They willingly accept responsibility. This was demonstrated very well by the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils acting as waiters and waitresses to the governing body and guests during the inspection. No evidence of bullying, racism or other forms of harassment were observed during the inspection. However, just prior to the inspection, an appropriate decision was made to exclude one pupil on a short-term basis due partly to unacceptable harassment of other pupils involving racial language. The new whole-school systems designed to improve pupils' confidence and self-esteem are beginning to show positive results. However, in several lessons, pupils required considerable encouragement to put forward their ideas, indicating a general lack of confidence. More significantly, a number of lessons were observed where teachers had to spend a good deal of their time managing challenging behaviour from a significant minority of pupils. This has the effect of slowing the pace of the lessons. It severely curtails the amount of work covered in each lesson and slows progress for many pupils.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	71	1	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	13	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	9	1	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	35	1	0
Black or Black British – African	31	1	0
Chinese	8	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0

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

7. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now well integrated into the curriculum and is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The school utilises a good range of opportunities to develop pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness and, as a result, most pupils show appropriate respect for the values and beliefs of others. The weekly celebration assembly attended by parents, with its presentations of certificates for good work is having a very positive impact, particularly in pupils developing a pride in their work and in their school. Provision for moral development is good; pupils help devise their own class rules and, although the behaviour of a minority does not always demonstrate this, the majority are fully aware of the way their actions affect others. Provision for social development is similarly good and is beginning to result in more constructive relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. In the best lessons this promotes a good working atmosphere and is having a significantly beneficial impact on achievement. The school promotes an awareness of pupils' own cultures effectively and awareness of the local culture and history is promoted well through studies of the locality, such as the questionnaire and survey planned by Year 5 pupils about the High Street. Awareness of life in a culturally diverse society is addressed well through a combination of outside contacts and visitors to the school.

8. Attendance information for the last year shows an average level of authorised absence but a high level of unauthorised absence. The school has subsequently promoted good attendance through a variety of measures. These have helped to raise parents' awareness of the consequences of intermittent attendance on their children's education and welfare. Parents and carers are also made aware of the legal implications if they fail to ensure that children attend school regularly and on time. The school rigorously follows up all unexplained absences and, as a result, recent attendance figures show a gradual improvement. However, some parents still fail to ensure that their children arrive at school on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	1.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory and improving under the action taken by the new headteacher. Teachers make very good use of the high quality new technology resources to add interest to their lessons. Assessment procedures have improved but target setting is not a regular feature and has been identified by the school as an area needing further attention. Productive links have been established with parents, other schools and the local community for the benefit of the pupils' achievement. A wide range of interesting clubs and other activities considerably enrich the day-to-day experiences of the pupils.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, as is the assessment of the pupils' work and progress. However, all these features are good in the Reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The action taken by the headteacher to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to stabilise staffing in Years 4 to 6 has met with much success in a short period of time.
- Teachers make highly effective use of new technology to make their teaching lively and interesting.
- Learning support assistants are very effectively deployed and they make a significant contribution to the learning of individuals and groups.
- Assessment procedures have improved considerably, but target setting is not used as a vehicle to inform teachers' planning or to support pupils' learning.
- Teachers have striven hard to develop a purposeful atmosphere in their classes, although a small number of pupils do not respond positively and demand excessive attention.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (15%)	14 (42%)	14 (42%)	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.

9. The quality of teaching and learning, as well as the behaviour of the pupils, was a major concern for the headteacher on her appointment in February 2004. Specific weaknesses were identified that needed urgent attention. The action taken by the headteacher to move teachers and remove others from frontline teaching is having a beneficial effect, particularly in Years 5 and 6. All of the very good teaching was observed in these classes. The pupils' books also show that teaching is of a much higher quality since the new teachers have been placed in these classes. The staffing situation for September 2004 appears to be much more settled. A significant weakness in the teaching of the Reception class has been eliminated by moving a teacher trained for this age-group to teach the class. Teaching is now good here and the pupils learn new skills at a good rate. Their progress is carefully assessed and work matched well to meet their identified learning needs.
10. Teachers throughout the school make their lessons interesting by the carefully planned and well-prepared use of new technology. They make particularly good use of the interactive whiteboards in the Year 3 to 6 classrooms, the computer suite and the hall. Thoughtful and judicious use of commercial software enables teachers to get over the main points of a lesson through polished presentations. This focuses the pupils' minds, aids their concentration and helps to maintain their attention. There remains scope to exploit new technology further by giving the pupils more consistent hands-on experience so that they can understand how to apply their skills in a variety of contexts to extend their learning.
11. Planning and lesson organisation, particularly in English and mathematics, focuses well on ensuring that the learning needs of groups and individuals are met. The learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning as well as helping the school to achieve its commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. They are well briefed, thoughtfully deployed and participate during whole-class teaching sessions, as well as when the pupils are undertaking tasks. Pupils capable of high attainment are challenged by the work and those identified with particular talents are extended further through the gifted and talented programme. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs enables them to have full access to the curriculum. Teachers and support assistants are aware of the individual needs of identified pupils. Any pupils who find concentration difficult are kept on task and key concepts and vocabulary are repeated and explained. Planning and teaching also takes account of the language and learning needs of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language, particularly if they are at an early stage of learning English. Teachers and support assistants provide good models of spoken and written language. Pupils are included well in lessons, asked appropriate questions and improve their confidence and self-esteem as a result. However, there is scope to enrich the language and improve the confidence to respond in lessons of the more significant number of pupils who have reached a reasonable level of proficiency in English.
12. The school has been particularly concerned to improve behaviour, the pupils' self-esteem and their relationships within lessons. A new structure for improving behaviour has been introduced. This is now being consistently applied and has resulted in calmer classes and improved behaviour. This is helping to generate a sense of purpose in lessons. However, the disruptions suffered in older classes this year have left their mark and small numbers of pupils engage in low levels of background talk and other minor distractions. It is also the case that pupils in Years 1 and 2 who concentrate and try hard during the morning sessions, lose concentration and take up a disproportionate amount of staff time, particularly in the afternoon. This slows learning during these lessons. Teachers have to spend excessive time using strategies to manage the behaviour of this small number of pupils, some of whom present quite considerable difficulties for staff.
13. Teachers have a clear picture of how well the pupils in their classes are progressing through thorough and much improved assessment procedures. This is particularly the case in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. For example, the results of regular end of unit tests in mathematics are used to good effect to identify individual and group progress

and where action is needed if pupils exhibit weaknesses. These procedures have not been extended to other subjects with the same degree of rigour. Marking of the pupils' work is also thorough and accompanied by useful comments that enable pupils to see where improvements can be made. Teachers use the information from marking and assessments to plan their lessons and in some cases to modify the curriculum. The school has not developed any secure target-setting systems; this is a matter that has been identified as an area for development. As a consequence, pupils are not clear how to take the standard of their work to the next level and teachers are not always aware during the year whether the pupils are making the progress that they should.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, with a very good range of opportunities for enrichment. The quality of accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been very good progress in improving the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 since the previous inspection.
- Provision for children in Reception has improved considerably since the last inspection.
- The school provides very good support for learning outside the school day.
- Teaching benefits considerably from the high quality of the new technology resources.

Commentary

14. The curriculum is now both broad and balanced, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. A key issue then was to improve the curriculum by reviewing time allocations to subjects, review planning of the school day and to provide clear guidance for curricular planning. Schemes of work were not in place for all areas of the curriculum, notably geography and history. The school has now adopted nationally recommended or published schemes of work for all subjects. These ensure breadth and balance and support the development of key skills as pupils move through the school, as well as providing senior management with a strategic overview of the whole curriculum. Issues over the time allocations for each subject and the arrangement of the school day have been dealt with effectively. Provision for children in the Reception class is now good. The teacher takes account of detailed assessments of the children's needs and lessons are planned in line with national guidelines for children of this age. Planning includes appropriate access to outdoor activities.
15. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils who have been identified as giving cause for concern are monitored closely. Due to difficulties within the school, which have now been resolved, there remain some pupils in each class who would also benefit from increased support. Individual education plans are good. Targets are clear and measurable and progress is checked frequently. They are reviewed regularly and the organisation of support is effective. Curriculum arrangements to support the language development of pupils with English as an additional language are also satisfactory.
16. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and provides satisfactorily for pupils' personal, social and health education. Historically, a decision was made by the governing body not to include sex education in the curriculum although it has now been decided to review this. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is both formal, through assembly themes, and informal, by means of day-to-day interactions between pupils and adults. There are well-advanced plans to introduce a whole-school scheme of work with a co-ordinator in the new school year. There is a good level of equality of opportunity for all pupils and the school is very inclusive in all its policies and practices. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils; the school has identified 28 pupils from Reception upwards over a range of subject areas. There are now consistent whole-school approaches to teaching and

applying literacy and mathematics. There is evidence that the school's willingness to adopt new strategies and to seek and accept guidance on reformulating the curriculum have begun to have positive results, notably in reading and mathematics.

17. Over the course of a school year, the school provides pupils with a very good range and variety of interesting, relevant and well-attended extra-curricular activities, including sporting activities, and a good range of visitors work in the school during the year. The school benefits considerably from its membership of an Education Action Zone. Through this link, significant funding has been provided for several out-of-school and joint-school activities which considerably enrich pupils' learning.
18. Although there have been many changes to the teaching staff in the period since the last inspection, there is currently a satisfactory match of teachers to the curriculum. There is a good match of well-trained support staff. Accommodation is now good overall. Significant improvements have been made, particularly in the accommodation for the Reception class and building work which will enlarge all classrooms is planned for the summer holidays. The quality and range of learning resources are good overall, and there have been very significant improvements in information and communication technology resources due to the school's link with the Education Action Zone. Although class libraries are well-stocked, the school no longer has a central library because this room is used as a computer suite. Careful consideration is being given as to how this situation can be remedied.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Pupils receive satisfactory support, advice and guidance. Involvement through seeking and acting on pupils' views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school looks after its pupils well.
- Pupils contribute effectively to the life of the school.
- Many pupils do not have clear targets for improvement and do not know what they have to do to improve their work.

Commentary

19. Child protection and health and safety procedures are good. Responsibilities are clear, training for staff is up-to-date, and future training needs are well understood. Monitoring of health and safety is thorough and records are comprehensive. Recent audits by the local education authority and other authorities show that the school is discharging its responsibilities in these areas effectively. The school knows its pupils well and this helps teachers to spot any emerging problems at an early stage. Pupils confirm this, and during discussions they say that they would feel able to ask for help or advice if they needed it. This puts pupils in a good position to be able to settle down and to concentrate on their work.
20. Pupils are confident that the school listens to their views and takes them seriously; inspectors agree. Although there is no school council, elected prefects are responsible for soliciting pupils' opinions and putting them forward to the school. As a result, pupils have been able to bring about several improvements. For example, pupils have chosen additional playground equipment and games and have contributed to changes in the school's vision statement.
21. Pupils receive clear guidance on the quality of their work completed both in school and at home. Work is marked quickly and constructive comments and suggestions from teachers help them to improve. During discussions, pupils confirm that teachers support them well. This helps them to make the most of their time in lessons and encourages them to work hard and do their very best. However, reports to parents lack specific target information. This is also the case in the classroom where there is little formal target-setting. As a consequence,

although pupils may be clear on how well they have done, they are not so sure about how to improve their work.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents, the community and with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are well-informed about the day-to-day life of the school and their children's progress.
- The community and local business contribute effectively to the work of the school.
- Good links with other schools enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal development well.

Commentary

22. The school keeps parents well-informed about what their children are learning and encourages them to support their education. The school invites parents to information evenings. These cover aspects of the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy and are designed to help parents to support their children at home. However, they are not well attended. There are also notice boards around the school and a whiteboard for daily information updates to parents and visitors. Regular newsletters and letters home provide information about school events and developments. In addition, parental support in the classroom and on trips outside school gives parents a good opportunity to see how the school operates and how it educates their children.
23. Members of the community provide generous support for the school. Staff from a local law firm visit the school each week to provide reading support to pupils. The school works closely with a group of local churches whose clergy and youth workers contribute to assemblies and hold a Sunday school on school premises. The school has benefited substantially through its membership of the Education Action Zone. It has upgraded its technology suite with new computers, installed whiteboards around the school and a computer network to connect them all together. As a result, pupils have been able to make more effective use of the computing resources and extend their links to an international community of schools.
24. Pupils from Year 6 have joined with those of other primary and secondary schools in the Education Action Zone partnership for a residential trip. In addition, pupils have attended language classes with pupils from other partner schools. These initiatives have provided valuable opportunities for pupils' personal development and allow them to get to know others who may attend their next school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership and governance is also very good. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Procedures for the management of the school are good and have been instrumental in securing recent improvements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has high expectations of the staff and pupils and has a strong presence around the school.
- Governors are playing a significant role in giving a clear strategic direction for the school through the recent decisions taken, particularly over staffing issues.
- Improvements in financial planning have enabled governors to identify the action needed to eliminate the widening budget deficit.
- Considerable staff changes and the limited number of experienced teachers have hindered the effectiveness of subject co-ordination.

- The school's commitment to ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met and that all can participate in what is offered shows through in all management action taken.

Commentary

25. The school has emerged successfully from a difficult recent period with interim leadership arrangements. It is now strongly placed to make significant strides forward. This is largely due to the strength of the leadership provided by the headteacher and key governors in taking difficult decisions and providing a clear vision for the school's improvement. The headteacher provides a sharp focus for the work of staff. She is an excellent role model and has skilfully led the series of changes needed to put the school on an even keel. She has quickly established a very clear picture of the strengths of the teaching staff and the action needed to improve their work. Members of staff have reacted well to her leadership and there is a strong and developing sense of teamwork. The school is a calm but purposeful place in which pupils feel secure. Parents, pupils and staff recognise the need for change and support the improvements that the headteacher has introduced.
26. Much of this would not have been possible had it not been for the action taken by the governing body since the last inspection. They have taken a much more active role under the astute leadership of the chair of governors who has been supported well, particularly by key governors. They have been guided and advised well by the local education authority in the decisions they have taken. Their main aim has been to stabilise the school as the number of pupils was falling quite rapidly because of the increasing lack of confidence of parents. In doing this and making the key appointment of the new headteacher, governors have not only helped to shape the next stages of the school's development but have also gained a sharp insight into its main features. Changes to the committee structure have led to more efficient and effective decision-making. This, coupled with regular visits to see the school at work, has enabled governors to identify the action needed to secure its improvement. They have supported the new headteacher well over the last few months in taking the important decisions needed to improve the quality of the work of staff so that pupils can achieve their potential. All statutory responsibilities are met with the exception of a few minor omissions from the governors' annual report to parents.
27. The school, from the governors downwards, has a strong commitment to the educational inclusion of all of its pupils. This is clearly demonstrated through the action taken to ensure that the needs of pupils are identified and steps taken to ensure that they are met. This commitment extends to a determination to provide equality of opportunity. The racial equality policy is appropriate and its implementation is carefully monitored. There is a successful focus on improving provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language as well as for those identified as gifted and talented. This has been achieved in spite of the staff changes which have left the co-ordination of special educational needs covered on an interim basis with a permanent appointment for September 2004.
28. The school has suffered from considerable staff changes since the last inspection and has had few experienced teaching staff over the last year. This has led to inconsistencies in the co-ordination of several subjects. In spite of this, reasonable progress has been made in maintaining and improving provision in key areas such as Reception, mathematics and information and communication technology. This progress has not been achieved to the same extent in improving pupils' writing, a matter that remains a key area for the school to tackle. The work of staff is monitored effectively on both a formal and informal basis, with training and guidance provided where necessary. With the staffing structure in place for the forthcoming year, there is scope for co-ordinators to take on a greater leadership role. Arrangements for the induction, support and guidance of newly-qualified teachers are thorough and effective. The school has collated test and examination data in a useful form and bases its planning securely on an evaluation of this information. The formal performance management of staff has fallen behind schedule over the last year, but secure plans are in place to bring this back in line from September 2004.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	690,630
Total expenditure	715,418
Expenditure per pupil	3,765

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to the next	-24,788

29. The fall in pupil numbers and the school's overstaffing, particularly in support staff, led to the school sliding rapidly into budget deficit after the last inspection. Governors did not have a sufficiently sharp enough understanding of the problem at the time and staff appointments were made without their knowledge that made the situation worse. Since then, governors have developed a much greater understanding of the school's financial situation and have become fully and actively involved in all financial matters. Support staff hours have been rationalised and posts made redundant where necessary. There is now a clear plan agreed with the local authority for the elimination of the budget deficit over the next two years and the emergence of a healthy surplus. Great care is now taken over all financial matters and the principles of best value applied well when making all financial decisions.
30. The strength of leadership, the vision for its direction, the stability of staffing for the forthcoming year and the gradual elimination of the budget deficit all place the school in a very strong position for future growth and improvement. It is justifiably regaining the support of local parents. Given the background factors of the pupils, the quality of education and the above average costs, the school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

31. Provision for children in the Reception class has improved since the last inspection and is now good. It is providing children with a secure, stable start to their school life. The co-ordinator has provided sound leadership throughout a period of difficulty for the school. Under her guidance, children are assessed regularly and this information is used well to build up individual profiles on all the children. The school has developed a good induction programme. The provision is evaluated regularly and outcomes inform further development in teaching and learning.
32. The current Reception class entered the school with overall attainment below the average in relation to national expectations. This is slightly higher than standards on admission in recent years. Teaching is generally good. Support staff are well trained and make a significant contribution to the children's learning. Most children are on course to reach the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception year and higher-attaining children will exceed them. This represents good progress over their time in the class. Teaching is well planned and takes effective account of the children's individual needs. As a result, children with special educational needs make good progress. A wide range of activities are provided to develop the children's learning in all aspects of the curriculum. There is a safe and secure outdoor area attached to the Reception class which is used well to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. There is an adequate range of resources within the classroom and the school is gradually improving the range of appropriate equipment in the outdoor area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and gain confidence based on the constructive relationships developed with the staff.

Commentary

33. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is good and most children are likely to reach the standard typical for their age. When children enter the Reception class, many have underdeveloped social skills. Teaching is good. Staff work very hard to establish routines and instil the discipline of school life. By the end of the Reception year, the clear boundaries and the consistent role models set by adults help children to know what is expected of them. Most children settle to tasks with a minimum of fuss and behave sensibly. Children are encouraged to take turns and to share amicably. When they do not conform, they are dealt with firmly and sensitively.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and the children achieve well.
- Higher-attaining pupils are challenged to apply their skills to read simple texts.

Commentary

34. As a result of the good teaching, most children have reached standards that are typical for their age in this area of learning; higher-attaining pupils have exceeded them. All members of staff support the children's oral development. Children are encouraged to answer in full sentences and are given time to express themselves. Most children listen very well, although there remain a few who find it very difficult to listen and wait their turn. The teacher has adapted the literacy strategy to meet the needs of the children. A wide variety of activities are provided to support the learning and meet the needs of all the children. Most can write their own names correctly and the few that cannot, make a very recognisable attempt. Children are encouraged to use their knowledge of letter sounds and higher-attaining pupils are beginning to use this knowledge to write independently. Children have many opportunities to develop their writing skills and they are encouraged to use a joined-up style and to form their letters correctly. Children enjoy books. Most children are able to read some words and higher-attaining children read simple texts with ease and use their skills to decode new words.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

35. Most children are likely to reach the national goals for early learning by the end of Reception in this aspect of their learning. Achievement is satisfactory. Most can count to ten with understanding and they have a developing knowledge of mathematical language such as 'more than' and 'less than'. Some children are less secure in their understanding of shape and do not always recognise simple shapes such as rectangle, square and triangle. Teaching is satisfactory and information and communication technology is used well to support learning in the subject. A good range of practical activities is also provided to support learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of interesting activities is planned to promote learning in this area.
- Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve well.

Commentary

36. Most children are working at the levels that are typical for their age. A good variety of appropriate and interesting activities is planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding. For example, during the inspection, children experimented with ice-creams and ice-lollies to see whether the rate of melting varied when one of each was placed outside, in the refrigerator and in the freezer. The children made very sensible predictions as to the outcomes. Those who felt the ice cream would melt before the lollies in the fridge and the lollies outside, were able to argue their point coherently. Children visit the local park and learn about their local environment. The outdoor area is used particularly well to support this aspect of their learning. Children have access to the computer suite, which was used well to support a mathematical development lesson during the inspection.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Commentary

37. Children have regular access to a safe, secure outdoor area. There is a limited range of outdoor equipment, which the children use confidently. Children are developing an awareness of their own and other's space and are achieving well. Children are on track to meet the national goals for early learning by the end of the year. One physical education lesson was observed in the hall. The teaching was satisfactory. Children were encouraged to change independently for the lesson. The teacher took care to remind children of the importance of warming up and down, health and safety issues and how to use small equipment. Most children responded well to instructions, but a small number find it more difficult in this situation and this inhibits the flow of the lesson.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory** with some **good** features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given good opportunities to develop their design and technology skills.

Commentary

38. The children's achievement is satisfactory in this area of their learning. During the inspection, children were observed designing material for a deckchair. The teaching was good and the teacher had a real deckchair available for children to see. When designing their material, they were encouraged to think carefully about the design and to think in terms of a pattern. The following day, they made their individual chairs with the help of support staff. These were of a good standard. It was not possible to observe any other sessions where creative development was the focus but an examination of their work and displays indicate that they have many opportunities to draw and paint and their work is well displayed. No music lessons were observed but they join in the hymns in assemblies. There is a role-play area which children use frequently. Assessment records indicate that children make sustained progress in this area of their learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising but they are held back by weaknesses in writing where many pupils throughout the school do not reach national expectations for their age.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject by the headteacher give a clear direction for future developments.
- Reading standards have improved throughout the school in response to action taken this year.
- The good quality of teaching is now sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement.
- The lack of a whole-school strategy for improving pupils' speaking and listening skills is leading to an inconsistent approach to their development.

Commentary

39. There has been satisfactory progress in English since the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with weak literacy skills, particularly in the area of speaking and listening. They are now making good progress although standards in English remain well below average throughout the school. Whilst this is undoubtedly due to some extent to the low level of attainment on entry to the school, there has also been a history of a very variable quality of teaching until very recently. Progress in Years 3 to 6 had been unsatisfactory earlier this year; however, there has been significant improvement since the appointment of the new headteacher. Pupils in these classes are now making better and appropriate progress. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school.
40. Weaknesses in pupils' speaking and listening skills have a negative effect on learning. Most classes contain a varying proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language. Many of these pupils lack confidence and are slow to offer responses. In a significant number of lessons, teachers have constantly to encourage pupils to offer their ideas. This weakness in speaking and listening skills is targeted very effectively by many teachers although there is not a suitable whole-school strategy for tackling it.
41. Reading has improved significantly in the past year as a result of the whole-school action such as removing guided reading sessions from the literacy hour. This has allowed more structured time and support to be given to developing the pupils' reading. Standards in reading are now approaching national averages throughout the school. This is a significant achievement compared to the results in the previous year. An annual reading test has been introduced and detailed tracking records are now kept. The essential input of the home in helping children to learn to read has been recognised and encouraged through a new home-school reading book booklet. Volunteer readers come into school once a week at lunchtimes to work with identified pupils.
42. Several additional and appropriate strategies have been adopted to tackle weaknesses in writing. These include the introduction of composition exercise books and activities such as report writing. In addition, there are examples of very good marking which includes comments that not only highlight the qualities of a particular piece of writing but also what could be done by the pupil to improve particular aspects. This ensures that the pupils now have a very good understanding of what they are trying to achieve and receive reward and encouragement for their efforts. Improvements in spelling are encouraged through weekly spelling lists and tests and improved marking of pupils' work. A joined-up style of handwriting is now taught systematically throughout the school and this has resulted in significantly improved presentation of work in exercise books. Whilst appropriate strategies have been adopted and improvements have clearly been made, these have not been as impressive as the improvements in reading. Significantly, these improvements have not yet been sufficient to improve overall standards in English from well-below average.
43. Teaching in English has improved and is good overall throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons very well, they demonstrate good subject knowledge and they use day-to-day assessment well to match tasks to pupils' abilities and learning needs. This was demonstrated effectively in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher had significantly amended her detailed daily lesson plans to reflect the limited progress in the previous lesson. The teacher used questioning very skilfully to challenge pupils and develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards to make learning more exciting and animated for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately included in lessons and are well-supported by well-qualified learning support assistants. Good use is made of assessment data to pinpoint weaknesses. The good range of booster literacy activities provided as a result are supported by well-trained learning support assistants.
44. The subject-co-ordinator provides very good leadership. Following a detailed analysis of pupils' responses in the annual tests, whole-school targets and termly target-setting has been

introduced. However, because of her unavoidable absence during much of the current school year, these initiatives have not been implemented totally effectively. Training sessions for teachers and learning support assistants have been organised and the co-ordinator has overseen a whole-school focus on improving teaching and learning. A noteworthy feature of teaching, seen in most exercise books analysed, is the good marking of pupils' work throughout the school. There is good use of information and communication technology by teachers to make English lessons more interesting; however, very few examples were seen during the inspection of pupils working at the computers during English lessons.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Pupils make appropriate use of their English skills in subjects such as science, history and design and technology. However, weaknesses in speaking and listening have a negative effect not only on English attainment levels but also on many other areas of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers focus well on developing methods of calculation and use the structure of national guidance well to support their planning.
- Pupils are now achieving well in lessons, but progress over the year has been inconsistent because of changes of teachers in Years 4 to 6.
- The school has dealt well with weaknesses at the last inspection, has secured good improvements, and it is well placed to make further progress.
- Teachers are successful at meeting the needs of all pupils in their classes, although learning slows when they have to spend excessive time dealing with the behaviour of one or two pupils.

Commentary

46. The teaching staff changes over the last year have been unsettling for pupils in several classes, but particularly in Years 4 to 6. This has limited the progress made by pupils in these classes and their work has suffered. Action taken by the headteacher has placed experienced teachers in these classes. Teaching is good overall and is particularly effective now in Years 5 and 6. This means that pupils are achieving well in lessons now, although the progress that they have made over the course of the year in Years 4 to 6 is only satisfactory. Pupils of all abilities are now learning well and making good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The stability of current staffing places the school in a strong position to raise standards in the future.
47. Year 2 test results have fluctuated in recent years. They fell in 2003 to well below the national average and well below results in similar schools. Initial indications are that results have improved considerably in 2004 and an increased number of pupils have exceeded the nationally expected Level 2. These results and other inspection evidence indicate that standards are currently just below average in Year 2. Test results for Year 6 pupils have also fluctuated but showed an improvement in 2003. Results were still well below average, but were in line with results in similar schools. There has been a further increase in standards in 2004 and an increased number of pupils working beyond the expected Level 4. Standards are now just below average in Year 6.
48. The pupils' achievement is improving rapidly with staffing stability and because of the firm foundations on which teaching is built. Numeracy lessons now occupy the prime position as the first session of the day when the pupils are alert and their minds receptive. Lessons are planned and learning structured well around the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy. Starter sessions in each lesson develop the pupils' mental arithmetic skills, as well as focusing

their minds on the lesson to come. Teachers use these sessions well to provide pupils with a range of alternative methods so that they gain confidence in their ability to handle mental calculations. Pupils are often asked to explain how they have arrived at a particular answer, although this is not entirely successful in younger classes where pupils are more hesitant in answering. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution during these sessions by sitting with targeted pupils, checking their understanding and encouraging them to answer. This is a particular benefit to pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language. These sessions are timed well so that they give each lesson a brisk start and consolidate the pupils' skills and understanding.

49. The aims for learning in each lesson are made clear to the pupils at the start and are generally displayed for them to see. In the best lessons these are clearly explained and returned to at the end so that the extent to which progress has been made can be evaluated. Teachers and learning support assistants also talk with individuals and groups of pupils during a lesson, so that they have an understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers use the new technology in their classrooms well to make their lessons interesting and to focus the attention of the pupils. The new technology is also used well in some classes to support learning. For example, Year 2 pupils used a spreadsheet to enable them to present information in a block graph from a survey undertaken in the class. However, there is scope for this aspect to be planned more consistently across the school given the school's resources. The best teachers skilfully vary their methods and questioning so that pupils of all abilities and learning needs can participate. The activities that pupils undertake are set at differing levels of difficulty so that the more able are challenged and those needing to work at a slower pace to ensure that they understand can do so. Teachers focus well on developing number skills and teach several different methods of calculation. Learning support assistants again play a valuable role here. They are well prepared for the groups and individuals with whom they are working. The activities take a wide variety of forms and include practical and problem-solving tasks. This is an improvement since the last inspection. This enables the pupils to learn how to apply their mathematical skills in a variety of contexts. Pupils capable of higher attainment are challenged by the tasks set and a small number identified as talented mathematicians are extended further through specific additional programmes. Marking of the pupils' work is thorough and constructive, giving them a clear indication how they can improve. However, there is currently no use of target-setting either to enable teachers to plan precisely how to move learning forward more rapidly or to enable pupils to see clearly how to reach the next level in their work.
50. The many staff changes have not only had an impact on teaching and learning, but also on leadership and management of the subject, which is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over on a temporary basis with a permanent appointment having been made for the next term. However, the focus placed on mathematics has led to good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. Satisfactory use is made by teachers in reinforcing pupils' numeracy skills in different subjects. There is evidence of mathematics being used in science when pupils have taken simple measurements and displayed results in graphs. Pupils get sufficient opportunities to develop their estimating and measuring skills in design and technology and pupils use computer software well to record the collection of data in the form of tables and charts. Other opportunities are provided for pupils to use programmable devices to develop their understanding of distance and degree of turn.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has tackled successfully the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and overall improvement since then is satisfactory.
- Teachers do not always use assessment data sufficiently to inform planning.

Commentary

52. Observations during the inspection and an examination of pupils' work indicate that standards are beginning to rise in science. In the 2003 tests, pupils in Year 6 achieved results that were well below both the national average and the average for similar schools. These results were lower than in English and mathematics. Indications are that standards are higher this year with more pupils working securely within the higher Level 5. The teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2003 were well below average for the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 but well above average for the higher Level 3. There has been an increase in pupils assessed at Level 2 in 2004, but a fall in the number at Level 3.
53. The school has been through a difficult period. On her appointment to the school in February, the headteacher identified science as an area of concern, particularly in Year 6. An experienced teacher was immediately transferred to the class and given responsibility for the subject on a temporary basis in order to accelerate learning in the subject. This swift action has had a positive impact on learning in the subject. With greater stability of staff and improved teaching in the subject, the school is now well placed to build on the early signs of improvement.
54. At the time of the last inspection, there was a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the subject; this included an over-dependency on worksheets and tasks were not matched to pupil's abilities. Pupils had few opportunities to develop their investigative skills. The school has successfully tackled these issues. Achievement is satisfactory because teaching is now satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen at the upper end of the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress because the work is well prepared to meet their individual needs. Teachers now provide a good range of experiences across all aspects of the science curriculum, so that pupils are developing a broad range of knowledge and understanding relating to living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Although standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 remain below average, pupils are learning to predict possible outcomes and to understand what makes a test fair. There were few worksheets in evidence and pupils are learning to record their findings using scientific terminology as early as Year 1 where the written work in books was of a good standard.
55. All teachers share learning objectives at the beginning of lessons so that pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve. In a good lesson observed in Year 5, pupils were testing which materials muffle sounds most effectively. The pupils discussed their ideas sensibly and enthusiastically. Group activities are well chosen to match pupil's abilities and provide good opportunities for practical work. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support targeted groups of pupils. Information and communication technology is used well to enhance teaching and to support learning. There is only limited analysis of test results to identify possible areas of weakness and use of this information to support teachers' planning.
56. The subject is currently being led and managed satisfactorily by a senior teacher who has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and the need to sustain recent improvements in the teaching of the subject if levels of attainment are to rise. Plans for improvement are well focused. A national scheme is used to support learning in the subject

and the school is looking at ways in which this can be adapted to meet the particular needs of their pupils. Improved assessment procedures and target-setting have correctly been identified as priorities in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality of the resources provided through the link with the Education Action Zone greatly enhances the pupils' learning and achievement.
- Teachers use new technology well to make their lessons interesting.
- Valuable opportunities are exploited to use computers to support and extend pupils' learning, but these are not consistently planned for in all subjects.
- The curriculum is well organised and develops pupils' learning well.
- Lessons and provision in general benefit considerably from the input and expertise of the specialist learning support assistant.

Commentary

57. All classrooms in Years 3 to 6 have an interactive whiteboard along with individual computers. The whiteboards are used expertly to enhance general teaching. The school also benefits from a new computer suite of 15 workstations and a further interactive whiteboard. Much of this resourcing has been provided through the school's participation in the local Education Action Zone, which also provides laser links between the systems in the various member schools. This level of resourcing not only enhances achievement but is also utilised to extend the learning of talented pupils such as through a project organised through NASA.
58. Teachers have good levels of personal skills and expertise. They handle the technology confidently and plan and prepare interesting lessons. Teaching is good overall, although teachers have not securely established the rules for behaviour in the new suite. This is largely because pupils are keen and excited and want to get on with work, resulting in them becoming distracted by the machines when the teacher still wishes to address the class. The curriculum tackles all aspects of the National Curriculum and is planned to build the pupils' skills in information and communication technology lessons as they move through the school. Teachers link their lessons to work in other subjects, but do not give consistently planned opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in different contexts. Assessment is built into planning well and enables teachers to identify where pupils have been successful in a unit of work or where they will need extra support when returning to the aspect at a later date. All of these factors are leading to the pupils' achieving well and making good progress in the development of skills. Standards are in line with national averages throughout the school.
59. There has been considerable development of the provision since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a clear view of where further developments are needed such as in utilising the new suite more, particularly beyond the school day and in developing greater use of the pupils' skills to support their learning in subjects. She is greatly assisted in identifying where teachers' strengths and weaknesses lie by the specialist learning assistant. He performs a valuable role in providing technical support and giving teaching staff advice and guidance on the most effective application of software. He also provides considerable support for pupils in lessons where his skills are used to help and guide individuals and groups of pupils. The subject is well led and managed through this combined work of the co-ordinator and learning assistant and, along with the support from the Education Action Zone, this accounts for the good overall progress in the two years since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

60. Pupils benefit considerably in virtually all subjects in Years 3 to 6 by the interesting use teachers make of new technology. This not only makes their lessons more creative but also shows pupils how their skills can be applied to support their learning and enables them to become aware of the many applications of their skills. However, because opportunities for pupils to have hands-on experience of using computers in their daily learning are inconsistent, their skills are not applied and developed systematically. Valuable experiences are provided such as when Year 2 pupils used a spreadsheet to help display information they had gathered from a survey in a block graph. The computer suite is new and teachers are just coming to terms with how this resource can best be used. There is scope now for subject planning to identify when new technology can be used to support and extend pupils' learning across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

61. None of the subjects in this area was inspected in detail. Religious education was subject to a denominational inspection. A limited number of lessons were observed in geography and history.
62. In the two **geography** lessons observed, teaching was at least good and in the **history** lesson, teaching was satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and, as a result, pupils apply themselves to their work appropriately. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were collecting and recording evidence about mountain environments with a view to making a two-minute presentation to the class. The teacher's good relationships, evident enthusiasm for the subject and very good classroom management skills led to the pupils gradually increasing in confidence as the lesson progressed. The good pace generated, effective help from the learning support assistant and the use of relevant resources led to good progress in learning. In the one history lesson observed, Year 2 pupils were learning about The Great Fire of London. Although, by the end of the lesson, pupils demonstrated a broadly satisfactory understanding of the key reasons why the fire spread so quickly, the written work of the majority of the class did not reflect their understanding. This weakness in writing, evident throughout the school, has a negative effect on much of the work produced.
63. As a consequence of the considerable turmoil in staffing, it has not been possible to appoint a co-ordinator for either subject. The curriculum has improved significantly, although teaching and standards have not been a focus for monitoring. Leadership is currently unsatisfactory. Nationally recommended schemes of work are in place for both subjects and these provide continuity and progression in key skills as pupils move through the school. However, observations confirm that this has only been a relatively recent innovation and older pupils, in particular, have missed a good deal of key skill development. These gaps, coupled with generally poor writing skills result in below average standards in the current Year 6.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

64. None of the subjects in this area were inspected in depth. It was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design or design and technology. Pupils' work was sampled in each of these subjects. Only two lessons were observed in music, both were taken by a part-time music specialist, observation of singing in assemblies was used to support the judgements made for teaching and standards. Two lessons were also observed of physical education activities.
65. Attainment in **art and design** is average in Year 2 and Year 6. Observation of pupils' work on display indicates that the curriculum is well planned. Displays are of a good standard and they reflect satisfactory progression in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject as pupils move through the school. Pupils are introduced to a variety of skills, materials and techniques and there is good use of the subject to support learning in other subjects, such as history and geography. Good use is made of the environment to enhance learning opportunities. There is

clear evidence of art and design work reflecting trips pupils have made including the Year 6 trip shared with other pupils from the Educational Action Zone. Currently, there is no subject manager; one has been appointed for September. Systems to assess how the pupils are progressing are underdeveloped.

66. **Design and technology** is taught in two-day blocks each term. There is a focus on design and technology throughout the school and standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. There is clear evidence of a wide range of interesting activities covering the required curriculum. Progression in knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject is clearly evident. A particularly good feature of work seen is the emphasis on pupils evaluating their own work. During the inspection, a Year 6 pupil was awarded a certificate for a 'mousetrap car' he had designed and produced whilst working in conjunction with pupils drawn from schools in the Educational Action Zone and pupils from an elementary school in Virginia, USA. The project was sponsored by NASA and pupils worked through a video link organised by the BBC with input from a scientist from NASA. This was a good example of a gifted and talented pupil being encouraged to extend his thinking practically. As in art and design, there is currently no subject manager; however, one has been appointed for September. Systems to assess how the pupils are progressing are underdeveloped.
67. The attainment of the pupils in the **music** sessions observed was average in Year 2 and Year 6. No firm judgements on teaching and learning can be made on the evidence seen. However, the school benefits from employing a music specialist to teach the subject. In a Year 6 lesson on drumming, the teaching was very good and the pupils responded well. Pupils are able to read the rhythm in music and to follow it sensibly; the resources were of a good quality and handled well by pupils. The teaching in a Year 3 recorder group was good and the teacher demonstrated a good range of strategies to keep the pupils on task. Music is used in assemblies and the pupils sing enthusiastically. On the limited evidence seen, progress and achievement in the subject are at least satisfactory. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory but there is limited use of assessment in the subject.
68. **Physical education** is a high priority for the school, with two, one-hour sessions on the timetable of all classes. One of the two sessions of physical education was a well-organised swimming lesson at the nearby pool for Year 3 and 4 pupils. The best swimmers were being assessed. Most of the group, representing almost half of the pupils, could swim at least one length of the pool with a reasonable front crawl stroke. Another group of less confident swimmers benefited considerably from the expert tuition of the swimming instructor. The second lesson observed was for Year 6 pupils, in which the aim of improving their technique and performance in running suffered because of the pupils' lack of teamwork.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

69. No discrete lessons were observed in this area. Much of the school's provision is through the effective daily assemblies where matters are dealt with as they arise. The school is currently reviewing how best to teach sex education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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