

INSPECTION REPORT

THOMAS RUSSELL INFANTS SCHOOL

Barton-under-Needwood,
Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124058

Headteacher: Mrs A F Wright

Lead inspector: Mrs P K Parrish

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 April 2004

Inspection number: 258184

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	174
School address:	Station Road Barton-under-Needwood Burton-upon-Trent Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Treanor
Date of previous inspection:	18/5/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thomas Russell Infants' School is located in the village of Barton under Needwood, near the Staffordshire town of Burton-upon-Trent. The school is popular in the locality, with 174 pupils currently on roll and very few vacancies. The school funds a part-time pre-school class from January to July each year and 25 children attend either the morning or the afternoon session but this pre-school class is scheduled for closure in July 2005. Very few pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. There are four single year group classes for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The reception class is taught by two teachers and two nursery nurses. Families using the school represent mixed and wide-ranging social backgrounds but the socio-economic circumstances of most are above average, overall.

On admission to the reception class, the attainments of the children are generally above average. A well below average number of pupils (4 per cent) has special educational needs, generally linked to moderate or specific learning difficulties. No pupil has a formal statement of special educational need. A below average proportion of pupils qualifies for free school meals (3.6 per cent). Pupils are almost all of white British ethnic background, with a small number of pupils of Pakistani or Chinese background in the early stages of learning English.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22380	Mrs Penny Parrish	Lead inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Foundation stage Special educational needs English as an additional language
9327	Mr Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	
18344	Mr David Earley	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Religious education
32897	Mrs Carole Snee	Team inspector	Science Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Thomas Russell Infants is a **good school** that is very popular in the local community. Within a very caring ethos, it provides a good curriculum, with lots of interesting things going on that make children want to learn. The quality of teaching is good, pupils learn well and staff are open to new ideas to help them to provide well for their pupils. The school works in close partnership with parents, with positive benefits for their children's learning. Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are good, and the governing body safeguards the quality of the school very well. At lower than average costs, the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is good; attainments as they start school are above average and these good standards are maintained well.
- Standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics, history, geography and religious education.
- In Years 1 and 2, limited provision for investigative work in science is restricting attainment, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not included sufficiently within all subjects, missing opportunities for further learning.
- The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good because staff encourage and engage their interest very well.
- Provision is very good for the children in reception and they are very well prepared for entry to Year 1.
- The use of assessment of pupils' skills as a basis for teachers' planning is inconsistent and inefficiencies sometimes slow the pace of pupils' learning.

Since the last inspection six years ago, national test results show good improvement, exceeding the national trend. The progress of higher attaining pupils has improved well. Provision for literacy within other subjects, a weakness in the last inspection, has been converted to a strength. Investigative skills in science and the inclusion of ICT within other subjects have been slower to develop than in most schools. Assessment systems are improved but there is still further work to be done on improving the use of information gained within plans for teaching.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	B	C	B	C
Writing	B	C	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils achieve well. A rising trend in standards indicates improvements on the national test results for 2003. For pupils currently in Year 2, standards are well above the national average in **reading and writing**. English is strong because good teaching is supplemented very well by plentiful practice at home. In **mathematics**, standards are above the national average, having recovered from a dip in 2003. In **science**, standards are average, overall, but investigation skills are not developed well enough for higher attaining pupils. Standards are above average in history, geography and religious education. Standards are average in design and technology and in ICT. Overall judgements on standards were not possible for art and design, music or physical education. Children in the

Foundation Stage achieve very well and most well exceed the goals set for the end of the reception year in all areas of learning.

Pupils' enjoy school, they are enthusiastic to learn and their attitudes to work are very good. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good**, with strengths in their moral and social development. Relationships in the school and behaviour are very good; the school is a welcoming community. Pupils are sensitive not only to the needs of others but also to the need to protect their environment, with the school's Silver Eco award a just reward for their efforts in improving the school's grounds. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good, overall, and sometimes very good. Most pupils learn quickly, helped by the enthusiasm that teachers generate for learning. Teaching assistants help to improve the achievement, in particular, of pupils experiencing learning difficulties, ensuring that they attain well. Assessment is not always rigorous enough, however, to make sure pupils are fully challenged.

A lively and interesting curriculum is provided, with a very good range of extra activities, many more than are generally available for pupils in Year 2. Pupils are cared for very well and their welfare is of prime importance to staff. The school's very good partnership with parents is a great asset and extends the pupils' learning and their interest in school very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads and encourages staff well, helping them to follow interests that improve their work. The new deputy headteacher is an enthusiastic partner, rapidly adding value to the school's provision. Management through self-evaluation is generally good, although the agenda set for improvement is sometimes too broad and not all projects are carried through to conclusion. The governing body is very effective and gives a firm and ambitious steer to the work of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold the school in very high regard. A very positive and productive relationship with parents gives substantial support to the school and pupils' learning. Pupils' views matter to staff and good opportunities are arranged for pupils to play their part in leading the school's activities and projects.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Increase the provision for investigative work in science.
- Extend the use of ICT across the curriculum.
- Make sure that teaching is based firmly and more consistently on assessments of the pupils' previous attainment to enable rapid progress for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2, overall, and very well in the Foundation Stage, building effectively on the children's above average standards of attainment on entry to reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 2, current standards in English are well above the national average and above the average for similar schools.
- In mathematics, current standards are above the national average, better than the results in 2003, and average compared to similar schools.
- In science, attainment is limited by insufficient opportunity for the development of investigational skills. Compared to similar schools, standards in science are below average.
- In geography and history, achievement is good and standards are above those expected nationally. In religious education, standards are above those set by the locally agreed syllabus.

Commentary

1. On admission to the reception class, children's attainments are generally above average, particularly with regard to speaking and listening skills. Other skills are less well developed and children have varying pre-school experiences. The relatively small proportion of children who attend the pre-school class in school for one or two terms, make good progress and achieve well. In reception, the quality of teaching is very good and children achieve very well. Most are on course to well exceed the learning goals set nationally for all areas of learning for the end of the reception year.
2. Current standards by the end of Year 2 are above average, overall. High standards in English, showing good improvement on previous results, are supported by thorough assessment systems and good support for reading, especially, from parents. Pupils' very good speaking and listening skills provide a good foundation for all learning. The school is recovering from a recent dip in results in mathematics, where the school identified weaknesses for some pupils in problem solving; pupils are achieving well now that standards are moving forward again. Recent improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics have proved successful, supported by regular assessment and improved marking systems. Boys and girls achieve equally well in most subjects although, similarly to the national picture, girls achieve more than boys in English. There is evidence that this gap is narrowing.
3. Provision for science, information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology is not so successful, but pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall, in these subjects. In science, pupils' achievement is restricted by limited provision for investigational work, affecting the higher attaining pupils in Year 2 especially. Assessment systems in science are not refined enough to pick up this weakness in provision. In ICT, although pupils reach average competence for their age, limited practice across all other subjects of the curriculum restricts pupils' progress. Planning for ICT is not sufficiently rigorous to make the best use of computers available. It is too soon to judge the effects of the school's recent acquisition of an interactive whiteboard for each class.
4. Attainment in religious education, history and geography is above average, supported well by interesting projects, good teaching and visits to local sites of educational interest. In design and technology, standards are average, with strengths in construction skills but with weaknesses in design and review skills. Insufficient evidence was available to make clear judgements on overall standards in art and design, music and physical education.

5. In national tests in Year 2, results show a good improvement since the last inspection although results vary with different cohorts of pupils. The overall trend is upward and ahead of the national trend. Good improvements have been achieved in results for higher attaining pupils, an issue in the last inspection, although there is still work to be done in science. The support for pupils with lower attainment and special educational needs is effective, with systematic extra work with teaching assistants reaping positive benefits and helping standards to show further improvements. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well because they are supported well through the school's good provision for speaking and listening, supplemented by extra support where necessary from teaching assistants.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.9 (16.1)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	16.1 (14.4)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.6 (17.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 60 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The school provides well for their spiritual and cultural development and very well for their moral and social development. Attendance is very good and pupils arrive punctually, well prepared for the day's lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships are very good; pupils and adults work very well together.
- Pupils are very interested in the life and work of the school and this helps them to achieve well.
- Pupils are good at getting on with their work, both independently and collaboratively, and take responsibility willingly and well.
- Most pupils are very confident and have high self-esteem.

Commentary

6. Pupils are eager to come to school because it provides a very interesting range of activities both in and out of lessons. This makes them want to learn and helps them to achieve well. The school works very successfully with parents and pupils to encourage regular attendance and punctuality. The school's strong, caring ethos makes all feel welcomed and encouraged to do their best. Pupils know that they are highly valued and that their efforts achieve respect. This helps to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem very well. Because the school provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to make choices and work without the immediate supervision of the teacher, they learn to become self-reliant and independent. Children in the reception class enjoy organising their own materials for craft work, for example, and devising imaginary stories and plays within role-play areas. Most children well exceed the goals set for personal development by the end of reception. In Years 1 and 2, pupils routinely collaborate well with partners for discussions and are keen to help with day-to-day tasks that help the smooth running of the school. The very good range of clubs and activities outside lessons enables pupils to follow their interests and sustain their very good attitudes to learning. There are no problems with racial harmony; pupils of all backgrounds co-operate equally and very well.

7. Behaviour is very good, the school is a safe and friendly place and pupils are not distracted from their work. Pupils are treated with fairness, honesty and good humour, and learn to treat others similarly. The very good relationships mean that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are helped to comply willingly and well. Parents and pupils report that staff deal promptly and sensitively with incidents of poor behaviour, should they occur, and pupils are helped to reflect on the consequences of their actions.
8. In assemblies, religious education lessons and in subjects such as science and music, pupils benefit from opportunities to enhance their spiritual development. They write their own prayers, for example, and respect the values and thoughts of others. Pupils in Year 2 listened carefully to the opinions of others about the nature of God. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to experience awe and wonder in the world around them. In the pre-school and reception classes, children react excitedly to the prospect of their ducklings and butterflies hatching. In Year 1, pupils plant and nurture seeds with great care, noting the wide range of shapes and colours.
9. The school has a strong sense of community and this is an important element in its very good provision for social development. When a pupil fell accidentally in the playground, for example, she was comforted immediately by another pupil who was passing, and help was easily obtained from an adult. Pupils are well involved in village life and learn about responsibilities as well as enjoyable social occasions, such as May pole dancing. A real strength of the school is the Eco Club, which helps pupils to understand how they can help to safeguard and improve the environment. In addition, the committee of representatives provides opportunities for pupils to develop ideas of democracy and citizenship.
10. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures in subjects such as religious education and geography. The school organised a multicultural week, with visitors such as African musicians and dancers, and opportunities for pupils to taste Indian food. At the appropriate time, the Chinese New Year is celebrated and pupils learn about the festivals of Divali and Holi.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education for its pupils, and provision for the Foundation Stage is very good. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. The curriculum is well constructed and interesting. Provision for English, mathematics, history, geography and religious education is good. The school's partnership with parents is very good and has a positive impact on pupils' achievement, especially in English. The school provides very well for the care, health and welfare of all pupils. Links with the community and other schools are good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good, overall, and very good in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make learning interesting for pupils and they apply themselves very well to their work.
- Teaching assistants add significant value to the pupils' quality of learning.

- Although the use of assessment is satisfactory overall and good in English and mathematics, in other subjects planning for lessons does not build sufficiently well on evidence of pupils' previous learning.
- ICT is not used widely enough in teaching.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	11 (37%)	12 (40%)	6 (20%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

11. Observation of lessons and discussions with pupils and their parents provides ample evidence of teachers' ability, throughout the school, to interest pupils very well in learning. Evidence of school assemblies, led by different classes, records the high level of interest pupils' have in learning and the relevant topics that promote their enthusiasm. Combined with the very good relationships evident in the school and the very good behaviour of pupils, a very good climate for learning is established. Parents support their children's interest in learning well and extra practice at home, in reading in particular, adds significantly to the pupils' success in school.
12. Most teachers show a good command of different subjects, which enables a confident approach and good questioning skills. Teachers pose frequent questions skilfully to get the pupils thinking hard. In a lesson in Year 2, where pupils were studying texts in groups with an adult, very good questioning led the pupils' understanding of their reading forward very well. In a similar lesson in Year 1, however, questions were less well prepared and pupils achieved only satisfactory standards in their reading. Well focused questioning at the start of most lessons establishes good revision of previous learning, setting a clear starting point. Learning objectives, however, are not always so clearly set out and pupils are not always certain of the focus for learning. This limited pupils' achievement in an otherwise satisfactory lesson in English in Year 2. In science, questions for practical investigation by pupils are not set often enough, which is restricting the learning of higher attaining pupils in Year 2 especially.
13. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very good. Learning is made fun, ensuring very good effort and concentration by the children. The different areas of learning are well integrated to make learning relevant and this extends the children's understanding very well. The co-ordinator shows a very good understanding of the needs of the age group and detailed planning is based on continuous and careful assessment of the children's changing learning needs. Very good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures consistently high standards of provision.
14. The school is focused on improving the quality of teaching and regular monitoring of teaching and learning, in English and mathematics in particular, leads to a continuous improvement in standards. Teachers are thoughtful about the ways children learn best and, for example, daily physical exercise sessions are arranged in an attempt to develop pupils' mental strategies. This work has not been fully monitored in order to track its impact on pupils' learning.
15. The use of assessment as a basis for teaching is satisfactory, overall, and has improved to good in English and mathematics since the last inspection. Its effectiveness varies between classes and subjects. Assessments are used very successfully in the Foundation Stage to make plans for future learning. In Years 1 and 2, in subjects other than English and mathematics, teachers' assessments tend to record coverage of the curriculum more than the development of pupils' skills. Prompts used within teachers' planning forms encourage staff to think how to make a task 'harder' or 'easier', rather than to match learning task to

learning needs. So, for example, a writing task for lower attaining pupils was almost the same as that for the rest of the class, with extra support, rather than a considered response to the writing needs of these pupils. The task led to little progress for these pupils. In a science lesson in Year 2, the teacher did not build on evidence of pupils' rapidly developing understanding of healthy eating by setting a more challenging task. The curriculum plans had set lessons in a sequence from which she was not prepared to deviate. The marking of pupils' work is improving, however, and teachers increasingly help pupils to understand how they can improve, building on the firmly established individual targets in English and mathematics.

16. The work of teaching assistants is organised very well to enhance pupils' learning. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are given extra help on a frequent and regular basis by teaching assistants, who play a significant part in helping these pupils to achieve well. The small number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language achieve well, benefitting from the very good spoken English of most other pupils and from the careful support of teachers and teaching assistants. Specific skills of teaching assistants are recognised and utilised very effectively, for example, through leading the school's Eco Council.

The curriculum

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum that meets the needs of all its pupils. All requirements of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are met. Learning is enhanced for many pupils through a very wide range of interesting extra-curricular clubs and activities as well as a good number of visits and visitors to the school. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many opportunities are taken to enrich the broad and balanced curriculum.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and integrates all areas of learning very effectively.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Staffing, accommodation and resources are good throughout the school.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets the needs of the pupils well and shows good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils throughout the school are enthusiastic about learning because work is carefully planned to be interesting and stimulating, and builds well on pupils' own experiences outside school. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
18. For the children in the Foundation Stage, the curriculum meets their needs exceptionally well and ensures that children's early experiences of school life are very successful in establishing a strong interest in learning.
19. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in identifying opportunities for extending literacy across the curriculum, through subjects such as history and geography, contributing well to the rise in standards since the last inspection. Numeracy links are satisfactory. Insufficient opportunities are found to extend the pupils' skills in ICT across the curriculum and this is an area for development.
20. The school has a strong commitment to providing well for all pupils, whatever their specific requirements. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and individual education plans set clear targets and generally offer clear guidance to staff for their effective support. Staff are aware of how best to support the pupils with English as an additional language, and they achieve well. While higher attaining pupils are usually suitably challenged

in literacy and numeracy, provision is much less effective in science, where insufficient provision is made for furthering their skills through investigational tasks. The staff and parents work very hard to provide a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and lunchtime activities to enrich the curriculum. Examples include keep fit sessions, violin lessons, Morris dancing and gardening.

21. The school is open to new ideas and innovations, and staff have introduced a number of initiatives to support and enrich the curriculum. Their work towards the national Eco awards has had a significant impact on developing pupils' awareness of ecological issues and their own contributions towards responsible citizenship. Consequently, the outdoor environment has improved well since the last inspection, with further developments at the planning stage, such as the Garden of Discovery, as part of the whole school approach to involving pupils in ecological and sustainable development. Following another local initiative, the development of a 'Dyslexia Friendly' curriculum has contributed to raising staff awareness of issues and strategies linked with dyslexia. While the impact of the daily physical activity, Jumpstart programme has not been formally evaluated; it provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their co-ordination skills and physical responses to music.
22. Accommodation and resources are good throughout the school. Staff are deployed effectively, and the high number of teaching assistants, students and parent volunteers ensures that pupils are given good support to enable them to learn. With the provision of ramps and disabled toilet facilities, the school is accessible for pupils in wheelchairs. Resources for ICT have not kept pace with provision in schools nationally but it is too soon to judge the impact of the recent acquisition of an interactive whiteboard for each class.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares for its pupils very well. Staff have a good understanding of children's needs and treat them as individuals. The support given to children as they progress through the school helps them to achieve well, both academically and socially. Pupils' views matter to the teachers and the children are given good opportunities to play their part in leading the school's activities and projects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils work and play in a very secure and friendly environment where they are cared for very well.
- Pupils are well supported in their development, because teachers know and understand the children well.
- Pupil's views are sought in a variety of ways and this helps the school to involve them in the work of the school as well as their own learning.

Commentary

23. All procedures for child protection, health, safety and welfare are carried out to very high standards. The headteacher leads in all aspects of care and ensures that all staff remain very well aware of the need for vigilance and careful planning when managing the safety of young children. Governors play their part very well in checking that all systems for ensuring care and safety are secure. All staff have the welfare of the pupils at heart, fully in line with the school's aim of creating a safe, caring, purposeful and secure environment.
24. The very good care begins from the earliest stages in school. The children are visited in their playgroups and nurseries, prior to admission to school, so that their development and needs can be assessed and preparations made. Parents and children are involved in a good induction process that introduces them well to routines, and helps the school to identify the children's characters and personalities. Because very strong relationships are developed from the beginning, parents are very happy to work with the school and are confident of the support their child receives. This open sharing of information ensures that children are

supported well. There are good links with the community nurse and other outside professionals and their advice, where needed, is generally promptly sought. The school has a strong commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils and shows this interest through, for example, the daily opportunities for exercise based on research of ways of developing the efficient functioning of the brain. The needs of pupils experiencing difficulties in learning or behaviour are generally met well but, occasionally, the school delays a little too long before seeking the support of other professionals.

25. The questionnaires completed by pupils show that they are very happy at school. They confirm that teachers give good support and show them how they can make their work better. Most importantly, pupils say they have an adult to talk to if they have a problem, they feel teaching staff are fair, trusting and listen to their ideas. These very positive relationships provide a very good environment for children to succeed.
26. Pupils' views are valued and the school tries hard to respond to them at all times. Classes agree their own code of conduct, for example, and the whole school discusses and agrees playground rules. Discussion times are arranged throughout the school, with classes sitting in a circle, to ensure there is a forum for pupils to raise their concerns and make their thoughts known. Each class has two members on the school's Eco Committee, giving them the opportunity to express their opinions and make decisions concerning care for the environment in school and further afield. Pupils are beginning to be more involved in managing their own learning through setting targets for learning in literacy and numeracy and helping to monitor their own progress towards milestones established.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a very positive and productive relationship between the school and home. Parents are kept very well informed and made welcome at all times. Their views are sought well and are taken into account. As a result, parents offer very substantial support to the school and their own children's learning. Partnerships with the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good information and links with home keeps parents informed and involved and helps parents to support the school's aims and objectives very well.
- Very strong support from parents helps the school to be successful and their children to achieve well.
- The school consults parents well and keeps in very good contact with them.
- Links with the local community and other schools contribute well to the quality of the curriculum and the range of experiences for pupils.

Commentary

27. The school has very effective links with parents and these have improved further from the good arrangements reported in the last inspection. Because they are so thoroughly informed, parents know the school and the staff very well and are able to make their views known easily. In the pre-inspection questionnaire and parents' meeting, parents expressed exceptionally positive views about the school. Very good links are established early and parents receive literature of very good quality on a regular basis that keeps them very well informed about current events and the work and progress of their children. The weekly 'partnership diary' for each pupil includes a useful thumb-nail sketch of the week's events and evidence of the frequent comments exchanged between parents and teachers. Three meetings a year provide profitable opportunities to review the children's progress with their parents and targets set for future learning are discussed. Pupils' annual reports are good and have improved since the last inspection. Annual 'open sessions' are well attended and give parents a useful insight into the routines and methods of the school.

28. Parents support the work of the school very well and staff welcome this strong interest. The parents' and teachers' association is productive and a substantial amount of money is raised to benefit the school's provision for pupils. For example, these funds help with transport costs for the many visits made by the pupils to broaden their experiences and add interest to the curriculum. School events, such as musical and dramatic productions, are extremely well attended by parents, which encourages pupils and rewards them well for their efforts. A good number of parents offer to help in the classrooms and the school actively seeks out parents with useful talents and skills!
29. Parents have high expectations of the school and they give very considerable support to their children's learning. For the termly consultation meetings, for example, one hundred per cent attendance by parents is the norm. The pupils' good achievements in reading owe much to the parents' efforts, mainly through practice at home, but also through the regular help provided by a group of hard-working parents working voluntarily in school. Parents encourage their children to take up the good range of extra-curricular clubs on offer and, as a result, all pupils in Year 2 are involved in at least one such activity, with many involved in much more. Parents try very hard to ensure their children have the best and fullest experience possible whilst at school and the school takes parents' views into account well within planning provision for pupils.
30. The school is held in high esteem in the local community and works well within the network of its partner schools to benefit the pupils' education. There are many visits and events, in and around the school, which give pupils a firm sense of their place in the community. Useful arrangements for transitions mean that children progress smoothly to the local junior school or elsewhere for the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good and this is reflected in the school's good quality of provision. Good leadership by the headteacher and key staff establishes a clear sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school. Management is good, overall, particularly for English and mathematics and for the personal and social development of pupils. Governance is very good and governors help to shape the vision and direction for the school very well. All statutory duties are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's good leadership helps staff, governors, parents and pupils to feel ambitious and encourages them to do their best.
- All staff and governors have a strong commitment to continuous improvement.
- The governing body safeguards the use of resources and the quality of the school's provision very effectively.
- The school improvement plan targets the right areas for development but too much detail tends to obscure priorities.
- The school's monitoring programmes are effective, overall, but not always linked closely enough to initiatives in hand.
- Inopportune changes in co-ordination roles are slowing improvement in some areas.

Commentary

31. The good leadership of the headteacher provides clear direction for the work of the school and, with the support of a good staff team and very efficient governors, the maintenance of good standards and continuous improvement is ensured. A productive climate for learning is a strength of the school. The new deputy headteacher provides fresh energy and drive to the school's leadership and management of the school and her very good teaching skills add significantly to the good practice in the school. The Foundation Stage is managed very well and ensures a very good start to school for the children and their parents.

32. The management of the school is good, overall. Standards and teaching in English and mathematics especially are checked thoroughly and appropriate action taken to improve any weaknesses identified. A rigorous performance management programme for staff is managed very well by governors in partnership with the headteacher and is firmly focused on the current priorities for the school. Identified inconsistencies in the quality of teaching are being managed well. Co-ordinators ensure that a good curriculum is planned that meets the needs of all pupils. Some elements of management, however, weaken the impact of the school's good leadership and the staff's strong enthusiasm to do well. The timing of actions is not always synchronised well. The monitoring timetable, for example, is not always linked closely enough to initiatives within the school development plan. Sometimes the same co-ordinator is leading significant improvements in two subjects at the same time, such as improvements in teaching reading and advances in systems in ICT. Although some changes in the roles of subject co-ordinators have been unavoidable and necessitated by a relatively high turnover of staff, other changes have not been necessary and have slowed the development of assessment systems, in particular, in subjects other than English and mathematics.
33. Provision for special educational needs is good because teachers are strongly committed to equality of opportunity and teaching assistants are delegated well. Individual programmes arranged generally work well. The overview of performance data for these pupils is satisfactory. Although most pupils are served well, occasionally a lack of progress slips through procedures because they are a little too informal.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	404,035	Balance from previous year	43,047
Total expenditure	423,805	Balance carried forward to the next	23,277
Expenditure per pupil	2,380		

The allocation of financial resources is managed very carefully by the governors working in close partnership with the headteacher and school secretary, and is well linked to initiatives identified within the school improvement plan. Governors are rigorous in researching for information that enables the school to achieve best value for expenditure.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. The large reception class is staffed effectively by two teachers and two nursery nurses, who work very effectively as a tightly organised team. About half of the children due to be admitted to school join a small pre-school class that operates part-time, with older children attending for two terms and younger ones for one term. The class is funded by the school and staffed by two nursery nurses, but budget restrictions mean that closure is planned for July 2005. Other children transfer from a variety of local pre-school settings. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator has ensured that the high standard of provision noted in the last inspection has been successfully maintained in the reception class and that provision is good in the pre-school class. The children are very well prepared for their future work in Year 1.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good in reception and good in the pre-school class. Strengths are the very good interest generated in learning and the very good provision for purposeful play. Good tracking of children's skills and the good use of information gained for setting future plans ensure successful learning.

Assessments made early in the children's first term show that they start school with attainments that are generally above average. The very good provision makes sure that children achieve very well and, by the end of the reception year, the attainments of most well exceed the goals set nationally in all areas of learning. No children in the Foundation Stage are identified as having special educational needs. The small number of children who have a different home language benefit from the good provision in the pre-school class, achieve well and their English is developing rapidly.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**. The children achieve very well and reach standards that are well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of very good quality ensures that the children develop their personal skills and self-esteem very well.
- The children develop a confidence, independence and social maturity that is well above average for their age.
- The very good relationships between the children and the teaching team provide a secure and enjoyable background to learning.

Commentary

34. The very good relationships between the staff team and the children and their parents mean that the children are surrounded by very good models of behaviour and social interaction. The pre-school and reception classes are very well organised, which helps to develop the children's independence through well-established routines. Staff have high expectations for the children and encourage them successfully to take care of their own personal needs and take responsibility for helping with the organisation of routines and equipment. Children co-operate very well with each other as well as with adults. The children are able to verbalise their thoughts and feelings well and are comfortable to do so within the consistently friendly and purposeful learning atmosphere that is established. A simple 'pantomime' devised by a group of children was performed informally, with great confidence, to a captivated audience of other children and staff. Invitations to a 'hatching' party help the children to identify and celebrate special events.

35. Any children who experience behavioural difficulties are sensitively managed. The staff check the children's personal development very well. Comprehensive informal notes are maintained and records of individual progress are suitably detailed to enable all staff to share an understanding of the children's development.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**. Children show good speaking skills on entry and these are harnessed and extended very well in all areas of learning to ensure that, by the end of reception, the attainments of most children are well above the learning goals set. The children achieve very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and teaching assistants pay careful attention to developing the children's communication through the stimulating range of activities planned and the careful and sometimes prolific discussion that these generate.
- Every opportunity is taken to pose questions that encourage the children to think and to explain and, consequently, the children make very good progress in their learning.
- Correct spelling is not always supported well enough as children's writing develops.
- The children's very good social skills mean that discussion is extended between children as they carry out their work, for example, when sharing construction activities.

Commentary

36. The quality of teaching is very good, overall. Children remember previous learning projects with pleasure and are keen to recall them. Imaginative role-play encourages the children to act out make-believe situations and to invent dialogue, for example, between a family of ducks involved in the care of eggs and young ducklings. A self-appointed narrator guides the actions of main characters and the children co-operate very well to improve their ideas. The teaching team are quick to see when children need guidance to focus and extend their thinking. Very purposeful, well-discussed play is a feature of both the pre-school class and reception. Adults use a wide vocabulary that helps to promote and extend the children's learning.
37. The children's very good interest in books, stories and finding out is evident in the way that they choose to look at familiar books on their own and are very willing to share books with adults and other children, showing a very good level of concentration. Most children in reception are already able to write their names with clarity and careful letter formation, and are working on their family names. In both the pre-school class and reception, there are regular opportunities for the children to begin to communicate in written form through early marks and symbols of words, often within play activities. The writing table is popular because imaginative writing projects are organised to generate letters and invitations. Most children extend their writing skills to a good level of independence by the end of the year. Teachers and teaching assistants show great patience and persistence in helping the children to use their good knowledge of letter sound to build words. There is still work to be done to organise systems that encourage more of the children to learn familiar conventional spellings more quickly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**. Very good teaching ensures that children are keen to extend their skills and most reach standards that are well above average for their age.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is very good and promotes a thorough grounding in the basic skills of mathematics. The children achieve very well.
- Many opportunities are found to practise counting and calculating each day.
- The children's very good speaking skills enable them to take on new mathematical words at a rapid pace.

Commentary

38. Many instances were noted of children counting to ten and well beyond, forwards and backwards and starting from different numbers. Teachers challenge the children well. Most children are confident in adding or taking away one or two, and higher attaining children can do much more. From their earliest days in school, the children use mathematical language increasingly well to describe shape. A group of children working with the teacher could easily name familiar three-dimensional shapes and easily learned the names of new ones, such as sphere and pyramid. They were able to predict whether a shape was likely to slide or to roll down a slope and enjoyed proving themselves correct. The teacher grasped their advanced level of development quickly and kept pushing the children's thinking a step further. The children enjoy all activities related to mathematics and were observed to count spontaneously in many situations. The children are especially enjoying the count down of 'sleeps' to the estimated arrival of the ducklings in the incubator.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **very good**. Children achieve very well and their learning is well above the goals set for the end of reception.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provided is imaginative and stimulates the children's interest very successfully through a very good range of interesting and enjoyable activities.
- Teaching is very good. Staff are adept at reinforcing the children's learning through good questioning and skilful repetition.

Commentary

39. Teachers and teaching assistants build skilfully on what the children know so that learning is very good in both the pre-school class and reception. The children find out about the way that seeds grow and plants change over a quite a short period of time. The pleasant outdoor play area provides good evidence of seasonal change. Exciting projects are planned that help children to find out about the world and to observe change very carefully. After the story of the Hungry Caterpillar, children in the pre-school class were thrilled when a package of caterpillars arrived by post for them to care for and watch in the hope of seeing them change into 'beautiful butterflies', like the caterpillar in the story. In reception, the children are carefully tending ducks' eggs in an incubator, feeling how warm they stay and carefully turning them till they hatch. Staff and children made good use of informative posters and pictures in books to help them learn more about the developing ducklings. An 'egg chair', complete with full canopy, helps the children to find out how it feels to be tucked up in a small space. Dressing-up clothes of good quality help the children to re-enact their learning and to anticipate the care required as the eggs hatch.
40. The children make good use of the computer and control the mouse with increasing skill as they learn to operate on-screen keys. The children with a computer at home make very rapid progress and quickly learn how to get their work printed out. When the teacher requested two copies of the children's work using a graphics program, higher attaining children had no

trouble responding to the request without any help and were confident in helping others through various stages of the process.

41. The children are adept at using their construction skills competently to make models and to assemble work in collage because they get plenty of practice. Reception is a busy place where children are profitably occupied continuously.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

42. A clear judgement of provision in physical development is not possible because a balance of teaching across this area of learning was not observed. Teachers provide plentiful opportunities within all areas of learning for the children to increase their manual control effectively and most children are very dextrous, for example, as they join boxes with adhesive tape and glue carefully chosen collage pieces into place. They learn to control writing implements very well and know how to form letters correctly.
43. Regular sessions for physical development are arranged in the school hall to encourage control of the larger muscles and movements. The outdoor area is very well used and organised to extend the children's physical skills, whenever the weather allows. Wheeled vehicles, climbing frames and small apparatus, such as bats and balls, encourage more skilful co-ordination successfully. The children show good control as they work co-operatively, for example, in pairs with 'sticky' bats and balls, with good concentration enabling them to build on successes with plenty of practice.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

44. Clear judgements on provision and the children's achievement in creative development is not possible because a balance of teaching across this area of learning was not observed. Available evidence indicates that most children exceed the expected learning goals in their creative development.
45. The children benefit from the abundance of opportunities for them to develop their creative skills well. Activities are well supervised but never directed too closely, allowing the children to respond to their own choices and preferences. The good range of dressing-up clothes and other resources encourages lively and imaginative participation. From the earliest stages, the children select their own materials in order to create their own artwork. Their learning is moving forward constantly as the staff involves them in discussion about their choices. Displays in the classrooms show many examples of confident, vibrant work, such as the paintings decorating the 'pond' area. The staff value their efforts and the children show pleasure and pride in pointing out their work and explaining its key features to visitors.
46. The children in the reception class join with the rest of the school for assembly times, giving them the chance to enjoy singing together. They know a range of number rhymes and enjoy acting them out.
47. Children have the chance to use their imagination in well equipped role play areas in each class, with a play 'pond', complete with pond creature outfits, proving very popular in both the pre-school class and reception. The children's social skills are very well developed and they play co-operatively together much sooner than usual, developing imaginative situations and extending each other's play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 2, showing good improvement since the last inspection.
- Teaching is good, overall, and most pupils achieve well - but there are inconsistencies in quality.
- Pupils' speaking skills are well above average and this supports their work in reading and writing well.
- The high standards in reading owe much to the parents' very good support in helping their children practise at home.
- A school drive on improving writing has paid off through providing frequent practice and regular assessments. In the early stages, however, the school does not reinforce correct spelling well enough.
- Good leadership in the subject means that the school is continuously focused on moving standards forward.

Commentary

48. Evidence from pupils' past work indicates good teaching and good achievement, overall, although the quality of teaching observed varied from very good to unsatisfactory. A key factor is the frequent and regular practice of literacy skills, not only during English lessons but also through the good inclusion of literacy activities within science, history and geography. Most pupils are supported very well at home and this is a significant factor in the school's high standards, particularly in reading. Teaching that is very good inspires pupils to learn and balances very successfully the degree of support given to pupils with a very good challenge. This was evident in a lesson in Year 2, where enthusiastic pupils were guided forward very well through perceptive questioning on a good variety of relevant, informative and interesting texts, that included pamphlets advertising a museum and factual books about the work of Vincent Van Gogh. Good teaching gives pupils plentiful opportunities to practice literacy skills, with good instruction and good feedback on their achievements. This was evident in a lesson in Year 1, where most pupils wrote confident accounts of science activities and the teacher moved their achievement forward well, with encouragement to use 'time words', such as *before*, *after* and *first*, in order to clarify their explanations. Pupils' successes were highlighted well, providing clear guidance on how to improve their work. A lesson observed was unsatisfactory when learning opportunities were reduced through insufficient challenge in the whole-class section of the lesson and individual tasks set were not clear enough to pupils to enable them to progress well. Such teaching fails to inspire pupils to do their best, the concentration of some pupils wanders and pupils achieve too little.
49. A feature of the pupils' good achievement is the way teachers assess the pupils' skills regularly to provide a clear basis for target setting and future teaching plans. This works well, generally, and results in a good pace of learning. Examples were seen, however, where the work provided for pupils was not so well matched to their needs. A group of lower attaining pupils in Year 1 achieved less than their capabilities in writing because teaching provided too few opportunities for an efficient blend of support and independence. Pupils' spellings sometimes stay at the experimental level for too long because clear and effective strategies for the correct spelling of a range of familiar words are not established. Generally the regular extra practice arranged for pupils who experience difficulty with learning works well and results in good progress towards targets set. Extra practice in writing, for example, arranged for two pupils in Year 2 with special educational needs was effective because the teaching assistant had a clear understanding of their current knowledge, showed an astute awareness of their needs and, consequently, moved their learning forward quickly. Similar successes were observed within regular extra reading sessions of good quality led by teaching assistants. Pupils using English as an additional language are supported well by the good provision for literacy and achieve well. The marking of pupils' work is improving as teachers focus more consistently on group or individual targets for improvement. In Year 2, for

example, teachers underline good descriptive words in gold, resulting in a swift improvement in the use of effective vocabulary.

50. Good leadership of the subject is evident in the way weaknesses in both teaching and learning are identified and addressed, with standards improving continuously. Some improvements planned, such as for the development of teaching reading in groups, is restricted by insufficient resources for teachers and not fully completed before moving on to other priorities for development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. The use of language and literacy within other subjects is good. Pupils are given frequent opportunities for discussion in pairs and, often, to answer questions at length. Each class presents a review of the term's learning to parents and the school and recordings show high expectations of verbal presentation and a good improvement in skills. Written work is frequently included in subjects such as science, history and geography, and shows good achievement, building well on work completed in English lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning are good and improving; this enables pupils to achieve well.
- The school makes good use of assessment in order to plan future work.
- The subject is well led and managed, with provision and outcomes kept under effective review.

Commentary

52. By the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average and in line with those for similar schools. This shows an improvement on the results of the National Curriculum tests in 2003 and a return to previous good standards. Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes very good. The school makes good use of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan work which builds securely on what has gone before. This helps to give structure to lessons and to provide continuity to learning through the school. The basic skills are taught well, providing a good foundation for further learning and good progress. In Year 1, for example, the teacher planned effective practical activities to increase the pupils' understanding of which different coins make ten pence. By Year 2, pupils confidently use methods of rounding up and down and partitioning in making calculations using money.
53. Teachers know how well pupils are progressing because they test them regularly and use the information from assessments to share targets for improvements with pupils. These assessments and information from reviews of pupils' work are used by the subject manager to identify strengths and weaknesses within the school's provision. In this way, skills in problem solving were identified as in need of improvement. The school focused its efforts on planning more successfully for this area of the curriculum and, as a result, pupils' skills and confidence have improved.
54. Pupils are divided into classes based on previous attainment for their work in mathematics and this helps teachers to provide work that is suited to the pupils' differing needs and to set an appropriate challenge. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in mathematics because their individual education plans provide clear and manageable targets for improvement and they are well supported by teaching assistants.

55. Individual targets set for improvement give pupils a good understanding of their own learning. Learning objectives shared at the beginning of lessons enhance this understanding and returning to these at the end of lessons helps pupils and teachers to review progress effectively. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide comments that help them to improve. Because relationships are very good, pupils are confident to answer questions and explain their own calculations in lessons. Pupils are managed very well so that they understand that high standards of behaviour and concentration are expected, which helps learning to proceed at a good pace. In Year 1, pupils worked sensibly in pairs in order to illustrate how their body shapes might be symmetrical and asymmetrical. Teachers encourage discussion and collaboration to promote learning and pupils have 'mathematical buddies' with whom they discuss different methods of calculation. Work is presented in lively and interesting ways so that pupils enjoy their tasks and are eager to improve. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, music and movement were used to reinforce the multiplication skills of lower attaining pupils. Teachers generally insist on high standards of presentation. This encourages pupils to have pride in their work and to work accurately, as seen in work in Year 2 on two-dimensional shapes and angles.
56. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and checks teaching and learning well in order to plan improvements and to support colleagues. She ensures that assessment is well used in order to help planning and has a clear understanding of the way forward in order to raise standards further. The problems, which led to a recent dip in standards, have been resolved through an increased focus on problem solving. The school acknowledges that provision was affected last year in part by its close focus on improving standards in writing.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. The school makes satisfactory use of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum to help pupils' extend and practise their skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 used a chart to classify different seeds and in Year 2, pupils used 'time lines' in history to clarify sequences of events. The limited use of investigational work in science restricts opportunities to use mathematics. Although pupils make some use of ICT in mathematics, computers are not used sufficiently to extend the pupils' skills and understanding.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistently planned opportunities for developing pupils' investigational skills are limited and this is restricting pupils' achievement.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and capture pupils' attention well.
- Good opportunities are identified to develop pupils' literacy skills but too few opportunities are found for developing ICT and numeracy.
- Assessment is not yet used consistently to inform teaching and learning.

Commentary

58. By the end of Year 2, standards are average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, but sometimes good or very good. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall, extended by a good memory of facts learned but limited by insufficiently consistent provision for experiment and investigation that really stretches the pupils' thinking. This affects the large group of higher attaining pupils especially, with many underachieving, and keeps standards below those for similar schools. Assessment systems are satisfactory for tracking the pupils' experience of the curriculum but are not sufficiently focused on skills to clearly inform planning for teaching and learning.

59. Teaching is satisfactory because pupils develop adequate knowledge and understanding of facts but are not stretched, generally, to find out more. Pupils in Year 2 learned what constitutes a healthy diet but were not challenged sufficiently within the lesson, for example, to devise a healthy menu. The teacher had planned the subject into 'bite-sized' lessons and was unprepared to move at the rapid pace of which the pupils are capable. Although past work indicates too little attention to investigation, some good examples were observed during the inspection, such as an experiment in Year 1 set up to investigate the best media for growing bean seeds. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils extended their investigational skills effectively through devising a fair test for assessing different flavours of crisps. Pupils collaborated well in collecting and recording information. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs were supported well by the teacher and helped to achieve equally well through answering extra questions posed to extend their thinking well.
60. Good opportunities are identified to extend pupils' literacy skills with, for example, written accounts of work in science extended into literacy lessons. Factual books based on scientific subjects such as healthy eating are used as a basis for study in English. The lack of opportunities to develop enquiry skills that is evident in a review of past work also inhibits the development of numeracy skills, such as measurement. Although some links with ICT have been identified, opportunities are not yet consistently planned. Some use is made of the Internet for research but teachers' preparation for this work requires further development. Good use is made of the interactive white board where teachers are gaining confidence, to introduce the lesson, re-cap on previous learning and to clarify important teaching points.
61. Leadership and management of science are satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has not been in post long enough to have had a substantial impact on standards. Assessment has been set as a priority for development to enable teachers to match plans for lessons more closely to the individual needs of their pupils. Standards have fallen from the above average attainment reported in the last inspection but opportunities found for literacy have improved well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory; they make sound progress in the use of basic computer technology.
- Pupils are keen to use computers but the school does not have a consistent system to ensure that all pupils have regular access to computers.
- Assessment is not used sufficiently to help with planning.
- ICT is not used sufficiently within other subjects of the curriculum to help pupils to further improve their understanding.

Commentary

62. By the end of Year 2, standards are average but have declined since the previous inspection when they were found to be above average. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers make sure that pupils develop a sound understanding of basic skills. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use computer mouse and keyboard skills confidently, and know how to use screen menus to access programs, and to save and retrieve information. Most can use computers to organise information, such as graphs of favourite foods, and are able to enter instructions into a programmable robot and to describe what has happened. Infrequent use is made of word processing but pupils show that they have the necessary skills to produce short pieces of writing and for purposes such as making gift tags. Pupils enjoy selecting and using adventure games.

63. Teaching observed varied from satisfactory to very good. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher introduced pupils to electronic white boards in a lively and interesting way so that they used their existing knowledge and skills very well in a new situation. In another lesson in Year 2, teaching was no more than satisfactory because the teacher set too rapid a pace for learning, combining too much into one lesson, and the pupils' understanding of e-mail and hyperlinks was not fully reinforced. Although the school has recently introduced a system for assessing pupils' work, this is not yet fully in use as a tool for helping planning. Sometimes, when accessing the Internet, teachers do not provide the support that ensures that pupils' research is efficient and focused. This limited their progress, for example, in a science lesson, where the teacher had insufficient prior knowledge of suitable sites.
64. The limited number of computers reduces opportunities for pupils to practise at the time of teaching and means that learning takes longer to establish and, consequently, less ground is covered. The school has recently supplemented the three computers in each classroom with an electronic interactive white board, in order to extend provision. Staff are awaiting full training in the use of the new equipment and it is too soon to make judgements on the impact on standards. The school does not have a consistent system that ensures regular access to computers and interactive whiteboards. The school is aware of the need for an improved system in order to help to raise standards and to keep pace with improvements nationally. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average.
65. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the subject and has worked hard to organise, up-date and maintain equipment. She checks planning and pupils' work satisfactorily. Training is in hand to guide staff through the challenge of incorporating the use of electronic white boards into their teaching and some have made an enthusiastic start. Opportunities are planned to check teaching and learning in order to provide further guidance but these are not timetabled until next year.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. The use of ICT within other subjects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory, overall. Organisation of the use of computers is inconsistent and unsystematic to support learning in other subjects. Few computers were observed in use during the inspection, for example, when opportunities for word processing arose in English lessons. This results in missed opportunities for further learning.

HUMANITIES

Teachers ensure that the curriculum is made lively, relevant and interesting for pupils and, consequently, they achieve well.

Geography

No teaching was observed but evidence from discussions with pupils and a review of past work provides clear evidence that provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Visits into the locality and pupils' experiences outside school are incorporated well to support learning.
- Good opportunities are provided to extend pupils' literacy skills.
- Opportunities are missed to use ICT effectively to support learning and develop skills further.
- Assessments are not focused clearly enough on the development of pupils' skills.

Commentary

67. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average, showing good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well because teachers make the subject very interesting and relevant. Pupils in Year 1 focus on their immediate environment and mapping skills are developed well through reviewing and plotting their journey to school. Pupils learn to express and record their opinions of local features by putting happy or sad faces on the map of their route to school.
68. In a lively discussion about the similarities and differences between life in villages and cities, pupils in Year 2 showed good knowledge and understanding and expressed well justified opinions and preferences, for example, "I prefer living in a village because there's no graffiti or crime. There are too many crowds in a city."
69. Pupils are encouraged to compare their own lifestyles and locality with the island of Struay in Year 1, and Tocuaro, a village in Mexico, in Year 2. Fun activities, such as a Mexican party, enable pupils to learn without effort. Pupils develop a good understanding of the similarities and differences between their lifestyle and the Mexican villagers, noting that, "We do really exciting things!"
70. Work in the school for national Eco awards has enabled the pupils to gain an impressive amount of knowledge and personal experience of environmental issues such as litter and recycling which directly affect them. They plan improvements to their own playground, using aerial photographs to help them.
71. Every class in the school has a bear who accompanies pupils on their travels with their families away from home. Many families have travelled extensively, so this is a profitable way of enabling all pupils to experience connections between themselves and other localities world wide and to develop a truly global perspective.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory at present. Several changes of co-ordinator in recent years mean that monitoring and evaluation of the subject is inconsistent. Assessment is not focused clearly enough yet on individual skills to provide useful targets for further improvement. There is little evidence of planned and organised use of ICT to support and extend learning in geography, although incidental use of a map web-site and a programmable toy to support mapping work have proved very helpful.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils' achieve well.
- The school's own history and carefully planned visits to sites of historical interest enrich and extend the curriculum well.
- The subject is used well to support the development of pupils' literacy skills.
- Although there is some use of ICT to extend pupils' understanding, it is not sufficiently integrated into curriculum plans.
- Assessment systems in the early stages are not focused sufficiently on tracking pupils' skills.

Commentary

73. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2, showing good improvement since the last inspection. Good teaching makes lessons lively and interesting and pupils learn well. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of how the past differs from the present.

They talk confidently about events that took place a long time ago, such as the Great Fire of London, and events in the more recent past, such as the Second World War. They understand that there are some people alive today who fought in the Second World War, although they will be very old, but no one would still be alive who had experienced the Great Fire of London. Pupils are well aware that possible sources of evidence about the past include pictures, photographs, examples of artefacts and buildings, and accounts in books or gleaned through discussion with older people.

74. Staff use the school's own history to good effect. The pupils are able to talk about the founder of the school, Thomas Russell, and how lucky the village children were when he used his money to have the original school built. They can distinguish between the older and newer parts of the school - "You can tell by looking at the bricks." Recent celebrations of the millennium provided a lasting reminder of the school's history through the establishment of an authentic Elizabethan knot garden in the grounds.
75. Visits to other historical sites are used very well to give the children good sources of evidence and enrich the curriculum well. Pupils speak with obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment about their experiences of dressing up and role-play, which help to develop the pupils' sense of empathy with people from the past. They say of the servants' work at Shugborough Hall, for example, "It must have been boring - it was all hard work." Links with art encourage close observation of good quality artefacts of the time through careful drawings of objects such as flat irons, dolly pegs and carpet beaters.
76. History is used well to extend pupils' literacy skills, changing a weakness noted in the last inspection to a strength. Many opportunities are given for pupils to write independently to a good standard, using recounts of events, notes in bullet points, questions and labels. The use of photocopied copies of the Illustrated London News of 1840 that included accounts of the work of Florence Nightingale gave pupils in Year 2 good opportunities to practise retrieving information from a text.
77. ICT is not used effectively in the subject to develop skills and raise standards. While there are occasional uses of the Internet to support research and some programs made available for those pupils who finish tasks early, work in ICT is not systematically planned. Little evidence was seen, for example, of written work being word processed as a routine way of presenting information.
78. The leadership of the subject is good in that expectations for pupils' achievement are high in the school and a strong interest is generated in providing a good curriculum. Management is no better than satisfactory because the role of co-ordinator frequently changes hands and this has slowed progress in developing the monitoring and evaluation of work needed to raise standards further. Assessment systems are not fully established, and plans for developing skills in lessons are not always based on a clear understanding of pupils' previous learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good quality of teaching leads to good achievement.
- The school makes good use of local places of worship and people from faith communities in order to enrich the curriculum.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Assessment systems are weak and in need of development.

Commentary

79. By the end of Year 2, standards are higher than set by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils develop a good understanding about religion and belief. The school ensures thorough coverage of the locally agreed syllabus, which includes provision for pupils to learn about and from Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. The school has good links with local clergy and pupils have good opportunities to extend their learning through visits to places of worship. These include places for different Christian faiths and for Hindus and Muslims. The school holds an Easter service in the local parish church.
80. Teachers show very good subject knowledge and understand very well how pupils learn. This enables them to teach lessons well suited to pupils' levels of understanding and to use clear explanations. Before pupils in Year 1 visited the local church, for example, they discussed the importance of their own special places. This helped to increase their insight into the idea of churches as special places for Christians. Teachers plan and prepare their work very thoroughly. This was very well illustrated on the visit to the church. All the adults involved, including the vicar, churchwarden, accompanying parents and staff, knew clearly what the objectives of the visit were. In very well organised small groups, they guided and prompted pupils to increase their understanding of the artefacts and practices in the church.
81. In order to deepen the pupils' understanding, teachers ensure that work is practically based. Pupils visited the church as part of their work on baptism and took part in a model baptism ceremony in school. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils were encouraged to take part in discussions about God and the creation of the world, expressing their likes and dislikes. Because relationships are very good pupils showed poise and confidence and respected the points of view of others. Pupils extended their understanding of responsibility and care well, through discussing how work with the Eco Club could help to make the world a better place.
82. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject and inspires colleagues to organise effective learning. She is aware of the need to extend the use of assessment of pupils' understanding in order to help improve planning and has a clear understanding of the way ahead in order to improve standards further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Due to timetabling arrangements, insufficient evidence was available to make clear overall judgements in these subjects, with the exception of design and technology.

Art and design

83. The school does not store portfolios of work and insufficient evidence was available to make clear judgements on standards by the end of Year 2.
84. The leadership of the subject has changed hands recently and a clear programme of work is not yet established fully through the school. Nevertheless, the new co-ordinator can indicate through past planning that teaching in the subject encompasses a sufficiently broad range of skills. Evidence available of pupils' drawing shows suitably developed skills. In science in Year 1 and in design and technology in Year 2, pupils completed bold and increasingly complex drawings. Pupils in Year 1 produced detailed paisley patterns, repeated using a photocopier, to represent traditional Indian fabric designs. Suitable attention is paid to the work of other artists and, for example, pupils in Year 2 made drawings for calendars in the style of William Morris.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make sure that lessons are relevant and interesting to promote enthusiastic learning.
- Pupils' co-ordination skills are generally good, enabling carefully produced work but their skills in making products are stronger than for design and review.
- Assessment systems are not sufficiently developed to provide a clear basis for planning.

Commentary

85. Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection. A review of teachers' planning and pupils' past work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, overall. Although pupils show a good understanding of how to work with and to join a satisfactory range of materials, they have limited experience of designing their work in advance or of reviewing their work in process, or on completion, to identify possible improvements. In Year 1, pupils' card and paper models of the Three Bears' house, complete with several rooms, were carefully constructed and finished to a good standard. In Year 2, pupils designed finger puppets and produced finished products to a suitable standard for their age. The work was made relevant and interesting as part of a cross-curricular topic but the focus of pupils' attention on the design and technology skills of, for example, judging fitness for purpose and possible changes to effect improvement was limited. Written instructions for carrying out the task, however, provided good practice for literacy. Opportunities, such as Christmas celebrations, are used, for example, to design party hats and calendars for the New Year, providing more practice in making products. The current project in Year 2, studying the workings of different types of axle, provides a good challenge and better opportunities to develop design and review skills. In a good lesson observed, the teacher inspired the pupils' interest in different axles well, demonstrating the significant features of the 'fixed' or 'rotating' axle very clearly. There is little evidence of computers being used to extend pupils' work.
86. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new subject co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to raise the quality of teaching and learning at the design stage. Some staff make assessment notes but a consistent system for identifying pupils' progress with all subject skills, to be used as a clear basis for planning, has yet to be developed.

Music

87. Evidence from the one lesson observed and from school assemblies and hymn practice shows that the quality of singing is good. Discussions with staff and parents indicate that pupils have good opportunities to play a range of musical instruments, such as the violin, keyboard and recorder, and to sing in the school choir. Pupils perform in public at local venues and at seasonal performances. The school tries to broaden the pupils' experience of music further through inviting visitors with musical talents into school. As part of the school's multicultural week, for example, pupils had an opportunity to listen to drumming music and play African drums.

Physical Education

88. Discussions with teachers and a review of planning indicate that the statutory requirements for teaching the subject are met. In the only lesson observed during the inspection, good teaching ensured that most pupils in Year 1 achieved well, showed good co-ordination and increased their skills well in responding to the rhythm and pattern of music. Good provision for extra-curricular activities gives pupils good opportunities to extend their skills. Pupils are able to take part in a Keep Fit club, a gymnastics club, and country and Morris dancing. A particular feature of the school is the daily 'Jump Start' session, when each class has a 15-minute exercise session to music. This is aimed at improving not only the pupils' physical skills and fitness, but also their thought processes. Staff are interested in putting research into action that indicates that daily exercises that link the right and left sides of the body

promote the capacity for learning. Monitoring of outcomes has been limited. Pupils participate enthusiastically and their balance and co-ordination are generally good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. Provision for this aspect of the curriculum is **good** and makes a strong contribution to the very good attitudes, relationships and behaviour of pupils. The school arranges discussion times for pupils to discuss personal and social issues and all teachers and assistants have received specific training. There are good links with science as pupils learn about the value of healthy eating. A week's work on the theme of safety included road safety and drug awareness activities, supported by specialists from the local community. The school's Eco Council, to which pupils are elected, is valued by the pupils and contributes significantly to their understanding of citizenship and the need to take responsibility for the local environment. The council also helps pupils to feel that their views are valued and this contributes well to the commitment that pupils have for the school.

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	3
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	2
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	3
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).