

INSPECTION REPORT

THEALE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 109980

Headteacher: Mrs Karen Williams

Lead inspector: Mr Peter Kemble

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 June 2004

Inspection number: 258177

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

© Crown copyright 2004

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	243
School address:	Church Street Theale Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG7 5BZ
Telephone number:	0118 9302239
Fax number:	0118 9304232
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Penny Myers
Date of previous inspection:	22 February 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Theale Church of England Primary School is an average sized primary school for pupils aged 3 to 11. There are 243 pupils on roll. Twenty-eight children attend part-time in the nursery. Twenty-nine children attend full-time in reception. Numbers have increased since the previous inspection due mainly to the school's good reputation within the local area for the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of special educational need is well above the national average with a significant number of these pupils joining the school in years other than reception. The vast majority of pupils are from White British ethnic backgrounds, with a small percentage of pupils from a variety of minority ethnic families. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is well below average. Pupils are drawn from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average reflecting the high number of parents who work in order to meet the high cost of housing within the area. Levels of attainment of children into reception are typically average with significant variations over time.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7269	Mr Peter Kemble	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Music Physical education English as an additional language
9334	Mrs Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector	
32263	Mrs Caroline O'Neill	Team inspector	Foundation stage Design and technology Religious education
17907	Mr Mike Bowers	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs
23204	Mrs Christina Wojtak	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography

The inspection contractor was:

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
LANGUAGE AND LITERACY CENTRE	19
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	35

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Theale Church of England Primary School is a good school with significant strengths in provision. It provides **good value for money**. The headteacher, governors and staff work very well together to promote pupils' academic and social development. Pupils benefit from a very good climate for learning and high standards of care, support and guidance and these contribute significantly to their good achievement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Virtually all pupils achieve well.
- Standards in speaking and listening, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education are above average.
- Standards in mathematics are below average in Years 1 and 2.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Opportunities are missed to help children in the Foundation Stage to become independent learners.
- Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good.
- Assessment information is not always used well enough in foundation subjects* to regularly challenge all pupils, and the more able in particular.
- Pupils benefit from a very good programme of extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers who lead subjects are not always sufficiently rigorous in evaluating the effectiveness of their colleagues' lesson plans and teaching.

(*Foundation subjects: art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.)

The school was previously inspected in February 1999. Since then, improvement has been good, notably in the quality of teaching and learning, procedures for monitoring and evaluating the success of the school and curriculum planning. Improvements have led to pupils' good achievement, particularly in writing, science and information and communication technology. In response to other issues raised in the previous report, pupils now achieve well in geography. Subject leaders now have a better knowledge and understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects but do not have enough opportunities to regularly work with colleagues and observe them teach.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well when compared with their levels of attainment on entry into reception. Standards of the current Year 6 pupils are average in English and mathematics. They are above average in speaking and listening, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education and pupils achieve well. Standards in all other subjects are average. Standards of the Year 2 pupils are above average in science, art and design, design and technology and physical education. Standards are average in speaking, listening, reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Standards in all other subjects are average.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, children's achievement is satisfactory overall. It is very good in personal, social and emotional development and good in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. It is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical and creative development.

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; attendance levels are above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching is **good** overall and is particularly strong in Years 3 to 6 where expectations are highest. Improvements to teachers' planning and a more thorough analysis of school and national test and assessment data have led to good learning. However, there is work to be done in making sure that levels of challenge are consistently high in all subjects. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall; literacy skills are taught particularly well and relationships are very good but pupils are not given enough opportunities to work independently. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a very good range of extra-curricular activities. There is a strong and successful emphasis on extending learning through links between subjects due to the recent implementation of an innovative approach to curriculum planning. Standards of care are **very good**. The school's partnership with parents is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher provides **very good** leadership. She successfully promotes a strong commitment to educational inclusion, equality and pupils' personal development as ways of raising standards further. Management by key staff and governors is **good**, leading to the implementation of appropriate priorities and action in the school development plan. All statutory requirements are met. However, teachers who lead subjects do not always monitor their colleagues planning and lessons with sufficient rigour. Staffing, resources and accommodation are used well to implement action, although better use could be made of non-teaching staff in the Foundation Stage to help children become independent learners.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the work of the headteacher, staff and governors. Pupils are very keen to come to school and express considerable satisfaction with all aspects of school life.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2
- Create more opportunities in the Foundation Stage classes for staff to help children to become active and independent learners
- Improve the effectiveness of assessment procedures in the foundation subjects to provide more opportunities for pupils, and the more able in particular, to follow their own lines of enquiry, solve problems and devise their own investigations
- Ensure that co-ordinators are sufficiently rigorous when evaluating the quality of teachers' planning and lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is **good**. It is **satisfactory** in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Achievement for pupils with special educational needs is **good** in all classes. Standards in speaking and listening, science and information and communication technology are **above average** in Year 6. In Year 2, standards in science are **above average**. Standards in mathematics are **below average**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Virtually all pupils make good progress in English, science and information and communication technology.
- Pupils in Year 6 attain standards above expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education.
- Pupils do not apply literacy and numeracy skills well enough to problem solving situations.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans.

Commentary

1. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development and well in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Progress and achievement in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development are satisfactory. Basic skills are taught well but not enough activities help children to be fully active and independent learners.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
---------------	----------------	------------------

reading	14.6 (14.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.0 (12.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.8 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- In the 2003 end of Year 2 national tests and assessments, standards were well below average in reading, and below average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below average in all three subjects. Standards of the current Year 2 pupils are above average in science, average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and information and communication technology, and below average in mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.8 (26.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (25.4)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (26.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Results of the end of Year 6 national tests over time show that they are rising broadly in line with the national trend since 1999. In 2003 they were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. When these results are related to those that pupils achieved in 1999 at the end of Year 2, achievement is above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Indications are that pupils have achieved similar standards in the 2004 end of Year 6 national tests. Challenging targets set by the school for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics were met.
- Standards of the current Year 6 pupils are above average in science and information and communication technology, and average in English, mathematics and religious education. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls.
- Good achievement is the result of good teaching, a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem in order to develop positive attitudes to work, and effective use of assessment in English and mathematics to challenge pupils to do as well as they can. Achievement is not so strong in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 mainly because, over time, teachers' high expectations of pupils' personal development have not matched expectations of their academic development.
- However, during the inspection there was evidence of a significant improvement in pupils' progress and achievement in all classes, and particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. The school has appropriately identified that many pupils do not apply skills learned in literacy and numeracy lessons effectively enough to problem solving situations. Improvement is the result of a whole-school curriculum initiative intended to provide more relevant links between subjects to help pupils transfer skills from one subject to another more successfully. For example, pupils' writing standards have made a very good improvement in all classes over the last two years.

7. In subjects where pupils achieve well, such as science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education, teachers successfully take advantage of many pupils' preference for practical activities. Attainment in these subjects reflects the fact that the school has a high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, many of whom join the school in years other than reception, and who initially have poor attitudes towards academic subjects.
8. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve standards close to the national averages in English and mathematics. Almost all make good progress in their learning to achieve well over time. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make good progress to develop more appropriate attitudes towards school life, their classmates and the adults who work with them. They respond well to the positive rewards programme designed to help them modify their behaviour. Those pupils with statements in respect of their autistic spectrum disorder cope well in class, learn to concentrate on the current task being attempted and have very good relationships with the learning assistants who work with them.
9. Levels of challenge for pupils of differing capabilities are generally good in Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing, science and information and communication technology. Challenge for the more able pupils is very good in Year 6, but is more variable in all other classes, particularly in the foundation subjects when all pupils are set similar tasks.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, cultural, social and moral development is **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour enable them to make good progress because they are highly motivated and eager to learn.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves promote a positive learning environment.
- Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good and contributes very effectively to pupils' personal development.

Commentary

10. Pupils and parents express positive views about the school. Parents are pleased that their children are happy and enjoy school. They feel that teachers' encouragement and high expectations help their children to develop confidence, work hard and achieve their best. As a result they make good progress. Pupils are very enthusiastic. They like the 'friendly school... we do nice work... we like to learn things and it's fun.' They find the teachers 'helpful' and enjoy meeting their friends. Inspectors endorse these positive views.
11. The children in the nursery and reception classes are developing very positive attitudes to their work and are on course to exceed the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development by the time they enter Year 1. An atmosphere of purposeful

concentration contributes to their learning and achievement. They show confidence and enjoyment in their different activities and lessons, and are learning to share their toys and resources.

12. The behaviour of the majority of pupils continues to be very good both in lessons and around the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. There are a small number of pupils with challenging behaviour who sometimes cause disruption in lessons. Class teachers generally manage these situations very well. Other pupils have a mature response and are tolerant of these disturbances, recognising that some pupils have complex special educational needs, 'although they can sometimes be disruptive they should be given a chance'.
13. Harmony is a strong feature of the school with pupils from different backgrounds well integrated into school life. There are effective procedures for dealing with any incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour. Pupils report that although there are some minor bullying issues, 'mostly name calling', these are not serious. They know who to go to if they have a problem and feel that the school has good systems for dealing with incidents. Pupils respond very well to the house system, reward programme and 'golden time', and feel these motivate them to work hard and behave well.
14. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils' gain a good understanding of their own religion and of others through assemblies and the sensitive delivery of religious education lessons, which help to develop pupils' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness. A well-structured programme within personal, social and health education lessons and citizenship enables pupils to show great respect for the values and beliefs of others.
15. Moral development is very good. Pupils respect the code of conduct which they have helped to devise, know right from wrong and are fully aware of how their actions affect others. The weekly Good Work assembly encourages pupils to recognise and celebrate others' achievements. Pupils gain an awareness of the elderly and others less fortunate than themselves through their support of charities and visits to an old people's home. The good behaviour of pupils in and around the school is a result of their developing self-discipline and continues to be reflected in no pupils being excluded from the school.
16. Social development is particularly well developed. It results in constructive relationships being forged, both between staff and pupils and amongst pupils themselves, and a good working environment, all of which have a positive impact on achievement. Pupils accept responsibility readily and complete any tasks they have been given conscientiously. The house system works very effectively in promoting team spirit. The school council engenders a good awareness of others and how members can meet the needs of pupils in the school. The older pupils are very caring of the younger ones.
17. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. There is a rich curriculum provision offered through music, art, dance and drama, and involvement in various local festivals, competitions and use of outside specialists. Although the school has few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds it seeks to promote pupils' awareness of cultural diversity through a range of curriculum developments, displays, projects and visitors.

Attendance

18. Attendance is good and above the national average. Most absences are due to a small number of pupils with irregular attendance, and to parents taking their children on holiday in term time. Most parents are conscientious in contacting the school when their children are away and bring their children to school punctually in the mornings. However, a small number of parents bring their children to school late on a regular basis, interrupting the start of the day for the rest of the class. The school monitors attendance appropriately and has good links with the educational welfare officer, who follows up absences and causes of concern.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.3
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.

Exclusions

No pupils were excluded during the previous academic year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. The quality of teaching and learning is **good**. Curriculum provision is **good**. Standards of care are **very good**. The school's partnership with parents and its links with the community are **good**.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall. It is particularly strong in Years 3 to 6 and in all classes for pupils with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well prepared and organised, with good quality resources available for pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good teaching in classrooms and in withdrawal groups.
- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils.
- Opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to be responsible for their own learning.
- Assessment information is not always used well enough to regularly challenge all pupils in foundation subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
-----------	-----------	------	--------------	----------------	------	-----------

2 (5%)	12 (24%)	24 (49%)	11 (22%)	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.

19. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. Planning in the nursery and reception classes is based closely on national guidelines with activities that successfully promote the nationally expected early learning goals. Promotion of children's personal, social and emotional development is very good. Children make good progress and achieve very well in both classes as a result of high standards of care and activities that develop social skills, confidence and self-esteem. Effective use is made of assessment information obtained soon after children start school to plan individual programmes of work but at present too many activities are taught on a whole-class basis.
20. The nursery and reception classes share the same classroom spaces as a result of re-organisation of Foundation stage provision last year. The quality of teaching and learning is steadily improving as staff continue to evaluate the most effective ways to work together in this arrangement. For instance, a high priority is being given to establishing how best to use the talents of the nursery nurse and teaching support assistants to help children to be active and independent learners.
21. In Years 1 and 2, many of the activities planned for pupils are interesting and motivating and this is one reason why most pupils have good attitudes to their work and behave well in lessons. Tasks planned are not always sufficiently challenging and so over time pupils' progress and achievement are only satisfactory. During the inspection, however, the majority of lessons were judged to be good and it is clear that a recent initiative to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills more effectively through other subjects is having a positive impact on the effectiveness of teachers' planning and levels of challenge for pupils of differing capabilities.
22. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching and learning is good, and often very good. Pupils make good progress and achieve well because teachers' expectations of what they can achieve are high. Assessment information is used well to plan challenging tasks for pupils of different capabilities in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, and standards are showing an improvement as a result, particularly in the number of pupils working at higher levels.
23. In Years 1 to 6, pupils benefit from resources of good quality which are well prepared beforehand so that there are very few unnecessary interruptions to their learning. This was clearly evident in a Year 6 art and design lesson as pupils worked on woven patterns using ideas from Aztec designs. Learning moved on at a good pace because of the range and accessibility of appropriate resources.
24. In all classes, teachers develop very good relationships with their pupils. They give a high priority to the promotion of pupils' personal development and equality of opportunity. The establishment of a positive rapport with pupils is successful in encouraging good levels of concentration and effort. This was a characteristic of virtually all lessons seen during the inspection, with pupils responding keenly to the challenges set by their teachers. Year 5 pupils made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of mountain environments because they responded well to their teacher's enthusiastic style and concentrated well as a result.

25. Teachers make good use of assessment information in English and mathematics to match activities to pupils' needs and to help them know what they need to do to improve. Assessment procedures in most other subjects are not so well developed. Consequently, a minority of lessons tend to be whole-class in method with little variation in the tasks for pupils of differing capabilities and this limits the progress certain groups of pupils can make, particularly the more able. A study of pupils' past work shows that, over time, more able pupils do not have enough special challenges so that they can use their well-developed skills to make choices and decisions for themselves. This is particularly so in mathematics and some of the foundation subjects.
26. Teachers work very well together as a team. The transfer of information from class to class as pupils move through the school is thorough so that skills are developed in a continuous progression. Lessons are planned co-operatively and this helps to ensure there is no unnecessary repetition of learning.
27. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good. Accurate assessments of pupils' current levels of attainment are used very effectively to direct teachers' planning. Learning targets are identified and written into pupils' individual education plans. Teaching in English and mathematics is clearly directed by these targets. They enable teachers to assess the optimum rate of learning each pupil with special educational needs can sustain. Because these pupils have been assessed carefully, their targets are achievable if they work hard; consequently they experience success in gaining new skills and understanding.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is **good**, with strengths in provision for pupils with special educational needs and extra-curricular activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and balanced, providing pupils with a good range of worthwhile learning opportunities.
- An initiative to teach the curriculum in subject blocks meets pupils' needs very well.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities extends pupils' learning.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Provision for more able pupils in mathematics and foundation subjects is not always sufficiently challenging.

Commentary

28. A broad and balanced curriculum provides pupils with a good range of relevant learning experiences alongside the development of positive values and attitudes. Curriculum provision successfully reflects the school's core aim of ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential within an inclusive learning environment. Statutory requirements, including those for religious education and collective worship, are fully met.
29. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is very good in both classes, instilling good

attitudes towards school and learning. Children's physical development is promoted well even though the outside area is not fully developed.

30. Provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education and guidance on misuse of drugs, is good in Years 1 to 6. Well planned activities successfully help pupils to co-operate with others and respect their feelings, to make the right choices for a healthy lifestyle and take responsibility for others, for example, through older pupils acting as 'buddies' to younger children. Staff use many opportunities to reinforce positive attitudes, care and respect for others through their own good example. Their success is evident in the very good school ethos and the positive relationships between members of the school community.
31. Over the last two terms staff have been trialling a curricular innovation to teach some parts of the curriculum in concentrated blocks of time rather than in a series of weekly lessons. This approach is proving to be helpful in enabling pupils to make clearer links than before between literacy, numeracy and activities in foundation subjects. For example, a full week devoted to activities related to design and technology has allowed pupils time to practice and refine their skills in greater depth and to achieve well as a result.
32. The school is very inclusive. For example, pupils with special educational needs achieve well against the targets set for them and teaching assistants are carefully deployed to support them in their achievements. However, the curriculum in the foundation subjects is sometimes delivered as whole-class activities which, although invariably interesting and motivating, do not always help more able pupils to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding by making choices and decisions for themselves.
33. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully included in the planned curriculum. Staff ensure that activities respond to pupils' needs and aptitudes. Very good direction is identified in the good quality individual education plans. The balance between whole-class activities and small group sessions is effective, helping pupils to form positive relationships with other pupils and feel good about themselves because they are making progress. Often, good quality worksheets and resources are written or collated by staff to respond to pupils' specific needs.
34. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties follow carefully planned programmes to help them identify the progress they are making to modify their behaviour. This helps them to become more positive class members and form positive relationships with the adults working with them.
35. Provision for activities outside lessons is very good. Pupils are keen to take part in the wide range of activities offered. After-school sports clubs, musical instrument tuition and homework activities, as well as a study support group, support pupils' learning well and provide opportunities for them to further develop interests and talents. Good use is made of resources outside school, for example, a variety of educational visits, both day and residential, and visits by specialists.
36. The quality and quantity of resources are good and curriculum co-ordinators are effective in ensuring all areas of the curriculum are well resourced. An automated library system, which is linked to the information and communication technology suite, provides a good resource to support pupils' research in all classes.

37. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school is divided into three separate buildings, creating difficulties for staff in maintaining strong curricular links between year groups and key stages. However staff work hard to create a stimulating environment through internal displays which celebrate pupils' achievements and maintain a strong whole-school atmosphere.
38. The school is well staffed with an appropriate number of qualified teachers and a generous number of teaching assistants, some of whom provide very good support to individual pupils with special educational needs.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils is **very good**. Pupils feel it is a safe and happy school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a safe, caring and supportive environment where pupils grow into happy and confident individuals.
- Effective adult support helps pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Good induction arrangements ensure pupils settle quickly into school.
- Pupils feel they are consulted and have a voice in the school's decision-making processes.

Commentary

39. The overall provision for pupils' health, welfare and protection is very good. Parents are very pleased that their children are well cared for and supported. Arrangements for child protection and procedures relating to health and safety are well thought through, with the governors taking their responsibility for health and safety issues conscientiously.
40. Induction procedures into school are effectively implemented with good links being established with pre-school playgroups and home visits. Nursery and reception children are quickly integrated into school through the sensitive and caring support of staff and their friendly classmates. The transition to secondary schools is very well managed through regular visits and joint projects with secondary school staff. These arrangements lead to smooth progression for pupils to the next stage of their education.
41. Procedures to monitor and support pupils' personal and academic development and progress are generally good. Pupils are involved in target setting in some academic subjects. However, whilst teachers know their pupils very well there are no formal tracking systems in place to monitor and promote pupils' personal development. The school has good systems in place offering support and guidance for pupils with special education needs and involves various outside agencies as necessary. The school has established good links with parents and involves them in discussions about their child's progress. Parents speak very positively about the school and feel their children are treated fairly.
42. Pupils are very happy at school. They report that the school is very safe and secure. Pupils are confident that there is somebody they can turn to if they have a problem or are unhappy. Opportunities to consult with pupils and to take their views into consideration are very effectively developed, particularly through the school and class council meetings.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about things that have been implemented arising from their suggestions. They feel this has encouraged them to be more responsible and given them a greater voice and involvement in the school's decision-making processes.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents. Links with the community and partner institutions are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a strong supportive parent body and parents generally hold the school in high regard.
- The school is a focus for village life and has forged good links with the local community that help enrich pupils' learning experience.
- Good links with partner institutions promote additional curriculum development and learning opportunities for pupils.
- Parents are concerned about the large numbers in the Year 5 class.

Commentary

43. The school's close liaison with parents keeps them regularly informed and provides them with many opportunities to become involved in their child's education both at home or in school. Arrangements have a very positive effect on pupils' learning and their levels of achievement. Most parents expressed a high level of satisfaction about the work of the school. They consider the school is well managed and find the headteacher and staff very approachable.
44. A small number of parents are concerned about incidents of bullying. Some parents are concerned about the large numbers in the Year 5 class. Inspectors followed up the school's procedures to deal with any bullying issues and feel these are good, and that staff take any concerns seriously and deal with them promptly. Whilst Year 5 has large numbers, inspectors judge that good class organisation, teaching strategies and use of additional adults are effective in providing a suitable education for Year 5 pupils.
45. A small number of parents are concerned that they are not kept sufficiently well informed about their child's progress. Inspectors do not support this view. General information for parents is good. Regular newsletters keep parents updated and well-informed about different school activities. Curriculum information is circulated termly and enables parents to see what their children are learning at school so they can help them at home. Parents' consultation meetings are well attended. Information evenings and parents' support group meetings are popular as they offer guidance and keep parents updated on new developments and important events. The annual Family Day is very successful with a large number of parents visiting and becoming involved in lessons and other activities. Staff and governors effectively consult with parents about different issues via questionnaires. Information from these keeps them updated and they act on the responses.
46. Annual reports to parents are good, clearly stating what pupils know, can do and understand and identifying targets for improvement. However, parents are not given an

indication of their child's level of achievement according to what is expected of a child of its age or against national averages. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their child's progress and are involved in the review processes.

47. Parents are invited to help in the school and a small number of volunteers – including governors and grandparents - offer their support on a regular basis by listening to reading, helping out in the classroom or on trips. Parents are generally very supportive of the school and involved in their child's learning. There is good support by parents, grandparents and local villagers for school productions, sports days, and other events. The Friends of Theale school association is run by an enthusiastic group of parents and staff who organise a large number of social and fund raising activities each year, contributing significant funds for the school. For example, a Bingo session is one of the highlights of the village calendar. Money from this event has been effectively used to purchase playground equipment, lunchtime tables and benches and help fund the building of a covered walkway.
48. Whilst the school has maintained strong links with local community, links with local businesses are limited and links with the local church are not as strong as they used to be. The school is involved in an effective partnership arrangement with a cluster of neighbouring primary schools. This helps to facilitate activities, both on a management and an academic basis, by helping to promote sporting programmes, provide resources for more able pupils and through various staff development opportunities. Links with the local secondary school are well developed and include opportunities for pupils to visit in connection with sports, science, English and mathematics. Year 7 teachers visit and introduce transitional topics at the end of Year 6, helping to ease pupils move to the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership, management and governance is **good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A firm commitment to the welfare and emotional well being of every individual in the team is at the heart of this school.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Governors are very well led and fully involved in school life.
- Provision for special educational needs is very well led and managed.
- The development of a more creative approach to the curriculum is helping to raise standards.
- Standards in mathematics in Years 1 and 2 have not improved since the last inspection.
- Re-organisation of provision in the Foundation Stage is limiting children's progress in some areas of learning.

Commentary

49. A firm commitment to including all individuals in the context of a Christian ethos is evident in the way that pupils, parents, staff and governors are treated. This owes much to the very effective leadership of the headteacher, who is perceptive, well organised and communicates extremely well. She has a high profile in the school and has a great many strengths. Her leadership style is marked by an excellent vocation to develop individuals which promotes a culture in which personal growth is highly prized. Her vision is shared by key staff and governors and is central to all decisions taken.
50. The vision has not been fully realised since the last inspection in its impact on learning because of the barriers to raising achievement faced by the school in the past. However, a settled staff over the last two years has resulted in a strong team pulling together in the same direction. As a result, pupils' standards in several curriculum areas have improved significantly during that time. Good progress has been made on the issues identified at the previous inspection. There is still more work to be done in improving standards in mathematics and in completing the re-organisation of provision in the Foundation Stage. A new plan for the checking the effectiveness of provision in curricular areas has been developed as part of the school's response to these weaknesses in provision. The plan is welcomed by staff, who are looking forward to further raising standards in their subject areas, particularly those of the more able pupils.
51. Governors have a good working knowledge of the school's strengths and know where improvements are needed. They have played a key role in supporting developments. They have actively promoted the close relationship between the school, the church and the community. The chair of governors is very good at ensuring that everyone gives voice to their opinions and that decisions are agreed democratically. Very good attention is paid to the welfare of staff, helping to create a happy atmosphere in the school. Staff report that they feel valued. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well, including those in relation to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex education.
52. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is led and managed very well. Much has been accomplished due to very strong leadership and teamwork amongst all staff. Careful monitoring of progress and effective assessment procedures provide valuable information on pupils' progress. The school has a number of intervention programmes planned very efficiently so that pupils do not miss out on other lessons. Parents report that the school includes pupils of differing capabilities very well.
53. Performance management is effective in focusing attention on areas where professional development is needed. Management procedures to check the quality of teaching and learning have been effective in identifying inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. Effective action has been taken, for instance through training, support for teachers in the classroom and careful deployment of skilled staff, but some variations remain. As a result, the headteacher has implemented more rigorous procedures, with a closer focus on the link between teaching and learning. Management systems ensure that day-to-day administration is very effective. The school office works efficiently as an administrative centre and as a focal point for parents, staff and visiting governors.
54. The school is making good use of self-evaluation procedures and assessment of pupils' performance to identify areas for improvement and to target resources efficiently and effectively. Subject co-ordinators generally do this well, linking their findings to the school's overall development plan. As a result, the school development plan is a

thorough document that includes appropriate targets for further improvement. A good example is the effectiveness of the development of the use of information and communication technology throughout the school and the innovative approach to curriculum planning.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	646,774
Total expenditure	594,617
Expenditure per pupil	2,563

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	54,300
Balance carried forward to the next	52,000

55. Financial control is very good; the budget is fully linked to strategic planning for the future. The school has avoided a deficit budget and decisions are prudent and visionary. Funds have been used to significantly enhance resources for learning, particularly in information and communication technology, and to develop the professional expertise of staff so that pupils' needs can be met more fully. The school gives good value for money.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Effectiveness of provision in the Local Education Authority Language and Literacy Centre based at the school.

Provision in the Language and Literacy Centre for pupils with dyslexia is **very good**.

Mains strengths and weaknesses

- Specific criteria are used to identify pupils to be taught in this centre.
- The leader of the centre works closely with class teachers in the main school.
- Very good teaching ensures that these pupils make considerable gains in all aspects of language and particularly in reading and spelling.

Commentary

56. The quality of teaching in the centre is very good. This is because accurate prior assessments of pupils' language development (particularly spelling and reading) have been completed and recorded in their individual education plans. This enables the teacher to plan lessons that challenge pupils and help them to experience success if they work hard and concentrate.
57. Time is used well with learning tasks being continually changed to ensure that pupils' attentiveness and interest remains high. Exercises, such as 'brain gym', are practised to help pupils remain alert and to extend their powers of concentration. Pupils from neighbourhood school, as well as Theale Primary, are taught in small groups and very good relationships exist between pupils and between adults and pupils.
58. Techniques, such as proof reading, are very effectively introduced to help pupils recognise the patterns of words and to stimulate their visual memory and identify their spelling mistakes. There are very good links between the leader of the centre and class teachers. Consequently, they are able to build on the pupils' skill development in class lessons and continue to raise their self-esteem.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It was reported to be good at the time of the last inspection. While the nursery and reception classes are based together in the same building the management and organisation of children's learning is not as effective as it might be because staff have to look for the most appropriate ways for the two classes to share the same learning spaces.

It was clear during the inspection that provision is improving as organisational problems are sorted out. However, the nursery nurse and teaching support assistants are not fully involved in planning or in making assessments to help adjust planning to suit specific needs. They are not always sufficiently carefully deployed to ensure they have an active part in all lessons. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to good but is satisfactory overall. The achievement of most children is satisfactory, although it is good for children who have special educational needs and for whom additional support is well organised.

Children start their nursery experience on a part-time basis and attend nursery for one year. Admission arrangements to the reception class are staggered, with some pupils attending full-time and others part-time. Children are also admitted to the reception class at different times of the year. Planning in nursery and reception is based on the nationally expected early learning goals, providing children with appropriate activities in all areas of learning. Assessment information is generally used well to match work to individual needs in both classes.

Initial assessments show that on entry to the nursery children's attainment is low in language, literacy and social skills. By the time they enter reception, they have made good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy development, but levels of attainment are generally below those expected nationally.

By the time they enter Year 1, virtually all children are likely to have exceeded the expectations for their age in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. A good number are likely to have exceeded expectations in their physical development. They are likely to have achieved expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world. Achievement in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative development is satisfactory although most children are likely not to have achieved the expected early learning goals in these areas of development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The calm learning environment and social routines promote children's learning very well.
- Relationships are very positive and play a significant part in children's achievement.
- Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good.
- Children are sensitive to the needs and feelings of others around them.

Commentary

59. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are likely to have exceeded the nationally expected early learning goals. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A strong sense of community typifies the nursery and reception classes and each child is treated as a valued member. The children develop warm friendships and seek partners to share an activity.
60. Children with special educational needs are fully included in all areas of learning and are well supported by teaching assistants so that they make good progress. For example, children are helped to play a game with a friend, to take turns and share equipment.
61. From their first days in the nursery, the teacher expects children to follow basic class rules of following instructions, sharing equipment and behaving in a friendly way to other children. All staff do this quietly but firmly, reminding children of what is appropriate behaviour and praising them when they do it right. Children soon recognise that good behaviour is expected and they respond very well. For example, children in the nursery learn to negotiate and share, for instance when hanging up to dry socks they had washed, the children successfully negotiated who should have which peg. In reception, this caring, supportive approach continues well and children make good progress and achieve well. For instance, children are very good at taking turns and sharing out the fruit at snack time.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children listen very well to their teachers and others.
- There is insufficient opportunity for children to use exploration and imaginary play to promote their speaking skills.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise early writing skills are good.
- The teaching of reading skills is not sufficiently systematic in reception.

Commentary

62. Children's achievement is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. However, by the time they enter Year 1, most will not have achieved the early learning goals.
63. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some children have poorly developed speech and language when they join the nursery. They are hesitant to speak and do not have the vocabulary to describe what they are doing. Other children are confident and articulate speakers. Teaching is not always matched to these differing needs. By the end of the nursery year, children are very good at listening to the teacher and she uses spoken language well herself as a good example for children. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to be active participants in conversations and to initiate and practise talking.
64. Both the nursery and reception teachers provide satisfactory opportunities to develop children's early reading skills. Nursery children learn about the different letter sounds by,

for example, collecting a variety of objects beginning with a chosen letter and displaying them on a table. Reception children have a satisfactory understanding of initial letter sounds. More able children are beginning to use their knowledge about letter sounds to work out the final sounds and to build words by putting sounds together.

65. Children are encouraged to look at and read books and know to follow the writing from left to right. Some pupils are not confident about using the pictures in a book to retell the story and even the more able children are not confident readers. This is mainly due to insufficient structure in the methods use to teach reading.
66. Staff value children's early mark-making in the nursery and celebrate achievements by displaying children's writing on the walls and in class books. Opportunities for children to make their own marks and to learn to write their own names are taken every day, for example during self registration, where children write their name or make their mark on a sheet of paper on the classroom door. The teacher plans good opportunities for children to develop writing skills outdoors, for example, forming the letter 'd' on the play yard by painting it with water. She plans a good range of activities which help pupils to develop pencil control.
67. These new skills are not developed sufficiently in reception. The teacher plans writing activities on a regular basis but these do not always meet the different needs of children. For example, more able children write simple sentences, for instance to describe something they like doing in school, but the lack of suitable challenge in the tasks means that their attainment remains below the expectations of the early learning goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children count and use number everyday and this helps them to learn at a satisfactory rate.
- Children are given plenty of practical experiences that help to promote their mathematical understanding but they struggle to write things down.
- Assessments of what children know, understand and can do are not used sufficiently to inform the next stage of their learning and move them on at a faster rate.

Commentary

68. Children's achievement is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. The most able children are set to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1 but a significant number are likely to still be working towards them and attainment is below expected standards overall. Many children have weak writing skills and these slow their progress because they find difficulty in recording their work. Others have had only a short time in reception and have not had enough support in helping them to understand some of the mathematical language.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the nursery, children learn to recognise numbers and clap an appropriate number of times, for example, when playing a game of spinning the arrow until it stops at a number. More able children count one more than a number, for example when another child joins the class after the number of

children present has been noted on the register. Counting skills were practised well when children hung wet socks up to dry and counted them on the washing line. In reception, some children are beginning to learn to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as forward, backward, behind, over and under, to describe position when playing outside.

70. Children in both classes become familiar with number through counting rhymes, singing games and daily opportunities to use counting, for example during registration. However, teachers' regular assessments of children's attainment and progress are not used well enough to make each new task sufficiently challenging. Activities planned are not always relevant to the activities going on in the classroom and, as a result, many children are not sufficiently interested or motivated to learn.
71. Teachers often use their questioning strategies effectively to challenge and help children to learn. Some children respond confidently to these challenges; for example one boy told the teacher that he had counted backwards. Opportunities which encourage children to count backwards are used well in a range of activities and contribute well to children's mathematical understanding. For example, during a physical education lesson, reception children counted backwards from 10 to encourage them to move from lying down to standing up as quickly as possible.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Activities are very practical and relevant to children's own experience.

Commentary

72. Progress in this curriculum area is good and most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children benefit from confident, enthusiastic teaching and interesting activities.
73. Nursery children are provided with a good range of experiences of every-day technology. As a result, they are confident in using computers and develop increasing control of the mouse. They have a good knowledge of how to operate the audio tape player so they can listen to stories wearing headphones. Activities link home and school well. For example, most children had drawn, cut out or noted, with their parents' help, things they use at home to keep themselves and their belongings clean.
74. Children are successfully encouraged to relate their knowledge and experiences to practical activities both indoors and out. For example, the children washed socks in the water tray outside and pegged them onto the washing line to dry. This activity was successful because the learning had a purpose and children make good progress as a result.

75. The reception teacher uses effective questioning to help reinforce children's learning. For example, children successfully identified occasions when they would need to wash their hands. This was directly relevant to their everyday experiences and the activity motivated the children to answer their teacher's questions and extend their vocabulary and knowledge.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use the limited out door area well to develop children's physical skills.

Commentary

76. Children make good progress and achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1 most are likely to have exceeded the early learning goals. The quality of teaching and learning is good and expectations of what children can achieve are high.
77. Nursery children learn and practise their physical skills of co-ordination, control and movement and achieve well because they have frequent access to outdoor activity. The limited space restricts their use of wheeled toys and therefore their movements, limiting progress to some extent in this aspect of development. However, the school has already recognised this need and has good plans to extend the area.
78. Reception children make good progress in developing their physical skills partly because the teacher makes very effective use of the weekly physical development sessions in the hall. Children show great energy and confidence as they use the equipment available to them. Careful planning with a good structure to lessons helps children to make good progress and achieve well.
79. Skilful intervention by the teacher to help all children learn leads to the very good progress made by children with special educational needs. For example, the teacher swapped a small ball for a large foam ball which helped a child with special educational needs to make very good progress in throwing and catching. Children move around the hall in different ways, showing an awareness of space. They respond well to instructions and, as a result of the teacher's careful direction, make their bodies curl up small and stretch out wide.
80. Nursery children are beginning to develop their pencil control by handling and mark-making with a variety of writing and drawing tools. Reception children use tools confidently to cut and join different materials as they make envelopes for their letters in the writing area of the classroom. They are independent and confident in dressing and undressing themselves and the encouragement provided by the teacher and teaching support staff helps children to make good progress.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

There are insufficient opportunities for children to develop their imagination through role-play.

Commentary

81. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning but only a few are likely to have achieved the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1.
82. Although the learning environment is well organised in both classes, it does not have a wide enough range of exciting role-play areas to stimulate children's creativity. As a result, children do not make as much progress as they could in this area. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Activities planned are not always sufficiently challenging or motivating to move children's learning on. The nursery nurse and teaching support assistants are not used effectively enough, for instance to ask enough questions or lead children in creative play.
83. Nursery children are experimenting with different ways of stacking and organising construction blocks in their play. They are beginning to use lines and shapes to represent objects they have observed. They learn to draw accurately with increasing detail, for example, when making observational drawings of pieces of fruit. In reception, children are learning to paint their own portraits although their sense of colour and colour mixing is limited.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing have improved since the previous inspection and pupils now apply their writing skills well in other subjects.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils achieve well in speaking, listening and reading.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The subject is effectively led and efficiently managed.

Commentary

84. Standards vary from year to year because of the larger than average number of children with special educational needs who join the school having started their education in other schools. Standards of the current Year 2 and 6 pupils are broadly in line with the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
85. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6, where most pupils speak confidently, organise their thoughts and debate issues well. Staff work hard to help pupils extend their vocabulary by:

- repeating and explaining unfamiliar words;
- using such strategies as ‘talking partners’ to encourage conversation;
- introducing new vocabulary prior to the start of a project to help pupils with special educational needs and less able pupils understand what is being taught.

86. Pupils achieve well in reading. This is because teachers promote the development of their knowledge and enjoyment of books hand in hand with the development of their reading skills. Standards are broadly average in Years 1 and 2 but many pupils have made good progress in their learning to achieve well by the end of Year 2. Standards are broadly average in Year 6 and pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. More able pupils have well-developed reading skills and express preferences for the work of authors such as Dick King Smith, Roald Dahl and J.K. Rowling.
87. Some very good teaching of pupils with special educational needs in small groups enables them to work out strategies to read words and sentences, and most tackle new reading material confidently. Boys perform better than girls as a result of a concerted effort by the school over the last two years to engage the interest of boys, especially the less able and those with special educational needs.
88. Book displays in classrooms are well organised and the library has a sufficient range of books to stimulate the interest of pupils who have progressed from the school’s structured reading programme. There are good opportunities during the school day for pupils to engage in grouped, paired and silent reading. Teachers have a good understanding of the strategies of ‘guided reading’ sessions which are used well to help pupils improve their reading skills. All pupils are encouraged to read to family members.
89. Staff have worked hard and successfully to drive up standards in writing. These are now broadly average throughout the school, a significant improvement on standards at the time of the last inspection. For example, at the beginning of the year a significant number of Year 1 pupils could only write a few words. By the end of the school year almost all are writing sentences, with more able pupils writing extended sentences. This high level of achievement carries on into Year 2 and, by the end of the year, many pupils extend their writing into sequences of sentences to include a full range of writing styles, such as story writing, diary and letter writing. More advanced pupils extend their use of punctuation to commas, question and speech marks.
90. Many pupils achieve the national standard comfortably but few achieve the higher level. This is because the school does not systematically identify the skills they require to achieve the higher level. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching support assistants and achieve well.
91. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are set interesting tasks and good opportunities are provided for them to write in a range of styles and at length. Very good use is made of information and communication technology as pupils improve style and presentation by word processing their work. A particularly good example is a Year 6 pupil’s philosophical writing:
 “.....There are all sorts of teachers in my life.....There are objects such as books and computers, there are animals and nature and also other people, my friends and family – but there is another teacher that I have not mentioned: Myself.....”

92. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is evident from both lessons and pupils' work that much of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good, with an emphasis on helping pupils to develop their literacy skills through purposeful and enjoyable activities. These characteristics enable many pupils to achieve well. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, the teacher used his own writing at the beginning of the lesson to show pupils how to plan a chapter of an adventure story and make it exciting by careful selection of words, phrases and short sentences. In a Year 3 lesson about letter writing skills, the teacher's enthusiasm carried the pupils forward. They quickly became aware that if they gave an account of their feelings of disappointment when a bouncy castle would not inflate, then this would make their letter of complaint more forceful and effective.
93. Good assessment procedures are used well by staff to plan appropriately challenging work. By Year 6, pupils have learned to assess their own levels of achievement. Very good organisation of pupils with special educational needs into small groups is a further positive outcome of these assessment procedures. Skilled visiting teachers work very well with the groups, providing challenging learning tasks which extend pupils' literacy skills, enhance their self-esteem and enable them to work alongside their classmates. Almost all pupils concentrate well in lessons and work hard. In the occasional satisfactory lessons, levels of challenge are not high enough for some pupils. Sometimes pupils are not properly settled at the beginning of a lesson and consequently are not fully on task and have difficulty concentrating.
94. The subject co-ordinator provides effective leadership and management. She leads staff well in regular monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievements. She has helped to raise teachers' subject knowledge and expertise through the organisation of a significant amount of in-service training and, as a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

Pupils are helped to use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects as a result of good planning. For example, pupils use scientific vocabulary accurately when they write up their experiments. In the humanities, there are good examples of well-written accounts based on independent research in most classes. Word processing is used effectively in history lessons, for instance to create newspaper articles. Pupils extend their writing skills well as they record geographical investigations into location and settlement in the local area.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 2 are below average because teachers' expectations are not high enough.
- The quality of teaching and learning is mainly good in Years 3 to 6 because pupils are given more time to apply their skills independently.
- Investigative work is beginning to be taught well in Years 3 to 6.
- Assessment information is not always used well enough to match work to pupils' needs.

Commentary

95. Current standards are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. At the time of the last inspection, standards were below average in both year groups. Since 1999 standards, as shown by the results of national tests, have risen in line with the national trend by the end of Year 6, but have remained consistently low by the end of Year 2. The 2003 end of Year 6 national tests show standards to be broadly in line with those of similar schools and indications are that the 2004 results are likely to be similar. The 2003 end of Year 2 results show standards well below those of similar schools. There are not as many pupils as might be expected exceeding the expected levels in Years 2 and 6 although there are more pupils in Year 6 working at a higher level than in 2003.
96. There are two main reasons for the consistently low standards and achievement by the end of Year 2. Some of the pupils experience a very short time in reception and do not receive enough explanation and experimentation in order for them to fully understand the language and meaning underpinning mathematical concepts.
97. The second reason relates to the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2. It is unsatisfactory because it does not allow pupils enough time to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding independently. Teaching is well ordered but not exciting, and does not always meet pupils' needs. Pupils are often taught as a large group for much of the lesson. Independent work is often completion of a commercial scheme booklet. This is not wholly satisfactory because the content of the pages is limiting and pupils are not always present when their work is marked.
98. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language generally make good progress because they have good support. Pupils who are slightly better than average do not gain confidence in working with higher numbers and applying their skills. Work for more able pupils is not sufficiently structured to accelerate progress.
99. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is mainly good because pupils are given time to apply their skills. As a result, pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall.

In Years 1 to 6 teaching is effective when:

- Ideas are carefully explained
- Questions are used well to engage pupils' interest
- Activities are well matched to pupils differing capabilities
- Good attention is paid to the correct use of mathematical vocabulary, which pupils use well to explain and discuss their work
- Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to problem solving and logical thinking activities.

It is less effective when:

- Pupils have limited time to record their calculations and to hone their skills because teachers talk for too long
- Teachers' expectations of accurate presentation of work are not high enough.

100. Some very good innovative techniques combining information and communication technology and numeracy were seen in the Year 4 class. Pupils were very pleased to

hear the computer praising them as they got answers right. This added an extra boost to pupils' enthusiasm as they changed positioning decimal fractions on a number line.

101. Teachers use information gathered from good assessment procedures inconsistently. For example, in Year 6, work is matched very well to the needs and interest of their pupils and so they know what they need to do to improve. In Years 1 and 2 this is less effective and pupils are unsure what they need to do next. Marking of pupils' work does not always provide enough guidance on how pupils could improve their work.
102. Throughout the school, there are many skilled teaching support staff who give high quality individual feedback to pupils and use a range of questions to help pupils to make the learning steps they need.
103. The subject co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and management. He is aware that mathematics has not had the same intensive focus as English over the last two years but has evidence to show that a recently implemented approach to problem solving is giving both teachers and pupils more confidence to try out their ideas. The co-ordinator is refining his analysis of pupils' test errors in order to improve identification of skills needing improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

There are sound opportunities for developing mathematical thinking and numerical skills, especially during residential trips. Some very good work by pupils in Year 6 was noted. This was taken from a unit of work on coastal processes and involved such exciting activities as measuring the beach with a combination of tools and equipment. Not only were pupils actively encouraged to work collaboratively, but they were able to work at their own level. However, opportunities are missed in all classes to promote pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science and geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 to 6.
 - Pupils benefit from a strong emphasis on investigations and experiments in all classes.
 - Very good links are made with other subjects of the curriculum.
 - More able pupils do not get enough opportunities to follow their own lines of scientific enquiry.
104. Standards of attainment by the current Year 6 pupils are above average. These reflect the results of the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 6 which were in line with the national average, but above the average of similar schools. Indications are that these good standards have been maintained in the 2004 national tests. Standards are a good improvement on those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Standards of attainment by the current Year 2 pupils are also above average. In both year groups a significant number of pupils are working towards the higher levels of attainment. Activities are interesting and motivating. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good and is one of the main reasons why pupils learn well. Teachers develop pupils' very good attitudes to the subject through their own enthusiasm for the subject and their good subject knowledge. These qualities make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements. For instance, the quality of Year 1 pupils' learning was good as a result of their teachers' careful preparation for, and organisation of, a lesson about the forces of pushing and pulling. Pupils' interest and concentration were effectively established from the start and maintained throughout the lesson.
106. A strong feature of teaching is the way pupils are questioned in order to get them to think. Year 3 pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of light and shadows because they were encouraged to use their previous learning to plan an investigation to predict, and then to test, which materials would form a shadow. Throughout the lesson the teacher and the teaching support assistants moved pupils' learning on at a good pace by use of well judged questions that prompted pupils to make connections between observations and results themselves.
107. Another reason why pupils achieve well is that most activities are linked closely to other subjects of the curriculum. This method of planning helps tasks to be relevant to pupils and increases their interest and motivation. For instance, in an excellent lesson for Year 6 pupils, elements of art and design and history were successfully brought together as pupils studied the construction of a variety of textiles being used in other lessons to weave designs drawn from a study of the Aztecs. Concentration and effort were intense as pupils studied fibres under a microscope linked to a computer, discussed their findings with each other and drew conclusions about the way the different materials had been made.
108. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to learn through practical tasks. This hands-on approach is particularly effective in helping less able pupils and pupils with special educational needs to achieve well by sustaining their interest. Lessons often contain additional support for these pupils from teaching support assistants and from well-prepared worksheets that guide their learning. Levels of challenge are generally good for pupils of differing capabilities in each lesson because teachers make good use of assessment information to match work to their particular needs. However, there are not enough special opportunities each term for the more able pupils in particular to make decisions for themselves about how they might apply their skills, knowledge and understanding, for instance about the form an investigation might take or how results might be recorded, and this limits to some extent the progress that they make.
109. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. She is relatively new to the post and has not had sufficient time or opportunity to gain a clear view of the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' strengths and weaknesses. However, she is successfully supporting staff in the way science is being planned to promote skills in other subjects. The co-ordinator encourages the very effective use of science by all staff to promote pupils' personal development. This approach makes a significant contribution to pupils' standards and achievement through the raising of many pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school and they achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good; pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported.
- Changes related to the implementation of the new information and communication technology suite have been well managed by the co-ordinators.
- Information and communication technology is used well to promote learning in other subjects of the curriculum.
- More able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by their tasks.

Commentary

110. Improvement since the last inspection has been dramatic and pupils' achievement has risen from unsatisfactory to good. Improvement is the result of co-ordinators driving through essential changes and laying strong foundations for further development. Each change has been carefully researched and staff training has kept pace with development. Staff rightly describe themselves as 'open to new developments'. The new information and communication technology suite has been well planned and is housed in the same area as the library. This arrangement has created a useful research area which is helping to raise pupils' reading standards. It buzzes with purposeful activity throughout the day. There is also evidence of effective use of digital cameras around the school.
111. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6. At least a third of pupils are working at a higher level than is expected for their age. Achievement is high because pupils have gained the knowledge they need to use computers as a research tool across the curriculum, as well as experimenting with learning in different ways. Standards are broadly average in Year 2 but assessment information shows that pupils are building a solid foundation in the subject.
112. A new approach to the curriculum, in which individual subjects are given a particular focus each week, is promoting pupils' progress very well because of relevant links with other subjects. Pupils consolidate their learning very quickly and success provides a satisfying experience for them. Older pupils talk confidently about search engines and swiftly locate the information they need. There is no wasted time because research skills have been effectively taught. Work carried out on residential visits is of a very high standard, for instance, helping to consolidate scientific knowledge and understanding.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Expectations are high and methods are well chosen. Teachers are confident in the use of computers and give clear instructions and demonstrations. They allow pupils ample time to investigate for themselves, using the good resources available. Of particular note is the way that pupils with special educational needs are supported. Teaching assistants sit alongside and give additional visual prompts as the teacher is talking. Often pupils demonstrate techniques to the whole group, or by working together in a pair. One pupil told his class about the web site he had developed at home, which led to an interesting discussion about restricted access and Internet rules. However, opportunities are missed to provide regular challenging activities for more able pupils.

114. The subject is well led and managed by the two co-ordinators. They are aware that assessment procedures are detailed but rather time-consuming. They have useful plans to introduce a simpler system which ensures that work is matched more closely to pupils' differing capabilities, particularly those of the more able pupils, and which allows pupils to measure their own progress. The good number of computers in the school means that pupils have regular access to them and a wide range of programs supports their learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

Good use is made of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Classes regularly visit the computer suite for lessons other than specific information and communication technology lessons. Teachers' planning for other subjects identifies opportunities for its use well. Pupils make good progress in the instances when gathering information in preparation for lessons in subjects such as history and geography.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved well since the last inspection and are above those expected by the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- A new curriculum initiative is helping to raise standards.
- Information and communication technology is used well to extend pupils' skills.
- Assessment procedures are not fully developed.

Commentary

115. At the time of the last inspection standards were below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Achievement for the majority of pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, is now good and standards are above those expected in Year 6. Improvement is mainly because as pupils' literacy skills have improved over time, more pupils have had better access to the curriculum, helping them to deepen their knowledge and understanding.

116. The quality of teaching and learning is good and makes a significant contribution to the improved standards and pupils' achievement. Pupils benefit from imaginative planning which goes beyond ensuring full coverage of the curriculum. Teachers use geographical vocabulary and provide good opportunities for language development, for instance by using talking or response partners in class. Local visits enrich the curriculum.

117. Teachers are successful in developing pupils' interest in the subject from an early age. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin acquiring map skills as they familiarise themselves with the islands of Struay and Jamaica. They have great fun finding out about

physical features and show a sound knowledge about places. They know the difference between a seaside location and a river location. When designing a survey, pupils in Year 2 planned their work very well together and enjoyed interviewing pupils from Year 1.

118. Year 3 pupil showed good knowledge about waste pollution as they sorted out rubbish, with one disgusted pupil exclaiming vehemently, "This is the most gross thing I have ever done!" Pupils braved wet weather to visit a local country house and grounds, and showed good skills as they competently mapped out the area. Pupils in Year 5 showed very good interest and concentration when learning about mountain environments and, as a result, learnt the meaning of new geographical terminology such as 'transhumance'.
119. The good attitudes shown to the subject by pupils in Years 3 to 5 is one reason why achievement by the time pupils reach Year 6 is so good. In this year group, pupils draw on a range of skills, knowledge and understanding to study a wide range of subjects in depth. For instance, pupils used their well-developed information and communication technology research skills to find out about life in Mexico City. A study of pupils' past work shows regular use of mathematical skills to plot graphs and measure scale.
120. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and management and has identified significant areas for further improvement. She is aware that assessment procedures are not sufficiently well developed to ensure that pupils of differing capabilities, and more able pupils in particular, are regularly challenged by their tasks. She does not have enough opportunities to see colleagues teach or analyse the effectiveness of their planning. However, the headteacher and governors are aware of this and there are useful plans to improve this situation during the next academic year.

History

121. In history, only one lesson was seen and so it is not possible to make a secure judgement about provision. However, there is every indication from samples of pupils' work, discussions with staff and pupils and the lesson observed that standards achieved by pupils are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils' skills of historical investigation and their knowledge is average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and achieve well. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be below average. Lessons are now carefully planned and adults are much more aware of pupils' levels of prior knowledge and understanding.
122. As a result of studying the life of Florence Nightingale, Year 2 pupils know that she saved the lives of many soldiers during the Crimean War and set up new hospitals. Information and communication technology is used well by pupils to depict Florence Nightingale and her nurses walking the wards in the Crimean hospitals. Many pupils make written comments about how the soldiers would have felt when they saw her coming by the light of her lamp and this work shows an effective promotion of pupils' literacy skills.
123. Well-planned historical projects ensure that older pupils gain clear insights into what it was like to live in the United Kingdom during the Second World War. They understand how the lives of children have changed since then. Year 6 pupils discuss life in Victorian times and are confident and knowledgeable about Isambard Kingdom Brunel and other Victorian inventors and technologists. Good teaching in Year 4 enables pupils to construct their own Roman armour and practise drills and battle tactics. This adds to

their sense of history and helps understand the differences between 'invaders' and 'settlers'.

124. By Year 6, pupils use information and communication technology well to write accounts of Aztec civilisation. Younger pupils apply literacy skills to their research into the Ancient Egyptian civilisation, when they confidently compile their own historical reference books. These include contents, index and glossary pages. Their historical writing is informative, accurate and reflects the pupils' current levels of historical knowledge.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and leads to good achievement.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- Links with the local church are good.

Commentary

125. Standards of attainment are in line with those prescribed in the local Agreed Syllabus for Berkshire. Good teaching ensures pupils achieve well because teachers plan interesting lessons which motivate pupils to learn. For example, pupils in Year 5 talked confidently about a recent project on Judaism. They demonstrated a good understanding of the differences between a synagogue and a church. Children in Year 4 demonstrated a good knowledge of Hinduism as they retold significant stories.

126. The curriculum is well planned to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. This enables pupils to gain a secure understanding of the main events of the life of Jesus and of the main characters in the Bible. There are many opportunities for pupils to discuss Christian values and beliefs, including the manner in which they affect people's lives. There is due emphasis placed on learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures, as was seen in a lesson for Year 6 pupils when they were developing their knowledge and understanding of Muslims by recording the Hajj pilgrimage.

127. The subject plays an important part in pupils' spiritual development. For example, Year 1 pupils were silent as their teacher lit a candle in the classroom. Pupils were confident in explaining that the light symbolised God and had a good knowledge of symbolism within other faiths.

128. There are good links with the local church that help to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. The vicar comes into school to take assemblies and work with pupils while they in turn visit the church to take part in a variety of Christian services and celebrations. Displays of pupils' work in the church provide a good link to the wider community.

129. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. She is experienced, has a good subject knowledge and provides good levels of support and guidance to

colleagues. She maintains a stock of artefacts but recognises more artefacts are needed to support faiths other than Christianity.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

130. Only a limited amount of evidence was gathered about **art and design**, **design and technology**, **music** and **physical education** during the inspection due to timetabling arrangements. It is not possible therefore to make an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.
131. Teachers use all four subjects very well to promote pupils' personal development and this approach makes a significant contribution to the very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in all classes. A study of teachers' planning shows that, although activities are often interesting and motivating, they are often whole-class in method, with very little difference made in the tasks in order to match work to pupils' differing capabilities. Opportunities are missed in this respect to extend learning for different groups of pupils, particularly the more able.
132. Work on display, conversations with teachers, examination of pupils' design books and a study of teachers' planning, indicate that standards in **art and design** are above those expected and pupils' achievement is good.
133. Artwork in Years 1 and 2 is often large and colourful. A wide range of different media is used to produce two and three-dimensional pictures and models. In all classes much of the artwork is effectively linked to classroom projects. For instance, Year 4 pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of habitats as they designed and drew posters illustrating the qualities of desirable habitats suitable for occupation by animals such as slugs, snails and centipedes. Designs by Year 6 pupils in the style of William Morris show very good attention to detail using a range of materials, such as watercolours, inks and paper sculpture.
134. The use of design books is a strength of art and design work throughout the school, successfully encouraging pupils to develop a critical approach to their own work and to make choices about appropriate materials and media. This was clearly shown in Year 6 pupils' Navajo rug designs. Pupils' designs were very individual and used mixed shades of paint very creatively to produce work of a high standard.
135. In **design and technology**, pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Years 2 and 6, most pupils attain good standards. A strength in provision is the link to other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 5 pupils made papier maché masks as props for their Greek drama and used information and communication technology very effectively to plan their designs. Pupils develop their skills by working with a wide range of materials, for example, wood, fabric and reclaimable materials.
136. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' learning is enhanced through food technology, which supports learning in other parts of the curriculum very well. For example, making biscuits related to learning in science about healthy eating helped pupils to evaluate different tastes and preferences.
137. In Years 5 and 6 pupils learn to evaluate their designs and refine the techniques used to design and make things. For example, Year 6 pupils designed posters to advertise a

roller coaster ride which helped to develop an understanding of the language and design of advertisements.

138. A scrutiny of lesson plans, discussions with staff and pupils and evidence from assemblies, indicate that standards in **music** are broadly in line with expectations. A good programme of concerts and performances, visitors, after-school clubs and opportunities for them to combine with pupils from other schools in musical activities extends pupils' learning. A good number of pupils are working at above average levels in their ability to play a musical instrument. String and wind players come together as the school orchestra and are developing a good awareness of performing as part of a group.
139. Good use is made of musical activities to promote learning in other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils made good gains in their awareness that music, like pictures, can describe images and moods. They created a large group painting by illustrating their feelings with patterns and designs as they listened to music.
140. **In physical education**, teachers plan a wide range of physical activities, including a number of extra-curricular activities, which successfully promote pupils' personal development. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem grow as a result of challenging activities and participation in group and team games. Pupils are encouraged to assemble and put away large and small apparatus and cope very well with this responsibility. For instance, Year 5 pupils showed good levels of co-operation and maturity as they prepared equipment at the start of a lesson. Opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their own and others' performance and most do this with thoughtful reflection. Pupils with special educational needs are successfully included in all activities, often with very good help from teaching support assistants. As a result, standards are above those expected by Year 6.
141. Many pupils benefit from participation in sport beyond the school day. The co-ordinator is successfully developing a wide range of activities for pupils in order to extend their skills. The school is very successful in its wide involvement in competitive sports.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

142. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are promoted to good effect through a sensitively planned programme in which, for example, pupils discuss personal responses to a variety of issues that affect their health in an atmosphere of trust and caring. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding from an early age of how to care for themselves. For instance, science lessons promote healthy eating very well. Group discussions feature prominently in PSHE lessons. These help pupils to become confident about sharing their feelings and emotions with others.
143. The school council promotes citizenship well. Representatives take their responsibilities very seriously and class discussions help pupils to present views for and against proposed changes. The school's very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development plays an important part in promoting PSHE and contributes significantly to the very good relationships and pupils' positive attitudes to school life.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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