

INSPECTION REPORT

WATLINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Watlington, Oxfordshire

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123032

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Briggs

Lead inspector: Martin Kerly

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th February 2004

Inspection number: 258320

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 242

School address: Love Lane
Watlington
Oxfordshire

Postcode: OX49 5RB
Telephone number: (01491) 612 474
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs Francesca Holmes-Smith

Date of previous inspection: 18th May 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Watlington Primary School is of average size with 242 pupils on roll from ages three to 11. It has new purpose-built accommodation on a site which is shared with the local secondary school on the outskirts of the small town of Watlington in south Oxfordshire. Nearly all the pupils live in the small town or in surrounding villages in mainly privately owned homes. A few pupils are from families who work in travelling fairs and from time to time leave the area for considerable periods. Very few of the pupils qualify for free school meals; the very few pupils who come from homes where English is an additional language already have good English skills on arrival in school. Attainment on entry is above the national average. Almost all pupils are white; a tiny minority are members of ethnic minority groups. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average, only ten being on the list for special provision, and only one has a statement of special educational need. There are no asylum seekers and no refugees. In 2002, the school was awarded Investor In People status. In December 2003, it applied for the Artsmark recognition.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
12783	Martin Kerly	Lead inspector	Mathematics Geography History Personal, social and health education
9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector	
33200	Airlie Fife	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education English as an additional language
30724	Delia Hiscock	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Watlington Primary School is a good school and provides good value for money. Pupils achieve well. They enter the school with above average attainment and leave with attainment above or well above average, except in mathematics, where attainment is broadly in line with national averages.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards achieved in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above national averages, and in science and information and communication technology (ICT) they are above national expectations.
- The provision in the Foundation Stage Unit is excellent.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning, except in mathematics in the junior years, where overall achievement for some is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils achieve well and enjoy participation in art and design, and the performing arts.
- The leadership by the headteacher is very good, as is the governance of the school.
- The overall leadership roles of some subject leaders and those of the combined senior management team need strengthening.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The accommodation is excellent and contributes well to the overall quality of experience.

The school has improved significantly from the time of the previous inspection, addressing the weaknesses identified, particularly in terms of governance, leadership by the headteacher and accommodation, and building on previously reported strengths, including above average standards in many subjects, good teaching and learning, and positive attitudes by the pupils. However, standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 have declined.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Most pupils achieve well during their time in school. Their above average attainment on entry is built on well in the Foundation Stage Unit so that almost all children are in line with national expectations and many above when they enter Year 1, particularly in personal and social development, oral skills and mathematical development. In Years 1 and 2, good achievement is maintained, especially in reading and mathematics, where standards are well above average. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, pupils achieve well overall, especially in reading and writing, ICT and science. Achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory for many pupils, with too few exceeding national expectations by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school.

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, as is their behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education across the school is good. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good in the Foundation Stage Unit. The very good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage Unit is linked to very well planned activities carefully structured in response to the children's needs within an imaginatively presented high quality environment. The good teaching in the rest of the school is spread across the curriculum and all year groups. Pupils benefit from very good relationships with their teachers and their own positive attitudes to work support learning well. Some pupils learn less well in mixed-age mathematics sets in some junior classes, where work is not always matched closely enough to their needs. Pupils respond well to problem solving and investigative work, collaborating well together and sustaining concentration, enhancing their learning. Teachers assess their pupils' progress well and use the information to help plan next steps. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is frequently enhanced by good quality teaching by teaching assistants who are committed to the pupils and sensitive to their needs.

Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage Unit is excellent; in the rest of the school, it is good. Strengths include literacy, the opportunities within the performing arts, personal and social education and the very good extra-curricular activities. The excellent accommodation is very well presented, providing a stimulating learning environment.

The school has good procedures for the care, guidance and support of all pupils. There are very good induction arrangements. Pupils' views are valued and acted upon well.

The very good links with parents and other schools impact well on pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. Leadership by the headteacher is **very good**. Governance of the school is also **very good**. The school is managed **effectively**.

The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, leads by example and has high expectations of all the pupils and staff. The governors fulfil all their responsibilities very effectively and contribute significantly to the success of the school. Many of the subject leaders are new to their roles, which remain in need of strengthening, as does the combined role of the senior management team. Leadership of the Foundation Stage Unit is very good and the special needs co-ordinator manages her team well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils have positive views about the school. Almost all parents feel pleased with their children's progress, and value the teaching, leadership and support given to their children. A small minority feel they could be better informed. Inspection evidence shows that overall there are good strategies for informing parents about their children's progress. The pupils trust the teachers and other staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn. Concerns by a minority of parents about supervision at lunchtime are not borne out by inspection evidence, although there is scope for strengthening the role of the supervisory staff and their relationships with the pupils.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve standards achieved in mathematics during the time spent in the junior years.
- Strengthen the overall roles of some subject leaders and the shared leadership by the senior management team in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The children's standards of attainment are above national expectations on entry to the school. Achievement overall is good. By the end of Year 2, standards are above or well above the national average in all the core subjects and by the end of Year 6 these above average standards have been maintained, except in mathematics, where achievement within the junior years is unsatisfactory for some pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing are well above the national average.
- Achievement in mathematics and standards by the end of Year 6 are unsatisfactory with too few pupils exceeding national expectations.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 have fluctuated considerably year-on-year in the last four years.
- Achievement in the Foundation Stage is very good, given the part-time attendance by many of the children.
- Standards achieved in science and in information and communication technology (ICT) are consistently above the national average throughout the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and achieve well throughout the school.
- Standards in the performing and creative arts are above national expectations.

Commentary

1. Results from the most recent national tests in the summer of 2003 show that standards in Year 2 in reading, mathematics and science were well above the national average, and above similar schools; and in writing, standards were above the national average and in line with similar schools. Standards in Year 6 were well above average for English, and high compared with similar schools; in science, standards were above the national average and well above similar schools; and in mathematics, standards were broadly in line with the national average and similar schools but below those schools in similar neighbourhoods.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.6 (27.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.3 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.9 (28.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The upward trend in standards at the end of Year 2 was above that found nationally. At the end of Year 6, the overall trend was in line with the national trend but this disguises fluctuating standards attained from one year to the next in all three core subjects over the last four years.

¹ All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age 11 is 27. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

The school's performance data and inspection evidence indicates the level of fluctuation is set to diminish.

3. The children's attainment on entry to the school is above that found nationally, particularly in personal and social development and oral language skills. All children achieve well, and many very well in the Foundation Stage Unit, and by the time they are five they are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals and a significant number to be above them, particularly in personal, social and emotional, mathematical and creative development.
4. Almost all the pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above average, as are their reading skills. They are impressively articulate and confident. These key skills support them very well and contribute to their good achievement in their written English and in other subjects across the curriculum. Achievement in writing in Years 1 and 2 is secure; however, it is in the older year groups that progress is most noticeable and by the end of Year 6 overall standards in writing, the awareness of audience and the imagination used are all very good. The few pupils with more limited language development benefit from the rich exchanges around them, and the careful support and interventions by teachers and teaching assistants during English lessons, enabling them to achieve well. This is particularly the case for the very few pupils with significant learning difficulties.
5. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 continue to be broadly in line with national averages. This represents unsatisfactory achievement and is not high enough, given the pupils' above average abilities in mathematics earlier in the school, their natural aptitude for study and their overall potential. Whilst almost all pupils achieve the national expectations, too few exceed them. The school's targets for mathematics for 2004, 2005 and 2006 indicate a higher than average proportion of the pupils are expected to attain the standard expected by the end of Year 6, but too few are targeted to exceed it given their potential and earlier mathematical levels of understanding.
6. Pupils achieve well in science throughout the school and standards have been maintained above the national average from the time of the last inspection. In ICT, standards have improved further since the previous inspection and are now well above the national average for the majority of pupils by Year 6. Pupils' good ICT skills are used well to support learning across the curriculum. Standards in art and design, singing and dance are above national expectations; pupils' confidence in the performing arts enhances their overall self-esteem and contributes well to their spiritual and cultural development.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because in class they are given work that provides relevant challenge for them. They are well supported by teaching assistants. The school has a comprehensive overview of the progress they make and the special needs co-ordinator checks that work is tailored to their specific needs. Gifted and talented pupils also achieve well in most aspects of the curriculum, especially in English, ICT, art and design and the performing arts. They achieve less well in the mixed-age sets in mathematics in the junior years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes are very good throughout the school. They have very good opportunities to foster their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good attitudes towards their work in school.
- Pupils have positive views about the school and they participate well in the range of activities offered.
- The school deals very well with promoting very good standards of behaviour and the pupils respond very well to this.

- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Attendance rates are above the national average and the pupils arrive in school on time.

Commentary

8. The pupils behave very well during lessons and in the dining hall, and they generally behave well in the playground. Their interest in school life and the range of activities provided is good and they are enthusiastic and participate fully. The very positive ethos in the Foundation Stage Unit enables the children to settle happily in school, to develop very quickly and achieve very well towards the personal and social development Early Learning Goals.
9. During their time in the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning overall, they usually show good maturity, and by Year 6, as the oldest pupils in the school, they display a very good sense of responsibility. They are willing to be enterprising and take responsibility, for example, they have duties to perform at lunchtime, such as supporting younger pupils and helping in the school office. These tasks they undertake effectively. The pupils all work together very well and there is a 'buddy system' to ensure everyone, especially those new to the school, are looked after and made to feel welcome. Relationships are very good, between both staff and pupils and the pupils themselves, and they are open, friendly and generally confident when dealing with their classmates and adults in the school. The pupils enjoy school, in an atmosphere which is conducive to learning, fostering mutual respect and understanding, and effectively boosts their self-esteem. These very good relationships do not extend to those between the lunchtime supervisory staff and pupils, which, although sound, do not contribute to the very good overall school ethos. The school encourages the pupils to learn, sets high expectations for conduct and strives effectively to achieve these. The very good range of after-school activities, clubs, visits and school productions combines to support well the pupils' social and emotional development.
10. Pupils with additional needs in learning are as interested in their lessons as others. They have a say when their progress is discussed and feel that they are helped to overcome any difficulties they encounter. They listen well to their teachers, and to each other, and are confident enough to explain their views. They work well as individuals, in pairs or in a group and show well-developed skills when they work with others.
11. The pupils have a very good awareness of spirituality and cultural diversity; this is being developed very well through religious education lessons, in assemblies and by visits to local churches. They are learning about both their own and other cultures and comparing the similarities in these. Art and music are used well to promote spiritual and cultural awareness, for example, by looking at the styles of different artists, music from a variety of backgrounds, and in looking at different civilisations in history and the present day. There are regular cultural events which many pupils are involved in, for example, at the Royal Albert Hall, at local churches and in whole-school music and drama productions.
12. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good; there is an effective policy to promote high standards of behaviour, which encourages a very positive ethos and raises the pupils' awareness of the consequences of their actions and how these affect others. The pupils' contributions are valued and respected, for example, in class discussions. There are many reminders and prompts displayed around the school as well as golden rules established by pupils in each class. There is an effective display entitled 'We all have rights and responsibilities', which includes portraits of all the pupils. Pupils, especially those in Year 6, are developing an insight into being responsible within a society and how to be helpful and kind. Members of the school council from all year groups take their responsibilities seriously and the council's work contributes positively to the moral and social development of the pupils.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year [%]

Authorised absence	
School data:	4.5
National data:	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.4
National data:	0.4

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

13. The table above shows the attendance figures for the school. The level of attendance is above average and has improved since the last inspection. Absences are mainly due to medical reasons. Nevertheless, despite the efforts of the school, a number of families insist on taking holidays during term time. Such absence affects the achievement not only of the absent pupils but also others in the class, as the teacher has to spend time helping the absentee catch up. Few pupils are late in the mornings and then usually by only a few minutes. The effective procedures at the start of the school day result in the pupils settling quickly, which helps to ensure a prompt start to lessons.
14. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years. Just one pupil has been identified for fixed-term exclusion on four separate occasions.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	186	4	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	1	0	0
Information not obtained	4	0	0
TOTAL	204	0	0

This table is based on the latest data available from the school's annual returns. The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **good** and, as a result, pupils **learn well** in lessons.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage Unit is very good.
- Assessment is used well to support teaching and learning throughout the school and across the curriculum.
- Learning in mathematics during the junior years is unsatisfactory for some pupils.
- Teaching and learning in science, ICT and the creative arts are good.
- The pupils' very good speaking and listening skills contribute very strongly to their learning in all curriculum areas, as do their positive attitudes.
- Teaching and learning by pupils with special educational needs are enhanced by an effective team of teaching assistants.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and very good relationships with their pupils.

Commentary

15. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since that reported at the time of the last inspection when 5 per cent was unsatisfactory and a further 50 per cent was no better than satisfactory. The teaching and learning in the nursery and reception Foundation Stage Unit is now very good indeed and a strength of the school. A high proportion of lessons observed across the school was good. Whilst no unsatisfactory lessons were observed during this inspection, other evidence, including the pupils' recorded work over time, shows that learning is not always as good as that seen during the inspection, particularly in mathematics in the junior years.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	11 (24%)	27 (60%)	7 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

16. A significant proportion of the very good teaching is in the Foundation Stage Unit, where almost three-quarters of the lessons observed were very good. This proportion of very good teaching is exceptional. Here, the practitioners are excellent role models and manage the children very well. They use observations of children's learning to assess their needs and plan activities which are well matched and provide challenge. The resources build well on children's interests; they are exciting and relevant, and allow children to learn using all their senses. The practitioners provide a rich and stimulating environment inside and outside and this contributes positively to the children's learning.
17. In other year groups and across the curriculum, there are frequent instances of good teaching and learning, but few examples of very good teaching. There is good teaching and learning, particularly in English in Years 3 to 6, in mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and in science, ICT, art and design and dance, throughout the school. A substantial amount of time is given to teaching English, which results in generally good gains in learning and contributes to the pupils' high standards in reading and writing by the time they leave the school.
18. Mathematics is taught in mixed-age ability sets in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. For over half the pupils, this is in a room other than their own classroom and by a teacher other than their own class teacher. Over time, too many of the pupils, particularly the more able, do not make sufficient gains in mathematics. There is an over-reliance on published curriculum plans by some teachers; insufficient challenge and match of work to pupils' abilities, particularly for the more able pupils within the set; inadequate marking to help the pupils improve; and insufficient involvement of the pupils in setting short-term mathematics targets. The mathematics environment in several classrooms is limited.
19. The pace of learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan carefully, enabling pupils to reach their individual targets for learning. Teaching assistants work well as a team and share their knowledge with each other to provide relevant support for the specific problems that different pupils face. They take care to ensure that they are well briefed before the lessons that they support so they know what it is that pupils are to learn. So much so that the children work with confidence and in some cases, where the school works together with the "outreach" service, pupils make rapid progress in a short period of time. Teachers and support staff alike give all pupils who struggle with their work good attention so that they cope well and have positive attitudes to their work. In a small minority of lessons, teaching assistants attached to a whole class are not always clear exactly what is expected of them by the teacher and with which pupils they should be working.

20. The pupils' positive attitudes, their good behaviour and constructive relationships with the teacher all contribute to effective learning. They sustain concentration for lengthy periods, collaborate well together and enjoy problem solving. Examples of this were in a Year 1 personal, social and health education lesson, when pupils collaborated together in role-play to present confrontations and reconciliations, in a Year 2/3 dance lesson when all the pupils collaborated and co-operated very well, leading to good standards with highly animated and dynamic movements within the dance performances, and in a Year 6 ICT lesson, where pupils were working in pairs using computers to prepare for multi-media presentations. The pupils' very good speaking and listening skills are a significant feature in their capacity to learn. Almost all of them contribute well to whole-class discussions. They are able to offer a range of sophisticated ideas and talk confidently about various options. For example, Year 2 pupils in a geography lesson responded very well to the carefully planned opportunity to raise questions for investigation about life in an Amazon rain forest village and in a Year 4 science lesson, pupils when challenged were able to use precise language when reflecting on definitions of fitness related to exercise.
21. Assessment is used well throughout the school and across the curriculum to support teaching and learning. In the Foundation Stage Unit, assessment procedures are very good, with all practitioners skilfully observing, intervening and recording children's responses in order to plan the next steps. In Years 1 to 6, there are good whole-school systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This leads to good performance data which is used effectively to track individual pupils' progress over time and to set targets for the end of the year or key stage, except in mathematics, where the targets for the end of Year 6 are not challenging enough. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and the other subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers regularly maintain records from assessments of their pupils' progress at the end of each unit of work, using a local education authority (LEA) assessment package. Teachers also observe and record pupils' personal and social development, contributing to their understanding of each pupil's strengths and frailties. Progress by pupils with special educational needs is regularly assessed and recorded as part of the review structure against their individual education plans. During lessons, teachers also successfully use a range of effective assessment strategies; lessons frequently begin by inviting the pupils to reflect on what was learnt during the previous lesson; and at the beginning of new units of work, teachers encourage the pupils to discuss or map out what they already think they know about a concept or topic, helping the teachers to adjust plans to match the pupils' levels of understanding. Also, during some lessons, teachers involve all the pupils in the use of mini-whiteboards, digit cards or number fans to record their responses, showing the teacher at a glance exactly who has understood the point in question. Most of the pupils' work is marked, and much of it conscientiously with thoughtful comments on how it can be improved. This is not always the case in mathematics. Pupils have study skill targets and many have literacy targets; however, they do not have targets in mathematics and are less clear about what they need to do to improve, especially in the junior years. Homework is used effectively to reinforce and extend learning. Parents contribute to this very conscientiously indeed and many maintain a dialogue with the class teacher through the homework diary/reading record.

The curriculum

The curriculum is of good quality. The school offers a stimulating range of worthwhile opportunities and a really good variety of after-school activities that extend and enrich pupils' interests and talents. The quality of the school's new accommodation is excellent and as such is much improved since the last inspection. Resources are sufficient.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage Unit is outstanding.

- The curriculum for mathematics is not planned well enough to meet the needs of all junior pupils.
- There is good provision for pupils with additional or different needs in learning, ensuring an inclusive ethos throughout.
- Literacy skills are planned well in many subjects and enhance the quality of writing for pupils, particularly in the junior years.
- The variety of additional activities enriches pupils' experiences and brings learning to life within and beyond the school day.
- Provision for ICT and for pupils' personal, social, and health education is good.
- The accommodation provides an exceptional learning environment to raise standards.

Commentary

22. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements to the curriculum: there is now better provision for classes that contain more than one year group to assure that planning builds on previous work and subject plans have been re-organised so that pupils' studies build successively on what they know and can do.
23. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and meets all statutory requirements. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been embedded and literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively to support learning across the curriculum. Religious education is planned in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus.
24. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the nursery and reception unit is innovatively presented and outstanding. So much so that children get an excellent start from a hugely exciting range of experiences. These are closely tailored to their needs, planned to extend their ideas and to encourage curiosity and exploration. This impressively well-rounded provision means that when children move into Year 1 they are avid young learners, ready to make headway into the beginnings of the National Curriculum and take on the challenges it presents.
25. The curriculum is well organised and reflects what the school sets out to deliver for its pupils. There is a good balance given to ensuring that children learn important skills of working with others and improving one's own performance, as well as gaining factual knowledge. Children are given good opportunities for pupils to investigate scientific phenomena and deal with the findings of their own tests. Furthermore, the school emphasises speaking, listening, reading and writing in most other subjects, particularly so in the juniors, where these skills and pupils' use of language blossom. There are strengths in drama, role-play and imaginative writing. Added to these, there are lots of moments in lessons designed for pupils to talk together and appraise each other's work and performances. These sessions provide pupils with the tools to develop a critical sense and the confidence to improve their work. In mathematics, curriculum planning within the mixed-age sets does not meet the needs of the pupils over the time in the junior years.
26. The curriculum caters well for the needs of all the different groups of children. Pupils with a keen interest or talent in the arts or in writing, for example, have the chance to shine or simply join in. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the adults who work with them. There is evidence of especially good support in conjunction with local "outreach" services for a pupil with a statement of needs in learning. These children's work programmes are thoroughly planned linked to their individual education action plans and work well in helping children to gain good access to the full curriculum.
27. The school makes valuable and often imaginative use of visits, visitors and partnership links with the secondary school. In one example, two Year 11 pupils ran the "Dance Club" for over 22 pupils, demonstrating skill and talent. These close links provide a strong bridge for pupils at the point of transfer to the next stage of their education. In addition, pupils benefit from the vibrant range of international and cultural links that enrich and broaden the curriculum.

28. The very good range of clubs and activities provided outside lesson time extends the arts curriculum and fosters responsibility. Many of these clubs take place at lunchtime as well as after school. Children respond very well to these extra activities and younger pupils benefit from the presence of older juniors, who often take responsibility for ensuring that everyone gets a turn or the opportunity to take part.
29. The school's accommodation is exceptional. The modern purpose-built building includes numerous well-proportioned additional learning spaces outside classrooms in the central spine of the building. The computer suite is well equipped. The large hall is flexible in use and provides a very good amount of space and natural light for a vast range of activities, including dance, drama and gymnastics. The school grounds and the environment for learning around the buildings provide prime areas for pupils' learning, including the children in nursery and reception, for whom the resources for learning add extra sparkle. All this excellent accommodation is very well cared for and presented to ensure a most stimulating environment celebrating and extending the pupils' learning.
30. There is an appropriate pupil/teacher ratio and a good balance of experienced and recently appointed teachers. Recent appointments have strengthened the team from that reported in the last inspection. In English and ICT, resources are good; in mathematics, science and most other subjects, they are sound. The imaginatively presented library areas are well stocked with reference material supporting each curriculum area. The new resources for gymnastics are very good, but the resources for games are poor.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **good** overall and support pupils' learning appropriately. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **good**. The involvement of pupils in the school's work, through seeking, valuing and acting on their views, is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good procedures for child protection and maintaining health and safety.
- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn.
- The school has very good arrangements to enable new pupils to settle in.
- The school provides a wide variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.
- The school effectively monitors and promotes pupils' academic progress and personal development through the school.

Commentary

31. The procedures for child protection and ensuring a safe school are good. The school follows local procedures and members of staff have received guidance on how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are good with several trained staff, records kept of treatment and telephone calls to parents if children bump their heads. The governors are actively involved in touring the school to identify any potential hazards. The health and safety co-ordinator also checks the buildings and site regularly to ensure there are no problems. Various risk assessments are in place, including ones for visits out of school. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as physical education and design and technology. Healthy life styles are promoted in science and personal and social education lessons. Nevertheless, not all the teachers are fully aware of their responsibilities, with potential tripping hazards seen of electrical leads trailing across the floor while operating equipment in the classroom.

32. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff show good concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff members are approachable if there are any problems. In particular, parents agreed that their children were well supported when they first come into the school, either into reception or if they arrive in other years. This is because of the close links between the local pre-school providers and the staff in the nursery and reception classes. In addition, the very good relationships with parents ensure that pupils settle quickly when they start at the school. New pupils arriving in other years also settle in quickly because of the welcome they receive from their classmates. Pupils consider that they are generally supported very well by the staff and know to whom they would go if they needed help. The one exception to this is that they are reluctant to approach most of the midday supervisors, even if they need help. Pupils also consider that the teachers listen to their ideas. During lessons, including group time known as 'circle time', teachers discuss and solve problems as they arise. In addition, the pupils complete questionnaires and, every two weeks, the school council meets. Members of the council have made a number of recommendations which have been acted upon, for example, new playground equipment and an increase in the number of litter bins.
33. The school provides good guidance to promote pupils' personal and academic development. Their self-esteem is raised by the way they are praised by the staff and by the recognition of achievements at a weekly assembly. The targets set for the pupils include personal as well as academic aspects. The teachers provide a variety of opportunities for the pupils to work in different ways to extend their social skills, for example, working in pairs, structured talking to a partner, work in groups and whole-class discussions. The different tasks in the classroom and, for the older pupils, around the school, encourage the pupils to act responsibly and to develop maturity. The records kept by the teachers help them to build effectively upon the personal strengths of the pupils. There are well-structured whole-school record systems of pupils' academic progress, with good data showing progress over time. These records are used effectively to help pupils with short-term curriculum targets, particularly in English.
34. Systems for checking the progress made by pupils with special educational needs towards their targets for learning are effective. The information is used well to support the organisation of groups and individuals. The school is very thorough and inclusive in meeting the needs of all its pupils and works hard to ensure that they are met well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good**. Links with the local community are **good** and with other schools are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The parents' regular support of their children at home and in school makes a very good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school provides an extensive range of information about what happens in school.
- The quality of information in the annual reports on pupils' progress, particularly in the subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT, varies between the classes.
- Very good links with pre-school providers and the local secondary school ensure a smooth move on to the next stage of education.
- The involvement of a wide range of organisations and people in the community extends experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Commentary

35. In their high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents indicated that they are very pleased with what the school provides. Their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and they make good progress.
36. The school sends home regular newsletters about general matters and, each term, information outlining what is to be taught in each class and how parents can work with their children. The nursery and reception teachers send such information home every two weeks. Teachers are readily available: in particular, the teachers come out to meet parents at the end of the day. From the relaxed, informal conversations seen to take place during the inspection, it is apparent that parents are comfortable talking to the staff. By successfully restructuring its approach, the school has also responded very well to an initial reluctance of some parents to come into school. This has resulted in good attendance at both consultation and curriculum sessions and to the Friday assemblies. The annual reports on pupils' progress in the summer term generally have a good summary of what the children know and can do in English, mathematics, science and ICT, and include targets for improving achievement. However, the quality varies between classes, with some providing only limited information in the other subjects on the gains in pupils' knowledge and understanding, concentrating more on attitudes and enjoyment.
37. Parents' involvement with the school makes a very good contribution to its work and to the achievement of the pupils. In the nursery and reception unit, several parents were seen to stay for the first 20 minutes to work with their children. In the main school each morning, several parents work with different children helping them to develop their reading skills. Others help in the classroom on a regular basis or provide one-off support for particular activities and offer their specialist skills as portrait painter, glassblower etc. The parent association works hard to very successfully organise both fundraising and social events. The school sends out questionnaires each year enabling parents to be actively involved in formulating school policies. Parents are encouraged to comment on their child's reading at home and many examples were seen of parents taking up this opportunity and writing useful comments in the reading record. Pupils confirm that their parents usually insist on the homework being completed. Nevertheless, some parents take their children on holiday in term time, interrupting their school studies.
38. The very good partnership with the local secondary school and other primary schools helps to extend staff expertise, with staff holding joint training sessions and opportunities for subject leaders to meet. The group is also planning to extend multicultural experiences for pupils with work related to international story telling. The school's links with the community college benefits pupils' academic and personal development, such as the joint work in mathematics and a variety of occasions when the Year 6 pupils can visit the college before they transfer. The sports matches against other schools enable pupils to meet others. The school's work with a local day care nursery and a playgroup enables the young children to be well prepared for their eventual move into the school. Pupils benefit from the school's work with the community. They are active in local events such as the May Parade and art competition and local people are invited into school for open mornings and exhibitions. The school choir holds concerts for the public in church with the support of professional musicians. The mainstream curriculum is enhanced by the trips out to places in the local area and further afield, such as the Roman museum in St Albans and by the different visitors to the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher is **very good**. Governance is **very good** and the school is **well managed**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, leads by example and has high expectations of all the pupils and staff.
- The governors fulfil all their responsibilities very effectively and contribute significantly to the success of the school.
- Some of the subject leaders are new to their roles, which remain in need of strengthening, as does the combined role of the senior management team.
- Leadership of the Foundation Stage team in the nursery and reception unit is very good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).

Commentary

39. The leadership, management and governance of the school are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection when a number of tensions in relationships and a lack of consistent philosophy was reported. The fairly recently appointed headteacher very successfully provides dynamic leadership across the school. Her clarity of vision and her high expectations of all pupils and staff have a significant impact on the ethos of the school, on pupils' achievement and the quality of their experiences. She provides a strong lead in curriculum development and innovation, and demonstrates fully the school's commitment to valuing all pupils equally, working strenuously to ensure that any specific needs are met and barriers overcome. She has successfully encouraged a number of senior manager colleagues to become effective team leaders, notably the leader of the Foundation Stage Unit and the SENCO. However, the role and function of the senior management team as a whole, which includes the two very experienced assistant headteachers, remains less clear in its contribution to strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. There are no published agenda or minutes for this group. The Foundation Stage team is led and managed very well and this results in excellent provision for the three, four- and five-year-old children. There is an effective whole-school five-year strategic development plan, with detailed plans for the first year addressing the main priorities which have been accurately identified following rigorous evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher in particular has a very good grasp of performance data across the school, in terms of individual pupils, year groups and trends. Other senior managers and subject leaders have been less involved in this, and whilst their knowledge of standards is growing, some have only limited awareness of the detailed analysis, and so are yet to make full use of this in their planning, teaching and guidance to colleagues. A significant proportion of the subject leaders are new to their role and have yet to be trained in the monitoring and evaluation aspects of that role.
40. There is an all-pervading commitment to inclusion within the school. All the pupils are equally valued and the good performing arts curriculum enables them all to participate, successfully enhancing their self-esteem. Talented pupils are encouraged in music, art and drama, and perform in a variety of settings, sometimes with the related costs being met by the school to ensure no pupils are excluded. The provision for special educational needs is well managed by the SENCO. There is dedicated, caring and well-organised provision for pupils brought about by early identification of any needs that children might have and strong links with outside agencies. The school provides effective support for the different groups of pupils. For example, at the start of morning and afternoon sessions, there are seamless ways for pupils to move in and out of class for additional support at times when all pupils have a range of study activities. This promotes self-esteem and confidence and in turn helps to promote a well-rounded access to the full curriculum. The SENCO manages well an extensive and motivated team of teaching assistants who work well with individual pupils and small groups. Most of this support is in classrooms; a small proportion of it is currently outside the classroom and this aspect should be regularly monitored. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully informed and involved in the support programmes. This good provision enables the relatively small proportion of pupils with special educational needs to achieve well during their time in the school.

41. The governance of the school is very good. This represents very good improvement since the time of the last inspection when three of the key issues related to governance. The chair of governors is very well informed and knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. She is regularly in school for formal and informal briefings with the headteacher and other key staff, and liaises closely with the chairs of the governors' committees. The governing body fully meets all its statutory requirements and manages its role very well as critical friend. There is an effective committee structure with appropriate terms of reference. All meetings are very well planned and purposeful; decisions taken, benefit from high quality information supplied by the headteacher and other senior managers in advance, giving governors a balanced view of strengths and weaknesses, and the opportunity to plan strategically. Their knowledge is validated by the frequent visits to school by a number of key governors who have specific responsibilities and links with members of staff.
42. Management of the school is efficient and effective. There is an established annual cycle for monitoring the performance of the school, which is implemented well and is becoming increasingly evaluative. This monitoring has revealed good overall implementation of school policies but some inconsistencies in policy implementation, particularly in the class of the oldest pupils. Outcomes of the monitoring and evaluation are presented to the governors by the headteacher and other senior managers. The very good performance data is used to help set targets for pupils; all of these are appropriately challenging for 2004, 2005 and 2006 with the exception of the surprisingly small proportion of pupils targeted to exceed the national standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
43. The school was awarded the Investor In People status in 2002 and professional development appropriately reflects whole-school needs and those of the individual. Performance management is used well and has been extended to include the support staff team. However, two elements of staff development do need strengthening; the first is the role of some subject leaders, the second is the role of lunchtime supervisory staff, whose status and relationships with pupils, whilst satisfactory, does not reflect the high expectations of the rest of the school day and staff team.
44. Daily routines and practices are well established throughout the school day; there are good administrative procedures and all the minor points identified in the last local education authority audit, conducted before the appointment of the present headteacher, have been fully implemented. The governors play a significant role in the budget-setting process at strategic level; the headteacher and the chair of finance committee work closely in ensuring the priorities reflect the school development plan. Budget monitoring is conducted most conscientiously and contributes to the very good application of best value principles in the school. The relatively large carry forward figure at the end of the 2002/2003 financial year was as a result of prudent planning by the governing body expecting a fall in numbers which did not materialise. The predicted carry forward from the 2003/2004 financial year is substantially smaller.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	560, 805	Balance from previous year	62,058
Total expenditure	561,197	Balance carried forward to the next	61,666
Expenditure per pupil	2,291		

45. There are a number of significant aids to raising achievement further of this successful school. They include the leadership and high expectations of the headteacher, the pupils' very positive attitudes to work, the excellent provision in the Foundation Stage Unit, the parents' commitment and involvement in their children's education, and the very well presented high quality accommodation. The only barrier relates to the current arrangements for mathematics in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, with the inconsistent provision and expectations within a mixed-age structure of taught sets.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is excellent. It is a strength of the school and has improved since the last inspection. Nursery and reception age children are now located in a single Foundation Stage Unit, enabling the school to make excellent use of resources and provide an innovative and age-appropriate, play-based curriculum which is fully in line with national guidance. The majority of children attend some form of pre-school provision and enter the school at age three or four. Their attainment on entry is above national expectations. Full-time places are offered in line with the school's policy, taking account of age and the spaces available. At the time of the inspection, a fifth of reception age children were still attending part-time. All children achieve well, and many very well, because of the very good teaching and the excellent curriculum and planning. It provides an entirely appropriate balance between adult and child-initiated activities; direct teaching and opportunities for children to pursue their own interests. The excellent planning ensures that resources are available which enable the children to build on adult-led sessions and therefore reinforce their learning. The activities and resources are inspirational and enable the children to access all the areas of learning, both inside and outside. This particularly effective practice meets the needs of all the children at this early stage in their education. Children are prepared well for transfer to Year 1, having experience of literacy and numeracy sessions. The continued part-time attendance has an impact on children's progress; they are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals and a significant number to be above them in personal, social and emotional, mathematical and creative development. The accommodation inside and out is excellent and the timetable ensures very good use of the space. Practitioners are excellent role models and manage the children very well. Adults use observations of children's learning very well to plan activities which are well matched and provide challenge. The resources build well on children's interests; they are exciting and relevant and allow children to learn using all their senses.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of the very good teaching and high expectations set by practitioners.
- The organisation of the day and the resources enable children to develop independence and confidence.
- The quality of teaching is excellent.
- Children have very positive attitudes to their work and are happy.
- Every opportunity is taken to enhance children's development and many are likely to exceed the expected goals by the end of the reception year.

Commentary

46. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is higher than expected for their age. The clear routines and the balance of adult and child-initiated learning enables the children to operate with independence, to conform and work with others. The quality of teaching is excellent. The consistent role models set by the adults and their high expectations support the children in quickly learning the way to behave and achieve a calm but rigorous approach to work. The excellent team work of the adults across the work spaces allows the children responsibility. They show interest in what they are doing, high levels of involvement and are eager to learn.

47. Children are very well supported by the adults, who encourage the children as well as helping them to develop ideas to extend their work. They are confident to try new activities and initiate new ideas. Children are encouraged to share and take turns amicably and they are able to do this even when not directly supervised. On the very rare occasions when children do not conform, they are dealt with firmly and fairly in a calm way which helps them learn to consider the needs of others. Children are encouraged to tidy away and set up the areas for the next session, which they do with little prompting. The children are successfully taught the importance of managing their own personal hygiene. There is a strong sense of caring and supportive relationships. This is reinforced through interest in the children and their work and adults treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. These trusting relationships help the children to try new activities, initiate ideas and to succeed in their learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress and are in line to achieve the expectations in this area.
- All practitioners take every opportunity to develop children's language skills and teaching is very good.
- Opportunities to encourage writing are embedded within all work areas outside and inside.
- Children enjoy reading and access books throughout the school day.
- Non-fiction books are placed among displays, although more could be available in the children's book boxes.

Commentary

48. The evidence from children's records and displays is that they are in line to achieve the expectations in this area of learning. Children make good progress because of the rich opportunities that they are given. Teaching is very good. All staff take every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and oral skills through probing questions and modelling. The children respond well to targeted questioning which helps them to share and develop their ideas. The very good relationships and the adults' genuine interest in what the children have to say gives them confidence to talk and offer their ideas. Children enjoy books; they handle them carefully and have an enthusiasm for reading. This is developed further through parents reading with them at home. The children listen very well in class sessions, taking turns and listening to the contributions of others. They listen attentively when a story is read to them. For example, when the teacher read the story of 'Little Rabbit Foo Foo', the children were hanging on her every word and a number of them were joining in with the well-known parts of the text. An examination of planning, children's work and children reading indicates a good emphasis on the recognition of sounds to help children read and write. When using a computer program, they were able to give the letter sounds. In writing, they are provided with very good resources, both within the specific writing areas and within other work areas, for example, the clipboards outside. This supports children in having a purpose for their writing and both boys and girls demonstrate an enjoyment in early writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are working at least at the expected levels for their age and many will exceed the Early Learning Goals.

- Teachers plan very effectively to ensure that activities support learning in number and other aspects of mathematics.
- Opportunities to encourage mathematical thinking are provided within all work areas, outside and inside.
- Teachers plan activities which interest and challenge children and build well on their prior learning.

Commentary

49. The timetable ensures that all children receive a mathematics session each day which includes the opportunity for work with numbers. Teaching and learning are very good. Most children are working at least at the expected levels for their age and many will exceed the Early Learning Goals. In line with national expectations, the children are not yet required to record their number work formally, but they are confident in counting and able to identify correctly the number which is 'one more than'. With an adult, they can count accurately to 60 supported by clapping patterns which identified the 'tens'. In the teacher-led sessions, adults model mathematical vocabulary very well, for example, cuboid, corner, face. They provide challenge through games which involve the children in using their learning, for example, the properties of shapes. These games build on prior learning, engage the children and make learning fun. Resources are then made available in free-play sessions for children to explore the shapes further, for example, through sorting into sets. Careful questioning by the teachers allows children to explain their thinking and supports them in correcting their answers where necessary. Resources are provided for child-initiated sessions which excite children and encourage them to explore and enjoy mathematics, for example, in making cone hats for the three bears. Photographs show how the programmable toy is used to support mathematical development. The opportunities for mathematics are included in the resources in all areas, both inside and out, and teaching sessions are undertaken in both. Through this excellent planning, mathematics is made accessible and relevant to the children.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world.
- A wide and rich variety of first-hand experiences are planned to promote learning in this area.
- All aspects are given equal value and focus.
- There is improved access to information and communication technology (ICT).
- Further resources could be included to represent cultural diversity.

Commentary

50. Through a wide range of first-hand activities related to their topic focus, the children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They are able to talk about different types of homes and have used their design and technology skills to build model homes in art and design and outside play houses. They use guttering to explore water flow and use jelly to explore the concept of dissolving when participating in water play. Adults support play well by encouraging the children and providing further materials to extend their work over time. Questions by adults explore children's understanding and support them in considering how they can improve their work. The children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals. They have good access to ICT. They are developing control of the mouse and are able to 'drag and click'. They use computers to support learning in other areas such as reading and art. Planning and records identify how they use a programmable toy and other equipment, such as tape recorders, a microwave oven and a camera, to support their learning. Access to a digital

camera would further enhance the opportunities for ICT and for children and adults to evaluate learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good access to outside areas, which provide an extensive range of surfaces, levels and a covered area.
- Very good provision, outside and inside, enables the children to develop large and small physical skills very well.

Commentary

51. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers make optimum use of the space, both inside and outside, to enhance children's physical development. A rich range of activities are provided which build on children's interests, creating very good learning opportunities for the children to develop manipulative skills through handling paint, scissors, string, small construction kits games and puzzles. Outside, the children have access to an extensive range of resources, including wheeled vehicles, household paintbrushes and rollers, balls, chalks and large building materials. Children move confidently, aware of their own and others' space, even at times of whole-class movement. The children's handling and control skills are also developed well through activities such as cutting, sticking and drawing, using markers, sticky tape and glue. Teaching sessions are held both outside and inside, which gives an appropriately positive message about the value of outside play. Children make very good progress and are in line to achieve, and many to exceed, the expected goals in this area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent opportunities for children to develop and extend their ideas are provided through the time given to child-initiated activities.
- The rich and exciting materials and activities engage children and support their ability to discover, explore and express their creativity.
- There are relatively limited resources reflecting cultural diversity.

Commentary

52. The quality of teaching is very good. Children are given a wide and rich range of creative development opportunities which are linked to the other curriculum areas, for example, in the straw and sticks for creating homes, linked to 'The Three Pigs'. This provision is equally rich outside, where children were creating houses for role-play, which extended over days, enabling them to be challenged as well as extending their creative ideas. The children carry out creative tasks sensibly, handling tools and potentially messy materials carefully. They demonstrate very good levels of concentration and involvement, for example, in the home role-play children took their play outside the home area, taking a mobile phone call from someone wanting to be picked up from the airport. The Foundation Stage Unit is a very rich environment with well-organised, bright displays, which celebrate and value the children's creative work. During the inspection, it was not possible to see children working in music or dance; however, evidence through observations and planning indicates that children make very good progress and are in

line to achieve the expected levels, and a number exceed them. Multicultural opportunities are included in planning, but further general resources could enrich this aspect further.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils reach well above average standards at the ages of seven and 11 in reading, speaking and listening.
- Pupils are hugely imaginative in their writing; and by Year 6, they achieve particularly well in the range of writing they explore.
- The quality of language that many pupils use is often of a high level.
- The teaching of reading encourages a depth of understanding and fosters a thoughtful response to literature.
- All groups of pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties who have catch-up support.
- Handwriting at the age of seven is relatively immature and infant pupils do not use the conventions of writing as well as they might.

Commentary

53. The school's test results for 11-year-olds show above average standards over time, though with considerable fluctuation; those for seven-year-olds are not quite as strong, but, nevertheless, keep pace with all schools nationally and, in 2003, meet those whose pupils come from similar backgrounds. An analysis of the school's performance shows that reading results are the strongest aspect in Key Stage 1. In 2003, for example, the results for seven-year-olds in reading compare very well to similar schools and, in writing, they are broadly in line. Inspection findings match the school's own accurate assessment of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work, as reflected in the school's robust management plans for improvement, showing that above average standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been fully maintained.
54. Given their start on entry to school, by the end of Year 2, most pupils have achieved very well in reading. They are confident in trying out new words and thoroughly enjoy choosing and tackling increasingly difficult books. They make a flying start because the teaching of early reading skills is anchored in reading for enjoyment. Both the school and parents give it a high priority. So much so that pupils gain considerable insight into the antics and problems of the characters in the stories they enjoy.
55. In work seen during the inspection, it is evident that most infant pupils reach marginally above average standards in writing. They are able to express simple ideas well enough. Interestingly, their work sparkles with imaginative choice of words when they write in response to pictures and the mood of poetry and description, but the high quality of language that many pupils use in their conversations does not flow readily into their writing. This is because they are hampered by their limited grasp of simple writing conventions, which are not taught early enough, and results in pupils spending time composing simple sentences when their spoken language abilities are far beyond this basic skill. This had adversely affected the standards pupils reached until 2003. However, overall, pupils now make sound progress in using correct punctuation and spelling in the sentences they write, but are somewhat limited by their immature handwriting at the age of seven. The rate at which pupils in Key Stage 1 acquire basic skills in writing could be greater, given their natural flair for words and phrases.

56. In the juniors, the high quality of communication skills of many pupils shines through during class discussions and when an adult questions them; at these times, they are very confident and impressively articulate. Lower attaining pupils have a narrower range of vocabulary and benefit from the additional dialogue with teaching assistants in lessons. All teachers are good at introducing new words or terms to support the work of this group of pupils. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported well during lessons, and in some cases make better progress than other groups in the class because of this concentrated attention. All make good progress with the extra help and many cope well with the same reading and writing tasks as the rest of the class.
57. Pupils are taught well how to search for information and extract the main facts from text; they share a wide range of books and printed materials with their teachers and use their computer skills to enhance their work, search for clips of information and indeed email it to each other with great ease. Increasingly, they tap the world's electronic learning resources; they receive land mail from countries across the globe and respond with enthusiasm and detail in the letters they write.
58. Literacy lessons are of good quality. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, in many of them, know how to develop pupils' writing very well. The strengths in infant reading promote a love of story and keen knowledge of how they work. Pupils' skills of using grammar, punctuation and spelling accelerate at a good pace in Year 3 onwards. In some literacy lessons in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is more ordinary because the lessons lack the pace and challenge of learning that the pupils could tackle.
59. Good leadership and management of the subject have meant that achievement has been strong and continues to be so. Overall assessment procedures are secure in the infant years and good in the junior years. A very careful eye is kept on the progress of all pupils, and the systematic tracking of attainment in end of year tests by the headteacher and subject leader means that weaknesses in the work of individuals or groups of pupils are identified and action is taken to remedy them. The school's current development plans show that management is adept at recognising the challenges for the future. The new subject leader has benefited from the well-planned transition to the role and has taken on the responsibility with enthusiasm and knowledge.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. The school gives pupils good opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects, and has enabled them to improve weaker aspects of their work. Where pupils achieve soundly in their writing, mostly in infant classes, teachers now plan for pupils to practise a broader range of writing. Other areas of English add enormous interest, enjoyment and depth in the subject. There is, for example, much use of drama in the extended curriculum in clubs and in whole-school work. This drive enriches communication skills and brings the zest of language, literature and learning to life.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory overall**, although good in the infant years.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many of the pupils in the junior years do not achieve as well as they should and standards by the end of Year 6 have declined over time, fluctuating widely from year to year.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well and standards by the end of Year 2 are well above national averages.
- Teachers' expectations and challenge of average and above average ability pupils over time in the junior years are frequently too low.

- Older pupils are not helped enough in terms of knowing how to improve their mathematics knowledge and understanding.
- The current setting arrangements in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have not had the intended effect of raising attainment.
- The new subject leader, whilst being well supported by the headteacher, has yet to receive significant training in her role.

Commentary

61. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above the national average. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 6 are in line with national averages. This is significantly lower than at the time of the last inspection when they were well above average by the end of Year 6. It is also well below the potential of many of the pupils, who enter the school with above average levels of mathematical understanding. The relatively few pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and many achieve well. By the time pupils enter Year 2, almost all of them have a good understanding of the number system and place value and are able to calculate accurately mentally, using an empty number line and using more formal written methods. A significant proportion of these pupils are operating at levels well above the national average. By Year 2, they are developing a good knowledge of fractions and shape, and are able to use standard measures such as centimetres and metres. They use this knowledge well in investigations and problem solving. Their very good speaking skills support them well in thinking through and explaining strategies used for mental calculations. Their good ICT skills and enthusiasm for working with programmable toys enable them to make rapid gains in their understanding of such concepts as rotation, 90 degrees, right angles and quarter or half turns. They have learnt to collate and present data well using ICT.
62. By the time pupils are in Year 6, many have a sound knowledge of the number system in line with the average for their age. Most are secure in the four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Their knowledge of place value and the decimal number system is secure, including negative and positive numbers, percentages and fractions, and they understand such terms as factors, inverse and lowest common multiple; however, their speed of recall of known common number facts such as addition bonds or multiplication tables is less secure. They cover a wide range of mathematical concepts and have learnt about the properties of shape, the creation, presentation and interpretation of data, and strategies for problem solving. Their sophisticated language skills strongly support their capacity for problem solving, which is a continuing priority within the school.
63. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good in the early years. Pupils are very positive about the subject and respond well to the well-planned and imaginatively presented lessons. The teachers have high expectations of all their pupils and provide a range of activities suitably matched for the different ability levels of groups within their class in the oral and mental session and the main lesson. Apparatus is used effectively, for example, number fans in a mental session in which all pupils had to participate by showing their fans. Teaching assistants work well in the classrooms with small groups of pupils with special educational needs and this contributes to these pupils' sound achievement. Pupils have mathematics targets in their books and teachers regularly review these with the pupils, supporting them in their learning. Teachers carefully mark the pupils' work and indicate what they need to do to improve. In one class, nearly all the work is on loose sheets stored in a folder, making it more difficult for the pupils, their parents or the teacher to track progress and review the achievements over time.
64. The overall learning in the later years is unsatisfactory for a proportion of the pupils. In the lessons observed during the inspection period, much of the teaching was good and many of the pupils were learning effectively. However, evidence from pupils' work and an analysis of test results show that many pupils do not make the gains they should over time. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are taught in mixed-age sets according to their ability. In some of these sets, the teachers use published plans as a basis for their lessons; these plans are frequently

related to the younger pupils within the mixed-age set and do not show how the less able older pupils are to be helped to catch up. Conversely, the plans for the high ability sets do not sufficiently draw on objectives from the year ahead. Over-reliance on these published plans, without due preparation or adjustment to suit the particular needs of the group, sometimes leads to confused teaching and inadequate coverage or pace over the week. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, after a good introductory activity, the teacher had misunderstood the plan and had to abort her teaching of a particular strategy as a result. In another Year 5/6 lesson, some of which was good, the teacher's plan was not adhered to: the main planned objective was not fully addressed, and none of the pupils moved on to the intended extension activity, limiting their progress. More than half the pupils are taught mathematics by a teacher other than their class teacher, often in a different classroom. This limits the opportunities for their class teacher to reinforce mathematics concepts during the rest of the day across other curriculum areas.

65. The work in their mathematics books shows that all pupils in the same set have frequently been given the same tasks, without any apparent additional challenge for the more able pupils. Whilst nearly all the pupils' work is marked, in several sets the comments do not relate to the mathematics being learnt and do not provide guidance to the pupils about how they might improve. The pupils have not been set specific short-term mathematics targets; in one set, they have targets such as "I will put my hand up when I need help" and "I will write more lightly." In another set, all the National Numeracy Strategy key objectives for Year 6 are pasted in the back of each pupil's book, but with no reference to a focus for any given week, nor to the progress being made by that pupil in achieving the objectives. The mathematics environment in classrooms is less developed in the rooms of the older pupils than in the rest of the school. There is almost no attempt to support teaching and learning by displaying key mathematics concepts, terminology, number patterns, charts or symbols. There are some good displays of pupils' mathematical work in the central areas of the school, particularly some investigations; work by pupils in Year 4 is displayed well in the classroom and outside, celebrating the pupils' achievements and raising the profile of the subject.
66. There is very good performance data available, including a detailed breakdown of mathematical concepts pupils succeed or struggle with; however, as yet, this data is not being used to best advantage by teachers to help them plan. In addition to this data from formal testing at the end of each school year, there are well-structured and comprehensive assessment procedures across the school, enabling teachers to maintain a good grasp of achievement and learning needs. In some lessons, teachers use good strategies for assessing pupils' understanding at the beginning and during lessons: for example, number fans and mini-whiteboards, enabling the teacher to check on all the pupils' understanding before moving on. In a Year 4 top set lesson, there was a good conclusion to the session in which the teacher successfully assessed and reinforced the main teaching point and then challenged the most able by introducing a more complex concept. The school's targets for mathematics for 2004, 2005 and 2006 indicate a higher than average proportion of the pupils are expected to attain the standard expected by the end of Year 6, but too few are targeted to exceed it. Expectations remain too low for pupils who have already demonstrated their high mathematical potential in the early years in the school.
67. There is a new mathematics subject leader who is being supported effectively by the headteacher, but has yet to receive formal training for her new responsibilities. The headteacher is well aware of the shortcomings in the provision for mathematics; she has rigorously monitored the teaching and learning across the school and has involved the local education authority in auditing practice. She commendably teaches an upper ability set of Year 3 and 4 pupils every day. Mathematics features strongly within the action plan to raise achievement and appropriately includes strategies to raise teachers' expectations.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Whilst the National Numeracy Strategy principles are largely adopted by the school, there is no systematic, planned approach to using mathematics across the curriculum. Some evidence was seen of mathematics supporting learning in other curriculum areas; for example, pupils were able to interpret a timeline in history in Year 1, to competently present data in the form of pie charts in a Year 4 geography topic on the Amazon rain forest, and to read measurements and understand a range of scales in science experiments in Year 6. Effective use is made of ICT to support both teaching and learning in mathematics in specific classes across the school.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of work in science are above the national average and pupils are well taught.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to scientific work.
- The school makes good use of the pupils' views on what they find most interesting in science.

Commentary

68. The pupils achieve standards which are above average in Year 2 and Year 6 and they make good progress in lessons. Those pupils identified as having special educational needs also achieve well in science and some of these pupils achieve very well with higher levels of attainment in both Year 2 and 6. The pupils have positive attitudes to their scientific work; they are inquisitive and keen to be involved in the activities provided. The subject has been maintained since the previous inspection when standards were also judged as above average.
69. Teaching and learning in lessons and from samples of pupils' work are good overall. The staff team has a secure understanding of the requirements of teaching science, lessons are generally well-planned, there are reasonable expectations for what the pupils are to achieve, based on what they can do, and management of the pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers support the pupils appropriately in lessons, but sometimes opportunities are missed to note observations and assessments of what the pupils are learning. The pupils respond well in lessons, have positive attitudes to their work, and are keen to participate and learn. In Year 2, the pupils are learning about different types of materials and how forces, such as pulling, twisting and stretching, can alter these. In a lesson observed during the inspection, there were appropriate opportunities for the children to explore and learn together; the extension activities were interesting and challenged the pupils' thinking, especially as some pupils found the ideas more difficult to grasp. However, they persevered and made good progress and the good reinforcement of appropriate scientific language enhanced their learning.
70. In a Year 2/3 lesson, the pupils made good progress, and the Year 2 pupils' level of attainment was very good as they worked alongside their Year 3 classmates. The introduction to the lesson was very effective, the investigative approach was successful, but opportunities to promote literacy skills were missed as the pupils tended to copy the guidance they were given on how to plan an experiment. In Year 6, the pupils are making good progress and achieve well in their investigative and experimental work, they have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test, can organise their own work and co-operate and collaborate very well. However, although there was support for pupils identified with special educational needs and extension work for higher achieving pupils, the tasks set for the pupils were very similar.
71. Leadership and management in science are good overall, work is monitored and science teaching has been observed. From lessons and analysis of the pupils' performance in statutory tests, an area for development has been identified, as some pupils have a less secure knowledge of the solar system. Although resources are satisfactory overall, there are

some gaps throughout the school; for example, there is not enough equipment such as balances and thermometers for the pupils to weigh and measure in their investigative work. The accommodation is very good and there is very good use of the local rural area and the school grounds to promote learning in science. Assessment procedures are good and generally well maintained, and the pupils' views on what they find most interesting in science are sought and acted upon.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above national expectations across the school.
- Teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) skills is good.
- ICT is used effectively to support learning in other subjects.
- A sound system for assessing pupils' progress in ICT is established.
- Aspects of the subject leadership role are underdeveloped; procedures for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in ICT are not yet established.

Commentary

72. The standard of pupils' work is above national expectations across the school. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with expectations so the school has made good progress since then. In the direct teaching sessions seen, good teaching enabled pupils to make gains in relation to the lesson objective and achieve well. The deployment of teacher assistants is good and they make effective contribution to learning when deployed to work with specific individuals or groups. However, improved use of them could be developed, particularly during the whole-class part of sessions. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress.
73. In the lessons seen, the teacher's own specialist knowledge was used well, providing clear instructions; this is particularly effective where the digital projector is used. As a result, pupils are able to access programs easily. In two lessons where new programs were in use, pupils demonstrated how effectively they are able to transfer their skills. Pupils use the ICT suite with confidence, quickly settling to their tasks, working in pairs and supporting each other well. Conversations with pupils and examples of their work show that by the end of Year 2, they are able to give instructions to programmable toys, log on, print and save their work. They can undertake basic word-processing and know how to create graphs in mathematics. By Year 6, they are able to use the Internet effectively to exchange and share information and for research. Pupils use word-processing packages very well, including publishing software and multimedia packages, to which they are able to add animation and sound. They have a good understanding of graphical modelling and data handling. They contribute to the progress of other year groups, through creating support materials for younger pupils and supervising the lunchtime computer club. They are enthusiastic about the use of ICT and particularly the use of interactive whiteboards in supporting active learning and the use of appropriate video clips.
74. Whilst the leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory overall, aspects remain underdeveloped. The subject leader is available to advise staff and provides technical support. Sound assessment procedures are in place, with regular samples of work in pupils' progress books which identify attainment and next steps in learning. However, this information is not yet used alongside other evidence from planning, displays and teaching to evaluate standards across the school and identify areas for development. In the lessons observed, teachers are confident in their use of information and communication technology; however, there is no clear system for identifying future training needs, for example, in the use of electronic whiteboards. The ICT suite is used by all classes; however, the use of optional sessions to enable a balance

of ICT-focused sessions and those to support learning in other curriculum areas are not monitored. National funding streams and support from the parents' association have provided equipment and a budget is available for software. The school has not developed a clear plan about future funding to ensure that equipment can be updated regularly.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. During the inspection, good use was seen of ICT to support learning in other curriculum areas. Pupils report that they use classroom computers to research for topics. In lessons observed, pupils were using ICT to support work on co-ordinates in geography, composing music, writing tasks in English and to create pictures. Work on display demonstrated other work such as an investigation in mathematics using graphs and the use of programmable toys.

HUMANITIES

Only one lesson was seen in geography, one in history and none in religious education during the inspection. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement on provision, standards achieved and the quality of teaching and learning in any of these subject areas. Evidence was gained from the analysis of curriculum plans for each subject, discussion with the subject leaders, the scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work since September 2003 and displays in classrooms and around the school.

Geography

76. The one lesson seen in geography was in a Year 2/3 class and it was a good lesson. The teacher had carefully planned a series of activities in which the pupils shared preconceptions about life in an Amazon rain forest village, formed questions about village life and then used reference material to check their hypotheses. The pupils' very good speaking and listening and literacy skills effectively contributed to their learning as they confidently used contents and index pages and scanned through pages until finding the appropriate information related to their hypothesis. They demonstrated good levels of understanding about the different geographical features of Amazon rainforests and good enquiry skills. The good quality and range of reference material also supported the activity well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 had completed some work on seashore habitats in the autumn term. The limited evidence available from Year 6 suggests that the good achievement in geography observed in the work scrutiny and in classroom displays in Years 3 and 4 may not be maintained throughout the school. Year 6 pupils are given a geography homework topic in the spring term. At the time of the inspection, this work was barely begun; limited evidence suggests that the structure and expectations of these topics need to be strengthened to ensure geographical skills are fully covered, and that pupils know what is expected of them and are able to evaluate their own work against agreed criteria. The geography curriculum appears secure; there is a two-year rolling programme of geography topics in Years 1 and 2, and a four-year cycle in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. It is taught in half-term blocks, enabling greater depth at any one time. In addition, there are specific curriculum theme weeks from time to time which enhance the geography curriculum; for example, the Football World Cup generated a whole-school project. Geography is assessed and recorded effectively using an LEA system.

History

77. The one lesson seen in history was in Year 1 in which the pupils demonstrated an above average knowledge of the facts surrounding the Fire of London. Although the planned focus was on historical enquiry and interpretation of evidence, a challenging and sophisticated concept for six-year-olds, much of the time was spent on rehearsing knowledge and feelings of those caught up in the fire. The pupils' very good listening and speaking skills enhanced the quality of their thinking about 17th century London. Displays in the classroom and elsewhere in Years 1 and 2 indicate a consistent approach and shared planning of the history topics. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 had studied the Romans during the autumn term. Some of the pupils had visited the Roman museum at Verulamium (St Albans). The older pupils began their work

on the Romans with a 'mind map' indicating what they already knew and what they wished to find out. This good strategy enabled the teacher to identify prior knowledge. However, the recorded work did not indicate how historical skills were being taught, for example, understanding of chronology and the interpretation of evidence. Learning objectives were not evident in the recorded work, making teacher assessment more difficult. The curriculum arrangements and assessment arrangements in history are the same as for those in geography.

Religious education

78. Work in religious education (RE) was sampled during the inspection. From the limited evidence available, standards are above those expected within the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and at the expected level for Year 6. No lessons were observed in teaching RE due to the timetabling arrangements, but from analysis of the pupils' work, their achievement is satisfactory overall. The school has a two-year programme of study for Years 1 and 2, a four-year programme from Years 3 to 6, and complies with the locally agreed syllabus for the teaching of RE.
79. From samples of the pupils' work, it is evident that they study Christianity and Islam in reasonable detail, and as they grow older, they make comparisons between these religions, for example, comparing symbols, artefacts and traditions which are significant. From Year 1, there are good experiences for the pupils to consider special events, for instance, they have attended a local church in their study about baptism. This visit resulted in very good displays within the classrooms, enhancing pupils' learning. There are good links overall to promote the pupils' development, through spirituality, social and moral issues, and the older pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility in the school, which enhances this work. There are good links in literacy for the younger pupils, but in Year 6, although the pupils have a reasonable grasp of the significant elements in their RE studies, the samples of work indicate they do not record these frequently to reinforce their learning and use their skills in writing. There are good opportunities overall for the pupils to consider a variety of beliefs and the school uses the resources available very well, for example, visitors to the school share their knowledge about festivals such as Divali, and the links with schools abroad are being used very well to develop an understanding of Buddhism. Resources are satisfactory, although there are not enough artefacts to reflect a variety of faiths. Standards in RE have been maintained since the previous inspection and progress is satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Four lessons were observed in physical education, two in art and design, none in design and technology, and none in music. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement on provision, standards achieved and the quality of teaching and learning in all of these subject areas. Evidence was gained from the analysis of curriculum plans for each subject, discussion with the subject leaders, the scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work since September 2003 and displays in classrooms and around the school.

Art and design

80. In art and design, the range of work covered by pupils is dynamic. At the age of seven and at the point of transfer to secondary education, the standards pupils reach are above that typical of most pupils. The breadth of achievement and the cultural and spiritual contribution the subject provides are very good. Pupils are able to develop their skills through a vast range of exploratory painting, drawing and designing, using interesting media in creative ways. The annual whole-school arts week adds new experiences and interest to the curriculum that children can further explore in the art club. Pupils demonstrate a vibrant and skilled use of computer-generated art. For example, junior pupils manipulate tools to produce exciting work in the style of the artist Henri Matisse. Infant pupils use interesting media to create objects, for example, when they formed sculptures of figures using wire and naturally found objects. In

one very good lesson seen in art and design, Year 5 pupils gained a wealth of artistic and cultural knowledge about the work of the American Indian totem art. They explored the deeper meanings of the stories told through icons representing family lineage of this period of the history of art. Using clay to explore these ideas, pupils achieved very well, despite the mediocre quantity of resources. The subject is well led and assessment ensures that pupils' skills are comprehensively built up.

Design and technology

81. In design and technology, pupils have produced a good quality of work in the small sample seen during the inspection. Year 3 pupils clearly understand how to design for a purpose. They make thoughtful comments about their work in writing. They are clear about the difficulties they faced and the options they chose to make things better. For example, one child wrote about the hedgehog made: 'Next time I will know that dried leaves don't scrunch up very well.' Year 6 pupils have decorated shoes to their own design with detail but there is little evidence in this work, of the design process or an investigation of materials and function - vital elements of the curriculum for Year 6 pupils to understand the distinctive nature of the subject.

Music

82. Music was sampled during the inspection, and no lessons were observed, due to the way the timetable is organised; therefore, it is not possible to come to a secure judgement on standards in Years 2 and 6. However, from taped recordings and from assemblies, it is possible to judge whole-school singing as above national expectations. The headteacher is the music subject leader; the profile of the subject has been raised significantly in recent years and the pupils are active participants in the range of musical experiences provided, for example, clubs include choir and recorder groups. A significant proportion of pupils are learning to play an orchestral instrument. There are regular events in which many pupils are involved, for example, at the Royal Albert Hall, at local churches and in whole-school productions. The school now has a strong ethos to promote creative and performing arts, which enhances the pupils' musical development. The good standards in singing have been maintained since the previous inspection, resources are adequate, of good quality and some reflect a range of cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

83. No judgment on the quality of provision for physical education could be made because a limited number of lessons were seen in each aspect of the physical education curriculum. In total, four lessons were seen; two in dance, one in games and one in gymnastics. In addition, resources were scrutinised.
84. The significant improvements in accommodation since the previous inspection mean that the quality and space available for the subject are very good indeed. The two dance lessons observed in Years 2 and 3 demonstrate that standards in dance at the age of seven are above national expectations. The extra-curricular club in dance, led by pupils from the partner secondary school, is an additional dimension for interested or talented children of all ages. Provision for swimming meets statutory requirements. The full curriculum for the subject is in place and indications are that there are some very good lessons in dance, characterised by strong and enthusiastic teacher knowledge. In addition, the teaching of gymnastics in Year 2 is good and standards seen were above national expectations.
85. The new hall is equipped with very good resources for gymnastics and the school has ensured that the full curriculum is in place. The subject has suffered somewhat for several years from the adverse effect of successive subject co-ordinators. The poor quality of resources for games would indicate very mediocre management of equipment over time; a new co-ordinator was designated at the start of this year. The broadly typical skills of the current Year 6 would indicate that pupils achieve soundly at best in their games skills.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. It is not possible to report in detail on personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE) as only one lesson was observed during the inspection. However, evidence was gained from a scrutiny of curriculum plans, talking with the subject leader, talking with groups of pupils and looking at their recorded work. All the available evidence indicates that provision for PSHE is likely to be very good with standards being well above national expectations by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils' personal and social development in the Foundation Stage is very good.
87. The one lesson observed was in Year 1 and was very successful. It involved pupils working in small groups role-playing confrontational scenarios, exploring the feelings of those confronted, and then role-playing reconciliations. The teacher managed this imaginative activity well and the pupils approached it sensitively and sensibly.
88. Personal and social development, responsibility and a sense of community are strong features and a priority within the aims, vision and ethos of the school, beginning as pivotal in the Foundation Stage and extending throughout the school. The recently designated subject leader has a good grasp of the current provision across the school and a clear strategy for strengthening it further. PSHE is currently taught through a carefully planned and structured programme and, in addition, teachers are increasingly integrating PSHE into other lessons and curriculum areas. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about feelings, friendships, responsibilities to others and about themselves, and health issues such as harmful substances, poison and healthy eating. In the older years, the curriculum fully addresses such issues as sex education, drug awareness, anti-smoking and water safety. There is an annual Life Skill week in the autumn term and pupils have personal PSHE targets which are displayed prominently in many classes. Around the school, there are frequent reminders of the principles of PSHE; these include posters, a very good display entitled 'we all have rights and responsibilities' with portraits of all the pupils, records of charitable fundraising events, and a range of literature for pupils and their parents to support individuals with a range of disabilities or problems. This is a further demonstration of the school's total commitment to inclusion. The principles of citizenship are strengthened by each class developing and maintaining its own 'golden rules' that contribute to the order and wellbeing in the school. The school council works effectively and the members of the council take their responsibilities seriously.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

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	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	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).