

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEGROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bracknell

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 131145

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Tsakmakis

Lead inspector: Mr C R Phillips

Dates of inspection: 26th - 29th April 2004

Inspection number: 258407

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:	5 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	423
School address:	Westmorland Drive Warfield Bracknell Berkshire
Postcode:	RG42 3QS
Telephone number:	(01344) 861 020
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Erin Cook
Date of previous inspection:	6 th July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a primary school of above average size, which occupies attractive modern buildings on a pleasant site. It draws pupils from mainly private housing and the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, with a range of learning, physical or behavioural difficulties, is broadly average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average. The pupils currently on roll are predominantly White British, but the school also has many pupils who come from other cultural backgrounds. There are only a few who are in the early stages of language acquisition because their home language is not English. Overall levels of attainment when children start at the school are above average, but a significant proportion have initial problems with listening and in relating to other children. Levels of mobility are broadly in line with the national average, but the school loses a few pupils towards the end of Key Stage 2 as parents make choices about secondary education. The school is involved in a number of initiatives aimed at raising standards and is recognised as an Investor in People, a Healthy School and an FA Charter Standard School.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9 - 15
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15 - 17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	18 - 29
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	30

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **very good** school. It is very well led by the headteacher, who is supported by a strong staff team. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and often very good. The standards pupils attain by the time they leave the school are well above average and pupils throughout the school do well in terms of their individual capabilities. The school is taking effective steps to maintain high standards, is thoroughly self-evaluating, offers a wide range of learning experiences for pupils and is fully inclusive. It provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards have improved considerably since the last inspection and are currently well above the national average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the time pupils are 11.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership and is supported very well by senior managers, a very good staff team and an impressive governing body, so that the school is very well managed.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is often very good, within a very pleasant learning environment, so all pupils are encouraged to achieve the best they can and show very good attitudes.
- The school is fully inclusive, makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and provides many opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility and express their views.
- The school provides a wide range of creative and aesthetic activities and many opportunities to enrich the pupils' experience within and beyond the school day.
- Most parents have a very positive view of the school and support it well.

The school has improved very well since its last inspection, with standards achieved in national tests showing significant improvement overall since then. The school has addressed the key issues identified at that time well and has grown not only in size but also in the quality of education it provides and its reputation in the community.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils' **achievements are good** overall when compared with the levels at which they enter the school. By the time children leave Reception, almost all achieve the goals that are expected at this age in all areas of learning and most are above that level. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are currently well above the national average in reading and mathematics and are above average in writing and science. Standards in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science.

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Since the time of the last inspection, the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school have improved significantly. Current standards are high and the school does particularly well in terms of the proportion of its pupils who attain the higher grade of

Level 5. The number of higher grades last year in science was very high against national figures. When compared with similar schools, the proportion of higher grades is well above average in each of the subjects. The overall trend over the same period in results for pupils aged seven has also been upward, broadly in line with the national trend, but there has been some variation in results. For instance, those for reading and mathematics in 2003 showed a decline on the previous year, mainly because of a reduction in the proportion attaining Level 3. This meant that overall standards in reading were below those in similar schools, although, like those in writing, mathematics and science, still above the national average. The reasons for these reductions have been identified and are being dealt with by the school and current standards in these subjects are again well above average at this age. There is no significant difference overall in the performance of girls and boys. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in religious education are above the levels expected for both age groups. Most children are above the levels expected nationally by the end of their time in Reception. Pupils of all attainment levels, including those who have special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, achieve well in terms of their own capabilities and in a wide range of other subjects and activities.

The pupils' personal qualities are **very good** overall, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils show very good attitudes and behaviour is good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average, although a few parents have difficulty in getting their children to school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** and has many very good features. Teaching is **good** overall and often very good. As a result, pupils of all attainment levels and groups learn well.

The curriculum is broad and often stimulating and is enriched by many visits and visitors and by a very good programme of extra-curricular activities. The attractive, well-planned buildings and generally high levels of resourcing provide much encouragement for learning, although the buildings present one or two limitations. The school cares well for its pupils and has a very effective partnership with most parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and other managers is very good. The school is very well managed, has a clear sense of direction and is very effectively supported by its governing body. All statutory requirements are met. The school is particularly successful in the professional development of all staff, including its strong team of teaching assistants.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a high opinion of the school and the job it is doing, although a minority feel they are not sufficiently informed about their child's progress and others have concerns about aspects of behaviour. The inspection team believes that the arrangements for keeping parents informed are very good overall and that any inappropriate behaviour is usually dealt with well. Pupils are very positive about school life and have many opportunities to make their views known.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

No major areas for improvement were identified.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve **well** overall during their time in the school. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they are 11 are **well above the national average**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school are well above the average for all schools nationally, indicating continuing and significant improvement since the time of the last inspection.
- Standards by the time pupils are seven are currently well above the national average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing and science.
- Pupils throughout the school are doing well in terms of their own capabilities.

Commentary

1. The figures below indicate that pupils at the age of seven in 2003 were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils in that year group attained the national standard of Level 2 in mathematics and the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grade of Level 3 for that subject was above average. The higher grade was attained by an above average number of pupils of this age in writing, but below average in reading. When compared with pupils in similar schools, the number gaining Level 3 in reading was well below average. In science, teachers' assessments indicated that overall standards were above average. The school has identified and is remedying the reasons for the poorer performance in reading and a much higher proportion of pupils are now working at Level 3. Inspection findings indicate current standards in Year 2 are above average in writing and science and well above average in reading and mathematics. At the time of the last inspection, standards at this age in each of the subjects were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations, so those evident now indicate clear improvement and the overall trend is upward.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.3 (18.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.8 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.3 (18.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The results for pupils who were 11 in 2003 indicate standards that were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with those of pupils in similar schools, results in English and science were well above average and for mathematics were above average. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grade of Level 5 was very high in science and well above average in English and mathematics. Standards at the time of the last inspection, for a much smaller group of pupils, were judged to be broadly in line with expectations, but results in the interim have improved very significantly and the school's overall trend for the last four years has been markedly upward. This pattern is confirmed by the levels being attained currently in each of the subjects. Inspection findings are that standards in English, mathematics and science for this age group have continued to improve and are now well above average. The school's thorough analysis of results and careful monitoring have ensured that patches of underachievement, such as a lack of progress for some pupils in reading or a reluctance of some to write, are dealt with promptly and effectively.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.7 (29.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	29.1 (29.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.3 (30.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The overall levels of children's attainment when they enter the school are above the national average and, since standards by the time they leave are well above average, it is clear that pupils are generally achieving well. Pupils with special educational needs receive detailed and very effective support and careful planning helps to ensure that they are achieving very well in terms of their own targets. The substantial proportion of higher grades in national tests indicates that higher attaining pupils are also achieving well, as are those for whom English is not their first language. The planning for lessons makes clear provision for the different levels of capability in each class and the quality of teaching and the learning opportunities provided, more particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6, ensure that pupils generally are challenged to achieve their best and to develop their individual gifts and talents. Although there are variations year on year, there is no significant difference overall in the performance of girls and boys.
4. The nature of the school's intake is broadly the same as at the time of the last inspection. Each year group represents a wide range of capabilities, including a proportion of potentially very able children. However, the school is currently noting that a significant number of children, although apparently very confident socially, have initial difficulties with sharing, taking turns and listening to others. For a few, this is shown in challenging behaviour and teachers have to work hard to ensure that progress is maintained. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are above the levels expected for each of the six areas of learning that form the curriculum for the Foundation Stage, including their personal, social and emotional development.
5. The school achieved its overall targets in English and mathematics for the Year 6 group in 2003 and is likely to do so again this year, although the targets represent a challenge. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) at the ages of seven and 11 are above the levels expected nationally. Standards in religious education (RE) at both ages are above those expected by the local authority's agreed syllabus. There are many opportunities for pupils to achieve well in other subjects of the National Curriculum and in other aspects of school life, such as sport. The sampling of the other subjects during the inspection indicates standards that are generally above the level expected and that pupils are able to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills well through them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are **very good** and behaviour is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are good. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to work, enjoy being at school and behave well. This shows improvement since the last inspection.
- The level of attendance is usually above the national average.
- The school's provision for social and moral development leads to very good relationships around the school.

Commentary

Attendance

6. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school for the last school year, when they were in line with the national average. The level has been above that of other primary schools around the country in other recent years and, on the evidence of the first two terms, is in line to achieve that position in the current year. Absences are mainly due to medical reasons, although a significant number of families take holidays during term time. Punctuality is very good for the great majority of pupils, but 20 or so pupils are regularly late in the mornings. The very effective arrangements at the start of the day lead to the great majority of pupils being in school on time, resulting in a prompt start to lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

7. The pupils' social development as they go through the school is very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates in group work, paired discussions and classroom responsibilities. The school council and the house system enable pupils of all ages to work together. Pupils in Year 6 act responsibly when undertaking a range of duties around the school. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme includes a useful consideration of what enables society to function well. The pupils' awareness of the wider world is enhanced by taking part in local events, inter-school sports and talks by representatives of charities. Pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults are very good, contributing to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress they make, especially by giving them the confidence to ask and to answer questions. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
8. The pupils' personal development is very good. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are good. As well as providing a brief time for reflection, the effective and well-organised school assemblies help pupils to gain a sense of belonging to a whole school community. Circle time discussions help pupils to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem, as well as to listen to the views of others. They discuss varied topics in lessons and accept that others may have a different viewpoint from their own. The pupils mix well with each other, although they come from a range of different cultures and racial harmony is a strong feature of the school. Pupils express many positive views about the school and showed great maturity when highlighting what they liked about it, citing the helpfulness of the staff as a particular strength.
9. The provision for cultural development is good. Its strength lies in the fact that many subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them. The study of world faiths in religious education helps them to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. Art and music help to develop aesthetic awareness. Pupils are starting to appreciate the western cultural tradition from work on, for example, the Greeks and Tudors in history and European artists and composers. They are introduced to life in other societies, as when studying life in an Indian village in geography or Indian art or taking part in a local schools' production about the tribes in the Amazon basin. A music group is visiting to introduce folk music from around the world. The school extends its teaching of different faiths to include cultural backgrounds, but the pupils' awareness of life in multicultural British society is more limited.
10. The pupils' attitudes towards learning, including those of pupils with special educational needs, are very good. They are interested in what happens in school and they enjoy their work. They listen attentively and follow instructions well. Pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and

maintain their interest even when not being directly supported by adults. They have confidence in their own abilities and are eager to contribute their ideas. These positive attitudes reflect the quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities used in lessons. Children in the Foundation Stage are generally confident when they enter school, but are not always ready to listen or to share. However, most respond positively to the clear routines and social situations they are encouraged to take part in, such as snack time and co-operative play and begin to relate better to others. They enjoy the range of activities planned for them and are eager to learn.

11. Overall, the behaviour of the pupils is good and they respond well to the moral guidance they receive, so that they have a very good understanding of right and wrong. They develop a good awareness of how their behaviour affects others and most are developing self-discipline. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other and are welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way, even when not supervised. Even the youngest wait patiently for other classes to come in to assemblies. The school uses a variety of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour. This positive approach is used consistently by all staff. Nevertheless, there are occasional disagreements in the playground, although pupils confirm that the number of incidents has reduced recently. In part, this is due to the appointment and training of some of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 as peer mediators. This role is taken very seriously and is clearly proving effective. As can be seen in the table below, one pupil was excluded on two occasions last year.

Exclusions

<i>Ethnic background of pupils</i>	<i>Exclusions in the last school year</i>		
Categories used in the Annual School Census	No. of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	372	2	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	24	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	14	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good** and has several strong features. Teaching and learning are good and often better. As a result, pupils of all attainment levels are generally learning well. Arrangements for assessment are very good overall in English, mathematics and science and are developing well in the other subjects. The curriculum is relevant and interesting and makes good use of the resources available in the community to enhance the pupils' learning. The school provides very good opportunities to enrich the curriculum through the use of visits and visitors and the programme of extra-curricular activities. It cares well for pupils, listens to them well and has established a very effective partnership with parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good** overall and are often very good, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The quality of assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and pupils of all levels of attainment throughout the school are learning well.
- Teaching assistants provide very good support, enabling pupils to make good progress.
- The assessment and tracking of the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science are very good overall and satisfactory or better in other subjects.
- The way the school analyses and uses data about pupils' performance is impressive.
- The response made to pupils in the marking of work is not consistent, but there are examples of very good practice.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	15 (28%)	29 (55%)	7 (13%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

12. These figures present a positive picture of the quality of teaching, with more than four out of every five lessons seen during the inspection judged to be good or better and almost a third very good or excellent. This is a substantial improvement on the last inspection. A higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching was seen in Key Stage 2 than in the other areas of the school. The figures confirm the positive opinions parents have of teaching, as well as the equally positive views the pupils have of their teachers.
13. The school monitors and evaluates all aspects of its performance. The results of this for teaching and learning are fed back particularly well and the format of performance management is used effectively to ensure continual improvement of specific aspects of teaching and learning, in line with the school's plan for improvement. This has a direct influence on standards and achievement. Pupils at all levels of attainment take their learning seriously and put a lot of effort into developing their skills and improving their understanding of concepts and there is increasing evidence that many are finding that learning can be exciting. The strong relationships between the pupils and the adults who support them, both teachers and assistants, are an important part of this achievement.
14. Teaching is consistently good and, in English, science and special educational needs particularly, is rarely below that. It is often very good or better. The tracking of progress is very well developed overall in English, mathematics and science, although not developed sufficiently in early reading. The new initiatives to help pupils develop their skills in reading and in writing, devise their own science investigations and develop mathematical concepts are clearly improving standards, as well as the pupils' motivation and enjoyment.
15. The subject knowledge of all teachers is good or better and they have a good knowledge of individual pupils. Teaching in all classes is a mixture of clear teacher delivery, careful questioning that usually involves all pupils and well planned work completed individually or in groups. The work is usually linked to the clear lesson objectives, but occasionally in Years 1 and 2 does not consolidate or develop learning sufficiently. Throughout the school, structured discussions in pairs or groups encourage the sharing of pupils' contributions in some of the best lessons. However, there is sometimes a lack of interaction, with pupils not always taking a

full or active part in their learning. The teachers use a range of methods well and are currently making particularly good use of the new interactive whiteboards provided in many classes. These were used, for instance, to illustrate how to write a report about bats in Year 3 and to develop pupils' understanding of audience, purpose and format in their report writing in Year 6. Most teachers use many strategies successfully to keep attention and interest high and ensure a brisk pace throughout and there are high expectations for both attention and learning. There are some good examples of teachers breaking down learning into manageable portions so that the pupils can learn more effectively and of providing a clear structure for pupils to follow or to use. All teachers consolidate work well. Time is generally used effectively in lessons, so the pupils' work rate is high and progress is clear. Current changes to the curriculum, such as the introduction of a planned programme of thinking skills, are helping to make teaching more challenging and learning more purposeful and this is clearly demonstrated in many lessons.

16. The teaching assistants, whose numbers have been increased, provide valuable support in each classroom and work closely and effectively with teachers. The overall management of this area of school life is very effective and is providing additional time for teachers to remain focused on the precise needs of the pupils, as well as facilitating the preparation and monitoring of work. There are very good relationships between the pupils and each adult, which is an important factor in the achievement of different groups of pupils. In addition to supporting pupils with special needs and others to develop their skills, the teaching assistants are helping to develop the creative responses of pupils and furthering their confidence and interest in learning.
17. The school has developed effective systems to assess how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science, including some use of the pupils themselves to monitor their own targets for learning and sometimes those of others. The teachers use their knowledge of where the pupils are in their learning well to improve planned teaching. They check learning in lessons and often intervene well to provide the specific teaching that is needed in order for progress to be made. Careful assessment by the adults of what is being learned during the lessons is being used increasingly to ensure that all pupils know where they have reached in the required learning and how they can improve. The marking of work does this particularly well in some classes and there are impressive examples of responses to pupils' work, but this is not consistent across the school. In other subjects, systems for the assessment and recording of results have been developed for consistent use across the school, but many of these are not well established and the tracking of how each individual pupil is making progress is not yet fully developed.
18. Useful tests are completed and the results analysed to provide valuable information, which the school uses extremely well to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning and raise the achievement of all groups of pupils. The senior leadership team tracks carefully the value added to the pupils' learning as they go through the school. The information is used for improvement through the use of well thought out and specific strategies for the pupils' learning and for more effective teaching. The sampling of lessons and other information during the inspection indicates that teaching and learning in the areas of physical education (PE) and design and technology have improved since the last inspection. The teaching of music, less developed than other areas, is now clearly improving with the recent appointment of a specialist teacher.

The curriculum

Curriculum provision is **good**, with some features that are **very good** and is being reviewed effectively in the light of current needs. Provision for enrichment is very good. The accommodation and resources are very good overall, in spite of the fact that more teaching spaces are required for small groups of pupils. Some aspects of the Foundation Stage accommodation and resources are in need of development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is being adapted to maximise teaching and learning time and provide a broader and richer experience that ensures purpose and challenge for all pupils at all times.
- The provision made for all pupils, including the higher attainers and the less able pupils, is good overall and encourages the development of good and often very good attitudes to learning.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Opportunities provided to enrich the curriculum are very good.
- The accommodation and resources are of high quality and are used very well, although there are some limitations.

Commentary

19. Literacy and numeracy play their necessarily important part in the curriculum, but the school is implementing plans to ensure more breadth. Some further work is necessary to complete the overall structure, but several initiatives that have been introduced are encouraging a purposeful and challenging curriculum. Teaching styles are being broadened and thinking skills enhanced. Cross-curricular links are strong within and between subjects, although the special nature of each is retained. Valuable weeks are planned each half-term where the pupils take part in activities around a focused area of the curriculum, such as a specific aspect of the arts, science/technology or geography/PSHE. The most recent example was a week's focus on 'the brain', which provided pupils of all ages with valuable insights into how we think and learn. Provision for pupils to develop their physical skills and attitudes have improved considerably, both in school time and beyond. The school is remedying a lack of musical experience, particularly in Years 5 and 6, by the recent appointment of a music specialist and has improved provision in design and technology, which was a weakness at the last inspection. Good use is being made of teachers' specialist skills. Planning systems are established and consistent in the school and there is currently a useful focus on planning for different groups so that the school can be sure it is meeting the differing abilities and needs of all pupils.
20. The pupils respond well to a generally varied, interesting and relevant curriculum, which already provides many stimulating opportunities. This provides motivation and is leading them to enjoy learning, to try hard and generally show pride in their work. The pupils usually find lessons interesting and many say that learning is fun. There is still work to do to develop skills, such as those of reading, writing and speaking and listening, for a few pupils, but this is improving. The use of scientific investigation in each class is often inspiring and the pupils achieve very well. The provision of both teachers and teaching assistants is very good. They share much expertise, which is used well to develop teaching and learning. The national initiative to use the skills and training of teaching assistants is clearly at an advanced stage of development and provides much valuable support for teachers and the deployment of additional release teachers allows more effective planning, to the further benefit of the pupils. Much work is done to develop the pupils' positive relationships with one another, with good use made of activities such as circle discussions. Impressive school and class council meetings help to ensure that the pupils feel the school belongs to them, encouraging a sense of responsibility and the school's programme for PSHE is strong.
21. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is a very significant improvement since the previous inspection. Clear procedures are in place and they follow closely the Code of Practice on the identification and assessment of pupils. The code has been implemented very carefully and effectively. The individual education plans provided for pupils have improved considerably and are now of very good quality. Pupils are fully aware of their targets for improvement and they study them regularly to see how they are doing. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the work provided for pupils is closely suited to their needs and the special needs co-ordinator, the teachers and teaching assistants complement each other very well in their support of the pupils. Several initiatives, very well managed by the special needs co-ordinator, are helping to improve standards and the quality of teaching and learning. Support

for pupils whose home language is not English is also good and all pupils are involved in the full range of school activities.

22. There are very good opportunities for enrichment within and beyond the taught curriculum. The school provides a very good range of clubs and activities, mainly for older pupils, before and after school and at lunchtimes during the year. These include art, science and guitar clubs and activities for those developing language skills. There are numerous PE activities and clubs, which are supported well by both boys and girls. The school welcomes many visitors, such as a rock drummer, poet, scientist, environmentalist and others. A wide range of educational visits extends understanding and provides pupils with a rich cultural awareness, although visits to places of worship need to be extended. Good use is also made of the locality. Pupils have also taken part in a wide variety of activities both in and for the community, with, for instance, Year 6 pupils taking part in a Junior Citizen week with police, fire and rescue services. Links with local industry and commerce are used very well to extend educational opportunities for the pupils. Older pupils have the opportunity for an annual residential visit and all of these activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development, as well as to their learning in various subjects.
23. Accommodation and resources are very good overall, providing a learning environment of quality, that is both functional and imaginative. It has a positive impact on teaching, achievement and attitudes and is appreciated by all who come into the school. The quality and volume of resources often enable whole classes of pupils to make use of them at the same time. The size of a pleasant library area is limited for the number of pupils, but good use is made of it and all classes develop their higher order reading and research skills well using book and ICT resources. There are two temporary classrooms in use because of the extra pupils in two year groups and space is limited for small groups working with the additional teaching assistants now in school. Playground space is not large and the youngest children do not have a separately designated and fenced area or a range of large equipment for outdoor activities. However, these shortcomings have only a limited effect on the overall standard of education delivered.

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 careful monitoring is good. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective procedures for ensuring a healthy and safe environment.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.
- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff and know there is someone to whom they can turn when they encounter problems.

Commentary

24. The local authority has recently audited the school's arrangements for health and safety and is very pleased with its strong commitment to a positive safety culture. The staff are pro-active in identifying any problems, particularly with the site manager's regular touring of the site. In addition, the teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science and physical education. The school follows the local procedures for child protection and all the staff have received guidance on how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are good, with training given to all staff, records kept of treatment and letters for parents if pupils bump their heads.

25. Staff show good concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage development. Most parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. In particular, parents agreed that their children were well supported when they first came into the school either into Reception or if they arrived in other years. This is because of the visits made by the reception staff to see pupils before they arrive and the provision of 'buddies' to help new arrivals in other years. Pupils consider that the staff support them very well and know whom they would go to if they needed help. Pupils are enabled to influence what happens in the school by means of the school and class councils. Innovations they have helped to introduce are the painting of games on the infant playground and the provision of covered seating in the playground, all carefully costed and budgeted for.
26. The school has good arrangements in place to track pupils' academic performance and provide support and guidance. It does not use a formal recording system for pupils' personal development, though teachers keep their own records. This information is shared with parents at the consultation meetings, recorded in the annual progress report and passed on to the following year's class teacher. The pupils' self-esteem is raised by the way they are praised by the staff and by the recognition of their achievements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The parents' support at home and in school makes a very good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a wide range of information about what happens in school and about pupils' progress.

Commentary

27. In their high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are very pleased overall with what the school provides. Their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and they make good progress. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Nevertheless, several parents expressed some concerns. They consider, for instance, that homework provision, especially for mathematics, is not appropriate. The school recognises this concern and is already trialling a different approach in one year group. Pupils say that concerns expressed about playground behaviour are less apparent since the introduction of the peer mediator scheme. Some parents feel that, particularly when compared with what happens in the infant classes, teachers in the junior part of the school appear to be less accessible to parents. The inspection team believes that teachers are generally readily available, although it recognises that some teachers appear less often in the playground at the end of the day. The concern about a lack of information on children's progress has already been alleviated by the introduction of an extra meeting in the spring term.
28. The school sends home regular and attractive newsletters and other communications about general matters and school life. In addition, it provides a very good calendar each term that indicates all key dates and outlines what is to be taught in each subject in every year group. These are supplemented with evening presentations about various curriculum subjects and other areas. The parents of younger pupils are welcomed into school with their children before the start 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. In Years 3 to 6, parents are asked to leave their children at the entrance, in order to help develop their independence. The annual reports on pupil progress in the summer term provide a very good

summary of what pupils know and can do in each subject but do not always include targets for improvement.

29. Pupils confirm that their parents either help with the homework or at least ensure that it is completed. Most parents also ensure that pupils attend regularly and generally arrive on time. Nevertheless, although the school explains the disruption that is caused, some parents continue to take their children out of school for holidays in term time. The parents' and friends' association is very active in arranging very successful social and fund-raising activities, as a result of which considerable financial support is provided for the direct benefit of pupils. Some parents help regularly in the classroom and more accompany trips out. The school has also sent out questionnaires and consults the parents' group to enable parents to be involved actively in helping to formulate school policies. Parents are generally satisfied with the way the school deals with any concerns.
30. The school's good links with the community and with other schools help to broaden the experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development. The pupils' sporting skills are enhanced by the support of local sports clubs and competitions with other schools. Their understanding of society is enhanced by the various visitors, charitable organisations and representatives of public bodies such as the police and fire brigade. The mainstream curriculum is enhanced by visits to places in the local area and further afield. The good links with local nurseries smooth children's arrival into the Reception class. Contacts at the secondary level also help to facilitate the transfer of pupils at the end of Year 6. Links with other primary schools provide valuable opportunities for subject leaders to share good practice.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good, as is that of other key staff. The school's overall management and its governance are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a thoroughly self-evaluating school, which is very well led by the headteacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff work very well together as a team and the senior leadership team, subject leaders and other managers are helping to ensure continuing improvement.
- The management of the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the school makes careful provision for all pupils to do well.
- The governors are fully committed to the school, have a very good knowledge of it and are thoroughly involved in monitoring and evaluating standards and in planning for development.
- As the school tries to raise standards further, it faces some problems of space.

Commentary

31. The school is very well managed. This comes particularly from the quality of leadership provided by the headteacher, who has been in post since the school was opened and has developed a clear vision for the school and a firm commitment to self-evaluation and continuing improvement. Her style of management encourages all members of the school community to know that they have an important contribution to make in the direction it takes. This leadership has ensured that the school has a clear educational direction, is thoroughly inclusive in its provision for all pupils and has a strong ethos of care. As the school has grown in size, appropriate systems and practices have been developed to ensure that all aspects of its provision are of high quality and, as a direct result, standards throughout the school have risen.
32. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior managers and the rest of the staff team. The school is committed to the professional development of all its staff, as shown by its continuing endorsement by Investors in People. This means that all members

of the staff team, whatever their role, are encouraged to make a full contribution to the life of the school. The school is also involved in the national pilot scheme for reviewing the complementary roles of teachers and teaching assistants. One of the benefits of this involvement is that all subject leaders are allowed time for the monitoring of the work taking place in their subject, which is clearly helping to raise standards further, as is the careful development and deployment of the very able teaching assistants. All of the subject leaders have clear ideas about the development of their subjects, provide good support to colleagues and play a full part in the school's continuous evaluation of all aspects of its life. New teachers and other staff receive appropriate induction. Changes in staffing as the school has grown and staff have moved on have brought together a group of teachers, teaching assistants and other support staff who have bonded well into a strong team. They are fully committed to providing a rich experience for all the pupils in their care and work hard to enable all pupils to learn.

33. The headteacher and staff are very well supported by all members of the governing body, who are very firmly committed to the continuing development of the school and play a vital part in its life. The members of the governing body have been involved with the school for varying lengths of time, including some who have been involved since the school started and all bring to their role particular expertise from a range of backgrounds. They are very well informed about school life, the standards being achieved and the progress made by pupils. With the support of the headteacher, they take a full part in the analysis and interpretation of the performance data available to the school. They discharge their duties effectively through a system of committees, which has recently been revised to ensure greater efficiency in decision-making. Several governors have regular and valuable contact with the daily life of the school.
34. The school improvement plan identifies an appropriate range of priorities and is focused clearly on the raising of standards. It provides useful detail about these priorities, with indications of costing and criteria by which success can be measured. It is proving effective in helping the school to meet its goals. Responsibility for the approval of the plan lies clearly with the governing body and governors and staff are fully involved in monitoring its progress.
35. The management by the special educational needs co-ordinator of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, has improved very significantly since the time of the last inspection and is now very good. Pupils are identified quickly, through a variety of procedures and placed on the special needs register. They are provided with detailed and very useful individual education plans, which now set clear targets for improvement. These plans are reviewed termly, with new targets being set if appropriate. The special needs co-ordinator keeps extensive and detailed records and the progress made by the pupils is checked thoroughly. The co-ordinator also provides each teacher with a detailed file, including much information about the needs of the pupils. These files are used very effectively by both teachers and teaching assistants. Appropriate and effective links are also forged with parents and outside agencies and these all contribute to the overall provision for the pupils. The co-ordinator's timetable makes valuable provision for her to see parents at the beginning of each day. The governor appointed to monitor the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is a regular visitor and carries out her work efficiently and effectively. The school is fully inclusive, so that all pupils, whatever their ethnic or social backgrounds, are provided with equal opportunities to succeed.
36. The school achieves the high standards it does in spite of the fact that it loses a few pupils each year towards the end of Key Stage 2 as parents consider options for secondary education. Similarly, the quality of its accommodation and levels of resourcing are high, but the library is small for this size of school, there are few places where small group support and other activities can take place and accommodation and resources for the Reception classes have some shortcomings. The school is gaining particular benefits from its involvement with 'workforce reform' as teachers are freed for the preparation of work and the monitoring of classroom practice, so helping to raise standards further. The school is very well supported by the local education authority in all aspects of its work.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	909,130
Total expenditure	921,983
Expenditure per pupil	2,364

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	60,263
Balance carried forward to the next	48,627

37. The quality of financial planning is very good. Careful records of expenditure are maintained and the issues raised at the time of the last audit have been addressed. The school manages its budget well and spending is related clearly to the raising of educational standards. The governors and headteacher monitor the school's financial position carefully and are supported very well by the school administrator. They are well aware of the need to ensure best value and to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of spending decisions. The school does well in terms of attracting extra funding for particular initiatives and is also very well supported as a result of parents' fund-raising activities. The school functions efficiently, with the administrative staff and site manager playing a full part in its smooth running.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

At the time of inspection, one class of reception children had been in school for just three days and the other class consisted of those who had started school in the two previous terms. The majority of children enter the Reception classes with attainment that is above average, although a small minority have significant special educational needs. These needs are most noticeable in aspects of speaking and listening and in social skills. A few other children joining the school at this age also show initial difficulty with relating to others. The school makes good links with the many local pre-school providers and with parents. Consequently, children are introduced to school in a very positive way and they demonstrate quickly that they are happy within the classroom and confident in their relationships with staff and their new friends. The teachers' plans are very comprehensive and they provide classrooms that are attractive and well organised. Because of this, children know what is expected of them and they generally respond well. Staff are particularly vigilant when identifying pupils for whom additional support is necessary. Most pupils quickly reach at least the recommended standards in the six areas of learning that make up the Foundation Stage curriculum and then start work on the National Curriculum programmes of study, particularly in English and mathematics. The teaching is good overall, although some work is too teacher-directed and expectations for children's involvement are not always high enough. The effective team of adults, including teaching assistants, demonstrate their own enthusiasm and their clear knowledge of all pupils. This is evident in the thorough recording of pupils' individual progress. Teachers plan the next important stages of learning carefully and mostly ensure that the curriculum is well balanced and interesting for all pupils. The Foundation Stage provides well for each child, although there are some shortcomings in outdoor provision.

Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has been maintained. Systems for identifying and responding to children's individual needs are clearly developed and the Foundation Stage manager provides an effective lead.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The parents are happy and confident to work with the school and, as a consequence, most children settle quickly into school routines.
- Teaching is good and, in the best examples, staff build very warm relationships with pupils, demonstrating their own pleasure in learning.
- Most children achieve well and relate positively with each other, although more opportunities for children to develop further independence could be provided.
- All staff insist on high standards of behaviour and, as a result, children receive appropriate praise and sanctions when appropriate.

Commentary

38. Most children meet or exceed the goals for early learning by the time they leave the Reception classes. All achieve well. The reception staff are especially welcoming and at the beginning of the day parents and children play together, until the adults choose an appropriate time to leave. Staff are sensitive to the feelings of the children. In one good lesson, for instance, the teacher recalled a special time with her own family before encouraging children to take turns to talk to the whole class about a time that had been special for them. Children were willing to share these memories because the teacher had explained clearly in advance how others should respond. At snack time, the children are very capable and manage their food independently

whilst enjoying listening to lively music. Such good provision enables pupils to feel very secure and happy. Although there were some opportunities to see children making choices about activities, they were sometimes too directed in their work. Staff are very quick to show their disapproval of any unacceptable behaviour, choosing to highlight pupils who are doing the 'right' thing and they give full praise for this. Some of the young pupils are very pre-occupied with themselves and have difficulty with taking turns or sharing, but this is well managed by staff in order that attitudes and behaviour towards others improve significantly.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children achieve well and can talk enthusiastically about their interests.
- The teaching of handwriting and of phonic knowledge is very good and almost all pupils achieve at least the early learning goals by the end of their time in Reception.
- Teachers ensure that groups of pupils who enter school in different terms are initially taught in those groups to ensure that they all cover the necessary skills at the outset.
- The majority of pupils achieve well in reading and many are confident, but sometimes limited activities do not engage pupils fully.

Commentary

39. Almost all children meet or exceed the goals for early learning by the time they leave Reception and many do so before that. They are happy to explain what they are doing and to discuss in detail the classroom displays and work they have done. Most pupils listen well to others, but some need and receive the support of adults in order that they can sit well and pay attention. The very structured approach to the teaching of handwriting is effective in enabling pupils to form letters confidently and correctly. This skill is acquired early for many pupils, who present work well with a joined script. They make good progress in writing and write simple sentences in response to a stimulus. Teachers plan carefully and organise groups well in order that each child, regardless of which term they start school, receives good teaching of literacy skills. Pupils practise and develop their reading skills regularly and most are competent when reading. However, at times, adults give pupils insufficient opportunity to discuss their own ideas relating to the books and, in particular, to talk for themselves about the characters and events in a story.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The adults are careful to plan and teach a range of practical activities based on their good knowledge of how young children learn.
- Teachers ask questions of high quality, challenging children to express their mathematical thinking.
- Children practise social skills whilst playing mathematical games and are closely observed by adults, who assess their levels of understanding.

Commentary

40. Teachers are knowledgeable and confident, using approaches that engage the children at the right level, allowing them to achieve well and teaching is good overall. The standards achieved by most pupils are above those expected when they reach the end of their time in Reception.

Many are confident when naming two-dimensional shapes and one child enjoyed considering irregular shapes, saying *'I know this is still a triangle because it has three funny sides. But it's still a triangle!'* When working with the whole class, teachers show their expertise by aiming questions at particular children in order to vary the challenge for each child. Many children can add numbers confidently to a total of ten and sometimes to 20. They consider objects of long and short length, discuss the significant times of the day and all take part in surveys such as 'Which pizza topping is the favourite?' In this way, their mathematical development occurs through lively and practical approaches. Adults assess pupils' understanding in order to plan the next learning opportunities. This was demonstrated very well through a group activity linked to work on shape, where children learned to take turns, share the dice and recognise colour whilst having fun.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

41. It was not possible to see sufficient teaching for this area to make an overall judgement on provision, but from work on display and in children's books it is clear that children are gaining good scientific ideas as well as an understanding of their own past and their place in the world. Children talk very confidently about their memories of visits abroad during family holidays and they discuss their own locality, including a recent class visit to a pizzeria. The past is brought alive in the topic on homes, when staff introduce old objects such as an iron and a telephone and questions are prompted when the children handle such items for themselves. Displays of children's own paintings and drawings demonstrate their close observations of a range of fruits. The drawings indicate how teachers have cut into fruits, thereby encouraging the children to investigate and ask questions of a scientific nature. Almost all children make good use of ICT and progress well with mouse control, for example, when using the computer for drawing.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

42. Although it was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards and provision, from observation of children involved in physical activities, it is clear that the school provides satisfactory opportunities indoors and some limited outdoor opportunities for their physical development. Currently, the children play readily with sand, water and chalkboards outside and staff arrange additional opportunities for physical exercise through an activity trail, walks to the wildlife area and to the local park. The accommodation does not provide space for wheeled vehicles or other large resources and pupils are not able to move spontaneously from inside to outside when they choose because space for activities is limited. When in the hall, pupils move around safely at varying speeds and they clearly enjoy using the large space. They are developing further control using construction equipment, scissors and beanbags.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

43. It is clear from the teachers' plans and work seen that children's creative development is good, although judgements on teaching, learning, standards and provision could not be made. In a recent lesson about the 'Wise and Foolish Man' the children learned a song, played creatively with sand and bricks, mimed the story and drew colourful chalk pictures or a group collage of the story. Opportunities are made for children to play in role and they dance, sing and use instruments regularly. Examples of pupils' work in design and art show they enjoy experimenting with colour as well as developing techniques such as printing and shading with pastels.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good** and is improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English by the time pupils leave the school are very high.
- The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall, with much teaching that is very good or excellent and pupils' attitudes are good.
- There is a whole school determination, led by the subject leader, to improve achievement in English even further.
- The use made of assessment information to improve learning is very good.
- Overall systems for the tracking of progress in English are very good, although the progress that individual pupils make in reading is assessed insufficiently at Key Stage 1.
- The response to the pupils' work through marking is good overall, although not fully consistent across all classes.

Commentary

44. Both standards and the progress pupils make are much improved since the last inspection, when they were judged to be broadly in line with the national average. Standards for the seven-year-olds, which were above the national average in 2003, are showing considerable improvement on last year in reading, mainly because of the greater proportion of pupils attaining higher levels, and are also improved in writing. Standards at 11 were well above the national average for English overall last year. They are showing considerable improvement this year in reading, but less pupils are attaining the higher grade of Level 5 in writing now than in reading, because of uneven progress earlier in the school. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. All pupils, including those with higher attainment, those who have special educational needs and those whose mother tongue is not English, are achieving well and often better.
45. In speaking and listening, standards are above those expected nationally for pupils aged seven, with a large number well above that level and most pupils are well above average at 11. The pupils' skills develop throughout the school and in general aspects of school life, such as assemblies, where pupils are most attentive. They use the opportunities provided by circle times and class and school councils to show their skills. Year 1 pupils posed coherent questions to the teacher who was acting in role as a servant, for instance and the pupils later showed delight in acting out their own roles, showing empathy and even righteous indignation at the lot of a servant girl. However, some of the pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not find it easy to listen and the teachers work hard to encourage careful listening. By the end of Year 6, most pupils understand quite complex ideas, develop them well and hold opinions they can explain with clarity, some quite succinctly. They use a wide and rich vocabulary in different subjects and contexts. But, although the pupils know their structured oral responses are valued, the teachers often have to work hard to ensure that many of the oldest pupils take an active part in discussions. The school is currently working on the development of these skills and is to develop this work further.
46. In reading, standards are well above average for 11-year-olds nationally and the pupils' reading is impressive and their achievement high. The seven-year-olds are reading at a level above the average, with more children than last year able to respond clearly to stories, because of additional emphasis on understanding. This is a strong picture of improvement at both key stages. The Year 6 pupils are avid readers, reading a wide range of literature, including, for instance, Lemony Snicket's autobiography. A few pupils are able to discover common threads in their stories and comment impressively about the author's style and the significance and

effect of some of the writing. Most refer to the text confidently to discuss how an author achieves particular effects and select phrases to support their views. Those who do not always find it easy are also mature and enthusiastic in their reading and experiencing success, because it links clearly with what they are being taught about writing in their literacy lessons. Many Year 2 pupils read fluently, with accuracy and expression, helped by their growing knowledge of punctuation. All become enthusiastic about books. They know about non-fiction and can use index and contents and some a glossary. A significant number can suggest what might happen next and refer to the main points of the story in their lengthy re-telling. Most Year 1 pupils already read fluently, accurately and with expression and are making good progress. Some Year 1 and 2 pupils use their phonic skills as the main strategy to read difficult words and do not use other strategies sufficiently, so hampering their fluency and understanding. The pupils' progress in reading is not tracked in sufficient detail at this age. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and make good progress.

47. Overall standards of writing at the age of seven are clearly above average, as are those at 11. At both ages, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher grades is also above average. Current progress is good and most pupils are achieving well. In the present group of higher attaining Year 6 pupils, there remains a gap between the levels attained in reading and the significantly lower standards in writing for this cohort. Results in reading and writing in the school have been very similar to each other in recent years and are expected to be so next year. Strategies for improvement have been put in place to enhance the style of writing that is otherwise technically correct and often contains complex sentences. These are having a positive effect in ensuring that more precise phrases are beginning to be used accurately, along with similes and metaphors, with improvement in the general style. The achievement of higher attaining pupils is now good and often better in all year groups. Other strategies introduced in Years 3, 4 and 5 have improved the motivation to write for all pupils and particularly for some less eager pupils. There has been a useful focus on oral skills and story-telling, prior to writing and an emphasis on a structure for writing. The impact of these changes has been immediate and improved attainment and confidence have been noted. In all classes, the initiative to increase links made between reading and writing, led and monitored by the subject leader, has improved attainment.
48. In Years 1 and 2, the handwriting of most pupils is joined and legible because of careful work to encourage correct letter formation during their early years in the school. By Year 6, most have developed their own fluent, joined style. Pupils now join their writing earlier and more often in their work and presentation has improved. However, although improved from the unsatisfactory level of the previous inspection, neatly written and presented work is not completely consistent in Key Stage 2, in spite of careful monitoring. Most pupils develop good strategies for spelling and are careful with their punctuation, because of thorough teaching and the development of good work habits. Special needs pupils and those who have English as an additional language work well, with or without support, showing both good ideas and improved English skills. The support provided by the special needs co-ordinator is rightly recognised by parents to be vital and of an impressive standard.
49. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, improved since the last inspection, is good overall, with much that is very good and excellent. All teachers are committed to improving standards and work hard to challenge their pupils. At Key Stage 1, the work is varied and usually interesting. Year 1 pupils, for instance, write about pirates and pupils in Year 2 make party invitations and write clear instructions on how to wash up. Work is normally matched to the needs of individual pupils so that each achieves well. By Year 2, the writing of most shows the increasing use of interesting words and phrases in poems and stories. For instance, one pupil ended a story, *'Sally felt silly, sad, forgetful, mistaken and hungry...'*. There is evidence of extended writing in both year groups. Current achievement by all pupils is usually good and sometimes better, as are their attitudes. Pupils in the upper part of the school who were formerly less interested in writing are now more motivated. Most pupils enjoy the work and respond to the generally high expectations set by their teachers in lessons that show pace and quality. Some younger pupils do not always find it easy to listen to others and

sometimes their concentration lapses. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are particularly good and all teachers use a variety of interesting methods to consolidate knowledge and understanding effectively. Their delivery is clear and questioning is aimed at all groups of pupils. Many intervene well and use the information gained in lessons to develop learning further. In the best lessons, explanation is clear and precise, learning is organised into suitable steps, the pupils' contributions are handled particularly well and carefully thought out strategies provide reinforcement. All teachers respond to the pupils' work positively and many show clearly how the pupils can improve it, with good use made of specific targets for future work. The marking of the pupils' work in Year 6 is exemplary and the good practice in these and some other classes is a useful aid to improvement. Work at home provides good support for work in school and parents are generally happy with this.

50. There is a very clear vision and a strong commitment by the whole staff team to improve the teaching and learning of English. Several initiatives, some with local education authority support, have been introduced to raise standards and these are led and co-ordinated most effectively by the subject leader and managed by the senior staff team. Some strategies are fairly recent and their full impact is not yet felt, but they already play an important role in raising achievement overall and for different groups of pupils. The monitoring of teaching and learning, planning and work is very well developed. Guidelines for teachers and the planning of work are generally good, but the objectives for some lessons in Key Stage 1 are not sufficiently specific and group activities are not always matched closely enough. Many aspects of the assessment of pupils' learning, such as the use of targets, have improved from their previously good level. Overall progress is tracked extremely well and very good use is being made of information gained and of the analysis of results.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Pupils in all classes write for a variety of purposes and for different audiences and use their writing and research skills well in subjects such as science, religious education, geography, history and design and technology. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and these are to be extended further to form a progressive programme. Pupils use non-fiction books from an early age to find information, a clear improvement. In Year 2, for example, they gathered information and found out about a Mexican village. In Year 3, they wrote up their own notes about Boudicca. They have regular opportunities to retrieve information using the Internet and use their word-processing skills to aid their writing. The purpose-built library is used well and book stock is improved regularly. Year 6 pupils report that it provides all the books in particular series and that new publications are in their school library within a month.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Based on their prior attainment, all pupils are achieving well.
- Very significant improvements have been made since the time of the previous inspection, when standards were reported to be broadly average.
- The role played by the subject leaders is very good and they have contributed very significantly to the recent improvements.
- The overall quality of the teaching and learning is good, with teachers making very good use of assessment to provide pupils with suitably challenging work.
- The attitudes and behaviour shown by pupils are good and often very good.

Commentary

52. Standards in mathematics have risen significantly since the time of the last inspection and are now well above average by the time pupils leave the school. Standards at the age of seven have also risen and are currently well above average. These standards indicate clear improvement on the levels at which pupils enter the school. Most pupils, including higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs, are achieving well in mathematics. Pupils throughout the school are confident in tackling all aspects of mathematics and they show well above the expected levels of understanding and skills. For example, pupils in Year 2 tackle addition and subtraction to three figures confidently and their secure knowledge of the multiplication facts relating to 2, 5 and 10 allows them to undertake a range of multiplication and division exercises successfully. Higher attainers also identify remainders in some of their division work. Pupils in Year 6 reduce a fraction readily to its lowest form and they find fractional and percentage parts of whole numbers. They use brackets confidently in their number work, when appropriate. Pupils in Year 2 measure accurately with a range of standard and non-standard measures and the oldest pupils measure angles to the nearest degree and know the angle sums of triangles and rectangles. Pupils throughout the school tackle relevant and often challenging practical and problem solving activities. Most older pupils are now competent at tackling problems that involve more than one step to find the answer.
53. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are suitably planned, resourced and implemented, although teachers do not always involve all pupils fully during the mental sessions at the start of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge, explain different methods and processes clearly and make very good use of assessment to ensure that all pupils receive work that is suited to their particular needs, especially the higher attainers. Teachers make sure that pupils are kept busy and valuable help is provided both by the teachers and the teaching assistants, when it is required. As a result, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language, make good gains in their overall mathematical knowledge and understanding.
54. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy the work and their attitudes and behaviour are good and much improved. When given the opportunity, they are prepared to answer questions and offer opinions. They settle to their written and practical tasks with interest and enthusiasm, work well with other pupils, when required and make good attempts to find answers and provide solutions. They seek help readily when necessary. Most pupils take care with the presentation of work in their books. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and some provide helpful and encouraging advice to help pupils improve their work further. However, this sort of feedback is not carried out consistently in every class.
55. The subject leaders play a significant role in improving standards and their leadership is very good. They monitor regularly the work being produced by pupils and they also observe lessons to see for themselves the standards being achieved in classes. They are fully aware of the many strengths of the subject and are currently working on ways to improve the quality of the school's homework provision, identified as an area for development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Numeracy is taught very successfully in mathematics lessons, with teachers putting much emphasis on developing pupils' ability in handling numbers. Very good use is made of ICT, especially in relation to data-handling. Teachers also make suitable provision for pupils to develop their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science and design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now well above the national average, with pupils of all attainment levels achieving well.
- The subject leaders have identified appropriate areas for development through their rigorous approach to self-evaluation and are supporting colleagues in developing the quality of teaching and learning still further.
- As a result of very good teaching, pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the scientific process and develop very good investigative skills.

Commentary

57. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science were judged to be in line with the national average at the end of both key stages and progress was satisfactory. Since then, the improvement in standards has been dramatic and pupils throughout the school are now performing at levels clearly above those seen in most schools. Standards are above average in Year 2 and well above in Year 6, with pupils achieving well throughout the school and very well in the older classes. Higher attaining pupils do very well in the subject. Because of the quality of the support they receive, pupils with learning difficulties and those whose mother tongue is not English also make good progress. The improvement in standards at Year 6 has occurred progressively each year and in 2003 the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels was well above the national average. Indications for this year are that, although there is expected to be a slight dip in these figures, the attainment of pupils will remain well above the national average. Last year, almost every pupil in the school attained at least the levels expected nationally. Boys and girls attain similar results.
58. The experienced, enthusiastic and effective subject leaders are very aware of everything that is happening in this subject. They monitor lessons, curriculum plans and the outcomes of pupils' work and they analyse assessment data to consider strengths and weaknesses in depth. Despite the already very high standards, they have evaluated thoroughly in order to identify priorities and implement plans to support these improvements. As part of this, they have identified that there should be more opportunities for all pupils to devise their own investigations, with less emphasis on more formal approaches to recording but with more opportunity for pupils to be creative and to pose and solve problems of their own choice. The intention is that all pupils, including those who find written methods more cumbersome, can be successful scientists. Following their own additional training, the subject leaders have supplemented the current scheme of work with materials that will support staff in their teaching and raise the quality of pupils' learning still further. The teaching in this subject is always at least good and often very good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and good knowledge of individual pupils. Consequently, pupils of all attainment levels do well according to their own capabilities and clearly enjoy science. A well-focused system for recording pupils' ability in investigative science has been introduced recently to aid pupils' progress further between the key stages.
59. Pupils in both key stages are provided with a comprehensive programme of science activities that enables them to acquire a knowledge and understanding of the world around them, of materials, of living things and physical processes. Their books include an impressive volume of completed work and there is a regular element of investigation that enables pupils to develop skills progressively throughout the school. They are able to set up and conduct investigations and they use their well-developed literacy and mathematical skills in order to record their findings. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of presentation in a significant number of workbooks was judged as unsatisfactory. However, books are now filled with high quality work, usually presented well in a variety of appropriate formats. Pupils throughout the school and of

all abilities also use information and communication technology to present their results clearly, including diagrams and complex tables. In some books, there are excellent examples of teachers' marking. In these instances, pupils' misconceptions have been corrected and follow up questions raised. As a result of this high quality teacher intervention, pupils often respond very positively and extend their work still further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are higher than those expected nationally by both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils are achieving well.
- Whilst standards are not as high as they were reported to be at the time of the previous inspection, this does not show a fall in standards, but rather reflects the greatly increased expectations since that time.
- Very good use is made of ICT in the other subjects of the curriculum.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with teachers being particularly confident in using the resources in the ICT suite.
- Pupils show very good attitudes to their work in the subject.
- The role played by the subject leaders is good.

Commentary

60. Pupils show good skills in all aspects of ICT. They are able to produce very appropriate text on a variety of topics and older pupils vary both size and font confidently to suit their needs. Suitable artwork is produced readily, such as that in the style of famous artists. Relevant modelling activities are undertaken and whilst younger pupils follow instructions in adventure games, older pupils produce spreadsheets relating to arranging a party. Pupils have a secure understanding of control technology, with pupils in Year 2 planning and giving instructions readily to a floor turtle and older pupils using a computer to control the movements of a model car. Pupils in Year 6 develop a range of skills further in producing multi-media presentations about, for example, famous people.
61. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they provide a very good array of resources for pupils to use, both in the ICT suite and in the classrooms. Teachers provide clear advice and demonstration for pupils and keep them busy throughout. They are particularly confident in showing pupils different techniques and procedures using the master computer and this clearly helps pupils to know how to proceed. Very good use is also made of the teaching assistant and this enables all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language, to achieve well.
62. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and they greatly enjoy their work. They listen carefully to the instructions being given and they show good concentration when working with the computers. They work well alone and with partners when required to do so, taking turns readily and helping each other. They behave very well and are very keen to accomplish whatever task is set them. They handle all forms of equipment with great care. Pupils' attitudes contribute well towards the good progress they are all making.
63. The subject leaders are keen and enthusiastic. They sometimes have the opportunity to support their colleagues in lessons and provide advice regularly. They have assembled useful examples of pupils' work, to illustrate the standards being achieved. They have a clear understanding of the many strengths of the subject and are currently working on developing the use of assessment further. They complement each other well and their leadership of the subject is good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. Teachers throughout the school are increasingly confident in their use of ICT and they make very good use of it in their teaching of all subjects, such as English, mathematics and art and design. For example, pupils are encouraged to use the Internet regularly to find a range of information and this enhances the overall curricular provision. Many classes are now also equipped with interactive whiteboards, which are proving a very valuable resource and the teachers use them well in the delivery of their lessons.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected fully and is reported below. It was not possible to undertake detailed reviews of geography and history, but it is clear that both subjects are in good standing in the school. One lesson was seen in **history**, where pupils in Year 1 were beginning their topic on castles and were able to identify various key features. The teaching was good and pupils showed much interest. An interesting example of the cross-curricular links that are made throughout the school was then seen in a Year 1 drama lesson, as pupils delighted in imagining themselves as servants in a castle. One lesson was seen in **geography**. This Year 4 lesson, in which pupils were continuing their study of the Indian village of Kesharpur, was also taught well. The pupils showed considerable knowledge of aspects of life in the village, as well as demonstrating their familiarity with different sorts of maps. In each of these lessons, pupils achieved well because the work was relevant, interesting and directly related to their own experience. The sampling of completed work from all year groups confirmed that pupils throughout the school do well in both subjects, reaching standards that are above national expectations. Both subjects benefit from the good range of interesting visits and visitors and also provide many opportunities for the pupils to undertake their own research activities, using a range of sources, including ICT.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above the level expected.
- The pupils are encouraged continually to relate what they are learning to their own experience and to understand the significance and meaning of the beliefs and practices they study.
- The subject has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly because of the recent influence of the subject leader.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good, with a good range of methods, activities and ways of recording work used, but more provision could be made for first-hand experience through visits to places of worship and the use of artefacts.

Commentary

65. By the time pupils are seven and 11, their knowledge and understanding are above the level required by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This means that most develop a good understanding of the religious traditions of Christianity and the other main religions in this country, appreciate what it means to take a religion seriously and make an increasingly thoughtful response to the ideas and practices they are encountering. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those who have special educational needs, achieve well. Those pupils whose mother tongue is not English achieve at similar levels to their peers.
66. The key to the success of the subject is the way in which pupils are encouraged in all the topics they study to see the relevance of what they are learning to their own feelings and experiences and to understand the significance and meaning of what they are studying for

believers and for themselves. For instance, pupils in Year 6 responded thoughtfully to a consideration of the meaning of the word 'sacred' by contributing ideas about what was important to them and then showed very good understanding of how Muslims show respect for the Qur'an. Similarly, pupils in Year 4 were helped to grasp the concept of the many Hindu gods and goddesses being aspects of one supreme God by considering how they themselves are seen to various people or in differing situations. This sort of approach, of course, requires sensitive teaching and the development of a positive atmosphere that encourages the sharing of ideas and there is ample evidence that the good and often very good teaching seen during the inspection is typical of what is happening throughout the school. As a result, pupils' attitudes are very good and the subject makes a strong contribution to their personal and social development, particularly in terms of their spiritual, moral and cultural awareness.

67. Pupils are introduced to topics in interesting and lively ways and, in accordance with the agreed syllabus, they encounter a wide range of religious beliefs and practices. Most teachers are generally confident in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is increasing because of the support they receive from a lively subject leader, whose enthusiasm is helping to raise standards throughout the school. She knows what is planned and how pupils are progressing because of careful monitoring and discussing with pupils what they have learned. Work completed by pupils confirms that they do well and enjoy the subject. They also develop a good awareness of and respect for, each other's views and opinions. There are limited opportunities for them to experience directly aspects of the religions they study by means of visits. Some of the school's small collection of artefacts were put to good use in a Year 5 lesson, when pupils examined the important symbols of Sikhism, but more topics would benefit if more artefacts were available.
68. The subject supports the development of pupils' literacy skills through many opportunities for speaking, listening and writing, such as the thoughtful writing produced in Year 4 on the theme of 'God is everywhere'. Useful assessment procedures are being introduced and the subject leader has identified the need to develop guidelines to support the use of the agreed syllabus and to continue to develop staff confidence through further training.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

69. From the evidence of work seen throughout the school and a small sample of lessons, it is evident that the teaching of **art and design** is now good. Pupils have many opportunities to develop a wide range of techniques and often produce work of high quality. They use sketchbooks regularly to practise skills such as shading and to develop ideas about form and perspective. Pupils use ICT increasingly to express themselves in art, in addition to using more conventional techniques. In one lesson, they considered how to design striking images when working, for example, in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Although the weather on this occasion prevented them from working outside in the natural environment as planned, pupils were confident and lively when constructing instant sculptures from indoor classroom equipment. They were thoughtful and honest when evaluating their sculptures and the teacher recorded their work using digital photography before it was disassembled at the end of the day.
70. During the inspection, only two lessons were seen in **design and technology** and no overall judgement is made on provision. However, in one Year 6 lesson seen, for example, pupils designed and made a variety of cog mechanisms successfully to drive model playground rides. The teaching was good and pupils showed very good attitudes to the subject. A study of other items made by pupils in this year group, including pencil cases and a variety of structures, showed planning and making skills much higher than expected. Components were cut and shaped carefully and joined skilfully. The pencil cases, in particular, compared well with commercially produced items. A study of plans and samples of work from other parts of the school also show consistently high standards of work. For example, younger pupils plan and make puppets, food containers, castles with hinged drawbridges and winding mechanisms and older pupils make such things as picture frames, sandwiches, moving

monsters and musical instruments. Good quality evaluations contribute well to the quality of the work.

71. During the inspection, only one lesson was seen in **music** and no overall judgement is made on provision. In this lesson, also in Year 6, the teaching by a specialist music teacher was very good and the standard of singing produced was higher than expected. In the singing practice, pupils sang with enthusiasm and good skill, showing very appropriate control of rhythm and pitch. The older pupils sang clearly and they kept together well when singing in two parts. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils were very good and they clearly enjoy taking part in music activities. A study of teachers' plans shows that there is appropriate coverage of the subject during the year. Extra-curricular activities enhance the overall provision for music.
72. Only one lesson was seen in **physical education** and no overall judgement is made on provision. However, in the lesson seen, Year 6 pupils showed good control and co-ordination in carrying out various games activities. In particular, they showed better than expected accuracy and skill in throwing and catching. The quality of teaching was very good, as was the pupils' behaviour. The teacher took great care to coach the art of good catching and his demonstrations clearly benefited pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 5 attend swimming lessons during the year and by the end of the year at least 90 per cent can swim 25 metres, with some swimming significantly further. Planning for the subject shows that all areas of work are tackled during the year. Provision is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and the school has a number of successful sports teams.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

73. Much work takes place in the school to support the pupils' personal and social development. All classes, for instance, have regular sessions when they are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings in a sensitive and supportive atmosphere while seated in a circle. This is made possible by the careful approach of the teachers and teaching assistants, which is typical of the school's caring ethos. Values are promoted through the school's daily acts of collective worship and through the overall programme for personal, social and health education. This provision is good and there is clear evidence throughout this report that the school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop positive and responsible attitudes. The pupils' sense of citizenship is encouraged through the organisation of the school and class councils, in which elected pupils run meetings and make decisions that have an impact on their lives at school. Responsibilities such as these are taken very seriously by all pupils, who also gain useful skills in democratic procedures. As a result, pupils of all ages are encouraged to develop a sense of ownership and of pride in their school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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