

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BLUE SCHOOL

Isleworth, London

LEA area: Hounslow

Unique reference number: 102523

Headteacher: Mr J Frostick

Lead inspector: Ms A Coyle

Dates of inspection: 24th – 26th November 2003

Inspection number: 258106

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	234
School address:	North Street Isleworth London
Postcode:	TW7 6RQ
Telephone number:	(0208) 560 6721
Fax number:	(0208) 568 9162
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Oliver
Date of previous inspection:	18 th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Blue School is situated in a residential area of Isleworth, London. It is of a similar size to most other primary schools and there are 117 girls and 104 boys on roll, including 31 children in the Reception class. A full-time equivalent of 13 children attend the Nursery on a part-time basis and are admitted in the term of their third birthday. Most transfer to the Reception class, continuing until they leave at the end of Year 6, and attainment on entry is average. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is a very high percentage compared with the national figure, but none learn English as an additional language or are at an early stage of language acquisition. Thirteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is lower than in most other schools. Pupils' needs include specific and moderate learning needs, speech and communication difficulties, emotional and behavioural needs, physical difficulties and autism. Only a very small number of pupils have statements for their special educational needs. The school received the School Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20603	Ms A Coyle	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, special educational needs, English as an additional language
9769	Ms M Morrissey	Lay inspector	
21171	Ms S Handford	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education
32021	Mr A McLean	Team inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, geography, history

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
BRISTOL
BS8 2BN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an excellent school with many superb features that is led and managed exceptionally well by an outstanding headteacher. It provides very good value for money because the standards achieved by pupils are very high and the teaching and learning are very good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are very good in English, mathematics, science and music.
- Attitudes, behaviour and relationships are excellent. Pupils display exceedingly high levels of respect and self-esteem, and are very confident in this highly inclusive environment.
- The school takes exceptional care of its pupils within a welcoming and strongly Christian ethos.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher provides an exemplary role model for colleagues.
- Excellent links with parents and the community are used very well to support pupils' learning.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall, and often excellent, throughout the school.
- The paucity of books in the main library and a lack of use of computers across subjects limit pupils' opportunities for independent research.

The school has improved considerably since the last inspection in 1998 and rectified the five key weaknesses that were identified. The provision for information and communication technology is now very good because an excellent suite has been installed, equipped with plenty of software. The school development plan has been improved to a very high standard and the governors evaluate provision rigorously. The roles of the subject co-ordinators have improved very well to include far more monitoring of teaching and checking the balance of the curriculum, and the assessment procedures have been refined well. These notable improvements have helped to push up standards generally and have made sure that all pupils are challenged to do their very best at all times.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high; 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 6.*

Achievement is very good overall. The above table shows that standards in most core subjects have been consistently above or well above the national average and the results of similar schools over the last three years by the end of Year 6. Although the 2003 results for mathematics show a slight dip from previous years, they were still above the national average. At the end of Year 2, the standards attained in 2003 were well above the national average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. Compared to the results of similar schools, however, standards could have been better, particularly in writing, because only a few pupils attained high standards. Nevertheless, the inspection evidence finds that standards are currently good in Year 2 overall and very good by Year 6 in the core subjects. This shows that pupils are getting a good deal because they build up skills rapidly from an average starting point on entry¹. All do well in relation to their capabilities, and

¹ **ON LEVELS**

pupils with special educational needs make as much progress as others because the least capable and the most gifted are guided very well to reach as high as they possibly can.

Children in the Reception classes increase their knowledge and skills very well so that by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage,² they attain the Early Learning Goals³ in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. Standards are higher than expected in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development by the end of the Reception year.

Pupils show **excellent attitudes to learning and behave exceedingly well**. **Satisfactory attendance** and **very good** provision for social and cultural development lead to clear gains in pupils' personal qualities. Spiritual and moral development are **exceptionally** well promoted.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **very good** quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are **very good** overall throughout the school. Teaching is excellent in music, and sometimes outstanding in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, and for pupils with special educational needs and children in the Foundation Stage. The excellent teamwork and teachers' joy of teaching and love for the children shine through in everything they do.

The **very good** curriculum is extended by **excellent links** with parents, local parishes and the community. Pupils are cared for and cherished exceedingly well in a strongly Christian environment where a vibrant team spirit is nurtured. From the very efficient secretary, the dedicated caretaker, cleaners and caterers to the support teams, governors, parents and volunteers, all work together for the benefit of the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership of the school is excellent** because the **headteacher is inspirational** to his colleagues and continuously strives to promote excellence. His highly conscientious and very hard-working deputy and the senior managers work in excellent partnership with him and, together with the governing body, have steered the school closely through recent changes and made sure that all statutory requirements are met. This has resulted in very good governance and management that have driven the school forward successfully.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education the school provides. Pupils also speak very highly of their teachers and are proud to be associated with the school. It has an **excellent reputation** within the community and **the headteacher is very highly respected**.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

By the end of Year 6, pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels.

² **FOUNDATION STAGE** - This stage of learning refers to children aged between three and six years. In this school, it refers to children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

³ **ON EARLY LEARNING GOALS** - These goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year in the following areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal, social and emotional development.

There are no significant issues to address in this exceedingly well-run school. However, in the school's constant drive for excellence a minor point for improvement is:

- to increase the number of books in the main library and make better use of computers across subjects so that pupils have more opportunities for independent research.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **very good** overall and pupils attain standards that are well above the national expectations in many lessons by Year 6. Given the average attainment on entry, the progress made by pupils is very good because it accelerates noticeably as they move up the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and many attain very good standards by the time they reach Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs do very well as a result of the highly focused provision.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	94 (100)	84 (84)
writing	97 (100)	81 (86)
mathematics	100 (100)	90 (90)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	93 (94)	75 (75)
mathematics	78 (97)	73 (71)
science	96 (100)	86 (87)

There were 27 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Commentary

1. **Pupils achieve very well in English.** Standards have been consistently above or well above the national average and the results of similar schools over the last three years. The results of the 2003 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 were above the national average in English, with 93 per cent at Level 4 and 44 per cent at the higher Level 5. The results were much higher than those of pupils in similar schools. By Year 2, standards were well above average in reading, with 94 per cent at Level 2 and 41 per cent at the higher Level 3. However, in writing, although a well above average 97 per cent attained Level 2, only 13 per cent attained the higher Level 3. Nevertheless, these results represent a far better picture than that of the last inspection, when standards were just satisfactory. Overall, pupils' performance has improved exceedingly well at the end of Years 2 and 6. Most have made very good progress since joining the school because basic literacy skills are taught very well across the curriculum.
2. **Achievement in mathematics is very good amongst all groups of pupils.** In the 2003 national tests, standards were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools at the end of Year 6, with 78 per cent of pupils at Level 4, but a good 44 per cent at the higher Level 5. Although these results show a slight dip from previous years, they were still above the national average overall. Pupils in Year 2 did just as well because standards were

well above the national average and in line with those of similar schools; 100 per cent attained Level 2 and 38 per cent attained the higher Level 3. The inspection findings concur with this very positive picture and show that standards have risen well since the last inspection when they were just about average.

3. **Pupils do very well in science and achieve high standards.** In the national tests, the 2003 results show that 96 per cent of pupils in Year 6 attained Level 4 and a tremendous 63 per cent reached the higher Level 5, which was well above the national figure and above that of similar schools. The teacher assessments for pupils in Year 2 were above average for Level 2 at 97 per cent, and an above average 38 per cent reached the higher Level 3. The evidence gathered during the inspection shows that standards are currently well above the expected levels by Year 6 because pupils generally make very good progress, and literacy and numeracy skills are used well to help them increase their knowledge.
4. In other areas of the curriculum, achievement is generally very good amongst all groups of pupils, which leads to very high standards of attainment by the time they reach the top end of the school in Year 6. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and the most capable do equally as well as others. This is because learning builds rapidly on the good progress made by children in the Nursery and Reception classes. From fairly average beginnings, most children achieve well and attain most of the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. They exceed them well in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development and from this very strong start, they begin to make leaps and bounds in learning, accelerating rapidly as they move up the school. Of particular note is the outstanding provision for music that often leads to exceptional progress and very high standards in singing.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. This is because the provision for them is exceedingly well thought out and highly inclusive in providing for all pupils who have learning difficulties or physical needs or who are especially gifted or talented. The use of a newly created room that is warm, welcoming and a central part of the school does much to raise pupils' self-esteem and boost their confidence. In addition, a very wide range of resources, including vibrant displays of dragons, word-trees, shape-charts and violet-coloured chairs, add to the positive messages given to pupils. Their work adorns the walls and sings out a celebration of their successes. As a result, many make very rapid gains and some make exceptional progress in this very nurturing environment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are **excellent**. Attendance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' outstanding attitudes, behaviour and relationships are a credit to the school.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Very good procedures are established for monitoring attendance.

Commentary

6. A caring, Christian ethos and continual seeking of excellence underpin all areas of school life to which pupils respond very positively. Their excellent attitudes and behaviour result in a keen interest in all they do. Pupils are polite and courteous and have a genuine care for, and interest in, the welfare of others. They respond quickly to instructions and show a willingness to learn and a desire to improve. Pupils show considerable pride in being members of the school community and particularly in being active participants in the school council. They clearly enjoy learning and when asked what they most like about school, some say '*Fractions are the best things!*'. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection and pupils maintain they have

no experience of it. None have been excluded from school in the last year and there have been no racist incidents.

7. Pupils' relationships with adults and each other are excellent, and have a positive impact on learning. Pupils are able to work independently or co-operatively in groups, sharing and valuing ideas and concentrating well on the tasks in hand. Pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in lessons and in activities at playtimes. All pupils are happy and secure; they enjoy school life in an atmosphere where all are highly valued.
8. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and contributes to their very good personal development. Spiritual and moral development are promoted exceptionally well throughout the school and particularly through the high-quality musical activities. Pupils learn to appreciate the lives of those less fortunate than themselves through the many charities that the school supports. They have an acute understanding of right and wrong, which is promoted from a very early age. Pupils in Year 2 write why they are special: *'I can help when others in the playground need a friend because everyone loves and cares for me'*. Many opportunities are provided for them to enhance their social development through taking responsibility, which they do with commitment and pride; the school council and residential visits are good examples that help develop maturity. Pupils are encouraged to care for and respect others and to work hard through all school activities. The school's strong promotion of multicultural education extends pupils' awareness of the lives and beliefs of others and of the local and global environment through the diverse cultural background of the pupils and the developing links with a school in Ghana. Pupils are provided with a curriculum that promotes a good understanding of Western culture in subjects such as music and English.
9. Attendance is satisfactory and has improved considerably recently due to the very good monitoring procedures. Although slightly below the national average last year, with levels of authorised attendance being above the national picture, absence was mostly due to sickness or medical visits. Pupils arrive punctually for the start of the school day, and registrations are completed swiftly and efficiently, in line with legal requirements. Parents say that they are well informed by the school about attendance procedures; they are frequently reminded that term-time holidays disrupt pupils' progress and that punctuality is important.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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	191	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	8	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	9	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	7	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 for its pupils. The very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and the **very good** support for pupils with special educational needs extend the school's broad curriculum. Pupils are **exceptionally** well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding teamwork results in an excellent ethos for learning and highly inclusive practice.
- The quality of teaching is excellent in music, and pupils' exceptional attitudes to learning help them to strive hard for success.
- Teaching is occasionally excellent in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and for pupils with special educational needs and children in the Foundation Stage.
- Teachers manage and encourage pupils exceedingly well and teaching assistants are deployed very carefully to guide pupils.

Commentary

10. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and often excellent. It is never less than satisfactory. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, and makes a very strong contribution to pupils' excellent attitudes to their work. Teaching is generally very good in the Nursery and Reception classes, and also in Years 1 and 2. It is also very good in Years 3 to 6. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught very well and pupils use their

knowledge well in other subjects, which enables them to make very good progress in the learning of basic skills. This is because the staff work very hard as an excellent team to raise the standards of all pupils. Their highly inclusive practice stems from the exceptional leadership of the headteacher and leads to very good learning amongst all groups of pupils who strive hard for success constantly.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
9 (26%)	19 (54%)	6 (17%)	1 (3%)	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.

11. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are provided with a very good start to their education because the quality of teaching is very good, and sometimes excellent in musical development. All staff work as an outstanding team to provide an excellent inclusive setting in which all children know that they are highly valued and respected. Adults in both classes provide very good role models for children and treat them and each other with a very high degree of courtesy and respect. This gives a very strong message to the children so that they begin to understand how to behave and what is expected of them. Assessment plays a very important part in the school day and the staff regularly note children's successes and needs to help them plan activities. Staff ensure that the very good induction procedures help children to settle happily and feel secure in their new environment.
12. The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good in the infant and junior classes, and often excellent. All teachers have very secure subject knowledge and the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented exceedingly well since the last inspection. Basic skills are taught rigorously to ensure that pupils make very rapid progress in learning, and the excellent links with other subjects help pupils to extend their knowledge even further, although computers are not so well used for drafting and editing final pieces of work. Teachers are skilful when questioning pupils and identifying ways to inspire and motivate them. They have very high expectations and this leads to excellent attitudes to learning amongst pupils. However, the library is uninspiring and contains too few books to help pupils research topics independently. Nevertheless, they undertake work that makes increasing demands on their knowledge and understanding in lessons and, as a result, they learn well and standards are very good overall by Year 6.
13. Basic numeracy skills are taught very well in mathematics. Teachers have exceedingly high expectations of pupils' behaviour and levels of attention. They treat them with great respect and use praise well to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. Strong teamwork between them and mutual respect provides an excellent model for pupils. Teachers evaluate their work daily to assess progress and use the information very well to plan carefully for the next stage of learning. The use of computers has been improved since the last inspection to support learning across the curriculum, but is still an area for further development.
14. Teaching and learning are excellent in music because the subject is taught by the co-ordinator who is highly conscientious and has great expertise, especially in singing and piano accompaniment. Teaching is very good in science and information and communication technology, especially when the teacher's skilful questioning and very good use of praise lead to a significant increase in pupils' learning. Very good links are made between subjects such as English, art and design, and history through stories about famous people and themes throughout the year, although computers are not used enough across subjects. The work produced by pupils is displayed extremely well throughout the school and helps to provide an exciting and stimulating environment for pupils, staff, visitors and parents. Generally, the very good learning is a result of the teachers' very strong knowledge of the subjects they teach and excellent insistence on high standards of behaviour.

15. Assessment procedures and teachers' daily planning are very good because they are linked consistently to make sure that lessons build systematically on learning. Plans identify learning intentions clearly and set out how pupils are to be supported. For example, notes on how to and who will guide pupils with special educational needs, the most capable of which are used rigorously by staff. High-quality marking means that teachers' steer pupils very well by use of written comments and they set homework regularly to help them increase their skills at home with parents. A particular strength is the very good deployment of teaching assistants, most notably in English and mathematics, and all staff work in excellent partnership with each other. All know what they are expected to do and they enable pupils to make very good progress.
16. The management of pupils is outstanding. This helps to ensure that time is used exceedingly well in lessons. Teachers promote a classroom atmosphere that encourages hard work and a strong sense of enjoyment. In the best lessons the teachers motivate the pupils so well that learning is great fun! For example, good praise celebrates pupils' success and inspires them to achieve. They listen very attentively to the advice given, so that constructive criticism leads to better learning and, thus, higher standards.
17. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides excellent part-time teaching for the pupils, who range from several with specific learning difficulties to those who are especially gifted or talented. He works very closely with the class teachers and the headteacher to identify and target individual pupils' needs and makes sure that all have every opportunity to learn as much as they can. The highly inclusive provision extends to exceedingly effective sessions whereby pupils work with the co-ordinator in a separate room within the heart of the school. This works very well indeed because pupils' learning is nurtured very carefully and their self-esteem rises spectacularly as they reach for the stars! In addition, support assistants know all of the pupils well and give very good personal and academic help during lessons, so that they are encouraged to achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans. These plans are very good because they indicate clearly what each pupil needs to achieve and the action required. They are used very well by staff to pinpoint learning and help pupils strive for success. As a result, many make very rapid gains and some make exceptional progress.

An example of outstanding practice for pupils with special educational needs

A highly inclusive ethos for learning in the heart of the school and outstanding attention to lifting pupils' self-esteem through kindly support and gentle humour characterises this excellent lesson, taught by the part-time co-ordinator. The vibrancy of the room, created with plenty of violet-coloured chairs and vivid displays of dragons and word trees upon newly-painted sunny walls, sings out a very joyful message to pupils. As they work, they chatter to the teacher and each other happily, responding with great enthusiasm when suggesting adjectives and sentences for stories; 'my dad is a bold man (because he hasn't got much hair!)' and '...my mum is crazy (because she ickles me!)'. They dig for dictionaries frantically to search for 'tickle', 'balled', 'baled' and eventually 'bald', and find alternatives for the word 'smart' such as 'fashionable', 'stylish' and 'elegant'. The teacher's wonderful rapport with the pupils and lively approach makes learning tremendous fun and is inspirational. It leads to exceptional progress. As they eagerly exchange the word 'nice' for 'considerate', 'thoughtful', 'generous' or 'beautiful' all of their suggestions are very highly valued by the teacher. 'What's another word for tasty?' he asks. 'Scrumptious' says someone, 'but how do I spell it?'. 'You have a go first, then I'll tell you!' replies the teacher shrewdly, as he smiles. 'Try!' he prompts, and his love for them and for the sheer joy of teaching shine through the word!

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is an outstanding feature, embedded firmly in the school's aims and its excellent inclusive ethos.

- Support for learning outside the school day is outstanding, with very good opportunities for pupils to participate in sports and art activities.
- The lack of books in the library and limited use of computers across subjects restrict pupils' opportunities for independent research.

Commentary

18. The school's outstanding commitment to promoting equality of access and opportunity for all pupils is central to its aims. This leads to an excellent inclusive ethos in which the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and is regularly taught. All pupils and staff are highly valued by each other within a very positive learning environment throughout the school and subject leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas, continually striving to develop the provision still further. These are important factors that result in the high standards attained by pupils.
19. The school prepares pupils exceedingly well for later stages of learning. The very good curriculum ensures that pupils move seamlessly from one phase of their education to the next and pupils with special educational needs are supported very closely within a highly supportive environment. Aspects of the curriculum that were weak in the previous inspection are now covered well and all statutory requirements are met fully. For example, information and communication technology and music are now planned successfully and the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is thorough.
20. The school has a very good number of out-of-school clubs, some of which are led by specialists such as coaches from a local secondary school. An outstanding example of the way the school seeks to support and enhance pupils' learning was its successful bid for funding to extend the provision for the performing arts, which was used well to raise standards by developing a dance club. The funds also enabled several selected pupils to attend musical performances in West End theatres. The school operates as a community and events such as church festivals, book weeks and exhibitions of pupils' work are very effective ways to draw parents into school life.
21. Teachers and support staff are very effective in promoting pupils' learning and providing positive role models. They are very well qualified and work together in excellent partnership to help pupils achieve high standards. The very good accommodation is bright and welcoming, and the new computer suite provides a high-quality learning environment. However, computers are not used enough across the curriculum yet to help pupils extend their knowledge and the main library has only a limited number of books since its refurbishment. These shortcomings restrict the opportunities for pupils to increase their research skills and investigate a wider range of reading material. Nevertheless, the school makes very good use of its wide range of resources in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Provision is **very good**. This is a very caring school in which all pupils are cherished.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good procedures for health, safety and child protection underpin the provision.
- The school's strong Christian ethos and high levels of respect lead to excellent trusting relationships between staff and pupils.
- Induction arrangements are very good and pupils are very involved in school life.

Commentary

22. The school's very clear systems for promoting the health and welfare of pupils are adhered to by all staff to ensure that pupils learn within a very caring and supportive environment. Health and safety is given a very high priority, backed up by specific school policies, rigorous practice amongst staff and governors, and strong links with external agencies. The school's very good child protection procedures meet statutory requirements and all members of staff have received clearly written information and practical training. These strong features mean that pupils can strive for success within a very positive and safe working environment.
23. Pupils' wellbeing and personal and academic development are whole-school priorities. Parents maintain that the school cares very well for its pupils within a strong Christian ethos where each individual is highly valued, and the inspectors endorse their views. Many pupils say they enjoy coming to school and are confident about whom to approach if they have any problems. Pupils' excellent trusting relationships with their teachers and very high levels of respect for them are reflected in statements such as '*We trust our teachers. They are very fair*'. The very good relationships between pupils and staff mean that pupils have the confidence to seek help and support for their work and for any personal problems. Pupils are known very well by all staff and receive very good guidance from them. Parents are extremely pleased with the high standards of care provided for their children and maintain that it improves their capacity to learn. These views are backed up by the inspection evidence; for example, consistent whole-school assessment policy helps pupils to understand achievement and how to progress. Pupils know that their views matter and they are confident about discussing or challenging ideas in lessons. They understand learning targets and goals, having shared their progress with their teachers, and parents are kept well informed by the school about the standards pupils attain.
24. The school makes sure that the arrangements are very good for new children entering the Nursery and for those joining the school in the Reception class or later. Parents' views are very positive about the value of the induction programme, which they say helps children to settle quickly and enables the learning process to begin. Pupils are very involved in the life of the school and their views are sought regularly. They discuss what they have learnt at the ends of lessons and all are fully involved when deciding classroom rules and monitoring their successes. Their views and requests are listened to very carefully. The school's highly inclusive ethos strengthens the care and support which teachers provide for pupils and parents are pleased with the willingness of staff to discuss pupils' needs with them. Through the school council, and particularly through the 'suggestions boxes', all pupils can give their opinions or make suggestions and these are always considered by staff and often acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is **excellent**. Its **very strong** links with local schools and the wider community are used consistently to support pupils' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent partnerships with parents and exceedingly good quality information have a strong effect on pupils' achievement.
- Very good links with the community and local schools enhance learning.

Commentary

25. The school's excellent partnership with parents has a direct impact on pupils' achievement, because consistent messages are given to pupils at home and at school about the importance of learning. It also means that parents are happy to approach the school if they have any concerns, and they have great confidence and respect for the staff who deal swiftly with any issues that arise. They are pleased with teachers' expectations of pupils and say they help children to become mature and independent. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and those who wrote to the inspectors and attended the parents' meeting

expressed very positive views about the school, and these are upheld by the findings of the inspection. Parents are extremely pleased with the quality of education the school provides and pupils speak very highly of their teachers.

26. Plenty of excellent information and guidance is provided to help parents continue children's learning at home. They are also encouraged to spend time in school and a good number help in the classrooms. Through regular consultation evenings, questionnaires and other activities parents' views are sought frequently and used to help devise the school development plan. In addition, not only is the 'Parents' Association' a hard-working group that raises a considerable amount of money for the good of the pupils, it also provides an excellent sounding-board for the school by holding discussions about imminent changes and planned developments. This work is driven very skilfully by the highly competent deputy headteacher who acts as a key link with parents and liaises closely with them by attending meetings, setting up events and feeding back to the staff about parents' views. As well as regular activities, including fairs, concerts and an annual barbecue, the group has also discussed the format of school reports. This shows that parents respond extremely well to personal approaches from staff for help and support, which is greatly appreciated by the school staff who maintain that parents contribute exceedingly well to pupils' learning and the general ethos.
27. Very good links are forged with local parishes and the community through a wide range of visits and activities. Numerous visitors provide enrichment of the curriculum and support pupils' personal and social development, so increasing their awareness of the lives of other people and of the environment. The very strong links with other schools are maintained by the active part played by the headteacher in the local pyramid of schools, particularly in providing curriculum support for drama, dance and the arts. Links with the secondary school are very productive and these are used well to support pupils prior to, and during, the transfer process. Parents and pupils agree that the guidance received to prepare them for the next stage of education, particularly through links with visiting teachers for physical education and music, helps to provide a smooth change-over to secondary education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is **excellent**. Governance and management are both **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher is backed up by excellent teamwork with the highly conscientious deputy and hard-working senior staff.
- Very good governance and management have driven the school forward very successfully and led to excellent improvements.
- Exceptional self-evaluation and clarity of vision propel school development planning.

Commentary

28. The school has an excellent reputation within the community and is regularly oversubscribed. Parents are keen to get their children into The Blue School and many believe it to be the best. This is because the headteacher is very highly respected and the staff are known to be very conscientious, which consistently leads to high standards of achievement amongst all groups of pupils. The inspection evidence agrees with the parental views about the headteacher who is an inspiration to his colleagues and continuously strives to promote excellence. His highly conscientious and very hard-working deputy and the senior management team have formed an excellent partnership with him and, together, they have steered the school closely to bring about many excellent improvements since the last inspection.
29. Very good management of the school and many new initiatives have resulted in significant changes since 1998 and all of the previous key issues have been dealt with very thoroughly. For example, the headteacher monitors lessons and performance data in depth, and the

information gained from these activities is translated into actions that have improved teaching and learning tremendously, despite the high turnover of staff in the last two years due to promotion and life changes. The subject co-ordinators now monitor and evaluate planning much better than they did before, and they scrutinise work and analyse test data very carefully to make sure that all pupils achieve as much as they can. They use the well-refined assessment procedures scrupulously to help them adjust the curriculum and so aid teaching and learning. These strong features have resulted in some excellent improvements to the provision for information and communication technology, not least the superb computer suite and tremendous rise in standards! The most capable pupils and those from ethnic minority backgrounds are challenged much more successfully than they were in 1998 because the co-ordinator for special educational needs ensures that the highly inclusive provision extends to the gifted and talented pupils, as well as to those with physical or specific learning needs.

30. The management of staff is very good and the school is highly committed to professional development. All teachers are given the opportunity to move roles and to teach different age groups on a regular basis. This very good management strategy works well, because it is used to ensure that staff update their skills regularly and feel valued, as well as to extend their expertise. Support staff are very well deployed; teaching assistants contribute to improving standards through their interaction and support of less capable pupils and the most gifted, whilst the highly efficient secretary, the dedicated caretaker, kitchen and cleaning staff all make a significant contribution to the family ethos of the school. They are well known to pupils, who appreciate them and receive mutual respect in return. As a result, a vibrant team spirit is manifested not only amongst staff but also amongst pupils, parents, governors and volunteers.
31. The governors have driven the school forward very successfully over the last few years. Although many of the current members of the governing body are fairly new appointments, they are very enthusiastic and keen to develop their roles further. They are knowledgeable, supportive of staff, parents and pupils and have very clear ideas about how to raise the quality of education in school. They meet regularly, have specific roles and provide regular reports. Curriculum areas are allocated to individual members, who then report on those subjects to the whole governing body, so that they ensure all statutory duties are fulfilled. They are challenging about expenditure, standards of education and school's targets. Governors have a regular and familiar presence in school, taking every opportunity to participate in school life. This means that they are well-known and easily approachable for parents and pupils to discuss topics when necessary, and they play a significant role in the development of the school.
32. The very extensive school development plan is supplemented by thorough additional and specific improvement planning. The two run alongside each other and are used rigorously to determine the rate of change over time. These plans are based on a remarkable clarity of vision and exceptional school self-evaluation actions that have been carried out by the headteacher and senior managers, in conjunction with governors. Regular meetings are also held with staff, governors, parents and pupils to ascertain their views on where and what needs developing, and the lines of communication to obtain the opinions of all parties are very good. From this, it is clear that the headteacher and senior staff make strenuous efforts to provide the best possible education for all pupils and they are rewarded by the generally high standards achieved. Information is communicated openly to all, in what is a 'family' school and an integral part of the local community.
33. Financial management is very good. Budgets are systematically analysed; spending is very well planned and evaluated, with the principles of best value being rigidly employed. From these actions, governors make strategic decisions to ensure that the character of the school and its high standards are built upon.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	698,091
Total expenditure	731,638
Expenditure per pupil	2,998

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	35,566
Balance carried forward to the next	2,019

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. Children enter the oversubscribed 'Noah's Ark' Nursery in the September following their third birthday, and the Reception class following their fourth. The very good induction process helps to ensure that they settle happily and feel secure in their new environment. The classes are well staffed and the teachers and support assistants liaise in excellent teamwork to make sure that children are integrated quickly. The very good curriculum gives an equal balance of adult-led and independent activities and, although the lack of a readily available large climbing frame in the small outdoor hard play area is limiting, the staff make very good use of the indoor hall for formal physical activities. The management of the Foundation Stage is very good because the co-ordinator makes sure that children have a very wide range of opportunities within a very supportive and inclusive setting. The quality of teaching is very good overall, and sometimes excellent in musical development. Assessment plays a very important part in the school day and the staff regularly note children's successes and special educational needs to help them plan activities and ensure that all make good progress and achieve well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well.
- Adults are very good role models for the children.

Commentary

34. Children are taught very well so that they settle emotionally, learn quickly and attain the expected goals and sometimes beyond by the end of the Reception year. From tentative beginnings when they first start in the Nursery, children learn to play together happily and share or take turns with the toys and equipment. By the time they reach the Reception class, they concentrate well in teacher-led activities and they sometimes spend sustained periods on tasks they have chosen themselves. Adults in both classes provide very good role models for children and treat them and each other with a very high degree of courtesy and respect. This gives a very strong message to the children so that they begin to understand how to behave and what is expected of them. As the time goes on, children develop their personal and social skills to such an extent that they have secure knowledge of how to behave and they achieve well in relation to their capabilities. When 'Tidy-up-time!' is called, they respond with great enthusiasm and a willingness to help, stowing away items energetically. For example, children in the Nursery know that dinosaur books, number books and baby books all go away into different coloured baskets. Prayers said at the end of each session in the Reception class reinforce the strong Christian ethos of the school and start to help children understand some of the spiritual values of the society in which they live.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have well-developed speaking and listening skills.
- Plenty of opportunities are provided for children to develop writing skills.

Commentary

35. Children make very good progress and exceed the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Very good teaching means that they become accustomed to taking part in conversations about characters and stories, such as *'Mr Bear and his Honey Pot'*, and *'The Toy Party'* and this helps them to take turns and so increase their speaking skills very well. Children in the Nursery learn to listen attentively and build up a good understanding of new words and phrases by watching and listening carefully to staff and taking an interest in their surroundings. Reception-aged children converse clearly with each other and adults, using full sentences, and they enjoy the plentiful activities for writing. Most hold pencils and felt pens correctly and concentrate hard when forming letters of the alphabet and writing short sentences. They interact enthusiastically in the home corner 'Café' and chatter to each other happily, recalling stories readily. They know that certain words sound alike, such as 'cat', 'hat' and 'pat', and they participate willingly during whole-class activities on the 'mat'. Children with special educational needs are guided very well by staff who make sure that individual education plans and care plans are used extensively to help motivate and inspire children's confidence to explore new activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children achieve well and exceed the expected standards.
- Outstanding teamwork and an excellent inclusive setting make children feel highly valued.

Commentary

36. The very good teaching has a positive effect on children's learning, which is rapid as they extend their knowledge of numbers and shapes in songs and practical activities. Children in the Nursery achieve very well when counting up to ten and they are beginning to understand the concept of 'one more' and 'one less'. They calculate total numbers when playing 'People on the Bus' and when counting the number of pennies dropped in a hat. Many children recognise 'big' and 'small' toy trains, and they enjoy shunting them along the toy wooden tracks. By the time they move into the Reception class, progress has accelerated so that the continued good progress means that children attain good standards overall and exceed the Early Learning Goals. Many count up to 20 and back confidently, with the most capable counting well beyond. Opportunities are used well to consolidate children's understanding of number throughout the day and the calm, orderly and friendly way in which classes are managed helps to provide a warm, welcoming environment for children and their parents alike. All staff work as an outstanding team to provide an excellent inclusive setting in which all children know that they are highly valued and respected.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good range of opportunities helps children to achieve the expected goals.

Commentary

37. Children achieve well and attain the expected standards and often beyond by the time they leave the Reception year. Children from both classes enjoy activities to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world because they are well taught. They love to play outdoors in the 'Fire Station' whilst taped music is played for them to sing along and they enjoy answering the play phone, making pretend lunch for visitors or building with large wooden blocks. Adults make good use of computer programs such as 'Tizzy's Toybox' and encourage the children to experiment with different materials to help them increase their physical dexterity. For example, children use a multitude of objects to make moving models of cars and lorries; cotton reels, artstraws, card and lollipop sticks, corks, buttons and paper fasteners are amongst the vast array of things available.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a wide range of indoor activities.
- A lack of readily available large apparatus outside limits children's daily opportunities.

Commentary

38. Throughout the day, children in both the Nursery and Reception classes have a wide range of indoor opportunities for physical development and they hone their finer skills of using pencils, crayons or paints. They move freely with pleasure and confidence when using outdoor equipment. For example, they adjust speed and confidently change direction when demonstrating good strong movements to push moveable toys. However, the lack of large pieces of apparatus, such as a climbing frame, means that children do not have readily available equipment for daily use to practise their skills. Although the hard play area outside is small, staff make good use of the school hall for physical education and the grassed area is used well when dry.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent teaching of musical skills inspires children to achieve well.
- Staff provide children with an excellent ethos for learning.

Commentary

39. Children have many opportunities to extend their creative development. They paint and use construction materials freely in both classes and take part enthusiastically in role-play activities in the 'Toy Shop' or 'Café'. Adults support children's creative skills very successfully by participating with them, and they provide an excellent ethos for learning by making sure that all are included and equally valued. The very good focus on colour and shape extends children's skills well and includes studies of famous works by artists like Kandinsky, good links with literacy texts, such as *'The Owl Babies'*, and topical themes on fireworks, autumn trees and snail-trails. The provision for musical development is outstanding because the children receive specialist teaching from the music co-ordinator, who has excellent expertise. Her very good use of praise and strongly supportive environment extol children's successes and inspire them

to achieve well. They particularly enjoy stomping their feet in the style of a 'Clog Dance' and love singing responses to the teacher's vocalised, '*Harry Hare-y's in a Hurry!*'.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve high standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
- The very good teaching ensures that all pupils enjoy their lessons and those with special educational needs are supported very closely to help them do well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Computers are not used enough and there are not enough books in the library to extend pupils' research skills.

Commentary

40. Speaking and listening skills are very good. In English and other lessons, teachers ask good questions which prompt pupils to explain what they know and develop their skills of communication effectively. Teachers and teaching assistants who work with pupils who have special educational needs use questioning skilfully so that the pupils are given a good chance to talk about their work and are clear about what is expected before commencing writing.
41. Reading standards are very good by the time pupils reach Year 6. Pupils are keen to discuss stories and the intricacies of plot. They engage in lively discussions about personal reading habits, sharing their opinions and preferences with each other. Younger pupils use a good range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words and are confident readers. However, whilst older pupils explained well how they used books and the Internet for research purposes at home, they do not have enough opportunities to use the school library and computers so that they can fully develop their research skills. Parents support their children's reading very well and this contributes to the high achievement.
42. By the time pupils are 11, they achieve very well in writing. This is because teachers are careful to introduce different styles of writing in an interesting and exciting way. For example, in an outstanding Year 4 lesson, the teacher focused on using instructional texts by making strawberry jelly for the class and then asking them to record what she did, noting each step at a time. The content of the writing of younger pupils is generally very good. However, spelling and handwriting are inconsistent in Years 1 and 2, although standards improve dramatically as pupils mature.
43. Teaching is very good and there are some examples of excellent teaching in Years 3 and 4. All teachers have a very secure knowledge of the national strategy, and the introductory and summary sessions are used very successfully to check learning. Topics are chosen which interest and stimulate pupils, and there are very good links with other subjects. In a very good Year 2 lesson, because pupils had researched information on The Great Fire of London in a history lesson, they were able to use the skills they had built up in their English lessons to successfully sequence and write about the events. Teachers set up very good routines and have high expectations of attitudes and behaviour, which result in pupils persevering with their work and showing good independence. Teachers and teaching assistants give very good support to different groups, and pupils with special educational needs are guided very well.
44. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and the co-ordinator is an exemplary role model for colleagues. All aspects of the subject have improved significantly

since the previous inspection. Standards are much higher and the quality of teaching is far better. Management of the subject has improved greatly, with regular monitoring of teaching and learning now taking place. This ensures that teachers have high aspirations and, although the standards are high, the subject leader is assiduous in looking for new areas for improvement. Very good assessment procedures ensure that issues are identified quickly for action in the school development plan.

An example of outstanding practice in English

From the deep, dark depths of the classroom, the teacher's mellow voice whispered in the hushed stillness of the day. Pupils sat transfixed on the floor as they were joined by an enthralled registered inspector who crept in on all fours to listen. An exciting sense of mystery and suspense hung in the air, broken only by the eerie sound of the Year 3 teacher's voice as she read, 'On the Run!'. Her excellent creation of mood was compounded as the teaching assistant switched on some atmospheric lighting (a table lamp) and pupils gasped in awe as the story reached a climax! Quick as a flash, the teacher asked for adjectives to describe the haunted house: 'creepy', 'ghostly', 'spooky', 'scary' and 'mysterious'. The words came tumbling out and, as the pupils thought about how they would feel in such a situation, they began to empathise with the characters in the story, describing the experiences as 'horrifying', 'ear-splitting' and 'heart-stopping'. This superb start to the lesson led to outstanding attitudes amongst pupils and very high achievement as they embarked upon their own suspense stories with an incredibly high level of motivation. 'Yes!' they cried with a sharp intake of breath as the teacher sent them off to begin - '...twenty seconds to settle please!'.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. Very well developed language and literacy skills enable pupils to access all subjects of the curriculum easily. Writing is used extensively in subjects such as history and science. Lessons in information and communication technology give pupils the opportunity to use their literacy skills, such as when learning to send e-mails.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good and significant improvements have been made.
- Standards are very high and pupils display great enthusiasm for the subject.
- Excellent teamwork and lively rapport between staff are strong features of the very good teaching across the school.
- Too little use is made of computers to support mathematical learning.

Commentary

46. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Aspects identified during the last inspection as needing improvement have been addressed conscientiously. Clear plans for future developments are debated and all staff are consulted and kept well informed. This has led to significant developments in the provision and, in particular, increased the monitoring of pupils' progress.
47. All groups of pupils achieve very well and many attain very high standards before they leave at the end of Year 6, which is a notable improvement since the last inspection. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the use of support materials have brought about significant gains to both teaching and learning. All lessons follow a three-part structure, with mental skills being practised with great success and enjoyment at the start of lessons. Pupils' great enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject is evident and they say they particularly like solving problems involving fractions. In Year 6, a particularly effective feature is that the teachers demand all pupils explain their reasons for reaching their answers. The majority in

Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of how to add, subtract and multiply numbers up to 100. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 carry out calculations involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to 1,000 and beyond. Most pupils in Year 6 demonstrate very good knowledge of the equivalence of fractions, decimals and percentages. They also demonstrate very good knowledge of how to reflect two-dimensional shapes in four quadrants. In an excellent Year 5 lesson, the less capable pupils receive very good support to help convert fractions to decimal equivalents.

48. The quality of teaching across the school is very good. This results in all pupils making very good progress. Pupils of all abilities are given searching questions, asked to explain their reasoning and given specific tasks that match their capabilities. Planning is very effective, time is well managed and pupils are asked to explain what they have learned at the end of lessons. Teachers' very good questioning techniques enable pupils to participate very well and, as a result, they enjoy lessons and show very good co-operation and behaviour. Girls and boys receive equal opportunities in relation to their capabilities and the support provided by teaching assistants is very good, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. Excellent teamwork and lively rapport between teachers and assistants lead to very effective teaching and learning in which the respect shown to each other provides excellent role models for pupils to follow.

Mathematics across the curriculum

49. This is well established and evident in the majority of subjects, particularly in the use of various instruments to measure temperatures in science, the links to symmetrical designs in art and in the use of estimation and measurement in design and technology. However, computers are not as well used to support mathematical learning as they might be.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching, plenty of practical work and pupils' enthusiasm lead to high standards.
- High expectations and lively discussions are good features of lessons.
- The subject is led and managed well by the new co-ordinator.

Commentary

50. Pupils enjoy lessons and achieve high standards due to the regular practical nature of their learning and the very good quality teaching. By Year 6, they have an extensive knowledge of materials and their properties through wide-ranging activities such as investigations to measure the insulation properties of various materials for keeping a cup of tea hot. All pupils are given challenging activities to present their results in line graphs. They make very good progress due to teachers' demands for the use of detailed thinking skills. For example, in Year 2, a practical lesson to predict and test various electrical circuits had pupils in groups wholly absorbed for a sustained period. Their predictions were tested thoroughly and each pupil's opinion about which circuits would work or not was respected by others.
51. Pupils use an increasingly wide range of methods to record their results as they mature, with graph work being particularly good by Year 6. Although they do not use computers often for scientific measurement and recording, literacy and numeracy skills are used well to help them draw conclusions and set experiments down in tabular or written form. With detailed planning and the use of varied questions, teachers make sure that pupils' participation in practical work is enjoyable and fun. Teachers' high expectations promote learning well and lively discussions are encouraged as a particular feature to make pupils think for themselves and share their

views with others. This strategy was notable in a Year 4 lesson on measuring room temperatures, where detailed discussion amongst groups of pupils, supported by teacher intervention, was a very effective feature that led to very high achievement of many pupils.

52. The subject is led and managed well. The new co-ordinator has yet to monitor teaching, but good use is made of a scrutiny of planning and detailed analysis of test results to change teaching strategies and develop the provision. Overall, improvement has been significant since the last inspection and standards have risen as a result.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outstanding leadership and management have driven the excellent improvements since the previous inspection.
- The standards achieved by pupils are high due to the very good teaching.
- Computers are not used enough across subjects.

Commentary

53. Leadership and management of the subject are excellent. This has led to some outstanding developments, not least the newly installed computer suite that benefits pupils' learning significantly. It is regularly timetabled so that all year groups receive focused tuition for increasing technical skills, as well as practical sessions for refining their talents. The introduction of the scheme of work has been very well managed and is supplemented with posters and visual aids to support teaching and learning. The very good assessment procedures have improved tremendously since 1998, and include a portfolio of pupils' work to provide clear indications of the levels pupils can achieve. All the required elements of the curriculum are taught and the progression of pupils' skills are very carefully monitored.
54. Pupils in all year groups achieve high standards. An outstanding element of their performance is the high level of confidence and independence they exude. This is because teachers are very careful to teach and reinforce the skills they need. Pupils are given a thorough grounding in identifying information on computers that is represented by the different symbols they find in their everyday life to enable them to go on to successfully investigate the different icons on various programs. At a higher level, this attention to basics enables pupils in Year 6 to begin to experiment successfully, using search engines on the Internet, and to find ways of narrowing their search quickly.
55. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers are knowledgeable, and planning shows that they have thought carefully about the most effective steps needed to ensure pupils' success. Detailed attention is given to evaluating the use of computers so that the pupils understand the advantages compared to other methods of acquiring and recording information. The computer suite has only been in use for two years, but pupils are already very competent in using the machines and accessing programs. As a result, they achieve good success at highly challenging tasks. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates because of the good support they are given by teaching assistants or by working with partners. Teachers' high expectations impact very positively on pupils' exceptional conduct and they work very safely together.

An example of outstanding practice in information and communication technology

This outstanding lesson was characterised by the Year 1 pupils' tremendous enthusiasm for the task of investigating and discovering the uses for different computer icons on the screen in a painting program. Because they were so secure in their knowledge of basic computing skills, they were relaxed and had great fun investigating the various effects of the computer tools. They built up skills quickly from simple facts about sounds that give information, such as whistles and airport intercoms, to symbols for completing instructions. The teacher's support was unobtrusive but highly effective as she moved around, giving expert pointers to help pupils achieve success. They responded admirably by working sensibly together in pairs and showed great interest, joyfully sitting up at the machines with their legs swinging, working so productively and with such great confidence as to merit much praise. By the end of the lesson, they had learnt how to identify different shapes to sketch. They knew how to draw, write and paint on screen, and could identify icons for 'back', 'throw away' and 'erase'.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. The computer suite is used very well for specific lessons, but it is not used enough for other subjects so that the skills that are learnt can be practised in other curriculum areas, such as science, mathematics or English.

HUMANITIES

57. It is not possible to make firm judgements about the provision for **geography** and **history** as these subjects were not major foci of the inspection, and very few lessons were observed. Nevertheless, samples of work completed in Years 1 and 2 show that pupils gain a good understanding of the various topics covered. For example, in Year 2, they draw maps and identify natural and man-made features on the island of Struay. In letters, they write as if from a country girl called 'Katie Morag'. They show how well they understand and can use their knowledge of key features, for example, by asking of an imaginary town dweller, 'Do you have a field?' or 'Is it windy?' and explaining that 'When I look out of my window I see green everywhere'. In the two lessons seen in Years 5 and 6, teachers were careful to build on pupils' previous knowledge. This enabled pupils in Year 6 to use what they knew about Victorian life to interpret the information in a photograph, and in Year 5, pupils analysed and interpreted data from a traffic survey very effectively, so demonstrating good geographical and mathematical understanding. The clear scheme of work is based on the national guidance, which ensures that topics cover the curriculum fully. Management of both subjects is now satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection and suitable resources make very effective reference points. Literacy and mathematical skills are applied well but the use of computers to interpret and represent information in different ways is not as strong.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Very few lessons were observed in this curricular area; only one lesson was seen in art and design, two in music and one physical education. No lessons were seen in design and technology. Thus, it is not possible to make firm judgements about provision overall, except in music.

58. In **art and design**, all pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use their talents, and the quality of displays within classes and across the school is outstanding. Particular thought and emphasis is given to presenting pupils' work meticulously and teachers take great care to mount finished pieces for display throughout the school in an excellent way. For example, in Year 5, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own designs and those of others to produce the best design for a 'Wish Box'. Staff expertise and enthusiasm for the subject are manifested in the extensive use of artwork across the curriculum. Bright, colourful paintings, stencil designs, three-dimensional clay work and illustrations enhance the multicultural diversity of the school and celebrate pupils' successes vividly. Perceptive self-portraits and intricate geometrical patterns by the junior pupils and fine Indian-style 'Mehndi' patterns by infants in

Year 1 are very good examples of how the school makes strong use of the art and design to enhance learning across subjects.

59. The school's recent focus on **design and technology** has been good and is particularly evident in terms of the application of skills learned to support other curricular areas. The subject is very well planned, which ensures coverage of a wide variety of activities. For example, in Year 5, particularly good examples of home-made musical instruments show strong cross-curricular links, whilst in Year 4, pupils have made clay '*divas*' or candles to support their work on the religious Hindu festival of Diwali. In Year 3, pupils have sewn patchwork samples together to make very colourful '*dream-coats*' for the character of Joseph.
60. In **physical education**, the evidence from discussions with the enthusiastic subject co-ordinator show that pupils are given very good opportunities for sporting activities. The wide range of clubs are often led by specialist coaches whose expertise is used well to extend pupils' learning and staff explore every opportunity to develop the subject. The school is proactive in constantly seeking ways to improve the provision, such as procuring a grant from the performing arts funding to set up the dance club.

Music

Provision in music is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent specialist teaching and inspirational leadership by the co-ordinator lead to very high standards, especially in singing.

Commentary

61. Pupils' singing is very tuneful and expressive. Their performances and compositions show great imagination and a strong understanding of basic music theory that is built up year upon year. From early beginnings, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to take part enthusiastically with untuned percussion instruments and are able to distinguish between short and long notes. In Year 3, they sing sweetly, adding their own accompaniment whilst reading simple notation very effectively, and by Year 6, standards are very high. The oldest pupils participate enthusiastically in the school choir, in preparation for regular performances both in school and in the local community. The range of music performed makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' spiritual development; for example when practising hymns for the Christmas service, pupils sing with true emotion and feeling that 'touches' hearts.
62. Pupils' genuine eagerness for the subject and outstanding efforts have an exceptional impact on the very high standards attained. These features stem from the excellent quality of teaching that is due to the outstanding expertise of the specialist teacher, who takes all classes for music lessons and also manages the subject. Her inspirational leadership means that lessons are exceedingly well planned and organised. From the chanting rhymes learnt in Year 1 like '*Here's the soap to wash our hands, blow a bubble, see where it lands!*' to the short staccato of '*Ho! Jack! Frost!*', infant pupils begin to get the idea of rhythm and rhyme very quickly. The teacher's highly skilled questioning techniques, excellent organisation and very specific match of work to pupils' capabilities frequently result in very high standards. All pupils are given every opportunity to participate; boys and girls work very well together and pupils with special educational needs are given every chance to display and enhance their musical skills, and the most capable often do extremely well.

An example of outstanding practice in music

Pupils' shining faces gazed up as the teacher began the lesson with a hauntingly beautiful rendition of 'Greensleeves' on the flute. Enraptured, they listened intently before joining in with 'Tinga-Layo, Come Little Donkey Come!'. The whole class sang sweetly in tune and the excellent teaching captivated the pupils, as learning moved on rapidly to include practice of individual phrases. Pupils achieved in leaps and bounds as they discovered that the 'clip-clop' of a donkey's hooves were short sounds and parts of the phrasing of 'Ting-a - La-a-a-a-y-o' were long sounds! The teacher's amazing rapport with them led to exemplary attitudes and behaviour so that when a new phrase was introduced, they listened enthralled as she sang and tapped the beat. An outstanding sense of awe and wonder was portrayed as pupils showed great joy and the teacher's musical prowess extended to her exceptional piano-playing skills as she challenged pupils to put the lyrics together and sing in rounds. They rose to the occasion and performed with great confidence, until the teacher moved on briskly by encouraging them all to have fun with different untuned percussion instruments. With great delight, they took up coconut shells to imitate 'clip-clop' sounds, and used 'froggy' castanets and lollipop drums to accompany each other. They learnt to use simple notation to help them, spurred on by the teacher's bright smiles and excellent use of praise to inspire. Her obvious love of the children shone out and the excellent inclusive ethos meant that all in this Year 2 class were thrilled to do equally as well as their neighbours. They showed very good independence by choosing for themselves who would answer their rhythm patterns, and even the final ditty sung in unison reinforced learning well: 'Good-bye-eve-ry-one, glad-that you-were-here!'.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

63. This area was not a major focus of the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and pupils' learning overall. Nevertheless, it is clear that pupils achieve very well overall because their attitudes and behaviour are excellent. They are highly respectful of others and have a very strong understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The school's very high expectations of pupils' conduct and the excellent inclusive ethos lead to the very positive promotion of Christian values and racial harmony.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
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	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	1
Attendance	4
Attitudes	1
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
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	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
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).