

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITEKNIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading, Berkshire

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109839

Headteacher: Mrs J Daniels

Lead inspector: Ms A Coyle

Dates of inspection: 21st - 23rd June 2004

Inspection number: 258413

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:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	387
School address:	Fairlawn Green Shinfield Rise Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG2 8EP
Telephone number:	(0118) 987 2588
Fax number:	(0118) 975 8497
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bayes

Date of previous inspection: 18th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whiteknights Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Reading, Berkshire within Wokingham local education authority. It is larger than most other primary schools nationally and there are 387 girls and boys on roll, including 49 children in the two reception classes. Most begin school in the term of their fifth birthday and attainment on entry varies considerably, but is average overall. The school provides a separate class in the summer term for its youngest children. Eighteen per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority and traveller backgrounds, and one per cent is at an early stage of language acquisition. Fourteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is a lower figure than in most other schools nationally. Pupils' needs include specific or moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural needs, speech and communication needs, hearing impairment and physical difficulties; two per cent have statements for their special educational needs. The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20603	Ms A Coyle	Lead inspector	Design and technology Geography History Special education needs
9614	Ms C Webb	Lay inspector	
31075	Ms D Harris	Team inspector	English Music Foundation Stage
16773	Ms R Arora	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language
8056	Mr H Probert	Team inspector	Science Art and design Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Whiteknights Primary School is an **effective school**, with many good features. The teaching and learning are good and pupils attain standards that are generally in line with the national average. It provides good value for money because it is led and managed very well by the very committed headteacher, the hard working deputy and senior managers, and a conscientious governing body.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- Standards are good in speaking, listening, reading, scientific investigations and singing by Year 6.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. They are very willing to take on responsibilities and their moral development is very good.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Pupils are provided with a good curriculum and plenty of extra-curricular activities.
- The school is benefiting significantly from the very good leadership of the headteacher and her excellent sense of purpose and vision.
- The roles of the subject leaders are not fully established.
- There is no separate secure outdoor accommodation for the children in the reception classes
- Assessment procedures and teachers' marking are inconsistent across the school.

The school has improved satisfactorily since its last inspection in 1999 and rectified the five key weaknesses that were identified. However, it has gone through a period of upheaval during the intervening years that has resulted in staff turnover and several changes to leadership. Nevertheless, standards have improved well in information and communication technology (ICT) because the provision has been developed well to include better links between subjects, an improved use of time and greater staff expertise in the use of computers. However, although the curriculum is more balanced than it was, the use of assessment is still an area for improvement. This has been identified by the school in the school development plan, which is more sharply focused than it was five years ago. It is now a good working document that is being used well to herald changes for the future and identify the professional development needs of staff. Governors ensure that the statutory requirements are met and parents are provided with sufficient information.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is satisfactory. The above table shows that standards at the end of Year 6 have varied over the last three years, and they dipped significantly in 2002 due to irregularities

for which appropriate action was taken. In 2003, the results for English were well above the national average and in line with schools in similar contexts. They matched the national average in mathematics and science, but were well below those of similar schools. The inspection evidence differs slightly from these results and shows that standards are currently above the national expected levels in lessons ¹ by Year 6 in English and in line with them in mathematics and science overall. Standards are also in line with the expected levels in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. The national comparative information for the latest test results is not yet available but the early indications are that pupils in Year 6 have done particularly well in science this year. Pupils from ethnic minority and Traveller backgrounds achieve satisfactorily and those with special educational needs achieve well. Children in the reception class are provided with a good start to their education and, as a result, reach the expected goals ² in most areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. ³ They exceed them in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical and creative development.

Pupils' personal qualities and their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** are **good** overall. Most pupils display good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good overall throughout the school. Teaching is often very good or excellent for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in the Year 6 classes. An extensive range of after-school activities enriches the good curriculum and pupils are cared for well in a supportive environment in which the quality of the teaching assistants is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The new headteacher's very good leadership is a strength of the school and she is providing excellent vision and direction for the staff to help them forge ahead with new innovations. Together with the conscientious governing body and very hard-working deputy and senior managers, she has quickly set up a very good team to steer the school closely. This has resulted in effective management that is beginning to drive the school forward successfully, which bodes well for the future.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the way the school educates their children and the values it promotes. Many help regularly with cooking, hearing readers and running after-school activities. Parents are well informed through the prospectus, school website, governors' newsletters and annual reports, as well as the termly newsletter known as 'Whispers', which gives children's views, drawings, ideas and stories. Friendly office staff are always ready to

¹ **LEVELS** - by the end of Year 6, pupils are expected to attain Level 4 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels. By the end of Year 2, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected levels.

² **EARLY LEARNING GOALS** - these goals are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the end of the Reception year in the following areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal, social and emotional development.

³ **FOUNDATION STAGE** - This stage of learning refers to children aged between three and six years. In this school, it refers to children in the reception class.

help parents with form-filling or to give additional explanations and the premises, catering and cleaning staff all make good contributions to the work of the school. Pupils particularly like the welcoming atmosphere and the extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:

- Strengthen and develop the roles of the subject leaders to include more monitoring of teaching, learning and the curriculum.
- Encourage staff to make more consistent use of assessment information, marking, homework and pupils' targets across the curriculum.
- Develop the outdoor accommodation for the reception classes.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Pupils achieve **satisfactorily** in lessons and attain standards that are in line with the national expectations overall by Years 2 and 6.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are good in speaking, listening, reading, scientific investigations and singing by Year 6.
- Children in the reception year make a good start to their education and achieve well.

COMMENTARY

1. The results shown in the table below indicate that in 2003 pupils in Year 2 did much better than the year before in mathematics. Pupils did less well in reading and writing and the results have been very varied overall. However, the provisional results for the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 2 indicate that standards are being maintained since last year and are currently in line with the nationally expected levels. Pupils reach satisfactory standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 because basic skills are taught thoroughly and practised regularly. Teachers and pupils work hard because much is expected. The work in pupils' books shows that they cover a lot of ground and achievement is satisfactory overall.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (15.6)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.4 (15.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.7 (16.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The results noted in the table below show that in 2003 pupils in Year 6 did as well as other schools nationally in science. They did better in mathematics and much better in English. However, they did not do as well as pupils in other similar schools in all three subjects. The trends in the school's results have been very varied over the last three years, particularly for pupils in Year 6. This is partially due to the fact that the National Numeracy Strategy has only recently been fully implemented and has not had sufficient time to impact upon the standards in mathematics. In addition, the mathematics and science results for 2002 in Year 6 were shown as significantly low due to irregularities for which appropriate action was taken, and this has affected the overall picture.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (28.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.4 (15.0)	26.8 (26.7)

science	28.6 (15.0)	28.6 (28.3)
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There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. There is clear evidence to show that standards are moving upwards. They are currently in line with the national expectations overall in mathematics and science in lessons. Pupils attain good standards of scientific investigation in Year 6. The national comparative information for the latest test results is not yet available but the early indications are that pupils in Year 6 have done particularly well in science this year. Standards of attainment have greatly improved in English and are currently good in speaking, listening and reading in Year 6, which represents good achievement. This is because the school's targets for the year group are suitably higher than last year's and the quality of teaching provided by the newly appointed deputy headteacher and class teacher is very good and often excellent in the subject. These oldest pupils in the school are benefiting significantly as a result and achieving well. They are making a spurt at the top end of the juniors that prepares them well for secondary school.
4. Standards are in line with the nationally expected levels in ICT and pupils achieve satisfactorily. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection when the standards were poor. Pupils make the most of good teaching of skills and the opportunities provided in the computer suite and in the classrooms. Pupils' ICT skills are used well in many subjects, particularly in science and design and technology. Pupils achieve the standards expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. By Year 6 they are able to carry out individual research projects about religious people such as St Paul and they use research skills competently when using the Internet and the Bible to prepare for whole class presentations with 'Power Point' computer facilities.
5. Standards in singing are good; pupils sing tunefully with clear diction and phrasing. Pupils have used a wide range of media to produce work of sound quality in art and design and design and technology. The substantial amount of colourful work on display shows that the subjects are used well to links with the topics covered in geography and history. However, it is not possible to make overall judgements about standards in most foundation subjects, which were sampled only and therefore just a few lessons were observed.
6. Children in the two reception classes follow the curriculum set out for their age in the six areas of learning. They achieve well, particularly in gaining social skills and early language and literacy development. Most children are on course to reach the targets set for them in each area of learning, and a few will exceed them. The teachers respond well to children's individual needs because of the very good quality of assessment and they make sure that every activity provides plenty of good opportunities to increase children's skills in speaking and listening and in learning to get on with others and gain independence.
7. Pupils with special educational needs do well because the curriculum is adapted for their needs so that they do not find the work too difficult. The co-ordinator and the specialist teachers and teaching assistants keep a close check on pupils' individual targets and provide work that helps them to achieve success. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily as a result of the targets set for them. They receive good support to help them increase their spoken and written language. There are frequent sensitive checks on their understanding of technical vocabulary in other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and their attitudes and behaviour are generally **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good** overall. Attendance is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils' personal and moral development are very good.
- A small but significant number of boys are disruptive in some junior classes.

COMMENTARY

8. Pupils like coming to school and their attendance is good. Procedures to record and monitor attendance are good and the education welfare officer is appropriately involved with the few families whose children persistently arrive late.
9. Pupils are generally eager to learn; they work well together and enjoy their lessons, although a small number of boys in Years 3 and 5, some with special educational needs, challenge teachers with their unacceptable behaviour which the others do not like. This behaviour interferes with lessons, limiting the progress their peers can make. All pupils whatever their difficulties are included in activities wherever possible. The positive reward system works well. Silver stars are eagerly sought and allocated to the different houses. Sanctions are perceived as fair and there have been no exclusions during the past twelve months.
10. Through thought-provoking assemblies ('Forgiveness' was the theme during the inspection), well-conducted personal, social and health education lessons and opportunities in lessons pupils' spiritual development is good. They experience a sense of wonder as they contemplate God's promise to Abraham and when taking part in role-play as members of the government of India to decide on whether fresh water should be available to all. Pupils quickly develop a strong moral sense of natural justice as a result of the staff's very high expectations and the Christian values permeating the school community. Social skills develop well. Pupils' good cultural development is enhanced by their theme days, and through visiting speakers and their visits to the church, gurdwara and local mosque.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good. By the time they leave, many will have been house captains, with termly responsibilities for various areas; for example, dinners, registers, messages and 'meeting and greeting' visitors. Pupils in Year 6 volunteer to be 'Yellow band' helpers to assist break time supervisors and Year 5 'Buddy' readers take their duties very seriously. Class council chairs make up the democratic school council and, as a result of their representations, they now run the break-time healthy snack tuck-shop. Pupils are mature, knowledgeable about life outside Whiteknights and confident, thinking young people by the time they leave the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.7
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.4
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence in 2002/3.

EXCLUSIONS

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	310	0	0
White - Irish	1	0	0
White - any other White background	12	0	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	8	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	8	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British - African	8	0	0
Chinese	3	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
Parent/pupil preferred not to say	7	0	0
Information not obtained	1	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 is **good**. Teaching and learning are good overall. Provision for pupils' health, safety and welfare is **good**; the guidance and support provided are **good** and pupils are much involved in school life. Partnerships with parents are **good** and links with the community and other schools are also **good**.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** overall.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- A strong team spirit permeates teaching.
- Teaching is often very good and occasionally excellent in one of the reception classes and in the two Year 6 classes.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs.
- The quality of teachers' marking and the use of assessment information are too variable.

COMMENTARY

12. During the last two years the school has had many changes in teaching staff. Despite this, it has developed a strong team spirit and an ethos of support for each other and new members of staff. There is also a willingness to review and change practice to ensure improvements in pupils' learning. This shows some improvement since the last inspection but there are still inconsistencies in practice. Teachers prepare and organise learning well. Activities are based on clearly identified learning objectives and these are shared and discussed with pupils. However, the shortcomings in lessons generally relate to specific weaknesses rather than to common features across the school. These include times when teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons, not enough focus is put on pupils' own research, the pace of lessons is occasionally too slow and there is an over-use of worksheets.
13. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is good overall and there is some very good and excellent teaching. This is demonstrated by the outstanding organisation with built-in flexibility that ensures that the teaching sensitively meets the needs and next steps for each child. The teachers' enthusiasm for learning means that children behave and concentrate well. The very effective questioning supports the development of their understanding and helps to refine their knowledge of the world about them. The assessment procedures are very good and detailed records are kept through observations of the progress of individuals.
14. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 is good overall, although there is some lack of confidence in the teaching of music. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented appropriately, and the teaching of ICT has improved since the last inspection. There are many strengths in teaching that have a positive impact on pupils' learning. For example, in an excellent mathematics lesson seen in Year 6, questions were targeted skilfully at pupils' different levels of ability and the teacher provided an excellent demonstration using a CD-ROM. There was challenge and pace throughout the lesson as the pupils learnt how to solve mathematical problems recognising patterns and relationships. The strongest features of teaching throughout the school include the planning of lessons, the teachers' very good subject knowledge, the variety of teaching methods used to interest and stimulate the pupils, and the support for the lower attaining pupils. The staff value the contributions made by pupils and they use a good range of resources and artefacts to motivate them. Good use is made of visitors and special events such as the recent art week.
15. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are sensitive to their learning needs, plan appropriate work and provide good support. Specialist teachers and teaching assistants are generally well briefed and they contribute to the quality of pupils' learning particularly well when working with individuals or in small groups withdrawn from lessons. In mathematics, from Year 2 to Year 6, pupils are grouped across the year to address the different learning needs of pupils. This arrangement is effective. Behaviour is generally well managed and teachers use praise and recognition of success to encourage pupils, thereby enhancing their self-esteem. In most lessons, pupils respond well and are keen to discuss, listen, learn and help each other. Pupils are expected to work hard and there is a productive and purposeful ethos in most classrooms. Effective questioning challenges pupils to think for themselves and involves them well. Paired discussions are a particularly effective tool used to motivate and support pupils who might not contribute to debates.

16. The school has suitable assessment procedures for English and mathematics. Teachers evaluate the outcomes of their lessons and use the information appropriately to assist planning so that work is matched to pupils' attainment. However, the use of assessment is unsatisfactory across subjects as it is inconsistently applied. For example, the use of individual learning targets in English and mathematics is weak and many pupils are unaware of what they need to learn next. Pupils' work is marked regularly but in many instances the assessments lack constructive comments to help pupils know how to improve. The school has accurately identified assessment as an area to develop.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4 (7%)	11 (19%)	24 (42%)	17 (30%)	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; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

THE CURRICULUM

The school provides a **good** curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in the infant and junior classes. A **very good** range of clubs and after-school activities enrich pupils' learning. Accommodation and resources are **sound** overall.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching assistants and other adult helpers in classrooms are well organised to help pupils.
- Pupils' personal, social and health education permeates the curriculum well.
- A very good range of after-school clubs and activities extends pupils' learning.
- The outdoor curriculum for children in the reception classes is limited by the lack of a separate outdoor area for them.

COMMENTARY

17. The school has a good staff of qualified teachers and support assistants. A particular feature of the provision is the effective use that is made of teaching assistants in the classrooms. Support staff and adult helpers play an important role in guiding individual pupils and small groups and they are sensitive towards those for whom they are responsible. The strong teamwork between adults benefits pupils and helps them to make good progress. For example, good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs to help them participate in all activities according to their capabilities whilst the gifted and talented pupils are given sufficiently challenging tasks. Good quality support is provided for pupils who learn English as an additional language and Traveller pupils because the school is committed to the inclusion and integration of all pupils in all school activities. In particular, new language learners are closely guided to help them have access to the curriculum and take part in lessons.
18. A good emphasis is placed upon developing pupils' personal, social and health awareness, and the curriculum is good throughout the school. Children in the Foundation Stage have access to an extensive range of learning opportunities that are well suited to their needs, whilst pupils in the infant and junior classes follow the full National Curriculum. The school has developed its curriculum well since the last inspection when there were

significant shortcomings. In particular, there are now suitable schemes of work for all subjects, including religious education and ICT, and the time allocations have been reviewed and revised to ensure that there is now a balanced curriculum. However, although the accommodation and resources are sound overall, the outdoor curriculum for children in the reception classes is limited because there is no separate outside area in which they can play and there is no fixed equipment for them to climb, stretch or balance upon.

19. Pupils are given plenty of very good opportunities to extend their learning by joining a wide variety of lunchtime clubs and after-school activities. These include musical activities such as recorder groups and choir, all of which are well attended. Further opportunities are created by the school's active participation in projects and events, as well as clubs for netball, cross-country, athletics, football and running. The school also has good links with local schools and coaches who regularly visit the school to teach tennis, cricket, and dance. In addition, the Year 6 residential trip enables pupils to experience team building and adventure activities.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Procedures to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare are **good**. The school's arrangements to consult with pupils and to act on their views are **good** overall. Systems to support, advise and guide pupils are **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Support for pupils with special education or other needs and those who speak English as an additional language is good.
- Pupils' target setting is not consistent.
- Pupils' personal development is not systematically recorded and monitored.

COMMENTARY

20. Health and safety are high priorities. Regular risk assessments and security reviews are carried out. Current child protection procedures are good and the school is aware of the new legislation. Personnel trained in first aid are always on site and practice is good, although occasionally staff whose certificates have lapsed do administer first aid and not all minor incidents are recorded.
21. Pastoral care is very good. Pupils trust adults to deal with their worries fairly and quickly as a result of the very good relationships they enjoy. Whenever they arrive at the school all are welcomed. Pupils with special education or other needs and pupils learning to speak English as an additional language are very well integrated as a result of the good and well-targeted support they receive from staff. When necessary the traveller support service is involved with individuals and gives very good support.
22. The oldest pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and understand their targets but this is variable across year groups and classes. One teacher, through class questionnaires, establishes how well pupils think they are doing and what they feel about the various subjects, but this very good practice is not common to all. Pupils value the useful comments from teachers and teaching assistants during lessons, and when these are made on their written work.
23. The school consults pupils via questionnaires similar to those used by Ofsted and considers the results when making decisions. The school council also has a strong voice in these, with the deputy headteacher in attendance at all of their meetings. Although teachers know their pupils well and personal development is well promoted this is not systematically recorded other than in their annual reports, which makes monitoring difficult.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school has **good** links with parents, the local community and other schools.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Liaison with the main secondary school is very good.
- Parents' support for the school is strong.

COMMENTARY

24. Parents are pleased with the way the school educates their children and the values promoted. Inspectors agree with their reservations about the behaviour of a few pupils as expressed through the questionnaires. Parents demonstrate their support through their very good attendance at meetings. Many regularly help, with cooking, hearing readers

and running after-school activities. Pizza making with a parent was a very popular activity in the Reception class. The active and enthusiastic school association sends out its own newsletters and is always looking for ways to raise funds. Families and members of the local community alike enjoy their events, at some of which pupils run stalls.

25. Parents are well informed through the prospectus, the new school website, governors' newsletters and annual report, regular school and curriculum news and other letters. 'Whispers' newsletters that are sent out once a term give children's views, drawings, ideas and stories. Parents of children in the reception classes are provided with clear information about starting school and encouraged to help their children at home. Pupils' annual reports are easy to read but there is little detail about their achievement in foundation subjects. The office staff are friendly and always ready to help parents with form filling or to give additional explanation. Parents of children with special education or other needs and those who speak English as an additional language are well supported and informed. Attendance at the support groups known as 'TRACKS' is good.
26. Good community involvement includes grandparents and local residents coming into school to speak to children of their wartime experiences, the people 'who help us' visitors, and some sponsorship from companies. Pupils take part in local sporting and other events, and the choir is one of twelve chosen from schools to sing at the Mayor's Christmas charity concert. Ministers from local churches regularly take assemblies.
27. Good links, as well as pastoral and curricular liaison, have been established with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. These include the Years 6 and 7 bridging unit and secondary school students helping with extra-curricular netball. Good links with playgroups and other local schools are well used to ensure easy transition and transfer.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The headteacher provides **very effective** leadership and excellent vision for the school and is supported well by the leadership team. The leadership and management of other key staff and the governors are **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The headteacher has an excellent vision of what is needed to raise standards.
- The deputy headteacher has had a significant impact on the management of the school.
- Governors give good support to the school but are still developing their roles as critical friends.
- Leadership and management of the subjects is underdeveloped.

COMMENTARY

28. The headteacher who has recently been appointed has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and an excellent vision of what is needed to raise standards. Her inspirational leadership has motivated and influenced staff and pupils. She is supported very well by the newly appointed hard-working deputy headteacher who has had a significant impact on standards in Year 6 and has helped to ensure that the climate for learning is good. Together with the senior managers, they have created a team of teaching and non-teaching staff who are committed to the pupils'

education. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are strong.

29. The governing body makes a significant contribution to the leadership of the school. It is fully involved in strategic planning and formulating policies. All statutory requirements are met. Governors keep in touch with the school's work and this cements the partnership between the school and the governing body into an effective team. Governors are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and contribute to the development planning. All governors monitor the school's work through a well-established system of committees, visits, meetings and discussions with pupils, staff and parents. They work closely with the headteacher, consider where improvements can be made and then work with staff to effect change. The school has been supported well by the local education authority.
30. Subject leaders in the core subjects review pupils' performance and take the necessary action to improve standards. For example, writing standards in English and problem solving in mathematics are priorities. In science, the emphasis is upon experimental and investigative work and in ICT the development of skills. However, in other subjects the leaders are not as effective in the use of assessment and monitoring to guide their work. As a result, there are some variations in the quality of teaching across the school. The senior management team is active in supporting and guiding teachers and the arrangements are effective for the induction and training of new staff, including the newly qualified teachers. They settle quickly and gain much from the structured curricular planning and the support they receive from colleagues.
31. The school is an inclusive community and works hard to give all pupils equality of opportunity. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well and pupils have access to good quality support. The office staff, site manager and catering and cleaning staff all work hard to make sure that the daily routines run smoothly. The school development plan has been improved since the time of the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. It is now a useful document that is used well to guide the work of the school. All staff are involved in its formulation and it is well founded on the robust evaluation of the school's needs. The school has made sound improvement overall since it was last inspected. There have been some good improvements to leadership and management since 1999 when they were judged to be satisfactory and some statutory requirements were not met in full.
32. The school budget is managed and monitored well by the finance committee, the headteacher and finance bursar. Financial resources are linked appropriately to school priorities and good value for money sought through several tenders for major purchases. The school has a healthy carry forward figure, which has been partially used to fund the small in-year deficit.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	855,533
Total expenditure	876,915
Expenditure per pupil	2,429

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	76,295
Balance carried forward to the next year	54,913

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33. Children enter the reception classes at the start of the term in which they are five and most attend part time. Children who are five in the summer term attend full-time. Attainment on entry is average overall. The indoor accommodation is very good with attractive areas that provide children with many opportunities to develop their skills. These include role-play areas comprising space ships, travel agents and a castle. Children also have access to the outside area but there is no separate fenced playground for them, although the school intends to improve its outdoor provision.
34. The children are very carefully assessed when they start school and the teachers and the teaching assistants regularly note the children's achievements through well-planned observations. Very good records are kept to track progress and the information is used well to ensure that activities are well planned to provide appropriate challenges for the children. The good leadership of the provision for the Foundation Stage has resulted in a well-planned curriculum that is imaginative, well organised and resourced.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teachers have high expectations and develop children's independence well.
- Very good teaching assistants support the well-organised routines.

COMMENTARY

35. All children are well cared for and supported to help them achieve well. They attain the expected goals and are well settled into the class routines, putting up their hands to answer questions and listening to others. The younger children who only started school this term are learning the routines but still have some difficulties in taking turns. All children are encouraged to think about and plan their own activities and investigations, which gives them real independence in their learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was little opportunity for this. As a result of the modelling of behaviour by the adults children are polite and considerate of others. For example, they are polite to parent helpers when saying '*Thank you for helping us - you are welcome to come back again!*' During circle times children recall their experiences and can say that they had learnt to be friendly. They respond well to responsibilities such as helping with clearing up in the classroom or the equipment outside. Teaching and learning are good. The high expectations of the adults and the good opportunities provided help children to make good progress and attain the expected goals.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teaching is of a very good quality and includes very effective questioning
- Planning is very effective in supporting this area of learning.

COMMENTARY

36. The oldest children achieve well and exceed the expected goals as a direct result of the very good teaching and planning of activities. With support and security, the children are developing well as communicators with adults and each other. Very good opportunities are provided for them to work in small groups with adults to express their ideas and opinions. Teachers support the development of language well through play; for example, in one activity the teacher very skilfully asked questions and encouraged the children to record messages as they planned their journey to the planets in the class 'space ship'. However, a few of the younger children struggle to speak in full sentences or recall events in sequence and they find it difficult to think of descriptive language. Nevertheless, all children read regularly in lessons and they take books home to share with their parents and carers. They learn letter sounds by using hand puppets and most are developing good pencil control when they write; they particularly enjoy practising on smooth surfaces created by using shaving foam!

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children achieve well as a result of very good quality teaching.
- Good opportunities extend children's number knowledge well.

COMMENTARY

37. Most children achieve well and exceed the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Very good teaching and skilful questioning by the adults ensures that children achieve well, understand a wide range of concepts and that the language of mathematics is purposefully developed. A good range of resources and activities engages and challenges the children, and teaching assistants are used well to support them as they work. For example, lower attaining children used dice to count and move counters up a card and this aided their ability to recognise numbers. Some higher attainers are able to count and recognize larger numbers using a 100 square and understanding that 99 is less than 100 and 109 is more than 100. They understand the story of nine and are beginning to see patterns in the numbers. In their written work, children form their numbers well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Good activities include play created by the children and work organised by the teachers.
- Children are not always challenged sufficiently to develop their understanding.

COMMENTARY

38. The good teaching and effective support from the teaching assistants leads to children's sound achievement. They attain the expected standards and widen their discovery of the world around them successfully. Lessons are planned well to include a good balance of play activities and organised work. Staff encourage the children to use all their senses and develop their thinking. For example, the children are beginning to show good control when using the computer and they learn scientific facts about materials when cooking pizzas. However, children are not always challenged sufficiently to develop their understanding. This was noted in a tasting session when children sampled different fruits including, mango, pineapple, paw-paw and pear. They used a chart to record their likes and dislikes, but they were not questioned about their reasons and thus, an opportunity was missed to increase children's use of descriptive vocabulary.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Indoor activities are planned well to develop the children's manipulative skills
- The provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory.

COMMENTARY

39. The well-planned indoor activities are designed to develop the children's fine movements such as the use of pencils and scissors, and this leads to satisfactory achievement overall. Other activities include the use of dough and the computer mouse. As a result of good teaching, the children meet the expected standards by the end of the year. However, the provision for outdoor play is limited, as there is no separate fenced outside area and there is no fixed equipment for climbing, stretching or balancing. Nevertheless, teachers make good use of the school hall for lessons and they provide a good range of small equipment for the children to use. The teachers' very good use of praise and challenging tasks encourage the children to try to master skills such as skipping and throwing. Good ball control ensues as they learn to 'dribble' around rows of skittles and begin to work as a team, taking turns fairly.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Photographic evidence shows that staff provide a good range of well-prepared activities.
- Role-play areas are inspiring and encourage imaginative play.

COMMENTARY

40. Children achieve well and exceed the expected standards in creative and imaginative activities. They have a wide range of opportunities to fuel their imagination through drawing, painting, cutting and gluing. Teaching is good and all artwork is well displayed, demonstrating the high value given by adults to the children's efforts. Careful attention is given to getting children to observe physical features when drawing and painting. For

example, they have produced good drawings of a range of fruit, noticing colour and the main features such as pips or the tops of pineapples. In the role-play areas the children are inspired effectively as they re-enact stories. They put on white 'space suits' and carry models of oxygen bottles on their backs because they realise that, *'they help you breathe because there is no air up there'*. Children report that, *'We went to Saturn but there were friendly aliens there. We only took a short time to get there as we went so fast.'* Plenty of musical instruments are available so that children can experiment with sound and they sing tunefully, with enthusiasm.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Standards are good in speaking, listening and reading in Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall; it is excellent in Year 6.
- Very effective planning supports pupils' learning.
- Leadership is effective and priorities for further development are accurately identified.

COMMENTARY

41. Standards in the national tests in 2003 for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well above average but in line with similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was average. Currently, standards are good overall amongst the oldest pupils and a significant number are working within the higher Level 5. In Year 2, the results were well below the national average for both reading and writing. They were also well below average when compared with similar schools. However, on the basis of this year's unconfirmed results and the work seen during the inspection it is clear that standards are rising, particularly in reading, and they are now satisfactory. Most pupils in Year 2 are working within the expected band for their age and a significant proportion attain higher standards than previously in both reading and writing. Overall, achievement across the school is good, particularly where there has been a particular focus such as in improving speaking, listening and reading skills.
42. Standards are good in speaking and listening in Year 6. Pupils achieve well because of the good discussion opportunities that are provided. They listen carefully to each other and contribute well in small group discussions or whole class situations. For example, in a Year 1 class pupils listened well to their teacher and each other and thought hard as to how to form questions to discover what was in a 'Feely' bag. The good promotion of pupils' personal and social skills throughout the school gives them the confidence to respond to teachers' challenging questions. In this way, pupils are actively involved in their own learning.
43. In reading, pupils achieve well and attain good standards by the end of Year 6. They are confident and enthusiastic readers and enjoy reading a range of texts. At present, the Year 6 pupils are compiling their own reading journals to take with them to their secondary schools and working confidently on texts from the 'Shadow Cage' as part of this project. Pupils develop their comprehension skills well through focused reading sessions with the teachers. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher's excellent questioning supported pupils in thinking beyond the text to infer the writer's intention. Links were made with their own writing as they discovered how the author built up the suspense. Pupils in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily and attain sound standards. They enjoy choosing books from the library. They make their selection with confidence and are able to justify that choice giving reasons such as, *'I am going to have a pet mouse and this book will tell me how to look after it'*.

44. By the end of Year 6, pupils' writing is at a broadly satisfactory standard. Pupils write in a range of styles for effect and purpose, and they use computers well to help them produce finished work and 'Power Point' presentations. Themes are well developed and the use of both technical and personal language is secure. Standards are satisfactory in Year 2. Writing skills are beginning to develop well and pupils use a variety of connectives but the endings of stories are often repetitive and the use of punctuation is insecure. Teachers take care in the introductory part of lessons to prepare pupils thoroughly for written tasks. For example, pupils in Year 3 responded eagerly to the teacher's lively role-play of the story of 'Goldilocks' and they were keen to write letters to 'Mummy Bear' as a result. They were so enthusiastic that they continued into the lunch hour, producing credible letters in a short space of time. Both presentation and handwriting are generally satisfactory but disparities between classes in the use of pen leads to inconsistencies in the development of handwriting.
45. Teaching and learning are good overall; they are notably excellent in Year 6, which is having a significant impact on standards. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was sound overall. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and use methods that involve and stimulate pupils to achieve well. For example, in an excellent lesson that was planned well a pupil in Year 6 acted out the character from a book and the pupils questioned him about his feelings and how he dealt with a 'scary' situation. The thoughtful questioning added to the atmosphere and suspense created, in preparation for pupils to write about characters and story setting. Teaching assistants are well briefed and understand the needs of pupils with special educational needs. They give very good help in most classes to enable pupils to rehearse responses so that they are confident enough to contribute during discussions. Pupils who learn English as an additional language are also provided with a good level of support to help their acquisition of English; teaching assistants help them to practise reading and writing on individual tailored programmes.
46. The leadership and management of the subject are effective. The subject leader has clearly identified priority areas for development that have been agreed with staff. Another member of staff who will shortly take over the role will continue to develop these agreed plans. The library has recently been improved and it is now conducive for pupils to browse or research. Reading books are being updated and colour-coded to support the teaching of reading to younger pupils. Assessment procedures enable teachers to track pupils' progress. However, these are not leading to the systematic use of targets and most pupils are unaware of them. All work is marked and occasionally teachers state what pupils can do to improve their work. However, this approach is not consistent across the school and pupils are unaware of how to improve.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

47. Throughout the school, good opportunities are given for pupils to discuss and share ideas on a wide range of topics. These are strong features in many lessons that lead to pupils' good development of speaking skills. Key vocabulary and technical terms are often reinforced in classroom displays, to which pupils can refer and use effectively. In subjects such as history, pupils use a range of written material to discover things about the past, and write clear accounts of what they have learnt.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Teaching is occasionally excellent in Year 6.
- There are not enough opportunities for practical work.

COMMENTARY

48. The national test results for 2003 the end of Years 2 and 6 were in line with the national averages. They were below the results of similar schools in Year 2 and well below in Year 6. The current inspection findings differ from these results and show that standards are generally in line with the national expectations overall. Basic skills are acquired steadily and pupils' knowledge of place value is secure. In Year 4, pupils use games effectively to reinforce learning and they benefit from the teacher's quick-fire questions about multiplying and dividing by 10 and then by 100, which encourages them to apply known number facts. Adept use of place value was also apparent in samples of work from pupils in Years 4 and 5. Standards in other aspects of the subject, such as shape, space and measure, are improving and are now satisfactory. For example, pupils in Year 6 lesson can plot shapes accurately, using their knowledge of symmetry and reflection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, and throughout the school most pupils have good attitudes towards the subject, which contributes well to learning and achievement.
49. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good overall in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is occasionally excellent in Year 6. This contributes to pupils' ability to perform written computations and recall and calculate mental challenges using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Planning and awareness of what pupils can and cannot do, were strong contributory factors in an excellent lesson in Year 6. The teacher constantly extended and challenged the more capable pupils in the lesson, and used their understanding to support others. Good teaching in Year 4 and 5 encourages pupils' confidence and helps them to achieve. Pupils are able to explain their different methods of calculation and the few who learn English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily in the subject. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and teach all aspects of National Numeracy Strategy appropriately. All staff are receiving support to help them raise standards. In most lessons good use is made of available resources to support learning, but opportunities for hands-on experience and practical activities are limited. This was the case in some Year 3 lessons, where the imbalance of too much direct teaching by the teacher and a lack of practical activities for pupils led to limited learning in lessons.
50. The new subject leader is developing the provision effectively and providing sound management. She has clearly identified areas for raising pupils' achievement. However, systems are not yet fully in place to allow her to monitor teaching and learning. The assessment of pupils' work and the tracking of their progress are used satisfactorily to assist planning. All pupils from Years 2 to 6 are grouped into ability 'sets' and this works well, but not enough different tasks are provided to match pupils' capabilities within the groups.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

51. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils produce graphs, tables and charts in a number of subjects such as science and ICT. However, teachers are not using cross-curricular approaches sufficiently in their work and thus, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills regularly in other subjects. The school has accurately identified problem solving as an area for improvement and is treating it as a cross-curricular skill that can usefully be applied across subjects.

Example of outstanding practice

Exciting investigations of number patterns gripped pupils' attention as every minute of the lesson was conducted by the teacher at a snappy pace using a 100-square grid, the CD- ROM and the interactive white board.

There was a great variety of tasks to keep pupils interested; for example, a short but succinct session of mental warm up questions got pupils recognising and explaining patterns and relationships in numbers. This was followed up with an exciting game of 'Monty on the Grid', using a range of moves on a number square up to 100. Two gifted and talented pupils were very skilfully extended and constructively employed to identify the underlying formula. The teacher effectively brought learning together at various stages, thus leading and supporting pupils in generating the answer. Any new terms were clearly explained; for example, 'signature number'. All pupils acquired new knowledge very successfully in the lesson and showed a high degree of interest in their work. Pupils acquired clear understanding of how to work systematically through the grid to establish a pattern or a relationship. They solved mathematical problems with ease and could explain their methods and reasoning with developing confidence.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Good planning and good management are helping to raise standards.
- Standards of scientific investigation are good in Year 6 as a result of the very good teaching and good use of the wild area for observational studies.
- Assessment procedures are inconsistent.
- There is no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons.

COMMENTARY

52. The National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 were in line with the national average in 2003 but below those of similar schools. The results were an improvement on 2001 and 2002 when standards were well below the national average and the average for similar schools. There are no significant differences in the achievements of boys and girls. However, there is some underachievement at the end of Year 2 although the inspection evidence shows that teaching and learning strategies are having a noticeable impact on achievement, which is satisfactory overall. Consequently, pupils attain standards that are in line with the national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. They attain well in scientific investigations in Year 6. The comparative results for 2004 are not yet available but the indications are that pupils in Year 6 have done well this year in the standardised tests. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of well-directed support. Pupils in all age groups talk positively about science and many said it was their favourite subject. The most capable pupils are challenged sufficiently to achieve well.
53. Teaching and learning are good overall but there are some variations. The teaching is very good in Year 2 and Year 6. In these lessons there was an emphasis upon the systematic collection of evidence. For example, pupils in Year 2 were identifying the wide range of mini-beasts found in the school environment including frogs, spiders, ants and ladybirds. They collected and observed these creatures before carefully returning them to their environments safely. The lesson provided good opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills. Year 6 pupils were learning about the importance of water following a 'Power Point' presentation. They discussed and investigated the importance of water management and waste, as well as explored the properties of water and the management of supplies. In both lessons the quality of the planning, the good use of ICT to collect information and the effective use of investigative strategies resulted in good achievement. Teachers use good questioning skills and their subject knowledge is good. However, in some lessons, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to contribute or investigate for themselves.
54. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The recently appointed subject leader is giving a strong lead for colleagues and has already identified areas to improve. Well-developed schemes of work ensure good coverage and planning of lessons, and there have been significant improvements since the time of the last inspection. For example, the resources have been improved and the use of the wild area in the school grounds is well established for experimental and investigative activities, which is helping to raise standards. However, the use of assessment is not consistent across the school.

There are some procedures for collecting samples of pupils' assessed work to help teachers identify the levels attained but portfolios of work are being developed to show progress in the subject. There has been a good improvement in teaching in Years 1 and 2 since the time of the last inspection. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning in lessons has not yet been introduced as a strategy to help raise standards, although it is noted in the school development plan as an area to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Teachers use the improved provision effectively in the computer suite to develop pupils' skills.

COMMENTARY

55. Standards and achievement are satisfactory for infant and junior pupils. This is a good improvement from the findings of previous inspection when standards were poor. By the end of Year 2, pupils show sound skills in using the keyboard and mouse. They use and understand a satisfactory range of programs, for example, to create and modify images, control a floor turtle or amend and present their writing. They discuss their work confidently using some appropriate terminology. Pupils know about some applications of ICT in the wider world; for example, to communicate by e-mail and use the Internet to gain or exchange information. By the time they leave the school, most pupils are quite confident in demonstrating and explaining their computer skills. Pupils gain experience of a satisfactory range of programs and have a good sense of the usefulness of ICT and its potential. In their recent work, they combine text and images in a 'Power Point' presentation as part of their work on 'conservation'. In a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils worked very well in applying slide transitions to the construction of their presentations, amending and adapting them to the needs of the audience. In this lesson pupils were skilfully led to evaluating their skills and techniques used in the work. Some of the presentations by pupils were good and covered all the topic areas effectively; for example, in creating action buttons adding animations as well as sound.
56. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers manage pupils well and engage their interest by means of interesting, well-planned tasks. They draw on secure subject knowledge to give confident demonstrations and quick, well-informed support. This enables pupils to learn effectively and promotes enthusiasm for learning. The computer suite is a valuable resource and teachers use it effectively to build pupils' ICT skills. For example, in a good Year 4 lesson, the teacher enabled pupils to put information gathered from a science lesson into a database and produce a bar chart. Pupils are keen to discuss and explain their work. When working together at the keyboards, they collaborate well with each other.
57. Leadership and management are good. The recently introduced assessment procedures allow teachers to track pupils' progress with sufficient accuracy but are not yet used to assist lesson planning and ensure that pupils' differing needs are met precisely. The subject leader has produced a useful portfolio of pupils' work for colleagues. Monitoring opportunities have improved but are too limited to impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Overall, the subject leader has a clear grasp of strengths and weaknesses of the subject but has yet to bring precision to her analysis. There is a clear emphasis on how pupils' ICT skills are to be used in other subjects and there are good plans for improving the resources, especially the furniture in the computer suite as the swivel chairs currently leave very little room to manoeuvre around them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

58. The school makes productive links between ICT and other subjects that motivate pupils to learn. The good choice of tasks enables pupils to apply their skills in a variety of contexts. Pupils' work in the classroom is usually linked well to other subjects; for example, in English pupils build well on their earlier work and enjoy working together. Some good links are made in scientific investigations and in the geographical studies of the environment.

HUMANITIES

It was only possible to see a few lessons in geography or history during the inspection, and thus, there is not enough evidence to make firm judgements about provision or standards. However, in addition to observing lessons, the inspectors spoke to teachers and pupils, sampled pupils' work and scrutinised planning documents.

59. In **geography**, pupils apply mapping skills successfully, develop fieldwork skills, and extend their understanding of human impact upon the environment. A full programme of work has been developed, drawing upon the national guidelines, and pupils make sound use of computers and the local area in Reading to help them increase their understanding of maps and symbols when they undertake simple orienteering activities. They compare and contrast localities and are able to identify similarities and differences between their own surroundings and those of other cultures, such as India. In Year 2, they study maps of Mexico and Lulworth Cove whilst in Year 6 pupils have considered the physical features of Spain and Finland. The oldest pupils can identify parts of a volcano such as the magma and crater, and know that the structure of the Earth is made up of a crust, mantle and a core. Pupils understand the issues of conserving water and can describe how the environment is affected by the ozone layer.
60. Pupils enjoy **history** topics and they discover facts about bygone times, such as the Victorian era, through activities that include artefacts and the use of the Internet for research purposes. Pupils in Year 2 know that Florence Nightingale lived and worked in the 1800s when Queen Victoria reigned and they have found out about street games from the 1950s. Older pupils in the junior classes link historical enquiry and geographical skills well. For example, in a Year 5 lesson about Ancient Greece, they made very good use of maps as the teacher very skilfully helped pupils to develop their knowledge of gods and goddesses associated with Mount Olympus and Greek legends and temples. In Year 3, pupils discovered that in Ancient Egypt women were viewed differently from women of today and that they followed certain rules of society, dressing according to their social standing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Good planning has led to all the statutory requirements being met.
- Assessment is inconsistent and there is no systematic monitoring of teaching and learning.

COMMENTARY

61. Pupils learn about world faiths, such as Hinduism and Islam, as well as Judaism and Christianity. From the small amount of work seen and discussions with pupils the indications are that achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. School assemblies make an important contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, during the week of the inspection the theme for assemblies was 'Forgiveness'. The story of the 'Prodigal Son' was considered in relation to the lives of pupils today. Pupils contributed their own

knowledge and ideas before a moment of quiet reflection and prayer related to the theme.

62. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are planned well and all the statutory requirements are met, which are improvements since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 6 carry out individual research projects about religious people and ideas; for example, the life of St Paul and the structure and features of a Christian church. They develop a wide range of research skills and gain information from a range of sources including the Internet and the Bible. Several pupils were planning to make a 'Power Point' presentation to the class. The work was well planned and challenging and pupils were effectively developing their knowledge and research skills using a variety of sources. Pupils of high ability and those with special educational needs were all achieving very well. Pupils learn about Jewish traditions surrounding the after-life through stories such as 'Badger's Parting Gift'.
63. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator checks the planning and pupils' work and has led staff training. Good links are made with outside agencies and visits to local churches have been arranged. Local religious leaders visit the school regularly for collective worship. However, assessment procedures do not include regular monitoring of standards and there are no systems to help staff track progress. The co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching across the school. Nevertheless, there has been a satisfactory improvement since the time of the last inspection when the provision made in Years 1 and 2 was deemed to be unsatisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were seen in art and design or design and technology, only three were seen in music and one in physical education. Thus, it is not possible to make overall judgements about the standards pupils achieve and the quality of teaching and learning in these subjects. None the less, evidence was gleaned from the discussions held with the subject leaders and from a scrutiny of school documents and samples of pupils' work.

64. In **art and design** pupils in Year 2 make pencil drawings and patterns competently. For example, there are self-portraits in pencil and paint, pencil sketches of the school building and observational drawings of natural objects. There are good examples of sculpture and colour mixing activities and studies are made of the work of Charlotte Webb and William Morris. The ICT program 'Dazzle' is used to create patterns and pictures. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 develop their skills using a variety of media. For example, Year 4 make paintings of poppies in the style of Georgia O'Keefe. Year 5 pupils make designs based upon 'Talking Textile' scenes from *The Owl and the Pussycat*, and Year 6 make sensitive drawings and paintings based upon the work of Picasso and draw hand shapes using different marks for different purposes. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and has established strong links with the cluster group of schools and, in particular, Maiden Erleigh Secondary School, which has Visual Arts Status. However, she acknowledges the need to develop more robust assessment procedures, including portfolios of pupils' assessed work, and she has not had an opportunity to monitor teaching across the school.
65. In **design and technology**, pupils' employ cutting, folding and sticking skills and use their imagination well to create models. They also use literacy skills effectively to record

and evaluate products. For example, pupils in Year 5 have designed simple musical instruments to be durable and attractive. They have considered aspects such as shape and colour when thinking about the finished product. In Year 6, pupils consider the mechanisms of cams, levers and pulleys in appliances such as escalators and washing machines. They link their work well to other subjects such as science when designing models of fairground rides, slippers made from felt and headwear based on the theme of carnivals. Plenty of colourful displays celebrate pupils' achievements and add to the welcoming ethos of the school.

66. In **music**, standards are good in singing, as observed in the rehearsal for the forthcoming production. Pupils in Year 1 learn to keep a beat, whilst in Year 5 they link their work effectively to history topics. However, pupils are not yet evaluating and appraising each other's work in the upper part of the school and are not confident in suggesting ways to improve their performances. The extra-curricular opportunities add significantly to pupils' enjoyment and personal development. For example, they can learn to play recorders, drums, guitars, violin, and xylophone. The subject leader monitors teachers' plans but is aware that the curriculum requires further development, as stated in the school development plan. The school has a small music room where instruments are stored and there is a satisfactory range of tuned instruments but the variety and condition of the untuned instruments are variable. Priorities for future development appropriately include the monitoring of teaching and learning, and developing assessment procedures, neither of which are satisfactory at present.
67. It was only possible to sample work in **physical education**, so a judgement cannot be made on the school's provision in this subject. One lesson was observed in Year 2, teachers' curriculum plans were examined and a discussion was held with the subject co-ordinator. The lesson focussed well on teaching pupils the skills of throwing, bouncing or catching a ball with accuracy and control. The curriculum plans indicate that the school offers a suitable range of opportunities to learn the skills and techniques in all areas of physical education, and makes good use of the facilities at its disposal. Regular swimming sessions are planned for pupils in Years 3 and 6 who attend a nearby local pool. Many pupils can swim the required distance. A very good range of extra-curricular sports opportunities is offered in athletics, cricket, football, netball and running club. There is a good take up of after-school activities. There is currently no formal monitoring of teaching and no arrangements to formally assess pupils' achievement and progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

68. A few lessons were observed in this curricular area and teachers' planning was looked at. The provision is well managed and is an important part of the curriculum, which has cross-curricular links in topics across all year groups. In addition to health and sex education sessions, other aspects of moral and social development include the allocation of responsibilities to pupils, as in the 'Buddy' system whereby pupils in Year 6, help the younger ones. The school has a strong sense of community and new pupils are quickly made to feel welcome.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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