

INSPECTION REPORT

SYTHWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sythwood, Horsell

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125084

Headteacher: Mrs S Tresilian

Lead inspector: Mr M Phillips

Dates of inspection: 22 – 24 March 2004

Inspection number: 258079

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	395
School address:	Sythwood Horsell Woking Surrey
Postcode:	GU21 3AX
Telephone number:	01483 770063
Fax number:	01483 767414
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B McLaren
Date of previous inspection:	1 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sythwood Primary School is on the outskirts of Woking. This school is larger than most. It had 395 pupils on roll at the time of inspection aged from three to 11, of whom 11 are visually impaired. Many pupils live near to the school and come from a wide variety of social and cultural backgrounds, most from an Asian British background. Most children enter the Nursery Year of the Foundation Stage with standards well below those expected. The 25 per cent of pupils leaving and joining the school from Year 3 is above the national average. The 22 per cent of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and the 22 per cent with special educational needs, are in line with national averages. The 35 per cent of pupils who learn in English as an additional language is very high. In addition to these pupils, about 33 per cent receive support to improve their speech and language. The school has achieved a number of awards recently, namely the Investor in People award in 2002, the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004 just before the inspection and in 2003 the Educational Extra Award for Extra Curricular Activities. In 2003, the school achieved the first part of Surrey's Healthy School's Award. The school has been selected as one of five secondary and primary schools in the county to investigate best practice in the deployment of staff.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7704	Mr M Phillips	Lead inspector	English Religious education English as an additional language
9457	Mrs G Bindoff	Lay inspector	
11901	Mrs P Lowe	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage
30717	Mr G Tompsett	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education
17171	Mrs M Last	Team inspector	Special educational needs
27240	Mr T Hooper	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology History

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Anglia House
Carrs Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 2LA

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning.	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	18
OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES	
The provision for visual impairment	19
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	21
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This highly effective school provides very good value for money because of the excellent leadership of the headteacher, high quality teaching and pupils' very good achievements.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- the outstanding leadership of the headteacher who is very ably supported by key staff;
- exemplary evaluation of its effectiveness to ensure continuous improvement;
- the very high proportion of very good and excellent teaching;
- pupils with different learning needs, including those with visual impairment, being fully included in all learning opportunities;
- pupils' eagerness to learn and their high achievements;
- an excellent and innovative curriculum;
- strategies now need to be more effective to improve the attendance and punctuality of a few pupils;
- governors' health and safety procedures also need to be more effective.

The excellent improvement since the last inspection in February 1999 is largely due to exceptional leadership and practice that enables the school to evaluate its own effectiveness in order to improve all the time. The most significant improvements since the last inspection are in leadership and management, teaching, pupils' achievements, the curriculum and partnerships with parents and the community. The school's exemplary commitments to high standards, to include every pupil in all it offers and to meet individual needs all contribute to pupils' very good achievements. Other outstanding features include the ways in which the school enthuses pupils through an innovative curriculum and the deployment of highly effective teaching assistants.

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	E*	C	A
mathematics	E	E	D	A
science	D	E	B	A

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

Achievement is very good. Children join the nursery class of the Foundation Stage with standards well below those expected, particularly in language, literacy and numeracy. Although they make very good progress, most have a lot to learn and so do not reach standards expected in all their learning goals by the end of reception. Pupils continue to achieve very well by the end of Year 2 to reach standards in mathematics that are higher than those at the time of the 2003 national tests and now match national averages. Very good achievement is also seen in literacy where standards continue to be in line with national averages. In science, standards are above national averages. The high proportion of pupils who join the school from Year 3 settle down swiftly and soon achieve as well as other pupils. These new pupils include a high proportion with special educational needs and others who learn in English as an additional language. Their very good achievement is reflected in rising standards in mathematics that now match national averages, an improvement on the 2003 national test results for Year 6 where standards were below those of most schools nationally although well above those for similar schools. Standards are rising by Year 6 in English

because more pupils now exceed national averages than at the time of the 2003 national tests, ensuring that standards remain well above those of similar schools and match national averages. Further evidence of pupils' very good achievements is seen in the school exceeding its challenging 2004 numeracy and literacy targets.

Pupils' personal development is very good, as is their spiritual, moral and cultural development. The school's great concern for the needs of others is reflected in pupils' high standards of politeness, respect and behaviour. There is an exceptional range of sporting, cultural and other educational provision after school, during weekends and holidays that contributes to pupils' excellent cultural and spiritual development, sense of citizenship and enthusiasm for learning. There is exemplary teaching of the difference between right and wrong. Racial harmony is excellent. Adults who work in the school provide exceptional role models for pupils, many of whom come from the school's nearby diverse cultural communities, and so contribute powerfully to the curriculum that teaches pupils great respect for and understanding of cultures and faiths different from their own. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Despite the good efforts of the school, attendance is unsatisfactory because a few parents do not ensure that their children attend regularly or on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Most teaching is very good or excellent.

A striking feature of this school is its commitment to continuous improvement that has resulted in a creatively planned, innovative and challenging curriculum that matches the wide range of learning needs in the school. This is seen during Wednesday afternoons, 'Wacky Wednesdays', where pupils are engrossed in a large number of activities that extend and reinforce learning through problem solving activities. Very good use of assessment informs curriculum and lesson planning very effectively and enables teachers and their assistants to respond swiftly to the needs of pupils through activities that interest and inspire them. Provision for visually impaired pupils is very good, as it is for pupils with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and others who learn in English as an additional language, all of whom are fully involved in lessons alongside other pupils. Teaching sets high expectations to which pupils cheerfully respond, whole class teaching scatters probing questions around the class to keep pupils 'on their toes' and teachers and assistants work as highly effective teams to improve learning. Excellent teaching sweeps pupils along in their learning with infectious enthusiasm. Pupils are very well cared for through very good support and advice. The marking of pupils' work provides good advice on how to improve and the annual report each parent receives contains similar effective advice. The school works well with parents to help their children learn.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and she is supported by very effective teams of senior teachers and governors.

The headteacher's commitment to high standards and continuous improvement is shared by governors and staff. Management by governors and key staff is very good. This school has the confidence to be innovative because its drive to improvement is securely based on highly effective self-evaluation practices. The very well led and effective governing body is aware of areas to improve in its own practice, knows the school's strengths and weaknesses very well, is very good at holding the school to account for the quality of education provided and ensures statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very satisfied with the quality of education provided. Inspectors investigated concerns of a few parents about bullying, behaviour and communication. They found bullying is not an issue and that behaviour is very good. Inspectors found that parents receive a great deal of information about the school and their children's learning, but the school does not seek their views formally, for example, through a questionnaire.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to continue driving up standards;
- to improve the attendance and punctuality of a few pupils;
- for governors to make improvements to health and safety procedures.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning

Children's achievement by the end of the Foundation Stage is very good. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils also achieve very well. By Year 2, standards are higher than at the time of the 2003 national tests in mathematics and they now match national averages, as do standards for literacy. Science standards are above national averages. By Years 2 and 6, most standards in other subjects match those expected nationally, and for religious education, standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In physical education by Year 6, most standards are in line with national expectations, except for swimming. Pupils continue to achieve very well by Year 6, despite a high proportion of them joining the school from Year 3, and standards are well above national averages for similar schools in English, mathematics and science and they match national averages for all schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with different learning needs achieve very well.
- By Year 2, reading standards have risen since the 2003 national tests, and boys' reading skills have greatly improved.
- By Year 6, standards are rising.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.1 (14.7)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.7 (14.1)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 53 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. National test results for Year 2 in 2003 in mathematics and in writing matched national averages but they were well below average for reading. In comparison with similar schools across the country, mathematics was well above national averages, writing was above but reading was below average. The school exceeded the national average in writing in the percentage of pupils exceeding standards expected. National test results showed that in reading girls outperformed the boys. Since the 2003 national tests, reading standards have risen and boys' reading has improved greatly so that they are similar to those of the girls and standards are now in line with national averages.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.2 (23.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	26.4 (24.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.8 (26.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. National test results for Year 6 over time rise and fall, due in part to the large proportion of pupils who leave and join the school from Year 3. The 2003 national test results for Year 6 showed that in English, standards matched national averages and this reflects inspection findings. However, standards in mathematics are now in line with these averages whereas in the 2003 test results they were below average. There is a change in standards in science because they now match national averages whereas the 2003 national test results showed them to be above average.
3. A strong feature of this school is pupils' very good achievements from the time they join the school in the Foundation Stage to the time they leave at the end of Year 6. In 2004, the school received an A grade from the Department of Education and Skills for pupils' achievement by Year 6, well above that of most schools nationally. There is a large variety of learning needs within the school that include pupils with special educational needs, a third of whom have speech and language difficulties. There are pupils with visual impairment and others learning in English as an additional language, about a third of whom in Years 1 and 2 are in the early stages of learning in English. All these groups of pupils achieve very well because the school very effectively uses assessment to plan challenging lessons that match their needs and inspire them. This is seen in the way the school strategically planned improvements in reading through a 'Sythwood Year of Reading' that also resulted in improvements to pupils' speaking, listening, language skills and widened their vocabulary. By the end of key stages 1 and 2, standards in information communication technology and in all other subjects are in line with national expectations and for religious education standards match those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Excellent relationships contribute very significantly to pupils' **very good attitudes** and the school's **very good learning ethos**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships help pupils become confident independent learners by Year 6.
- High quality and often inspirational teaching contributes to pupils' very good attitudes.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good because it is very effectively managed with high expectations.
- Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to develop as mature and responsible members of the school community.
- Despite the good efforts of the school, attendance is unsatisfactory because a few parents take their children on holiday during term time.

Commentary

4. Attendance in the academic year 2002-2003 was below the national average and is still below 95%. The school has some good strategies that are improving attendance and punctuality but there are still too many parents who do not ensure that their children attend school every day and on time. Despite the firm discouragement by the school, a few pupils' learning is disrupted by parents taking holidays in term time.
5. Pupils love school. They think learning is exciting because they are very well taught and have varied and interesting lessons and activities to enjoy. They are inspired and challenged to do their best and they work very hard. They learn how to work independently and responsibly and are justly proud of their achievements. The youngest children in the Nursery and the Reception Years settle quickly into school and begin to establish good work habits. Their social development is poor when they begin school but they soon learn to listen to each other and to share. They apply themselves well, develop independence and are able to make choices about what they would like to do.

6. The school provides a calm, orderly environment and all staff have consistently high expectations of behaviour to ensure pupils' very good behaviour. Pupils are very clear about how they should behave and are very well managed by staff in lessons and around the school. There are pupils whose behaviour could cause concern, but their learning and behaviour are improving all the time. The school also deals well with the rare incidents of bullying. Inspectors investigated the concerns of a few parents and found that the school has very good systems in place to identify and deal swiftly and effectively with bullying should it occur. No pupil has been excluded in this school year but in 2002-2003, three pupils were excluded for a total of five fixed term periods.

7. The school's excellent commitment to include all pupils in all learning opportunities results in pupils valuing each other and themselves and contributes to the school's very good learning ethos. The governor approved anti-racist policy and curriculum and lesson planning for this very diverse school community provide exemplary social and cultural development for pupils to understand and appreciate cultures and beliefs different from their own. They all work and play very well together. There is a friendly, supportive atmosphere which is underpinned by excellent relationships between the pupils and the adults in the school. Adults provide excellent role models for pupils to follow that contribute to them being responsible members of the school community.

8. The provision for pupils' personal development has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. There are some excellent opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual aspects of their lives and to understand about fairness and kindness and how their decisions and actions impact on others. Pupils in Year 4 learn about the work of UNICEF and about the rights of children throughout the world. They were challenged to choose which rights they considered essential in order to learn that they also have responsibilities as citizens themselves.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	5.8
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	221	5	0
White – Irish	5	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	7	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	114	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	8	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	4	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and the leadership and management of governors and key staff are very good elsewhere. Very high quality teaching, an excellent and innovative curriculum and good parental partnerships ensure the diversity of pupils' learning needs are very effectively met so that their achievements are very good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching.
- There is very good use of assessment to plan lessons.
- Pupils' are fully included in lessons and their achievements are very good.
- There are high expectations for learning and behaviour.
- There is an excellent partnership between teachers and assistants.

Commentary

9. One of the main reasons why this is a very effective school is the high quality teaching that is occasionally excellent. It ensures pupils with different learning needs are fully involved in lessons that interest and challenge them so that by Years 2 and 6 their achievements are very

good. Throughout the school, the consistent focus upon school priorities to improve basic numeracy and literacy skills underpins pupils' very good achievements.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (7 %)	27 (50 %)	20 (37 %)	3 (6 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

10. Assessment is used very well to identify individual learning needs and to plan challenging work. It is at the heart of this self-evaluating school's commitment to continuous improvement because every pupil's progress is tracked from the time they join the school to the time they leave. Information is used to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to seek further improvements. An impressive feature is the way assistants work with class and support teachers to assess pupils' learning. This very good practice leads to their outstanding deployment that contributes to pupils with visual impairment, those with special educational needs and with speech and language difficulties and others who learn in English as an additional language matching the very good achievement of other pupils and being fully included in all learning. Teachers and their assistants work in creative partnerships to plan 'Wacky Wednesdays' in order to discover new ways of inspiring pupils to improve all time. Pupils are consulted in the selection of activities. Learning objectives are shared at the start of lessons to ensure that pupils know what to learn. In the most effective lessons, these objectives are frequently referred to in order to keep pupils focused on what they need to do, as seen in a very good Year 2 religious education lesson. The effectiveness of this school's assessment practice is evident from Year 3, where the proportion of pupils joining the school is well above the national average and whose needs often require expert analysis in order to help them settle swiftly into school and achieve as well as other pupils.
11. Very high expectations for behaviour and learning are very effectively managed. Pupils understand and respect boundaries set for behaviour and teachers and assistants are very good at reinforcing good behaviour and work so that they are common practice through the school. This is seen in ways pupils play together at lunch and break times, move about the school and learn enthusiastically in lessons where they often work together very well. In many lessons pupils eagerly, swiftly and with great discipline move from their classroom with assistants and support teachers to fill corridors and other available areas. In small groups, using a variety of extremely well chosen resources, they beaver away at challenging tasks that interest them, with staff who inspire them. For large parts of each day the whole school is alive with the gentle murmur of busy people and the occasional ripple of laughter, or sound of glee as a pupil gains new understanding for the first time. The sight of Year 6 pupils' hands straining in the air to answer a teacher's question during a lesson about spelling is typical of the way pupils respond to high expectations and challenging lessons. The use of praise and very good support and advice to improve learning in a Year 5 writing lesson are also typical of ways teachers and assistants provide pupils with knowledge of their own learning so that they are able to respond cheerfully to demanding work. The busy buzz of pupils intent on doing their best in this lesson is a common feature of other lessons throughout the school, and at registration times, when pupils use their own initiatives to improve their learning and complete work. Excellent teaching is conducted with infectious enthusiasm and humour that drives pupils cheerfully along in their learning. Where teaching is occasionally less effective, but nevertheless satisfactory, pupils are not as consistently well challenged.
12. The very effective advice pupils receive on how to improve, either through discussions with teachers and assistants or from comments in their books, contributes to very good knowledge of their own learning. For example, Reception class children explain what to do when using microscopes to find out about butterflies and Year 6 pupils know what they need to do to improve in science. This sense of purpose pervades all learning and is evident during 'Wacky Wednesday' afternoons.

13. A few parents at their meeting expressed concern about the appropriateness and amount of homework their children receive. Inspectors found that homework provision is good, prepares pupils well for their next lessons, is often geared to their learning needs and helps them understand what they need to do to improve. From Year 1, pupils receive different types of homework to improve learning that include taking reading books home, spelling and gathering information for their next lessons. By Year 6, homework increases and includes more formal writing and learning tasks and so prepares them well for secondary school.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding curriculum provision matches pupils' diverse learning needs and inspires them.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to be fully involved in all that the school offers.
- Excellent deployment of very well trained teaching assistants contributes enormously to the highly successful curriculum.
- There is very good provision for pupils to be creative and to improve their learning.

Commentary

14. Excellent improvements to curriculum planning since the last inspection, that include provision for ICT, contribute hugely to this being a very effective school. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. French is taught in Years 5 and 6 in preparation for it being a requirement in 2010. The curriculum is now very effectively and creatively planned and managed in ways that inspire pupils to do their best. There is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and improve numeracy and literacy skills through creative and problem-solving activities that were very apparent during 'Wacky Wednesday' afternoon, when the school is alive with enthusiastic pupils. They regard 'Wacky Wednesdays' as the highlight of their week and it contributes powerfully to their eagerness to learn.
15. Planning is very good and constantly evaluated for effectiveness. Very good records of learning and achievement are passed on to help the next teacher plan the curriculum and ensure that learning constantly improves as pupils grow older. References to the school's rich diversity of cultures, faiths and learning needs in planning for each subject contributes significantly to pupils being included in all the school offers. Planning pays close and very successful attention to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils. This is seen in pupils respecting beliefs and cultures different from their own. It is also seen in the ways they marvel at the changing seasons in their diaries about the school copse; in ways they appreciate the efforts of others; in their understanding of right and wrong and in their sense of community and citizenship through the work of the school council.
16. The effectiveness of the curriculum is evident in the way it is adapted to meet emerging needs. A school priority to improve the reading of boys whilst improving language, literacy and numeracy skills of all pupils permeates all curriculum provision. Lessons are full of creative ways to improve learning. This was seen in the use of music in a Year 4 literacy lesson to help pupils with special educational needs recognise syllables, in the use of drama to extend vocabulary, to the use of 'talking buddies' to improve speech and language skills and the use of English for those for whom it is an additional language, to highly demanding small group mathematics work for gifted and talented pupils. A poet worked with pupils for a day, a door was made to look like the entrance to a hermit's house to inspire poetry and on 'Wacky Wednesdays' pupils made story sacks to help bring reading alive for them and others. Computers are used in Year 6 to make documentaries about life in World War Two, and a small room was converted into a 1943 sitting room where, in small groups, pupils sheltered under a table to the wail of a siren whilst enacting a family during the Blitz.

17. Provision for activities after school, at weekends and during school holidays is excellent. The school has achieved a national award for its outstanding provision. Large numbers of pupils participate in a wide variety of sporting activities, with the school caretaker enjoying success as school football coach in countywide competitions. The many other clubs and classes include dance, art and music. There is an annual school play that involves all pupils. The school choir participates in musical festivals and there is an annual Week of Music. The whole school visits the pantomime at Christmas. There are weekend events and staff take groups of pupils on holiday. There are residential visits for Year 5 and 6 pupils that extend learning in lessons, for example in geography, and teach them valuable social skills.
18. Planning ensures that visitors to the school extend pupils' learning. Preparations are thorough for pupils to make the best use of visitors and for work on their departure. Pupils worked with a Nigerian potter and built on work they did in art and design, in geography and in literacy lessons that improved their understanding of different cultures. Work with a poet improved speaking, writing and reading skills and led to a wealth of poetry seen on school displays.
19. Resources and their use are good and accommodation is very good. Well qualified teachers match the demands of the curriculum and the diverse learning needs of pupils very well. Highly trained and resourceful teacher assistants work very effectively in partnership with teachers to help pupils learn. This partnership within an outstanding curriculum contributes hugely to the school's vibrant learning atmosphere.

Example of outstanding practice

Outstanding features of innovative curriculum provision

'Wacky Wednesdays' sees the school alive with enthusiastic staff and pupils engrossed in an extremely wide range of activities every Wednesday afternoon. Some groups contain pupils of mixed ages. In the school's large atrium, to the gentle sound of a fountain, enthusiastic teaching assistants helped Year 1 and 2 pupils improve their observation, speaking, listening and language skills whilst painting signs of Spring they had collected in the copse, such as catkins, blossom and daffodils. Elsewhere, a mixed aged gifted and talented group was challenged by a small team of teachers and assistants to use mathematical skills to design a plant that moved and grew. Around the school, groups of pupils improved their literacy skills as they made and selected items to include in a story sack based on a favourite book, 'The Gruffalo'. Year 5 and 6 pupils worked with intense interest together using computers to make documentaries using speech and sound based on a book called 'The Water Horse' by Dick King-Smith. A grandparent spent time sensitively helping pupils to improve their reading. A group of younger pupils took an imaginative walk in the school copse with its trees with Braille signs, to return fired with enthusiasm and longing to write. During 'Wacky Wednesday', when the usual timetable is replaced by a flowing tide of highly appropriate activities and the school is full of the sound of busy people, it is difficult to distinguish between teachers and assistants or to decide whether the most enthusiastic learners are staff or pupils. It is this crucial element of the curriculum that makes this school such a vibrant place to work and learn in: everyone is a learner.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for care, guidance and support is **good**. There is **excellent** provision to ensure each child has a trusting relationship with an adult.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent relationships ensure that pupils are able to share concerns with an adult.
- Very good provision for visually impaired pupils, pupils with special educational needs, others who learn in English as an additional language and gifted and talented pupils ensures that all pupils are fully included in all the school offers.
- There is very good provision for personal, social and health education.
- Very good arrangements ensure that children joining the nursery settle in well.
- The governors' procedures for the assessment of risks are not thorough enough.
- There are no whole school strategies for recording and monitoring pupils' personal development.

Commentary

20. Staff have an exceptional commitment to the wellbeing of the pupils and provide a very caring environment where pupils feel valued and supported. They make a great deal of effort to provide pupils with exciting opportunities for learning and are willing to give additional time at weekends and the summer holidays to offer pupils activities and experiences they would otherwise not enjoy. The calm and friendly atmosphere in the school is underpinned by the excellent relationships between adults and pupils that contribute to pupils confidently knowing that that they will receive help and support should they need it.
21. Provision for child protection is good. There is a very good programme for health education which teaches pupils to look after themselves and to keep safe. Good support is given by the school nurse and other visiting specialists and the programme for sex education and drugs awareness is thorough. The effective consultation with pupils to improve provision and their learning is seen in the way all pupils are involved through their elected school council in the Healthy Schools Initiative that very successfully raises their awareness about healthy eating. Provision for the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors is good but risk assessments are not thorough enough.
22. The school's very good guidance for pupils about what they need to do to improve and its very effective strategies to include all pupils in all it offers contributes to their very good achievement. Pupils' achievements are actively celebrated throughout the school in lessons and school assemblies, contributing greatly to pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with behaviour and emotional difficulties are very well supported and have the help they need to remain in school, to learn and to develop social relationships without interfering with the learning of others.
23. Very good links with parents, which include home visits and effective sharing of information, help children make a good start when they first attend the Nursery Year. They settle in very well, quickly begin to learn school routines and enjoy the nursery activities. There are very good procedures for recording and monitoring the children's progress which help them to improve, especially in their listening and speaking skills, in their social and emotional development and in the use of English for those in the early stages of learning in English. Very good support is also given when children transfer into the Reception Year and again into Year 1, which ensures continuity in their learning. Very good procedures to monitor children's personal development are not yet in place for older pupils, although the school has plans to do this. The school does not assess the effectiveness of its very good programme for pupils to develop their personal qualities and so does not know if there are any gaps in the provision.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnerships between the school and parents are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good support for parents to help their children learn at home.
- Very good induction arrangements establish very effective links between home and school when children enter the Nursery Year.
- The school gives very good support to trainee teachers.
- Pupils' learning is enriched through activities in the community.
- There are good opportunities for parental involvement in the daily life of the school.
- There are no formal arrangements for seeking parents' views about the school.

Commentary

24. The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents appreciate the welcoming atmosphere and say that they feel comfortable approaching class teachers and the headteacher if they have issues to discuss. Communication with parents has improved very well since the last inspection and is now good although there are no formal ways for the school to seek parents' views and to consult them about school improvements. Weekly newsletters encourage parents to take an active part in the life of the school and many parents help in classrooms as volunteers giving very good support to pupils.
25. Parents are positive about the school and the education it provides and are particularly enthusiastic about the good start their children make in the Nursery Year and the range of exciting activities their children enjoy on Wednesday afternoons. They have good information about what their children will learn and about how they are getting on. Annual reports on their children's progress provide useful information about areas of achievement although there is no specific information about standards attained. Opportunities for informal contact with class teachers are very good and there is good guidance about how to help their child learn at home. All these good features contribute to pupils' very good achievement.
26. Externally funded support for parents of pupils who learn in English as an additional language is very effective in helping parents to understand educational systems and expectations in the United Kingdom. The toy library and the family literacy course are excellent resources which help parents to learn what they can do to encourage their child to learn and play at home. The specialist home/school liaison officer contributes very significantly to the integration of pupils and their families into school life and is very effective in facilitating links between parents and the school.
27. Very good contact is made with parents before their child enters the Nursery Year of the Foundation Stage. They have very good opportunities to share information with class teachers and to become familiar with the school. They know what their child will learn and have opportunities to help them learn in class. Close contact between home and school is maintained throughout the year and contributes to their very good achievements.
28. The school contributes well to the life of the community, for example by entering a float in the Woking Carnival, and makes good use of community resources to extend and enrich pupils' experience. The whole school attended school productions in a local secondary school and the professional pantomime at the local theatre. These visits give pupils very good opportunities to experience live performances. Pupils contribute to the tradition of giving gifts at harvest time and have the benefit of good links with the local church and mosque. The school also provides a very good range of educational visits to places of educational interest and arranges for visitors to come to work with pupils in the school. The recent visit of a Nigerian artist and musician gave pupils an excellent chance to learn at first hand about African culture and traditions.

29. Links with other local schools are satisfactory and have some good features. There are some inter-school sports fixtures which pupils enjoy and the choir had a wonderful time singing with hundreds of children from other primary schools at the Woking Music Festival. Specialist music teachers from a local secondary school have supported the arts curriculum but links with the school where most pupils transfer into Year 7 are only satisfactory. Induction arrangements are outstanding for the transfer of visually impaired pupils to local secondary schools. Arrangements for other pupils are not as effective. Improvement is needed in induction arrangements to ensure pupils continue to make very good progress when they join their secondary school. There are the usual induction visits for pupils but there are few links between teachers and this school. The school works effectively with teacher training providers to give very good support to trainee teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding and she is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher.
- The excellent self-evaluation of school effectiveness ensures its continuous improvement.
- Leadership and management of other key staff are very good.
- Very well led governors work very effectively in partnership with the school to help to shape its future.

Commentary

30. The headteacher's leadership of the school is outstanding. She has transformed this school since the last inspection in 1999 from one with difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, and to which the local authority provided additional support because of significant weaknesses, to one with a stable staff and awards for provision and achievement. Teaching, learning and pupils' achievement have improved considerably. The excellent curriculum is now innovatively planned and creatively managed and the school has achieved a national award for its outstanding range and quality of activities outside lessons. There is a very great improvement since the last inspection in the ways staff and governors work as a team, sharing the headteacher's values and commitment to ever improving standards. This practice is a very significant strength of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,441,862	Balance from previous year	33939
Total expenditure	1,493,505	Balance carried forward to the next	13812
Expenditure per pupil	3,449		

31. The aims of the school are reflected in all it strives to achieve. These are evident in high standards of behaviour, achievement, care and respect and excellent harmonious relationships in this multi-cultural school. In addition, there is exemplary provision of opportunities provided for the inclusion of pupils with different learning needs in all the school offers. For example, visually impaired pupils work alongside others doing the same challenging work, the only differences being that their worksheets are written in Braille and their computers talk to them to help them write on the screen.
32. The school improvement plan is excellent because it is a highly effective strategic planning tool. It reflects school priorities that are securely grounded in the analysis of the school's past performance, for example in national tests, from evidence of pupils' achievements and from

the performance management of staff. It is based upon carefully managed consultations with teachers, assistants and governors. Pupils' views are taken into account, but there is no formal means of consulting parents, although the school encourages them to express their ideas. Information from evaluations of the effectiveness of teaching, learning and curriculum provision informs planning for the year and then each term to ensure the diverse learning needs of pupils are met. People are identified to lead on improvements with clearly described responsibilities, times for review of progress, success criteria and financial support. The very good day-to-day financial management of the school and the critical reviews of expenditure by the headteacher and governors are inextricably linked to the improvement plan so that adherence to the principles of best value is excellent.

33. Governors are very well led, know the school's strengths and areas to improve very well and are good at ensuring statutory requirements are met. They have approved a Race Relations Policy. Their procedures to monitor school effectiveness and for health and safety do not match the high standards of other areas of their work. Nevertheless, they make very good use of their experiences and talents within very effectively managed committees whose work reflects school priorities and its quest for continuous improvement. They ensure the prudent financial management of the school. They work in close partnership with the school to shape its future, unafraid to ask probing questions to hold the headteacher to account for the quality of education provided.

What is the effectiveness of provision for pupils with visual impairment?

Provision for visual impairment is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership is excellent and provision is very well managed.
- Very good assessment informs planning very well and guides the deployment of highly effective assistants.
- Very good teaching contributes to pupils' very good achievements.
- The highly effective curriculum matches learning needs very well and enables pupils to participate fully in all the school offers.
- The school works very well with external agencies to help pupils learn.
- Pupils' work does not show how much support they have received from staff.

Commentary

34. Provision for pupils with visual impairment is very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils work alongside their fully sighted peers with very good support from the specialist teachers and assistants, enabling them to achieve very well academically. They greatly increase their confidence, independence and maturity by the end of Year 6.
35. **Teaching is very good** and all staff ensure that the pupils have very good opportunities to participate in school activities. Pupils are consistently motivated by activities in lessons and they tackle their work with enthusiasm. Teachers and assistants ensure they settle swiftly to work. As pupils' skills and confidence improve, some use their computerised Braille note takers very well and independently to make notes and to explain learning in writing. They are fully involved during whole class teaching when discussing and answering questions. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, a pupil defined 'mass' and demonstrated how gravity affected him when he jumped. Another pupil demonstrated to the class how to work effectively in pairs and distributed exercise books to other pupils by reading their names in Braille on the covers. Class teachers follow the excellent guidance in the pupils' individual education plans and advisory documents when planning and teaching. Documents are reproduced in Braille and transcribed for sighted readers. The very informative and highly effective assessment and

monitoring of attainment and progress identifies what each pupil should be learning through the identification of realistically challenging learning objectives and methods to help them improve. A strong feature of planning is teachers' daily records of how well each pupil is learning that ensure partially sighted pupils make good use of their residual sight. Specialist support teaching is of the highest quality, with highly effective partnerships between specialist and class teachers to ensure pupils learn all the time. Class teachers benefit from the advice and guidance provided during lessons and at other times on how best to provide for visually impaired pupils and this support improves the teaching of all pupils. For example, the writing of key, specialist words on white boards that all pupils can see improves learning generally and helps visually impaired pupils in particular when using computers to write their thoughts on a computer screen. Very good teaching of computer skills that uses machines that 'speak' instructions to pupils contribute to their very good achievement in ICT.

36. **Teaching assistants are very effective.** Their partnership with teachers is highly effective. They assess pupils' responses in lessons, record their progress and share all this information with specialist and class teachers to help them plan. They contribute greatly to younger pupils' increasing independence by insisting that they undress and dress themselves for physical education lessons. They help pupils with reading and writing, to settle swiftly to work in groups or on their own and they ensure materials and other resources pupils use are appropriate. However, in the pupils' workbooks the nature and amount of such support each pupil received is not always clearly identified to make sure assessment accurately identifies what pupils can do on their own.
37. **Curriculum provision is very good.** The curriculum is very effectively adapted to meet the needs of pupils through specialist activities being carefully matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils with cerebral palsy receive specialist weekly sessions. Additional lesson activities build upon these sessions, as was seen when pupils practised standing and sitting with the correct posture and when pulling themselves along benches.
38. **Preparation to move to other classes in the school and links with secondary schools are excellent.** There are excellent systems in place to ensure pupils move around classrooms and outside the school safely and to ensure their smooth and safe transfer from one year group to another. Preparation to move to secondary schools is also excellent. Throughout their time at this school the school's partnership with external agencies, including mobility officers, is exemplary. There is an extremely good partnership between staff at this school and secondary schools. During the school holiday in the term before Year 6 pupils transfer to secondary schools, they receive 'route training' with the local mobility officer to familiarise them with new surroundings.
39. **Leadership is excellent and provision is very well managed.** The highly experienced specialist leader's firm commitment to high standards and to continuous improvement is shared by all the staff. Provision, including support and advice for colleagues, is managed very well and is evaluated for effectiveness. The leader leads by good example, spending a large proportion of her time supporting pupils in classes. Although very well managed, there are a few differences in procedures to record the work and progress of visually impaired pupils and other pupils with special educational needs that adds an unnecessary workload to administration.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Standards on entry to the Nursery Year in the Foundation Stage are well below those expected for children of this age. Over half the children do not speak English as a first language and about 40 per cent have speech and language difficulties. A highly effective and experienced multi-lingual family liaison officer and the increasing involvement of parents over the last four years in the family learning project contribute greatly to improvements in parental partnerships to help their children learn. In addition, children's progress in numeracy, literacy and language skills has greatly improved over the last four years through the deployment of a very effective and very well trained bi-lingual teaching assistant. All this highly effective and regularly evaluated provision leads to very good teaching that contributes greatly to children settling swiftly and happily into the school and achieving very well by the time they enter Year 1. Despite their very good achievements and attitudes to learning, 70 per cent of the children have so much to learn they do not reach standards expected in their Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. However, about 30 per cent do reach standards expected in their learning goals and of these 10 per cent exceed national expectations in all their goals.

The very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage has led to highly effective team work, very good teaching and a very well planned curriculum, all of which inspire children to work hard and with great interest. Improvement in provision since the last inspection is very good. Strengths of teaching are very good planning, high expectations and very good deployment of learning support assistants and nursery nurses, all of whom provide excellent levels of care and guidance. Thorough and frequent assessment of children's learning needs informs curriculum and lesson planning very effectively so that individual needs are swiftly identified and dealt with. The outdoor area is used very well to help children learn and there is a well advanced plan for further improvement.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction procedures enable children to settle quickly into learning routines.

Commentary

40. Sensitive and well planned induction procedures that involve parents give nursery children a very good start to their learning. Well planned activities focus upon children's individual needs to ensure they all have the same opportunities to be fully involved in all learning activities. They are encouraged to use their own ideas and to grow in independence when learning through a variety of challenging tasks. The appropriateness of learning activities is seen in ways pupils persevere, respond positively to their tasks and become increasingly independent users of the classroom and the outdoor area.
41. Children in the Reception Year are encouraged to manage their own time and they select and use resources independently. As they take part in group discussions and activities, they become more sensitive to the needs of others. Their increasing sense of responsibility is seen in the way they put away resources at the end of each activity. Most children

understand the difference between right and wrong and they gradually accept the need for a common code of behaviour. In learning about things that are special to other people, they examine artefacts from different faiths, such as a palm cross for Christianity, a spice box for Judaism and prayer beads for Islam.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are taught well.

Commentary

42. In the nursery, there are many opportunities for children to improve their language skills, including their use of English, through highly effective bi-lingual support. Children are encouraged to talk about ideas, explain their learning ideas, use their imagination and to anticipate what might happen next during learning activities. Children's language is further developed through role-play. All this was seen when they pretended to visit the moon on an imaginary carpet ride. Sessions are structured to provide time for sustained concentration, individual choice and decision-making. They learn to write their names and label objects.
43. Preparation for them to learn through the National Literacy Strategy when in Year 1 is introduced gradually in the Reception Year. The development of speaking and listening skills remains a priority throughout the Foundation Stage and as a result children extend their vocabulary very well to express ideas by the time they enter Year 1. They also improve their reading skills very well by listening to stories, sharing books with Year 4 pupils, and reading individually to adults. When listening to the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar', they commented on the events and recalled them in sequence. They created a book, sequencing the life cycle of a butterfly. By the end of the Foundation Stage, they form letters well and enjoy beginning to write words and simple sentences.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's mathematical skills are very well developed through practical, well planned activities.

Commentary

44. Children in the nursery develop mathematical language well through play. They enjoy counting. Most children understand 'more' or 'less' when dealing with small numbers. They sort objects by colour and shape, and make repeating patterns. Many children describe the properties of a circle, square and cube. Through sand and water play, they develop an understanding of quantity and measurement. Computer programs extend and consolidate their learning well.
45. The National Numeracy Strategy is introduced gradually in the Reception Year in preparation for learning in Year 1. Oral work is reinforced through well planned and practical activities. Children learn the days of the week, and begin to understand the meaning of 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow'. Most children recognise numerals to 20 and count reliably up to 10 objects. They

compare two groups of objects, saying whether they have the same number, or 'more than' or 'less than'. They develop an understanding of capacity and weight, as they fill containers with water or sand, using words such as 'heavier' and 'lighter'. Using mirrors, they create symmetrical faces, butterflies and patterns and they print shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A range of well planned activities develops children's understanding and use of the senses.

Commentary

46. Children in the nursery explore the school grounds at different seasons. They learn about tropical plants and animals from a visiting speaker and a book, 'The Great Green Forest'. Children plant vegetables in the garden and monitor their growth. Their interest in why things happen and how things work increases as they grow older through their examination of different objects and they use a good range of different resources to improve their building skills. They consolidate their understanding of the weather and forest environments through computer programs, and develop their understanding of direction by programming a 'duck' to move around a square.
47. In the Reception Year, children show a good understanding of the immediate past. They increase their understanding and use their senses as they explore very well planned nature routes in the school copse and hunt for bugs. In the 'Science Lab', they monitor the progress of caterpillar cocoons. They examine objects with the help of a microscope and magnifying glasses. Children use computers to improve their reading, writing, number, sorting, matching, and word processing skills.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given many opportunities to respond to rhythm and music.

Commentary

48. Children in the nursery learn to respond to rhythm, music and stories through movement and gesture and they learn to start and stop on request. They negotiate space successfully, adjusting speed and changing direction as they move around a 'safari obstacle course'. With support, they engage in activities requiring hand to eye co-ordination and use one-handed tools and equipment safely.
49. Children in the Reception Year demonstrate their ability to move with increasing confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination, and with an awareness of others, in the hall and outside. Climbing equipment and an obstacle course are used safely. Children use a range of body parts, as they travel along, over and under a range of equipment. They emulate the movement of animals in the jungle. Their awareness of the importance of exercise develops, and they recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Physical skills in the classroom are taught well and children demonstrate increasing skill and control in handling tools and objects safely.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many very good opportunities for imaginative and creative development.

Commentary

50. Children's creativity in the nursery is developed within stimulating, well-resourced learning areas. They learn to use primary colours and they mix colours very well. With guidance and support, they develop the ability to cut and join a variety of materials. The very good practice of adults talking with children as they work alongside them results in children improving their language skills at a great rate and constantly widening their vocabulary. Children respond imaginatively to music.
51. Very good planning ensures all activities have well defined learning objectives. Children in the Reception Year work well together in groups, as they develop their ability to draw, paint and make models. They create symmetrical pictures with fruit and vegetables. Children express their ideas in dance and accompany music with their bodies, voices and percussion instruments. They explore loud and quiet sounds and sing simple songs from memory.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching that is occasionally excellent and includes all pupils.
- Pupils' eagerness to learn and their very good achievements.
- Very good use of assessment to plan an innovative curriculum and challenging lessons.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary

52. By Years 2 and 6, achievement is very good, including that of pupils with visual impairment, special educational needs and others who learn in English as an additional language that include a high proportion in Years 1 and 2 in the early stages of learning in English. By Year 6, standards match national averages and reflect the results of the 2003 national test results. Over a third of pupils in Year 6 joined the school over the last 3 years, some with special educational needs and others with English as an additional language. These and other pupils make very good progress and, despite there being fewer able pupils compared to last year, three or four more pupils than last year are on track to exceed national expectations. The school is likely to exceed its agreed literacy targets for 2004. The 2003 national test results revealed that girls outperformed boys but the school's highly effective action has narrowed the performance gap considerably so that there is now no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls or between any other group of pupils. There are very good improvements since the last inspection in teaching, planning and the curriculum.
53. By Year 2, standards are in line with national averages. This represents very good achievement because well over half the pupils enter Year 1 with standards well below those expected, particularly in reading and in their range of vocabulary to explain learning when

speaking and writing. Over a third of pupils are in the early stages of learning in English in Year 1. Reading standards have improved a great deal since the 2003 national test results when standards were well below national averages and below those of similar schools. Another impressive improvement is in the range of vocabulary that now enables most Year 2 pupils to express ideas and explain their learning with clarity and confidence, as seen in numerous whole class discussions at the start of English lessons.

54. Teaching is very good and occasionally excellent and makes very effective use of a well planned and innovative curriculum to ensure pupils' achievements are very good. Teachers' action plans to improve the reading standards of selected pupils, are very successful. Lessons challenge and interest pupils because assessment is used very effectively to meet individual needs. High expectations for learning and behaviour are very well managed and the very good deployment of well qualified assistants and support teachers ensures that pupils with different learning needs are fully included in lessons. Planning ensures no time is wasted. All this very good practice was seen in Year 6 literacy lessons about spelling and in Year 2 lessons to improve reading. Whole class teaching shared learning objectives with pupils to ensure they knew what to learn, probing questions were scattered around to 'keep pupils on their toes' and teachers built upon pupils' previous successful learning very effectively, with times for them to review and explain learning. The very good practice, common through the school, of teaching assistants and support teachers working with class teachers to assess pupils' learning during lessons resulted in support staff responding in exemplary fashion to pupils' emerging needs. Very well planned learning activities were spread through the school to make best use of resources, such as computers, and lessons were very well managed at a challenging pace. Further very good practice was evident in these lessons when pupils came together at the end to review learning and to identify what they need to do to improve. A very good Year 5 lesson drew upon historical learning to teach pupils how to improve their writing plans and to increase their vocabulary in order to write extended, imaginative accounts based upon Greek mythology. This lesson was typical of the ways teachers use every opportunity to improve pupils' writing and vocabulary. The pupils' cheerful response to their tasks and excellent behaviour filled the class with the soft hum of busy people. Excellent teaching, for example in Year 3, has all the above very good characteristics with the added ingredient of infectious enthusiasm that sweeps pupils effortlessly along in their learning.
55. Pupils at this school learn enthusiastically because work matches their needs, they understand its relevance and it interests them. Their ideas are respected and their efforts valued. Teachers and assistants ensure pupils know how to improve. Pupils are expected to explain and discuss learning using recently learnt words and phrases. This expectation runs through the school and explains why achievement in speaking and listening is very good and why those pupils with speech and language difficulties and in the early stages of learning in English learn so well. Reading books are carefully graded, with support for pupils when they choose their next book. They take books home to share with their family and they have homework that prepares them well for their next lessons. Homework and class work are promptly marked with good advice and encouragement. Teachers and assistants discuss learning with them and pupils value the help they get 'when stuck'. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence, skills and understanding through a sense of achievement as well as a sense of direction.
56. The school is extremely good at finding different ways to enthuse pupils and raise standards. The school took decisive and innovative action when its analysis of national test results identified weaknesses in reading, especially of boys. Numerous events during the 'Sythwood Year of Reading' included a 'Readathon', and working with a poet for a week, which improved both reading and writing. Very good planning in preparation for visiting authors and poets ensure pupils learn a great deal during and after their visits and these times contribute very

well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are times set aside each day for pupils to read and share books with additional support for a few through a reading recovery scheme. On 'Wacky Wednesday' afternoons, pupils read and interpret different types of text, for example on a computer screen, or a map during a dramatic exploration of the copse. They read and discuss different texts to solve problems, for example to make machines. Year 1 pupils were seen browsing the library, intently hunting down a book. A few were on their stomachs engrossed in a text and some other pupils in other year groups took turns to share a book with a grandparent. The appearance of the deputy headteacher's door is typical of the school's imaginative practice to improve writing. The door is made to look as if constructed from rough timber. It is festooned with branches and leaves to become the entrance to a hermit's house. This excited the imaginations of sighted and visually impaired pupils alike and generated a great deal of poetry during 'Exciting Writing Week'. A Year 6 pupil with special educational needs produced poetry at a very high standard.

57. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The strong commitment to high standards is underpinned by very skillful evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching, learning and the curriculum to lead on school improvements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Literacy and language skills are reinforced very effectively through all lessons. On classroom walls the special vocabulary of subjects are displayed in order to encourage pupils to use these words accurately when writing and speaking. Pupils are expected in every subject to form letters well in well punctuated and expressed sentences. Displays of work demonstrate pupils' best writing efforts that are frequently changed so that the school is full of ever-changing examples of improving literacy skills. All this very good practice contributes to the vibrant learning ethos of the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Teachers' planning and subject knowledge are very good.
- There are high expectations for learning and behaviour.
- Occasionally, there is a lack of challenging pace in a few mental mathematics sessions.

Commentary

59. By Years 2 and 6, pupils' achievement is very good. Standards by Year 6 match national averages and are an improvement upon the 2003 national test results when standards were below national averages although above those for similar schools. Since the last inspection, there have been very good improvements in pupils' achievement, teaching and the curriculum. The school is likely to exceed its agreed 2004 numeracy targets. There are no significant differences in learning between different groups of pupils.
60. Most teaching is good and it is sometimes very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and make excellent use of assessment to plan lessons that interest pupils. This very good practice leads to the very effective deployment of assistants and support teachers to meet different learning needs, including those of gifted and talented pupils. Teaching very effectively improves the learning of pupils in the early stages of learning in English, and for all others improves well their range and use of vocabulary as well as their speaking, listening and language skills. Work in class and that done at home is promptly marked with advice and

encouragement to improve. As a result, learning is very good. In the best teaching, for example in a Year 5 lesson when pupils investigated number patterns, teachers enthuse pupils so that they respond very positively to working at a consistently challenging pace. Occasionally, in lessons that are nevertheless good, the pace of learning does not constantly challenge pupils, especially during mental mathematics sessions.

61. Subject leadership is very good and enthusiastically managed. Very good evaluations of the effectiveness of provision are used expertly to lead on improvements that are raising standards. Teachers receive very good advice and support. Computers are used well to help pupils learn.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. There is good, planned reinforcement in many subjects of pupils' numeracy skills and knowledge, for example in history to calculate times between events, in science when conducting experiments and when designing and constructing during 'Wacky Wednesday' design and technology activities.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Systematic planning of cross-curricular links provides very good opportunities to consolidate and extend learning.
- Teaching of investigative skills and recording findings contribute to pupils' very good achievement.

Commentary

63. By Years 2 and 6, pupils with different learning needs achieve very well and standards match those expected nationally. There are very good improvements in provision and teaching since the last inspection. Year 2 standards reflect teachers' assessment in 2003. This represents very good achievement. Pupils in Year 2 entered the school with standards well below those expected and many were in the early stages of learning in English. Standards in Year 6 reflect the 2003 national test results, although the current Year 6 contains fewer able pupils than last year's Year 6. Over a third of Year 6 pupils have been at the school for only 18 months, many joining with special educational needs or learning in English as an additional language. There are no significant differences in learning between different groups of pupils.
64. A high proportion of teaching is very good and excellent, resulting in pupils' very good achievement by Years 2 and 6. A significant strength of teaching is the very effective use of assessment to plan challenging lessons that meet pupils' different learning needs with interest. Another great strength is planning, teaching and the deployment of highly effective assistants and support teachers whose excellent work ensures that pupils are fully involved in learning. As a result, pupils work very hard and produce lots of very good work. They are encouraged to reason in scientific terms, to observe, predict, carry out scientific experiments and draw conclusions from the evidence. There is a strong emphasis on practical activities that make learning relevant to the lives of the pupils. Year 2 pupils investigated colour and camouflage in relation to animal and insect survival in the school copse, Year 3 pupils measured and monitored plant growth, and pupils in Year 4 used keys to identify mini-beasts. Year 5 pupils discovered the properties of gas and air through a carousel of activities, while pupils in Year 6 confidently used food chains to show feeding relationships in a habitat.

Highly effective use of very good resources improves learning. There is a strong emphasis on explaining learning to improve speaking and listening and to widen pupils' range of vocabulary, with many opportunities for them to use scientific terms accurately and to improve the use of English for those for whom English is an additional language.

65. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader has created a very effective team and provides strong leadership of the curriculum and teaching. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are evaluated for effectiveness and to decide on improvements. One result of this very good practice that is raising standards is pupils working in groups, or sets, that are based upon their prior attainment. The curriculum is enriched by science weeks, when scientists and engineers come into school to work with the children. A science challenge day of practical activities, on a Saturday each year, is eagerly awaited by pupils in Year 6. Of particular note are the copse diaries, kept by pupils throughout their time in the school, which contain a plan of the copse, rubbings of bark and leaves, notes on animals, insects and plants, pond dipping, signs of new life and the life cycle of a frog. Notices in Braille throughout the copse, and a sensory garden in the grounds, provide full access to the curriculum for blind and visually impaired pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very well planned and managed curriculum ensures that ICT is used effectively in most lessons to improve learning.
- ICT is very effectively used to ensure the very good achievement of visually impaired pupils.
- The system to track pupils' progress and analyse their attainment is not as good as it is for other subjects, although satisfactory.

Commentary

66. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are in line with the national expectation and so are similar to those at the last inspection. However, over the last term standards are rising as a result of very good planning and teaching and new equipment so that pupils now achieve very well. Pupils with different learning needs are fully involved in learning and there is no difference in learning between different groups of pupils. Provision, planning and teaching have improved very much since the last inspection and the school now has its own website.
67. Teaching is very good and pupils work diligently and enthusiastically. Lessons are well planned, pupils know what to learn and highly effective support staff are very well deployed to help pupils learn. Accommodation is good. Both computer suites are spacious enough for staff to oversee the work pupils do. The very good use by teachers and support staff of electronic Braille machines and programs to enlarge computer screen displays and to 'speak' to pupils make a very effective contribution to the learning of pupils with visual impairment. In Year 2, pupils use computers to make very good progress in word processing skills. They manipulate the 'mouse' confidently and make good progress in the skillful use of the keyboard. Year 6 pupils' achievements were very good when they produced multi-media presentations that add pictures and sound to a history project. Throughout the school, pupils are well supervised when using the Internet and from Year 3, pupils make good progress in research skills using computers. There is a wide range of equipment available for pupils to improve their use of control techniques through devices such as data-loggers to measure sound, sensors to measure temperature and programmable robots.

68. Subject leadership and management are very good. Evaluations of the effectiveness of provision have led to recent very good improvements with strategies in place to improve further the use of assessment to plan and monitor pupils' progress and the use of ICT in a few subjects. Guidance and support for teachers is very good. The introduction since September of interactive white boards is improving learning through teachers' confident use of technology. The deployment of an assistant to maintain and to up-date systems and deal with problems means that teachers make the best use of teaching time. Pupils enjoy the lunchtime computer club run by this assistant.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. Information and communication technology is planned very well in most subjects to help pupils learn, for example in mathematics to improve computation and other numeracy skills, in history to increase knowledge and understanding of the lives lived in the past, in science to record data and reach conclusions, and in numerous lessons to improve research, numeracy and literacy skills.

HUMANITIES

History

70. One **history** and one **geography** lesson were seen. It is, therefore, not possible to form secure judgments about the quality of provision for these subjects. Inspectors analysed teachers' planning and pupils' work and held discussions with teachers and pupils. Displays of pupils' work were also analysed. Planning and analysis of pupils work show good improvement since the last inspection in the challenge pupils with different learning needs receive.
71. Evidence suggests that by Year 2 and Year 6 standards in **history** and **geography** match those expected nationally. Planning shows that requirements to teach these subjects are met and indicates effective use of drama to bring learning alive in history. There is good use of computers to improve learning, with very good use seen in Year 6 when learning about life in Britain during World War Two. There is good reinforcement of numeracy and literacy skills through the calculation of times between events, use of time lines to plot historical events, use of co-ordinates to improve understanding and use of maps. When writing, pupils are expected to increase their use of specialist vocabulary, punctuate and spell accurately. Both subjects are very well led and managed by enthusiastic leaders who evaluate the effectiveness of provision well in order to lead on improvements.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership is very good.
- Most teaching is good and includes all pupils in learning.
- Pupils do not learn consistently *from* different faiths.

Commentary

72. By Years 2 and 6, standards match those required by the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve very well by Year 6, which is an improvement on the good progress at the last inspection. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in subject leadership and management.

73. Teaching is good and contributes to harmonious relationships because pupils gain good insights into beliefs and cultures different from their own. Well planned lessons ensure pupils with different needs and levels of attainment know what they have to learn and are fully involved in all learning. Expectations for learning and behaviour are high and managed well, contributing to pupils' interest in lessons, their willingness to learn and their good achievements. Teachers use the agreed syllabus well to make sure that pupils have good knowledge of main world faiths. Analysis of pupils' work shows that whilst knowledge *about* different faiths is good through the school, it is less consistently so for learning *from* various faiths. This means, for example, that by Year 6 there are too few planned times for pupils to learn about the effects beliefs have on ways people live and relate to each other and how different faiths help answer fundamental questions raised by human experiences, such as suffering and joy, birth and death.
74. Subject leadership is very good. The subject leader has been in post for about a year and in that time has evaluated the effectiveness of teaching, learning, the curriculum and resources in order to produce an improvement plan to increase a few teachers' subject confidence and to raise standards further. Teachers receive very good advice and support.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. Two **physical education**, one **art and design**, one **music** and no **design and technology** lessons were seen. It is not possible, therefore, to reach secure judgments about provision, teaching, standards or pupils' achievements in these subjects. Samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning were analysed and inspectors discussed learning with pupils. Displays of work were also analysed.
76. For **design and technology**, analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and results of discussions with pupils show that a good range of tools and materials are used effectively to improve learning. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. Year 6 pupils showed a secure grasp of how to plan, carry out and evaluate projects.
77. **Art and design** is well planned and has a high profile in the school. There were many activities seen throughout the school during the afternoon of 'Wacky Wednesday' that improved pupils' skills and knowledge that also provided many opportunities for pupils to improve their language skills, especially those in the early stages of learning in English. This was seen in a mixed age group of Year 1 and 2 pupils involved in this term's theme of 'New Life in Spring'. They worked enthusiastically with skilled and knowledgeable teaching assistants to improve their art skills and to extend their speaking, listening and language skills. In Year 1 and 2, pupils designed and constructed a plant that moved and grew, they drew and collated the life cycle of a butterfly and observed and recorded signs of spring. They explored line, pattern, colour, tone and shape, as they made close observational drawings, painted, and contributed to collage work. All this learning reinforced and extended numeracy and literacy skills as well as learning in science and geography. There is similarly good learning in Years 3 to 6 to improve and reinforce learning in other subjects, as seen, for example, in teachers' planning and in discussions with pupils about the ways texts studied in English lessons are brought to life through drawings, paintings and model making. Planning provides good guidance for teachers to help pupils improve as they grow older, with very good planning and use of aids and materials to help pupils with visual impairment participate fully in lessons. Throughout the school, pupils use sketch books to improve learning. Displays of clay masks on display, produced with the help of a visiting Nigerian artist, were of a high quality and reflected good learning about an African culture. The subject is very well led and managed.
78. **Music** is an important part of school life. Accommodation and resources are very good. A comprehensive scheme of work and planning that is well informed by assessment and subject knowledge all contribute to pupils' continuous improvement. All this good practice was seen

in a Year 2 lesson where pupils were observed using symbols to describe changing sounds in the song, 'The Hairy, Scary Castle'. They reviewed their own and each other's learning so that they all had a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. This effective practice, evident in planning and from discussions with pupils, helps them learn with interest and contributes to pupils with visual impairment being fully included in learning. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to enrich and improve learning. Many musicians visit the school and work with pupils, there are opportunities for pupils to learn to play different musical instruments and to participate in the school's annual music week. The school choir takes part in musical festivals and performs at Christmas concert at a local secondary school. During the inspection, a school choir of 30 pupils performed with nine other schools at the Surrey Music Festival. Music is very well led and managed.

79. There is excellent provision for activities after school in **physical education** that includes competitive sporting fixtures and work with Woking Town Football Club that contributes to pupils' positive attitudes. Subject leadership is very good. The school competes successfully in a number of sports with other schools. Planning is good with links to learning in science to help pupils understand the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Accommodation, equipment and facilities are very good. School assessment records show, however, that just over 60 per cent of pupils by the end of Year 6 do not achieve the national target of swimming 25 metres.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. Only one lesson was seen in this area of the school's work and so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school sees pupils' personal development as a very important part of its work and includes this aspect of learning in the planning of many subjects and through the excellent range of extra-curricular activities that fully include pupils with visual impairment and other pupils with different learning needs. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good and includes work on healthy eating that has won the school the first part of an award and it is on track to achieve the other parts. There is a very good programme to teach pupils about sex and relationships, drugs and personal safety, planned after consultation with parents from different faith communities and supported well by visits from outside agencies. There is a very good programme to teach pupils about citizenship, as seen when Year 4 pupils learnt about the work of UNICEF. In this good, challenging lesson pupils learnt about the work of this organization and they very thoughtfully prioritized their list of human rights and responsibilities. Pupils are proud of their school council and its achievements. They describe the democratic process leading to elections, how pupils are consulted and how they organise and manage a healthy eating 'tuck shop' during the annual healthy eating week. All these activities and their work with local council representatives about amenities for young people locally provide a very good understanding about what being a good citizen means by Year 6.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	1
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	1
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	1
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	4
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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