

INSPECTION REPORT

THE RIDGEWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 109789

Headteacher: Mrs J Parkes

Lead inspector: Mr Peter Sudworth

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 May 2004

Inspection number: 258160

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	193
	Willow Gardens Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG2 7EL
Telephone number:	0118 901 5530
Fax number:	0118 901 5531
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Drammeh

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average-sized one-form entry primary school, plus nursery, for pupils aged three to 11 years is situated in Whitley, about three miles from the centre of Reading. There are 228 pupils on roll with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls, including 46 part-time nursery children, who are educated in one of the two daily sessions. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. Pupils mainly come from housing in the area surrounding the school, most of which is low cost and of which a substantial amount is rented. The socio-economic backgrounds are much less favourable than usual. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is double the national average, as is the percentage of pupils with special educational needs, mainly for learning and emotional difficulties. Three pupils have statements for special educational need. Whilst most pupils are of white British heritage, approximately thirty per cent of the pupils are from a wide range of other ethnic groups, the largest group being black African. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is above the national average. A higher percentage of the pupils leave or join the school at times other than at the end and beginning of the school than is usual. Due to the secondment of a member of staff to another school, a local education authority leading primary teacher was taking the Year 4 class during the inspection and another had just temporarily taken up post to support staff development and subject management arrangements. A job share arrangement was operating in Year 2. The headteacher took up her duties in September 2002 after a long period of staff stability. The school is a member of a local schools excellence cluster.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2700	Mr P Sudworth	Lead inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography Religious education English as an additional language
9520	Mr J Leigh	Lay inspector	
24528	Mr G Muton	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Physical education Special educational needs
15916	Mrs M Lane	Team inspector	Science Art and design History Music Foundation stage

The inspection contractor was:

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

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Ridgeway Primary provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils and is improving under a headteacher, who is very effective. There is a clear programme for its further development. Whilst overall attainment is below average, pupils achieve satisfactorily given their well below average attainment on entry. Teaching is satisfactory overall and with some good features. Pupils relate well to their teachers. The school provides **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The very good leadership of the headteacher is moving the school forward;
- Pupils' attainment is below average in English, mathematics, science and ICT and boys have tended to make less good progress than the girls;
- Roles and management responsibilities of key staff are not developed enough, leading to some inconsistencies in the way they monitor the quality of provision;
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good, as are the relationships between teachers and pupils;
- The school takes very good care of the pupils and they enjoy school and try hard;
- The contribution of the governing body to the school's development has been unsatisfactory in recent months;
- The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs do not focus precisely enough on the targets for improvement;
- Links with the parents are good, although home reading books could be changed more regularly, and some parents do not explain reasons for absence.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards in religious education and science have improved and curriculum provision in ICT is better. Pupils' spiritual development has improved and acts of worship now comply with requirements. The quality of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs has not improved enough. There is still room for improvement in standards in key areas of work.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003*	2003*
English	E	E	D	B
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E	E	E	D

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.

* Grades have been put into the next category because the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is double the national average, and the increased number of pupils entitled to free school meals.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily in much of the school given their well below average attainment on entry to the nursery, although the girls tend to make better progress than the boys. Overall attainment is still below average in key areas of work by ages seven and 11. The children achieve well in the Foundation Stage, particularly in the nursery, though attainment is below average in the goals they are expected to reach at the end of reception and well below average in knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in most classes in Years 1 to 6 with progress accelerating in Year 6. The overall attainment of the current group of Year 6 pupils is higher than that for the previous year. In religious education pupils' attainment meets local expectations. It was not possible to judge attainment in other subjects, given the short duration of the inspection.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are nurtured **satisfactorily**. Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to their work are good. Most pupils are punctual and attendance in the present academic year is currently running at around the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils. The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. Teaching and assessment are satisfactory in the main, but with some good features, as in the teaching in the nursery and Year 6. Pupils' learning is satisfactory, but individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory and do not focus precisely enough on their learning needs. Current provision for extra-curricular provision is unsatisfactory, though plans are well advanced to improve this aspect. The staff take very good care of the pupils. There are good links with the parents and satisfactory links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** with strengths in the work of the headteacher, who leads and manages the school very well. The priorities for improvement have been clearly identified and are now being worked upon with the added support of advisory staff. In recent months, governance has been unsatisfactory and its work has suffered. Leadership of key staff is satisfactory, but they are not all equally effective.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and their children have good opinions of the school. The school enjoys good relationships with parents. Pupils enjoy school. The school works well in partnership with parents and other schools.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT throughout the school;
- Motivate boys more effectively so that they do not continue to make slower progress than the girls in key areas of work;
- Develop the role of subject leaders and senior managers to support the quest for improved standards by better monitoring of classroom practice and ensuring more consistent practice across the school;
- Improve the quality of work of the governing body and its involvement in the life of the school;
- Improve the quality of individual education plans for pupils with learning and emotional difficulties.

Minor issues

- Ensure reading books are changed more regularly so that pupils can make better progress by practising their reading at home.
- A small number of parents should co-operate more effectively in providing reasons for absence to reduce the amount of unauthorised absence.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The children's attainment on entry is **well below average**. Standards are **below average** at the end of the Foundation Stage in most areas of learning and in key areas of learning by ages seven and 11. Pupils achieve **satisfactorily**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development in the nursery and reception class helps them to achieve very well in this aspect.
- There are signs of recovery from falling national test results.
- The history of results indicates inconsistencies in the performance of boys and girls, as they move up through the school.
- Good provision in science and religious education helps the pupils to achieve well.

Commentary

1. The children enter the nursery at the start of the Foundation Stage with skills well below those normally seen at this age. In particular, many have poor speaking skills and very limited vocabularies, though they listen well to story. In the main they achieve well in the Foundation Stage, making particularly good progress in the nursery in many aspects of their development, though progress is less marked in the reception class. The children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development throughout the Foundation Stage, enabling them to reach the expectations for their age by the end of the reception year. In other areas of their learning¹, despite good achievement in most aspects of their work, their attainment is below average by the end of the reception year. It is well below average in their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in this aspect of work their achievement is satisfactory.
2. In recent years, results in national tests have been in line with the national trend for pupils at the end of the infant department. In 2003, significant numbers of the pupils did not reach the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics at age seven in national tests. Over the period 2001-03, both boys and girls have done less well in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with seven-year-old boys and girls nationally. In 2003, the results in writing were in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country. At this age, the school's girls have been doing better than the boys in all aspects of their work. Teacher assessed results in science in 2003 were above average at the expected level and average at the higher level. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics is well below the national average.
3. The trend of results at age 11 is below that nationally because results have been falling in English and mathematics since 2000, and in science since 2001. In 2003, almost half the pupils did not reach expectations in English and science and over half in mathematics. Results in science and mathematics were in the lowest five per cent nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was below the national average. Boys have been performing better than the girls in national tests in mathematics in Year 6, but girls have done better than the boys in English and science. There are clear signs that the initiatives undertaken by the headteacher, and the involvement of advisory staff, are reaping benefits in pupils' attainment.

¹ Early learning goals – these are the standards that children are expected to reach by the end of their reception year. They refer in particular to achievements children make in connection with communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning, for instance, in language and literacy children should be able to write their own name and be beginning to write simple sentences.

This is shown in the significant increase in the targets of the pupils expected to reach the expected level in English and mathematics for the current year at age 11.

4. Standards remain, however, below average in mathematics, science and ICT by ages seven and 11. Currently they are well below average in all aspects of English in Year 2, reflecting the ability of the group of pupils, and below average in Year 6. Current standards mainly reflect the picture at the last inspection, though with an overall improvement in pupils' ICT skills across the school through the setting up of the ICT suite and increasingly effective use of this facility. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in these subjects with an acceleration of progress in Year 6. The improved provision for religious education has resulted in better progress in the subject and the pupils now achieve well, reaching the expectations in the local agreed syllabus. There was not enough evidence to judge attainment in other subjects because of the inspection focus and its short duration.
5. Pupils with special educational needs, from different ethnic groups and pupils who have English as an additional language all make satisfactory progress, as do pupils with special talent. New initiatives are at an advanced stage of planning in conjunction with other local schools to extend opportunities for pupils who show special talent. Pupils who are more capable academically make satisfactory progress in lessons, though in some, they are not challenged effectively to extend them, for example in some mathematics and English lessons.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.8 (13.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	10.7 (12.1)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	13.9 (13.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 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	23.8 (24.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	21.6 (24.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	24.0 (26.1)	28.6 (28.3)

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

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **satisfactory** overall, and with some strengths.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance has improved during the current year, but some parents do not provide reasons for absence.
- Pupils relate well to one another and with their teachers.
- Pupils try hard in lessons.
- Pupils' social and moral development is good.

Commentary

6. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in the improved attendance, which in the current year reflects the most recent national average level. The school's initiatives to promote good attendance are proving successful. Nevertheless, despite the school's best efforts to ensure good attendance and punctuality, a small group of pupils regularly arrive late and unauthorised absence is still above the national average. This is because a few parents do not inform the school of the reasons for absence and the school applies the rules rigorously.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.4	School data	1.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

7. Parents' views confirm the great deal of enjoyment the pupils get from their education. This is reflected in the same good approach to their work as at the last inspection, and in the pupils' good behaviour and attitudes. There is little evidence of bullying because the staff promote a racially harmonious community and pupils from different ethnic groups work well alongside one another. Pupils are polite and helpful. They are expected to take some responsibility and are keen to do so. They exercise their duties conscientiously, as when they take part in the assembly arrangements and in school council duties. They are keen to represent their school in events, such as singing in the local festival. All show a concern for others. Pupils with special needs are fully included in the life of the school. Their emotional needs and self-esteem are well supported in the caring atmosphere. The children in the Foundation Stage make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and reach the goals expected in this area of learning by the end of the reception class.
8. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, and with some good features. Pupils' moral and social development is good and it is satisfactory for their cultural and spiritual development. This represents an improvement in the pupils' spiritual development since the last inspection. Acts of worship now fulfil requirements and are of a sound quality, though spirituality is not planned for across the curriculum, for example in mathematics and science. Pupils have a good understanding of the rights and wrongs of issues. The good provision for pupils' social development and maturity, evidenced in their attitude to the responsibilities that they hold, is enhanced further through residential visits. The school prepares the pupils well for life in a diverse multi-cultural society through the fostering of very good relationships between different ethnic groups in the school. This results in secure friendships between pupils from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Occasional good use is made of these differences to help pupils appreciate different cultures, as in religious education lessons, but music and art do not enhance their knowledge of cultures sufficiently well. In assemblies, music is played as pupils enter, but little reference is made to it. Pupils are developing a sound knowledge of other cultures through their work in religious education.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
103
8

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
3	0
2	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded. There have not been any exclusions during the current academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils. The quality of the curriculum, teaching, assessment and learning is **satisfactory**. However, current provision for enrichment activities is **unsatisfactory**, though plans are well advanced to improve this aspect. The staff take **very good** care of the pupils. There are **good** links with the parents and satisfactory links with the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching, learning and assessment are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the nursery and Year 6 is frequently good.
- Medium-term planning is detailed and contributes well to the structure of lessons.
- The opening to mathematics lessons does not develop pupils' mental skills enough.
- Assigned activities in lessons are sometimes not matched well enough to pupils' needs.
- Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not well enough planned to focus on their learning needs.
- Reading books are not changed regularly enough in the lower school to support pupils' progress
- The tracking of pupils' progress is developing well.

Commentary

9. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but with less good teaching than in the previous inspection. Teaching observed was best in the nursery and in Year 6. In the nursery, a good range of well planned activities, which provide a good balance of individual choice and group work, keeps the children interested. The calm atmosphere helps the children to focus on their work for long periods of time. This was evident in the use of story sacks; 'Miffie', a stuffed toy, emerged from one to keep an eye on the children and helped them to listen attentively to a story about himself. Organised group activities appeal to the children's interest. In the making of gingerbread men, a group of children mixed the ingredients and acquired descriptive language, as they stirred them round with their hands. The very well established relationships and purposeful working atmosphere in Year 6 help maintain a good work ethic in which all pupils want to do their best and evidenced in the good quality of the presentation in much of their work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	4 (11%)	11 (31%)	19 (53%)	2 (6%)	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. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils. As a result, many pupils are keen and confident to answer questions and they listen well to what others have to say. They readily, and often profitably, engage in focused, partnered conversations when requested. Teachers mostly preserve a calm working atmosphere. The explanation of tasks the pupils are to undertake is satisfactory, a strength being the language that the teachers use to ensure the pupils understand. However, occasionally the tasks are not explained well enough, and in such instances, or if the pupils cannot manage them, they can lose their interest. In English and mathematics, work is usually well matched to the pupils' needs, but there are occasions when higher attaining pupils find the work too easy. The opening to mathematics lessons is often not sharp enough to develop mental skills effectively and the conclusions to lessons are sometimes not timed well enough to bring out key points from learning or to extend the pupils' thinking further.
11. The support for pupils who have special educational needs and English as an additional language is satisfactory and enables them to achieve soundly, but pupils with special educational needs occasionally miss other important key learning when they are withdrawn from class for group work. The work of teaching assistants ranges in quality. It is often good in Years 5 and 6, where they are well briefed about what they have to do, and quietly engage with the pupils in the opening to lessons to make sure the pupils understand or encourage them to contribute an answer. They are equally effective in the Foundation Stage and engage with the children in the group tasks, promoting an understanding of language. However, a number of assistants lack experience or confidence and are, therefore, less effective. Teachers do not always modify tasks for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, tasks can be too challenging and pupils are not always able to finish. The individual education plans written by the co-ordinator and teachers are unsatisfactory. They do not include specific achievable targets from which teachers, pupils and parents can easily identify progress.
12. Teachers usually share the learning objectives with the pupils in language that is easily understood so that they know what they are going to learn. However, they rarely return to the objectives in the middle of lessons to ensure the pupils are still on track, and only occasionally at the end of lessons to share in a self-assessment of their success. Usually pupils indicate their understanding with a simple thumb sign, but this does not engage the learner in discussing specific areas of difficulty.
13. Lessons are well prepared and planning is detailed in both the medium- and short-term. Teachers research the content of their lessons well and they make good use of resources in the best teaching, such as artefacts in religious education to help pupils' understanding about rituals in faith. In a Year 1 history lesson, the teacher demonstrated a game from her own childhood, which not only helped the pupils to understand change over time, but incorporated humour and good fun.
14. The pace of lessons is usually satisfactory and sometimes brisk. Occasionally good use was made of time limits for task completion and this prompted the pupils to move quickly into their work and provided an extra impetus to their efforts. Pupils' below average speaking skills are, however, an impediment to a brisk pace in some lessons, as they are slow to explain their thinking and often do not speak up enough so that others can hear and share their own thoughts. Work in the computer suite was sometimes affected by unsatisfactory seating arrangements with some children standing for much of the lesson, as they shared a computer in pairs.
15. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning in school, but there are some unsatisfactory features. There is some inconsistency in its regularity and pattern and pupils in the infants are not changing books regularly enough to share with their parents. This is affecting their progress in reading.

16. Assessment is satisfactory with some good features. Some recent improvements have taken place, such as progress tracking, with further improvements planned. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is up-to-date and accurate. There is some inconsistency in marking techniques, but a new marking policy to overcome this was ready for implementation at the time of inspection. Marking is often supportive, but overall insufficiently developmental. In mathematics, pupils do little to correct their errors and learn from their mistakes. Good analysis is made of the school's national test results by gender, ethnic groups and pupils' responses to test questions. Staff know the pupils well because of the good record keeping systems. Teachers have begun to set group targets for mathematics and English, but involvement of pupils in target setting and more individualised targets to promote progress await further development. Good progress has been made in setting predictions and tracking pupils' attainment levels since the arrival of the headteacher, and pupils' progress towards them is monitored termly. This is helping to identify pupils, who are not making expected progress and an analysis of reasons is being sought.

The curriculum

The school provides a **sound** curriculum with a satisfactory range of experiences across most subjects. Opportunities for enrichment are **limited**, but some are provided by visits and visitors. Few extra-curricular clubs or other activities take place, so there is little opportunity for pupils to widen their experiences. Accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well managed.
- Good use is made of the extensive grounds.
- The provision of extra-curricular clubs and activities is under-developed.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments are limited.
- Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are not written well enough to ensure that they make the best possible progress.

Commentary

17. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and has been greatly improved by the development of a thoroughly planned scheme of work since the last inspection. There is a clear emphasis on the promotion of personal, social and emotional development in all activities. Resources for nursery and reception children are good and support most areas of learning. Activities are well planned according to national guidance. The outside area is secure and used well to promote the learning of the nursery children. However, the outdoor area for the reception children is in the early stages of development.
18. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is well planned and well managed and the co-ordinator maintains a good overview. Members of staff monitor provision and ensure that long- and medium-term plans match the learning objectives of the programmes of study.
19. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout the school and more recently there has been a focus on the further development of information communications technology. Teachers actively plan to use skills learned in these areas to support work in other subjects, for example pupils made good use of computers to learn about symmetry in Year 3.
20. The school has a clear policy for the development of pupils' personal, social and health education. This work is reflected in learning across the school. In a science lesson in Year 2 pupils used plastic food to identify and select healthy eating options. Pupils are also given opportunities to explore moral and social issues, such as friendship, bullying and drugs awareness.

21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school employs a number of teaching assistants who support groups and individuals in class, but they are not always deployed to the best effect. Individual education plans are of variable quality, but most are not well enough written to ensure precision in learning targets. The pupils who are having most difficulty with their learning are withdrawn from classes for short sessions to follow specific programmes to meet their individual needs. This aspect of the provision is good. Work in the classrooms is not always well matched to pupils' abilities. The management of home-school reading is not sufficiently supportive to those pupils having difficulty with reading. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language and those who show greater ability in different subjects is satisfactory.
22. Whilst enrichment activities are limited and overall unsatisfactory, a programme of visits and visitors to the school supports the breadth of curriculum satisfactorily. Pupils also participate in a limited range of extra musical activities, such as the local music festival and demonstrations from a musical group. There are strong links with a local farm, which profit the younger children's breadth of learning experiences. Older pupils make residential visits, which support their ICT studies and outdoor adventurous activities.
23. The accommodation is good. Classrooms are generally spacious, although the open plan accommodation for pupils in Years 5 and 6 with one side used as a thoroughfare can be distracting and allows for noise intrusion. The school grounds are extensive, used regularly to enhance pupils' learning with further plans to develop their use. The small library is well organised and well equipped, although pupils do not often use it. The ICT suite is an improvement since the last inspection and it is being used well to support and extend the learning of pupils in computer skills. Improvements have been made to the dining hall. The spacious hall supports the quality of work in physical education and facilitates whole-school gatherings. The accommodation is well cared for and maintained by the site manager and his team. Learning resources are satisfactory overall.
24. The school has a sufficient number of teaching staff who are suitably qualified for the roles and responsibilities they have. They are satisfactorily supported by a number of teaching assistants. Good induction arrangements are in place for newly qualified staff and all staff have good opportunities for in-service training. There is good administrative support, which contributes to the efficient management of the school on a day-to-day basis.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare, health and safety of pupils are ensured **very well**. **Satisfactory** support, advice and guidance are provided based on monitoring of achievement and personal development. The school seeks, values and acts on the views of pupils **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care, protection and support for children are good.
- The trusting relationships that pupils have with adults are very good.
- Induction arrangements are good.

Commentary

25. Staff work in the best interests of all pupils to safeguard their welfare. Child protection matters are handled sensitively, effectively and promptly. Child protection is well supported by comprehensive arrangements, where the school, parents and other agencies work together very well. Judgements are similar to those of the previous report.
26. The school ensures that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. All reasonable steps are taken to keep children safe and protect them from injury or ill health. The health and safety

policy is good and is effective in practice. Regular audits and inspections of school premises are carried out. Staff have been trained through recognised courses to a good level. A governor has designated responsibilities for health and safety. Risk assessment is comprehensive, thorough and up-to-date. The procedures for promoting pupils' health and safety are much improved since the last inspection.

27. The school provides a most secure, caring environment where pupils feel safe and are happy. Relationships with adults are very good. Pupils are known very well as individuals. If they have a problem, pupils are extremely confident that they can go to an adult and get help. It is clear that the school is making increasing efforts to ensure that all children can achieve what they are capable of through much improved and thorough, yet recent, monitoring of pupils' academic progress, which is beginning to bear fruit. The school operates as a supportive family.
28. There are very good procedures to monitor attendance, supported by effective records, communication with parents and highly prized rewards, such as the opportunity to learn circus skills if pupils have had good attendance. This has resulted in a significant improvement in attendance.
29. The school has good procedures to monitor personal development. This has a good impact on the achievements made by pupils both academically, and in the development of their personal qualities. This practice is very effective because staff know their children very well and they use every opportunity through encouragement, support or target-setting to develop all pupils.
30. Good behaviour and attitudes to work are recognised and rewarded accordingly. Pupils understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour and develop very good relationships. They become increasingly independent, self-confident and knowledgeable about themselves and safe living. The school equips pupils very well with the skills necessary to become good citizens.
31. The school council shows good organisational ability to represent the views of pupils and to develop initiatives. Members were concerned about litter and have organised a litter-picking rota at playtime. They have obtained extra playground equipment and visited another school so that they can provide advice to improve playground markings. Additionally, pupils complete questionnaires with questions such as "Is there someone who you would go to if you were worried?" The responses are analysed most thoroughly.
32. There are good induction arrangements for children into the nursery and into the reception classes, which are flexible enough to suit the needs of children as individuals. These are based on very good relationships with new children and their parents. The nursery is seen very much as a part of the school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is **good**. Links with other schools are **good** and there are **satisfactory** links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school has worked hard to try to develop a partnership.
- Parents are well informed and complaints are dealt with well.

Commentary

33. Parents are well informed by regular, well-presented newsletters. The prospectus provided for parents is of good quality and communicates effectively what the school does. The home-school community link officer assists in the translation of school information for parents whose

first language is not English. There are good opportunities to receive information on their child's progress throughout the year. Information for parents, whose children have special educational needs, is good and includes an annual report specifically for these pupils with helpfully written comments. The annual report to parents on pupils' progress is thorough and includes useful detailed assessment of a child's personal and social development. Targets are set clearly and parents are informed what their children will be studying at the start of term. The good links with parents are similar to those reported previously.

34. Parents are very pleased with what the school provides. They think their children make good progress. The school encourages a strong sense of partnership based on mutual trust and confidence. The school has an open door policy and is very welcoming to parents, which results in very good relationships with them. Parents are committed to the school, although as yet only a few help in school. If they are concerned about anything, they are confident to approach the school. Parents are appreciative that their children receive the help and support they need. The school seeks the views of parents through an annual questionnaire and acts, where it can, on these views. For example, it has increased its provision of extra-curricular opportunities, such as chess and a craft club.
35. Parents support the school very well through the active Parent Staff Association, which raises very significant additional funds for the school. These funds are used to improve the learning environment of the pupils, for example, imminent seating in the newly established outside quiet area.
36. Occasional visitors from the local community contribute to the school's work such as conducting assemblies. There are productive links with local supermarkets, which provide bottled water and fresh fruit at reduced rates. The school uses the local community satisfactorily to enhance the learning of its pupils through local visits in the surrounding locality.
37. There are good induction arrangements for pupils joining the school which enable them to settle very well into school. The transition from nursery is handled well through good liaison, which ensures children settle well into their next class. There are productive links with other schools supported by transfer days, staff liaison and transfer of information. A secondary school physical education teacher teaches Year 5 and Year 6 pupils once weekly.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. Leadership of other key staff is **satisfactory**. The effectiveness of management overall is **satisfactory**. Governance of the school is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher has a very clear vision and has made a very good start towards achieving her high aspirations for the school.
- Very good use has been made of the information gathered from the headteacher's evaluation of school performance.
- The governing body had been ineffective in the recent months.
- Leadership of key staff, including the deputy headteacher, has been identified as an area for improvement.

Commentary

38. Leadership of the headteacher at the last inspection was judged 'strong' and remains very good with the change of headteacher. The headteacher has worked closely and effectively with the local education authority, as well as using the services of an external monitor and her own observations, to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. The headteacher has completed the first phase of an energetic and rigorous evaluation of the school, whilst

maintaining a well-ordered atmosphere where pupils are cared for very well, behave well and enjoy their schoolwork. She has already made a number of key improvements including:

- Establishing clear expectations for pupils' progress;
- Strengthening curriculum planning;
- Changing roles and responsibilities of key members of staff;
- Formulating a new strategic plan;
- Raising the profile of the school in the community and reversing the recent decline in pupil numbers.

39. Throughout this process, the headteacher has placed a strong emphasis on consultation with all members of staff, parents and pupils. This has led to a new vision statement and an achievable plan to work towards it. Senior staff's involvement in a government initiative for *'primary school leadership'* together with visits and links to other schools by teachers, have given the whole school a new impetus. In particular, the need for consistency in school practices and procedures has been recognised and is being addressed. A number of changes have already been implemented, such as consistency in planning, but the school is working through an agenda to secure consistency in other areas. The headteacher's introduction of a new system to track pupils' progress is helping everyone to focus more clearly upon pupils' achievement.
40. There has been little emphasis in recent times on the role of subject leaders in monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. An important part of the current development of the school is the priority being given to the development of key staff in their subject and other leadership roles. Job descriptions have been revised and responsibilities changed to take advantage of individual strengths. A 'lead-teacher' has been employed specifically to assist with professional development. Subject and area leaders have contributed to the school improvement plan by writing specific action plans. In particular the role of deputy headteacher is being re-evaluated. The current post holder, who is very committed, has already taken on new responsibilities. Changes have been made to the way that the provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed and this remains under review. The present arrangements do not allow the special educational needs co-ordinator to monitor and develop the role of the learning support assistants or to monitor the provision within classroom for pupils with special educational needs.
41. The governing body meets statutory requirements, but has been ineffective in recent time mainly because there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of governors over the last eighteen months, leading to the collapse of the committee structure, with the exception of the finance committee. This situation is now improving with new governors being appointed in recent months. The governing body has relied too much upon the leadership of the headteacher. Current governors are very committed and determined to continue the improvement of the school. They are aware that they need to develop their own effectiveness as a first priority. The school bursar is very efficient and financial management of the school has been good. A number of good decisions have been made to ensure that the best use is being made of the funds available.
42. The headteacher's vision for the school has been a major determining factor in the improvement that the school is making. This, combined with the support from the local education authority, involvement in the government's initiative for *'primary leadership'* and the opportunities arising in the local schools excellence cluster and the realisation that standards can be raised is moving the school forward. Barriers to the school's development and pupils' attainment have been the decline in the work of the governing body in recent months and pupils' below average skills in key areas of learning. Despite the school's efforts, the above average level of unauthorised absence contributes to the school's workload in following attendance issues through. There has not been a culture in the school of effective monitoring of teaching and learning and tracking pupils' progress, but this is beginning.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	543,289
Total expenditure	577,940
Expenditure per pupil	2,700

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	48,461
Balance carried forward to the next	13,810

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

AREA FOR LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

43. Depending on places available, children may begin their education part-time in the term after their third birthday in either a morning or afternoon session. The children transfer to the reception class at the start of the term in which they will be five. The teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the nursery, where the children make good progress. Assessment of children's progress is good in the main. Very detailed records of the children's progress in the nursery help the staff to know their next learning needs. The quality of assessment in the reception class is not yet so detailed and the next learning steps for individual children are not so clearly identified, but the quality is beginning to improve. Overall the children achieve well, given their well below average attainment on entry, although their attainment is still below average in most areas of their learning by the end of the reception class. They do, however, reach expectations in their personal, social and emotional development, but their attainment is well below expectations in their knowledge and understanding of the world and their achievement is satisfactory in this aspect of their work. Resources for learning are good. The school has developed the outside environment well since the last inspection to extend learning opportunities for children in the nursery with similar facilities now being developed for the reception children.
44. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The teachers have put into place a soundly organised curriculum, which is focused on the Early Learning Goals. They are well supported by the nursery nurse and teaching assistants in the various planned activities and there is a clear understanding of the respective roles that each will play in the daily sessions. Staff make good use of time and have high expectations of behaviour, which contributes very well to the pupils' social development. There are better arrangements than at the previous inspection for the continuity of education between the reception class and Year 1, though standards remain below average. The staff show very good care for the children and have very good relationships with them that help the children to feel secure and develop their confidence with adults.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is good.
- Pupils are very clear about established daily routines, which make them feel secure and confident.
- Pupils are very well supported by the care and encouragement shown to them by staff.
- There are clear and high expectations about behaviour within a warm, caring environment.

Commentary

45. This area of learning has a high priority from the time children enter the nursery. The teaching is very good enabling the children to achieve very well, make very good progress and to reach expectations for the end of the reception class. Activities are carefully planned to help children to learn the difference between right and wrong and to become more independent. Children know, like and trust their teachers and other adult helpers and they relate to them confidently. The very thoughtfully established daily routines allow children to develop the confidence and ability to take turns, share resources and equipment and help them to understand clearly how

to behave and work well together. There is a good balance between adult-initiated and child-selected activities. Children learn to listen carefully and follow instructions. They have many opportunities to talk to each other and to adults and these develop their social skills. They enjoy school and join in activities with enthusiasm and interest. In the 'Baby Clinic' they chat comfortably whilst bathing their dolls. All pupils are encouraged to value each other and learn about each other's cultures and beliefs.

Communication, Language and Literacy Skills

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is good and ensures a range of activities to develop and reinforce language skills.
- Children are encouraged to enjoy books.
- Each room has a writing area well equipped with pencils, crayons, markers and paper to encourage children's writing skills.
- Teachers read stories very expressively and children ask questions, give opinions and predict outcomes.
- Instructions are sometimes unclear in the reception class and activities not well enough planned and structured.

Commentary

46. Despite the very limited language skills of many when they enter the Foundation Stage and the below average attainment by the end of the reception class, the high priority given to this aspect enables the children to achieve well. The teaching is good overall, particularly in the nursery. The range of planned activities, including encouragement to communicate with each other and with adults, ensures that the children experience, use and develop a widening vocabulary. The use of stories, poems, songs and discussions throughout the day add to their acquisition of vocabulary. The many opportunities for role-play help to extend their language skills further, as when they take on the character of Goldilocks and visit the cottage of the 'three bears'. Children identified as having special educational needs, and who have particular communication difficulties, also make good progress because they are fully included in all activities.
47. Children show a real enjoyment of books. They became totally engrossed when the teaching assistant read the story of the 'Gingerbread Man', with an immediate request for it to be read again. Children understood the story, answered questions with understanding, and some children made predictions about what would happen next. They are making good progress in their knowledge of letter sounds and in their recognition of simple frequently used words, although their early reading and writing skills are below those normally seen at this stage. Opportunities for children to write their names and record ideas contribute to their understanding that print carries meaning. Good opportunities are provided in the nursery for children to develop letter formation and pencil control and furthered in the reception class where older pupils begin to copy simple sentences. Some children write their own words. The good use of labels, diagrams and wall displays contributes well to the pupils' awareness of the importance of print and this is furthered through the good selection of both fiction and non-fiction books, which stimulates their imaginations.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for the development of children's mathematical skills is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily routines and practical situations involving counting and other mathematical activities help build up the children's confidence and understanding in number and shape from a well below average picture on entry.
- Carefully planned play opportunities reinforce more formal learning and encourage the continued enjoyment of mathematics.
- The activities sometimes do not inspire the children enough to sustain their interest.

Commentary

48. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in the nursery. The children achieve well, although attainment is below average at end of the reception class. Displays of work to stimulate enquiry and both formal and informal activities support the children's mathematical development well and enable them to learn basic mathematical skills. On occasions the mathematical activities are insufficiently varied to keep the children interested. Good use is made of other activities, such as art, to consolidate and extend their knowledge of shape and counting skills. Nursery children acquire the skill to count accurately through the daily routine of counting all the children present at registration, though many still find this difficult. Children develop early knowledge about volume and capacity through sand and water play and the importance of measuring skills, as they count in and balance the ingredients in the regular baking sessions. Good planning identifies the links between different aspects of work, which help to consolidate the children's understanding. When the story theme was the Gingerbread Man, children baked gingerbread men and learnt a lot about measuring and shapes. Good use is made of stories and rhymes to further the children's understanding of number.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a good range of activities to develop children's general knowledge of the world about them.
- Children are given opportunities to investigate and explore by using the outdoor area and the school grounds.
- Some of the independent activities lack sufficient structure to develop children's learning suitably.

Commentary

49. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils' achievements are satisfactory, although the children's attainment is still well below expectations by the end of the reception class. Through soundly planned activities, children develop their skills of observing and commenting on the world around them, often through experiences which the children are meeting for the very first time. Well-chosen computer programmes enable them to extend their knowledge of language and mathematics, whilst learning how to use a keyboard and develop mouse skills. Imaginative play areas, such as a vet's surgery or a baby clinic, and the many opportunities for role-play help to support the children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Visitors to the school help children to learn more about the traditions and beliefs of others. A parent in the nursery class shared many aspects of how her family celebrated the festival of Eid. However, the free-play opportunities are sometimes not structured enough to build upon these activities and support further learning and they can be repetitive. The purpose of some of activities is not

sufficiently clear to the children. Teachers make good use of simple scientific skills to encourage children to develop their senses and to investigate. Walks around the school grounds at different times of the year, for example, allow children to compare the seasons, whilst older children visit a local farm and record and discuss the many things they have observed. These activities are often linked to their creative skills, such as a simple collage of the farmer and his sheep. By the time children leave reception, they are beginning to show an understanding of the natural world. They have also learned and understand more about themselves and their families. They are beginning to acquire some knowledge of the geography of the school and the local area.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children's physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are varied and used well.
- Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their physical skills in the hall, the playground and the outdoor area.
- Regular use of a range of construction equipment enables children to begin to develop fine manipulative skills and control.
- The range of large outdoor equipment is limited.

Commentary

50. Children experience many planned opportunities to help them to develop skills when using pencils, scissors, brushes and other tools, together with handling a range of equipment when making models. Children respond positively to these activities and achieve well in the acquisition of fine control and manipulative skills, which are often under-developed when they begin school. Use of the computer keyboard and the mouse helps to reinforce these skills, and eye/hand co-ordination.
51. Teaching is satisfactory. The outdoor area in the nursery class is used well, giving the children opportunities to develop their skills in running, jumping and skipping. Good use of the mobile apparatus helps to develop other aspects of their co-ordination. The outdoor area for the reception class has only recently been established and is still in the early stages of use and development. Opportunities for activities, such as climbing, are currently limited by the lack of appropriate equipment.
52. Good use is made of the school hall for more formal lessons, in which the children develop physical skills satisfactorily. Reception class children were able to use skipping skills they had learnt when they performed a maypole dance outside.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching of skills is combined with many good opportunities to learn through play.

Commentary

53. Teaching in this area is satisfactory overall and good in the nursery. Most children are in the earliest stages of their creative development. They enjoy experiencing and experimenting with various media, tools and instruments. Staff plan a satisfactory range of activities and children achieve well with the support of adults through the teaching of specific skills, the opportunities

to investigate paint and modelling materials, which stimulate their imagination, and when playing together. Role-play is used extensively and profitably to stimulate thought. Children make up their own stories as well as acting out real life situations, often based on their own experiences. They have access to a good range of resources to enhance their work.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management of home-school reading is insufficiently rigorous.
- Pupils try hard in lessons.
- Pupils in Year 6 achieve well.
- There is not a consistent approach to pupils' extended writing.
- The teaching of phonics is not developed methodically and rigorously.

Commentary

54. Pupils enter the school with well below average communication and social skills. Speaking skills are underdeveloped, although listening skills are stronger. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and, by the time they reach the end of Year 2, close to seventy per cent of pupils are achieving expected standards. Very few exceed these standards so that, overall, performance is well below average in all aspects of English at age seven. Although standards are below average for eleven-year-olds in English, an analysis of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 shows that standards are improving. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 5 and they achieve well in Year 6. Standards are similar to those reported at the previous inspection.
55. Reading is below average throughout the school. Pupils' progress in reading is being inhibited by the current system of organising home-school reading. There has been a good effort to promote an interest in reading by awarding points when pupils have made the effort to read at home. However, there has been too little emphasis in ensuring that pupils are changing books regularly. This is particularly so in Years 1 and 2, with the result that the pupils become bored with their book or do not progress as quickly as they should through the reading schemes. The monitoring of older pupils' reading is inconsistent.
56. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. Pupils' progress is now tracked well. Relationships are good between teachers and pupils and teachers insist on good conduct, which helps to ensure pupils adopt good work attitudes. However, the individual education plans are unsatisfactory and do not focus thinking enough on the next steps in learning. Lessons usually have a good structure but sometimes the time structure of lessons is not managed well enough. Questioning is often good and many pupils are keen to contribute, but the pupils' below average speaking skills often slow down the lesson pace. Whilst learning is satisfactory overall, pupils are keen to get on with their work, behave well and show good attitudes to learning. Work in books is often presented well, reflecting the teachers' high expectations for presentation.
57. The new subject leader has made a satisfactory start to her new role and plans to make further improvements to teaching and learning. The headteacher has organised extensive monitoring of the subject and, as a result, a number of improvements are already in place. These include a greater consistency in planning and close monitoring of pupil performance. However, further development is still required and these include:
 - The development of extended writing throughout the school;

- The way in which the balance of the different components of literacy is organised and time-tabled;
- A consistent and effective approach to the teaching of phonics.

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the previous report and standards are at similar levels. An action plan has been drawn up for further improvements, which includes the development of phonics and speaking and listening opportunities.

Literacy across the curriculum

Too little use is made of the potential of drama and role-play to stimulate creative writing. However, the opportunities provided by ICT are being used well by a number of teachers to encourage pupils to write in different ways. Older pupils especially write independently in other subjects, such as history, geography and science. The library is under-used as a teaching resource, but pupils in Year 2 and upwards know how to use information books.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils present their work well, which contributes to its accuracy.
- Teachers do not use a sufficient variety of strategies at the start of lessons to improve pupils' mental skills.
- Pupils do not apply their mathematical knowledge enough to real life situations.
- Some good use is made of ICT in improving pupils' mathematical skills.

Commentary

58. As at the last inspection, pupils' overall attainment is below average in Years 2 and 6, though there is a wide range of ability, but with a very small minority of pupils reaching the higher levels. On average, boys do not achieve as well as the girls by age seven and there is a significant difference in their performance, but they recover ground in Years 3 to 6 and then surpass the girls. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall given their well below average attainment on entry to nursery. There are signs of improving standards in the current Year 6 compared to the previous year and this is due to better tracking of the pupils' progress, better record keeping and the use of ICT to re-inforce and extend their learning.
59. Year 2 pupils are gaining a good understanding of two-digit place value, but as yet, many find difficulty in writing down three-figure numbers correctly. They are progressing steadily in calculations involving addition and subtraction to 20, but several work inaccurately when dealing with more than two sets of numbers, particularly where there are mixed addition and subtraction signs in the equation. Many Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of probability, but sometimes choose over-complicated methods to work out answers in mental calculations, which can lead to inaccuracies.
60. The teaching of mathematics and pupils' learning are satisfactory across the school. Teaching is occasionally good. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teacher made very good use of biscuit and chocolate packaging to consider ways of adding up quickly by examining the lay out of the biscuits in the box and pupils made the connection with multiplication. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring new skills and in gains in understanding, but several lack confidence when working independently and need support. Teachers manage the pupils well and so they are well behaved. They quickly settle them down at the start of lessons, although they do not draw on enough different starter activities to promote pupils' mental skills and, as a result, pupils are not as sharp as they could be in working out examples in their heads. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils facilitate a good flow to lessons, help pupils to enjoy

their activities and to work purposefully and with a good effort. Pupils enjoy sessions in the computer suite. Good use is made of individual pupil whiteboards in mathematics lessons, so that the pupils' minds are kept alert as they record answers individually, and sometimes after thoughtful discussion with a partner. In the written and practical mathematics activities they undertake, there is usually a good match of work to pupils' different needs. The pupils with English as an additional language or with special educational needs are supported effectively, though in some lessons seen, the pupils of a higher ability could have been challenged more effectively. Whilst marking is up to date, teachers' efforts are not always rewarded because pupils rarely correct errors so that they profit from their mistakes.

61. Most pupils take care with their work and placing neatly formed numbers centrally in the squares of their exercise books contributes to the accuracy of what they do, although in some work, better use could be made of rulers to improve presentation. Pupils with special educational needs, however, often find it difficult to record their work neatly, although they try hard.
62. The leadership and management of mathematics are satisfactory. A good curriculum has been established and recent initiatives have improved the quality of weekly and medium-term planning, which are now good. Monitoring of standards across the school is developing well. Some recent shared work with local education authority advisory support has proved profitable and shown the way forward. The subject leader has a clear plan of action for improvement in the subject. Record keeping and target setting have improved in the past two years and these combined procedures now give teachers a clear analysis of the pupils' progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Satisfactory use is made of mathematics in other subjects. Developing use of ICT consolidates and extends pupils' mathematical understanding, as in their understanding of symmetry. Pupils measure and record results in tables and graphical form in science and learn to read co-ordinates in geography. They apply sequence of pattern in their artwork and consider proportion as when drawing facial features.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have positive attitudes in the subject and achieve well.
- There is good curriculum coverage with a good emphasis on investigation.

Commentary

63. Pupils make good progress in science throughout the school and their learning is good. They generally achieve well by the end of Years 2 and 6, particularly in investigative work, where the common sense approach of many of the pupils lends itself to practical activities. The good progress they are making is leading to improving standards in the subject, although the most recent results in national tests were well below average. Observation of lessons and pupils' work show that pupils are working well and record their work carefully. Pupils' attainment is, however, remains below average, as at the last inspection. Pupils perform much better in lessons and in recording their findings than they do in tests, where their comprehension skills and lack of vocabulary affect their performance. Over time, girls have performed significantly better than the boys in national tests at age 11, although there is no significant difference between different ethnic groups. No noticeable difference was noted between girls' and boys' attainment during the inspection.

64. The quality of teaching is good overall. Pupils' enthusiastic response in lessons and the good progress they make are a response to this. In the best lessons there are high expectations, teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan their lessons well. Challenging questions are asked and lessons are well planned. Activities build on previous work so pupils can use prior knowledge and understanding to help their learning. All teachers make good use of resources and organise them efficiently. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Work is marked consistently and there is an emphasis on the correct spelling of scientific vocabulary, which many pupils find difficult to learn and retain.
65. Learning is good. Pupils are well motivated to work. Most maintain concentration and work with interest and enjoyment. Most pupils are able to answer questions confidently. They collaborate well and have good relationships with their teachers. Some good use is made of other subjects within science work. Pupils record their work in a variety of ways and the effective use of charts, tables, graphs, written accounts and diagrams helps to develop numeracy and literacy skills. Older children make some good use of ICT skills. Pupils use the Internet effectively to research their work and they have acquired good skills in using a digital camera to record their observations and in storing them on the computer for their work in science.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The temporary, acting subject manager is well supported by experienced senior staff, who have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. The scheme of work has been thoroughly revised to accommodate the single-age classes and good plans guide all the work. Teachers undertake some assessments at the end of study units and these help to track pupils' progress. The use of these records is increasingly being incorporated into the planning. There is a clear vision and enthusiasm for the development of the subject and this is reflected in the improving standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory.
- The accommodation makes a good contribution to the progress pupils make.
- Pupils are often slow with keyboard skills and they have limited computer knowledge.
- Pupils have not yet undertaken any monitoring work with sensing equipment.

Commentary

67. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in ICT across the school, but standards of work are below expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Nevertheless, there are signs of improvement. Much has happened to increase provision since the previous inspection and considerable effort has gone into developing the facilities for teaching computer skills.
68. There are still variations in the confidence and competence of teachers despite the training received, but overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. On occasions pupils make good progress in the use of ICT to communicate ideas, so that by the time they are 11, they are able to use multi-media packages to design presentations, using text and graphics. Pupils from Year 2 upwards use the Internet with increasing confidence to find out information. Standards in other aspects of ICT are not as good. Year 3 pupils struggled to retrieve their digital photographs from the computer memory base and also later in the lesson in re-sizing them and their word-processing skills were laboured. Nevertheless, teachers are increasingly providing opportunities for pupils to record the results of investigations by creating tables, charts, graphs and spreadsheets on the computers. Older pupils have used control devices

satisfactorily to operate lights and to make and modify series of instructions to operate simple robots. No work has yet been done using sensory equipment.

69. The relatively new subject leader has made a satisfactory start to developing the subject and is leading and managing the subject satisfactorily. The curriculum is now secure and meets requirements in all respects, except where specialist equipment, such as sensing materials is awaited. Appropriate software has been purchased. The new suite of computers is well organised and is still being improved. The training that all teachers and teaching assistants have received has improved their competency and increased their confidence. The involvement of a learning support assistant, who has a special responsibility for assisting with ICT, is proving to be a very valuable asset to teachers and pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Word-processing programs are being used satisfactorily to develop writing across the school, although a few teachers make insufficient use of these resources for pupils to draft their ideas. There is satisfactory use of ICT to support learning in other subjects through the use of the Internet to research information and to make presentations. Software in art helps pupils to design in the style of famous artists. Increasing use is being made of computers to consolidate and develop mathematical concepts, such as symmetry.

HUMANITIES

Geography, history and religious education. One lesson was observed in each of geography and history and three lessons in religious education.

70. **Geography** was not an inspection focus and attainment and achievement were not judged. Only one lesson was observed. The major focus in this lesson was to develop ICT skills as a follow-up to geographical work conducted in the local area. Pupils were being taught to combine photographs of the local environment with their own text. Evidence indicates that satisfactory attention is given to geography with pupils gaining basic skills in understanding maps of the local area and of the British Isles. They gain some understanding of simple physical geography and places with different climates and life style by the end of Year 6. Younger pupils begin to develop environmental awareness through giving their opinions of the facilities locally.
71. Only one lesson was seen in **history**. Pupils showed interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject. They displayed good understanding of the Celts, as they researched the Celtic way of life. Older pupils are developing good research skills and often continue to put them into practice in their own time. The quality of written work seen ranged in quality but the older, more able pupils produce some good written accounts. Year 6 pupils wrote well presented and informative accounts comparing life in Britain in the 1930s with present day life. There is a good balance of personal accounts, researched work and notes, imaginative writing and illustrative work. Younger pupils develop a satisfactory feeling for time through studies about themselves. Some good links are made with other subjects. Year 6 pupils use their computer skills confidently to research their projects. Observational drawings in art are sometimes based on places and artefacts seen on school visits, which make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of the past.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The well planned curriculum encourages a respect for different faiths.
- Good use is made of resources in lessons to help pupils' understanding.

Commentary

72. Pupils' attainment is in line with local expectations throughout the school and pupils achieve well. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Curriculum provision is much better, now meets the local agreed syllabus and the subject commands its rightful place as a regular feature on all time-tables. Resources have been purchased and these are used to good effect to help pupils' understanding in lessons.
73. Three lessons were observed during the inspection, but insufficient to make an overall judgement on quality of teaching throughout the school. Of these, one was very good, one good and one satisfactory. In all lessons, the teachers made the content interesting to the pupils and engaged their thinking. The pupils made good progress in two of the three lessons in understanding faith and the centrality and importance of holy books. The sampled lessons indicate that the subject is helping the pupils to develop tolerance and a respect for different beliefs. They contributed effectively to pupils' cultural development. In the best of these lessons, pupils learned about the role of prayer in the Islamic tradition. Through the use of a decorative Muslim prayer mat and through playing a recording of the call to prayer, the teacher helped pupils to understand the rituals of prayer and also the prelude to worship at a mosque. Pupils came to appreciate cleanliness as an essential in the pre-prayer ritual. The reading of excerpts from the Qu'ran about prayer helped the pupils to see the connections between the written word and the practice of the faith on the issue of prayer. Good use was made of a Muslim pupil in the class who had brought her father's prayer mat from home. The pupil demonstrated the way that she prayed and the positions adopted on the mat before reading out an excerpt from the Qu'ran in Arabic. The other pupils were enthralled and clapped spontaneously.
74. In another lesson seen, pupils were introduced to the story of creation from Genesis. Respect for holy scriptures was again keenly promoted, and achieved, as the teacher showed her own treasured Bibles that she had been given as a child, one in pictorial form. These were used effectively to discuss the story of creation. Pupils were given an opportunity to give their own views about creation and to express their opinions about the creation story in the Bible.
75. Learning is good. Pupils make good progress in religious education. The work is taken seriously and planned well. The pupils show a keen interest and are well behaved in lessons. They show a good level of respect for different beliefs and are already coming to their own simply reasoned views about such issues as creation and the existence of a God.
76. Leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. The subject leader has done much to improve provision since the last inspection, but does not actively monitor work across the school. Too much of her knowledge about what is happening in religious education is informally gathered without hard evidence.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. No full lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology and physical education and one lesson was observed in music.

77. There are limited opportunities for pupils to use a wide variety of materials in **art** to develop their skills in different techniques, though satisfactory studies are made of the work of famous artists as a stimulus for their own ideas. Some useful links are made with other subjects, such as Year 5's design and completion of an Egyptian wall-hanging as part of their topic on Ancient Egypt. Year 2 pupils have created their own computer designs based on one of Mondrian's paintings. Year 6 pupils used the Internet to research landscape paintings before creating their own. In one part-lesson observed, pupils in Year 4 showed suitable understanding about designing symmetrical patterns and made appropriate colour choices for the pattern and the background. Younger pupils are given opportunities to explore colour and colour-mixing,

resulting in bright, attractive displays such as Year 1's warm and hot colour pictures. Displays of artwork around the school contrast in quality. At their best they enhance the learning environment. The carefully executed and colourful collages in the school hall, depicting the four seasons, provide attractive focal points in the large space.

78. The curriculum for **music** is based on a published scheme, which gives good support to class teachers. In the one lesson observed, Year 1 pupils handled instruments confidently, carefully and were familiar with techniques to produce different sounds. They followed the teacher's guidance well so they controlled timing and the volume of sound satisfactorily. Their evaluations of their own performances, noting differences and comparing the quality of the different sounds they had created were satisfactory. They sing confidently, enthusiastically and harmoniously and their smiles reflect their evident enjoyment. This good attitude to singing was also seen in the good quality in assemblies. A small but successful choir from the upper school practises after school and it has participated in the local music festival. Pupils' musical experiences are enriched by links with the Berkshire Musical Trust, whose members organise workshops and demonstrations for pupils. Recently, involvement in a local cluster has encouraged the setting-up of a recorder club. There are no other opportunities for pupils to learn an instrument. Recorded music plays an important part in school assemblies, but much more could be done to discuss the music and its composer.
79. Pupils' attainment and achievements in **design and technology** could not be judged. Planning evidence available indicates that pupils cover the National Curriculum requirements and make use of nationally produced guidance to plan the curriculum provision. Displays of work and photographic evidence indicate that pupils engage in the full design process, as in designing, making and evaluating sandwiches in Year 3 and biscuits in Year 5, including research and evaluation of the packaging. Good use was made of instructional writing after completion of hat making designs from various fabrics in the upper juniors.
80. It was only possible to observe one lesson in physical education during the inspection so that no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching or overall provision. It is clear from the time-tabling arrangements that the school places a good level of importance on pupils receiving frequent opportunities for physical exercise and a chance to develop their skills. All pupils have three physical education sessions per week, including one lesson outside on the field or playground. One of these is taken by a specialist teacher from the secondary school, which helps to forge good links between the schools. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have regular swimming lessons. There are few opportunities for physical activities after school hours, although this has been identified as a point for future development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All classes undertake regular lessons.
- The school has been successful in obtaining a healthy school's award.

Commentary

81. The school gives a good emphasis to developing pupils' personal, social and health education development and takes this subject seriously. It contributes significantly to the pupils' respect for each other, for themselves and for their surroundings. Pupils look after their school and its grounds and, as a result, it is free from litter and graffiti. A recent litter-picking operation in the school neighbourhood was designed to influence the local community in this regard and obtained good support. There is a good emphasis on healthy eating, which has enabled the school to obtain the bronze award and it continues to work for further awards in this regard. There is satisfactory drugs and sex and relationships education content. The school uses

published material to guide its personal, social and health education programme, but realises that this is now in need of revision to create a better structured programme across the school and to provide better resources to accompany the work.

82. A good development has been the school council. Their work and suggestions are taken seriously. A school council meeting observed was successfully chaired and managed by the pupils themselves. In this, class representatives discussed the fruit they would like to be available at playtimes, having discussed favoured choices with their class colleagues. A further useful school development has been the extra provision for a few chosen children to take part in a social skills course led by an external teacher. This work is helping them to develop sharing and co-operative skills.
83. One personal, social and health education lesson was observed in which the teaching was satisfactory. Pupils discussed issues to do with right and wrong and making correct choices. They listened very carefully to each other's contributions and the teacher got over the idea that listening to others could make them change their viewpoint. In a brief visit to another lesson, the focus of work was largely geographical, as pupils gave their views in turn about local photographs of the area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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