

INSPECTION REPORT

ASKERN LITTLEMOOR INFANT SCHOOL

Askern, Doncaster

LEA area: Doncaster

Unique reference number: 106724

Headteacher: Mr P R Hamlyn

Lead inspector: Mr P M Allen

Dates of inspection: November 17th – 19th 2003

Inspection number: 259784

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	169
School address:	Alfred Road Askern Doncaster
Postcode:	DN6 0PZ
Telephone number:	(01302) 701 353
Fax number:	(01302) 707 572
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Hogg
Date of previous inspection:	21 st September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average-sized infant school located in a recently designated 'Sure Start' area (a community based programme designed to improve support for families and children before and from birth to four years of age). There are 150 pupils on roll, plus 36 who attend part time in the Nursery. There are a similar number of boys and girls. The vast majority of children live in older rented property which is part of the adjacent estate of a once thriving coalfield area which now experiences significant levels of social deprivation, has high levels of unemployment and has a large number of lone parent families. Virtually all pupils are of White UK heritage background. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. There is a high level of pupil mobility mainly through the attendance pattern of the significant minority of pupils from Traveller families, most of whom return each year to attend the school from Autumn until Easter. Forty-two pupils are identified as having special educational needs, mainly concerned with moderate learning difficulties. This number is above the national average. There are two pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Need, this number being in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well above the national average. Attainment on entry to the Reception year is well below what could be expected especially for boys, most notably in speaking and communication skills.

The school was awarded a 'Healthy School Standard' in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17531	Peter Allen	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, religious education, music
11474	Peter Berry	Lay inspector	
19686	Stefan Lord	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, geography, English as an additional language
17310	Ann McAskie	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, art and design, history, physical education, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This very good school, with its caring, community ethos, is an ‘oasis’ of calm in an area with considerable social difficulties. It has a very significant impact on the lives of the children, who love coming to school, behave very well and have very positive attitudes to learning. Standards are now in line with those expected nationally. The pupils achieve very well in relation to their abilities, because of the high quality of teaching they receive. The progress made by Traveller children is adversely affected by the seasonal pattern of their attendance. Very good leadership helps the school to aspire to do the best it can for the pupils. The school provides very good value for money.

The school’s main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The school is successful because of the excellent leadership of the headteacher who shows a clear vision, a sense of purpose and a strong determination to provide the best for each child.
- The overall very good quality of the teaching provided by the teachers, the nursery nurse and the learning assistants, motivates the pupils, including those with special educational needs, to work hard and achieve very well.
- The pupils’ very good attitudes and behaviour have a significant impact on their learning.
- The quality of education is enhanced by the very good accommodation and resources.
- The school works hard to meet the needs of all its pupils, including the significant minority of Traveller children.
- There is a need to continue to tackle the low standards of boys compared with those of girls.
- There is a need to review the size of groups for some activities in the Nursery and Reception years (Foundation Stage).
- There is a need to improve attendance.

The school has made a good improvement since its last inspection in 1998. The key areas for improvement, to improve the monitoring of teaching, to further develop co-ordinator roles and to improve the quality and consistency of teaching have been successfully tackled. The school’s clear agenda for improvement and the improvement in the quality of teaching have led to it being more effective than previously.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	D	D	C	A
writing	D	C	B	A
mathematics	C	D	C	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.*

Most pupils achieve very well as a consequence of the very good teaching. A significant number of pupils enter school with poor speaking and communication skills. Even though they try hard and achieve well, only half of them are likely to achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year in communication, language and literacy and in the mathematical area of learning and very few are likely to exceed them. The children perform better in the other areas of learning such as the creative area and the physical area. Very good progress, especially in Year 2, means that by the time pupils leave the school, standards are in line with the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These standards are very creditable with pupils reaching levels which are well above average when compared with those of similar schools. Standards are gradually rising. Over recent years there has been a consistent pattern of girls

reaching higher standards than boys. The progress of Traveller children is adversely affected by their extended absences from school. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good help and they achieve very well. Standards in information and communication technology are similar to those expected nationally. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art and design are good across the school.

Pupils' personal development is very good. It is fostered by the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are happy and well behaved at school, with very positive attitudes in all they do. Attendance overall is unsatisfactory due to the extended seasonal absence of many of the Traveller children.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall; they are particularly effective in Year 2. Overall, pupils make very good progress. Their learning is enhanced by the breadth of curricular opportunities and the attention given to their individual needs. A key feature of the teaching is the detailed planning of lessons and the thorough assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are given very good care, guidance and support. There is a good partnership with parents. The school works very closely with the local community, increasingly through its 'community building'.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's excellent leadership is a major factor in the success of this well managed school; he is ably supported by the senior teachers. The work of the curriculum co-ordinators is very effective. Whilst overall governance is good and meets statutory requirements, the governing body could usefully further develop its monitoring role.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

During consultation and discussion the parents were very supportive of the school and its staff and no concerns were expressed. Parents value the care and support given to their children. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school; they show affection and respect for all the adults.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- to further develop strategies to raise boys' attainment;
- to review the size of groups and the deployment of staff for some Foundation Stage activities such as 'large group' times and outdoor play; and
- to continue to work on improving attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Throughout the school pupils achieve very well in relation to their capabilities. Progress is most marked in Year 2 and, as a consequence, even though most children have started the school with low attainment, standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. It is a pattern in the school that boys enter school with lower attainment than girls and, even though they work hard and achieve well, boys reach lower standards than girls. The attainment of most Traveller children is adversely affected by their extended absences from school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve very well and reach creditable standards as a consequence of the very good quality of the teaching.
- The very good provision for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve very well.
- Reading skills are well developed throughout the school.
- Pupils reach good standards in writing.
- Boys' standards are consistently lower than those of girls.

Commentary

1. Children are given a very positive start to school life due to the high quality of the provision in the Nursery and in the classes with Reception children. Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry when children start at Nursery age, overall attainment is very low, especially in social, communication and language skills. Attainment is consistently lower for boys than it is for girls. Children make good progress and achieve well during their time in Nursery, showing the 'value added' by the school. Nevertheless, when children start their Reception year at the beginning of the year in which they become five, standards are still well below what could be expected.
2. Even though most children achieve very well during their Reception year standards are lower than those expected nationally. Around half are likely to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year in the communication, language and literacy and the mathematical areas of learning and very few are likely to exceed them. Children perform better in the other areas of learning where most will reach the goals and a number will exceed them. Children perform best in the physical area of learning, especially in outdoor play when they show good physical skills with the large toys and games. Overall, girls perform better than boys across all the areas of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (14.3)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.5 (16.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. All the available evidence indicates that standards are higher now than they were at the time of the previous inspection and that they have gradually risen. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average in reading, writing,

mathematics and science. These standards are reflected in the 2003 results in reading and mathematics but not in writing where the results were very creditably above the national average. In reading, writing and mathematics, the results were well above average when compared to those of similar schools. In the science teacher assessments of 2003 the pupils achieved well at Level 2, the expected level for a seven year old and achieved very well at the higher Level 3.

4. There is clear evidence, based on national performance data over recent years, to indicate that boys do not attain as well as girls. This is clearly reflected in the school's analysis of how different groups of pupils perform. Girls consistently reach standards which are higher than the national average for all girls, whereas boys' standards are consistently below the national average for all boys. This difference is clear in the assessments undertaken when the children start at the Nursery and when they join the Reception year. The school is well aware of this situation and although standards have improved and boys overall are achieving as well as girls in relation to their capabilities, the difference in attainment still remains, although not in the case of the current Year 2 pupils. The attainment and progress of the Traveller children are adversely affected by seasonal absences, especially in the case of the boys.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The clear and appropriate targets for improvement on their individual education plans enable them to make very good progress in their learning. These targets are reviewed and revised on a regular basis. The early identification of problems and the very effective support provided makes a significant contribution to the achievement of these pupils.
6. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those normally seen. The two computer suites have a very positive impact on standards in literacy and numeracy because of the very good arrangements in place for pupils to practise their skills. Overall the school is very well resourced in information and communication technology where pupils' attitudes are very positive and clear strategies are in place to continue to raise standards. Given the time constraints it was not possible to make firm judgements about standards in all the other subjects, although there is evidence of good standards in art and design across the school.
7. Increasingly, the school is ensuring that the pupils' language and literacy skills and their competence in mathematics and information and communication technology enable them to make progress in all areas of the curriculum, progress which is carefully monitored. The school has firm plans to further develop the use of these skills across all subjects, including history, geography and religious education.
8. The school's own value-added analysis shows that almost all pupils achieve well compared with their prior attainment and ability on entry to school. They make similarly good progress, irrespective of their gender or background. Most boys are achieving well, even though the standards they reach are lower than the girls. The needs of the higher attainers are usually well catered for with setting of challenging work, more especially in literacy and numeracy. The school is successful in maintaining and raising standards. The school is setting challenging but realistic targets which are being well met. To this end there is a shared commitment amongst the staff to continue to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good throughout the school. Pupils' spiritual development is good, their moral and social developments are very good and their cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory for most pupils. There is understandable

concern that many of the Traveller children miss several months each year, which impacts adversely on their progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show a keen interest in the school’s activities and behave very well both in and out of classrooms.
- There are good relationships between the adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves.
- Pupils work well independently and co-operatively.
- Whilst the school does its very best to provide for the education of the Traveller children, their absence for a significant part of the school year limits the pupils’ progress.
- The school’s attendance level has dropped over each of the last three years.

Commentary

9. Pupils arrive at school enthusiastically, many attending the pre-school activities from 8.30am, such as the computer sessions. The school day starts with a calm, harmonious atmosphere and the pupils settle quickly. During lessons pupils respond eagerly to their teachers. Pupils were observed working well collaboratively, such as when the Year 2 class split into pairs to compose music using short and long sounds. Without exception, the attitudes of those pupils with special educational needs are positive. They want to learn, are co-operative and make a useful contribution to lessons.
10. The behaviour of the pupils is very good. No serious misbehaviour was observed during the inspection and there have been no recent exclusions. Despite a wide range of backgrounds and needs, all pupils integrate successfully and the school ensures that the individual needs of all pupils are well met. There is a high level of mutual respect between pupils and adults.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	157	1	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	22	0	0

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

11. Pupils’ personal development is very good. All aspects of personal, social and emotional development are well promoted in the Nursery and in the Reception Year and the children respond well. Pupils’ social development is enhanced by a well-planned range of activities, including charity work, community links, educational visits and comprehensive provision for personal, social and health education. The school maintains impressive documentary evidence of the pupils’ activities. Pupils contribute to the formulation of rules and this helps them to understand right from wrong. Discussions with pupils during the inspection showed that they know and understand the school’s expectations. The school’s excellent entrance hall has a water fountain, artwork and other features which provide a reflective atmosphere and typify the high quality environment. Pupils’ cultural development is satisfactory and has a lower profile than the other aspects. Pupils know about the local community and have a sense of the wider world. They know that there are different faiths and that this makes people behave in different ways. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and respond very well when asked to undertake tasks.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	16.4	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

12. The attendance of most pupils is satisfactory, being in line with that expected for an infant school, although over the last three years attendance has gone down. The school needs to give this further consideration. There is minimal unauthorised absence due to the school's thorough procedures in contacting parents in order to check reasons for absence. The school's overall attendance level is adversely affected by the necessity to retain the Traveller children on the class registers when they have left the school but not enrolled at another one. With a significant minority of pupils away for a good part of the year the official attendance level drops to an unsatisfactory level. The school provides distance learning packs for the Traveller children when they leave around Easter, but this is inadequate and the gap in education is detrimental to their progress. The school is working very hard to plug this gap, but is hampered by the limit to its resources. Pupils' punctuality is generally good, but there are a few regular latecomers.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The overall very good quality of the teaching and good levels of care and support mean that most pupils are able to learn very well. There is a good partnership with parents and the school works very closely with the local community.

Teaching and learning

High quality teaching throughout the school enables pupils to learn very well. Teachers regularly assess what pupils have learned and use it to plan future work and move pupils forward.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Around four-fifths of the lessons observed had good or very good teaching, in similar proportions, and there was some excellent teaching.
- The teachers, the nursery nurse and the learning assistants work very well together to support the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the Traveller children.
- Teachers have high expectations of good behaviour, which are well met.
- There are very good arrangements for assessing and tracking attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Very good relationships in lessons help pupils to engage in their work and co-operate well with their teachers and other pupils.
- The particularly effective teaching and learning in Year 2 is a very significant factor in the creditable standards attained.
- Teachers have very good subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy which has a strong influence on the standards being achieved.
- The teaching and learning are sometimes less effective in the Foundation Stage when the size of the groups is too large.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (6%)	13 (39%)	14 (42%)	4 (12 %)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

13. An issue from the previous inspection was to improve the quality of teaching through more consistency in planning. This issue has been tackled well, and very effective and consistently applied planning procedures are now in place. Judgements about the quality of teaching and learning which are better than seen previously, are based on the teaching observed, the quality of the shared teaching, such as that seen in guided reading, and the quality of planning and assessing of pupils' work.
14. The school has a very strong commitment to self-evaluation; performance management and staff development have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the time of the previous inspection. The school has successfully created a team of teachers and classroom support workers who are very supportive of one another and who are very committed to the school and its pupils. This is one of the reasons why the pupils are so positive about school.
15. Teachers have good knowledge of all the areas of learning and subjects and this is especially evident in literacy and numeracy. Learning assistants are very well trained and very successful in supporting the teaching of basic skills, often with pupils who have special educational needs. All pupils are fully valued and included in all parts of lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and teachers plan effectively to meet their needs. Great effort is made to include all pupils in oral sessions by appropriate questioning, often by a learning assistant.
16. Very effective liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers and support staff ensures that there is appropriate support and challenge for these pupils and, as a result, they make very good progress. The quality of teaching is at least good and often very good. Pupils who are gifted and talented receive appropriate support such as when Year 1 pupils work in a Year 2 class. Suitable work is set in all classes to ensure that these higher attaining pupils achieve well. The school is very pro-active in supporting pupils from Traveller families who miss substantial amounts of schooling each year. They are given very good quality support, which enables them to achieve well when they are in school.
17. All staff make effective use of time and insist on good behaviour. The staff are skilled at using methods and resources that enable all pupils to learn effectively. Staff work hard to ensure that all classrooms are calm and well organised environments where the quality of relationships promotes the pupils' self-esteem.
18. Teachers plan carefully for all lessons with clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils at the outset of the lesson and reviewed at the end. This gives teachers a good insight into what the pupils understand and what needs to be done. Most lessons interest and engage the pupils, who hold the adults in high esteem. In many lessons, pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and this they usually do well. Information and communication technology is well used for planning, recording and assessing the work. Teachers are becoming very skilled at using the interactive whiteboards, especially in numeracy lessons. The teaching and learning are well supported by the time pupils spend in the two computer suites practising literacy and numeracy skills before school, at break times and at lunchtime. Within the classrooms, there are times when more use could be made of the computers to support the pupils' learning.

19. The vast majority of lessons observed during the inspection were very effective in helping the pupils to achieve well and in promoting their personal development. A guided reading session and a Year 2 literacy lesson involved teaching and learning which were judged as excellent. In the very effective lessons seen, teachers challenged pupils, expecting the most of them; the pupils became well engaged in their work and made considerably better progress than could be expected. Pupils progress well through the school, although progress becomes more marked in the Year 2 classes. In the very small number of lessons seen where teaching was less effective, the teachers did not enable all groups of pupils to make the good progress typical of other lessons.
20. Staff usually work productively with whole classes, groups and individuals. There are times in the Nursery and Reception classes when the teaching and learning are adversely affected by the size of the teaching group. For example, in the Nursery sessions large group time involves up to 23 children in stories and rhymes with an adult leading the session. The vital promotion of the children's speaking and listening skills could be better served by three small groups, being led by the three very competent members of staff. The quality of the work in the physical area of learning for the Reception children is not well served by the very large groups going to outdoor play at the same time each afternoon.
21. Good quality assessment across the curriculum includes very good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science which are helping teachers to plan work that meets individual needs. There is a whole staff commitment to raising standards and, due to the strength of the tracking processes in place, staff know what to expect for individual pupils.
22. Marking is consistent and helps pupils to understand how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Learning targets are shared with the pupils and are usually displayed in the classroom. Homework is used effectively to support learning, with most parents supporting this aspect of the school's work well. This has a positive impact on pupils' achievements.
23. Pupils have positive views about their teachers and the learning assistants and feel that they make learning fun. Inspection findings are that the quality of teaching and learning are strengths of the school, enabling most pupils to achieve very well in a school which puts their needs first.

The curriculum

The breadth of the curriculum is good. The school offers good opportunities for enrichment. The very good accommodation and the very good range of resources fully support the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is fully inclusive in that it meets the needs of all pupils.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school's very effective use of information and communication technology in mathematics is motivating boys to learn well.
- Very good use is made of time outside lessons to provide structured practice of literacy and numeracy skills.
- There are no after school activities.

Commentary

24. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including those for provision for religious education and collective worship. The school provides an interesting range of activities which capture the pupils' interest and imagination and contribute very well to the high level of achievement in the school. Planning throughout the school is thorough and caters well for all pupils precisely identifying what they should learn. This ensures progression in pupils' learning. Great emphasis is put on developing language skills. Co-ordinators are very well

informed and monitor the curriculum effectively ensuring that all subjects receive appropriate attention. The governor for literacy and numeracy monitors work in school and another governor helps on a regular basis in the Nursery. It would be beneficial if other governors, who are very supportive and appreciative of the work done, could be more actively involved in monitoring the curriculum.

25. The school provides well for personal, social, health and citizenship education, including sex education, through specific lessons, 'circle time' and in other areas of the curriculum. There are strong links to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
26. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. Provision for the significant number of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Well planned activities, very good teaching and very thorough tracking procedures ensure that these pupils make very good progress. Targets are appropriately linked to individual education plans. Communication between teachers and support staff is very good ensuring consistent high quality instruction. The school is particularly pro-active in its work in supporting Traveller pupils, some of whom miss significant amounts of schooling each year. Good provision is made for gifted and talented pupils.
27. The school day starts earlier than normal in order to provide reinforcement activities in literacy and numeracy. This pattern of support is continued at break times and at lunchtime. The commitment of very dedicated support staff to this work combined with effective, well-targeted small group work is having a significant impact on the standards being achieved. It is particularly effective in developing boys' mathematical knowledge. There are no after school activities.
28. The school provides a very high standard of accommodation and resources. This high quality, very attractive and well-ordered environment is supporting the quality of the pupils' learning experiences. Both parents and pupils are appreciative of the facilities offered by the school. Pupils love coming to school. Parents are supportive of homework tasks and arrangements.
29. The school now provides a very good range of outdoor play equipment which is well used. More effective use could be made of the new library facilities and the information and communication technology equipment at certain times of the day.
30. There are sufficient teachers and other staff, who are very well deployed and appropriately qualified and experienced to meet the needs of the curriculum. There is very good leadership from the curriculum co-ordinators. Visiting artists and performers to the school and visits to places of interest enhance the opportunities for enrichment within the curriculum. The school's European links help to widen pupils' understanding of their culture. The school prepares pupils well for the next phase of education. The school has good links with the neighbouring junior school enabling the smooth transfer of pupils to the next phase of education. There are further useful links with partner primary schools.

Care, guidance and support

The school promotes the pupils' health, safety and welfare very effectively. Within its caring and secure environment the school provides very good support and guidance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good, comprehensive policies and procedures for pastoral matters and child protection.
- All staff, including the midday supervisors, know the pupils well and provide a high level of care and supervision.

- All classes provide a warm, welcoming environment for pupils and there are very good induction procedures to ensure the starters settle into school.
- Healthy lifestyles are very well promoted.
- The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good.
- The school provides very well for pupils' individual needs.

Commentary

31. The school provides a high level of pastoral care which ensures the health, safety, care and protection of all pupils. There is a supportive, family atmosphere that is highly valued by parents and pupils alike. The school's policies are well written and the procedures are consistently applied by staff. The staff know the children well, typified by the headteacher's personal knowledge of, and concern for, the well-being of each individual child. Each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
32. Early identification of pupils with special educational needs ensures that effective support is provided as soon as possible, successfully promoting good progress. This support may be either in class with work that is appropriately planned for them, or in small groups working on basic skills in literacy groups. There is good liaison with external special needs support staff and other outside agencies. Regular thorough assessment ensures that the work planned is sufficiently focused to enable pupils to make very good progress. The regular reviews of individual education plans and annual reviews of Statements of Special Educational Need give suitable, achievable learning steps which are used very effectively by teachers to support planning.
33. There are appropriate systems for rewards and celebrations to promote good work and good behaviour. Support from external agencies is appropriate; for example, fire officers and the community police officer visit regularly to reinforce the school's teaching on matters of safety. Personal, social and health education is delivered through a well-planned programme, including 'circle time' and assemblies. Elements of citizenship are also being taught. The school involves both the pupils and parents in its work and development by actively seeking their views.
34. Health and safety matters are given a high priority with appropriate risk assessments being undertaken. This ensures that the pupils work in a healthy and safe environment. The conscientious caretaker maintains a clean, tidy and secure site. The chair of the governing body undertakes regular inspections. The school has very good accommodation which greatly enhances the quality of education provided; for example, the outside play areas in both the Nursery and in the main school have excellent equipment.
35. Of particular note is the school's unstinting efforts to provide the highest quality level of care and support for the many pupils who are affected by the community's social deprivation. The integration of all pupils, including the significant number of Traveller children, is very successful. Their particular needs are well catered for.
36. The staff work very hard and are successful in meeting the school's aims. All pupils have access to well-informed support, advice and guidance as they progress through the school. The high quality of care and support greatly enhances the education and underpins the standards that are achieved.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and with its community. Parents support the school well and are appreciative of its education provision and its contribution to their children's personal development. Links to other educational establishments are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works successfully to encourage parental involvement in their children's education.
- During the inspection, parents were unanimous in their praise for the school.
- The school is open and approachable to parents with many of them going into the classrooms to work with their children before the start of the school day.
- Whilst there is some very good information provided for parents, other information, particularly the pupils' annual reports could be improved.
- There is a well-planned system of homework, which is known and appreciated by parents.
- Links with the local community are good and the use of the community building (the 'Shed') is being further developed.

Commentary

37. The school welcomes parents and encourages their participation in their children's education. Many parents accompany their children into school and spend time with them; for example, in the computer room, prior to the start of the school day. The school has a well-established and appropriate system for pupils' work at home; the school's requirements are understood and appreciated by parents. Parents are given every opportunity to be involved in reviewing the needs of their children with special educational needs.
38. The school holds two formal open evenings each year and most parents attend for discussions on their child's progress and attainment. The school tries to ensure that all parents are seen regularly, either through formal events or through informal meetings with staff. The pupils' annual reports are computer generated. Whilst they have a reasonable length of text on the curricular subjects, they are very similar and could benefit from more personalised comments.
39. Other information supplied to parents is of variable quality. The prospectus lacks inspiration and could be more 'user friendly', but the termly newsletters, discrete for each year group, are very good, containing very useful details of forthcoming curricular work and explaining to parents how they can help with their children's learning. The Nursery provides a range of good booklets such as the 'Welcome' brochure and the 'Early Stages' mathematics, science and reading guides.
40. The school is developing extended services for parents and the community including the 'Caring Start' programme. The school is a meeting place for the staff of the local 'Sure Start' initiative.
41. Links with the local community are good. The children are regularly taken on educational trips, such as to the library and, in connection with their environmental topics, to plant trees. The school welcomes many visitors who support the educational provision, especially the enhancement of the pupils' social development. There are appropriate links to the local church and other community based organisations. The use of the 'Shed' by the local speech and language support service is beginning to have a very positive impact. The further development of the 'Shed' into a community resource and the involvement with the Sure Start 'Sparky's bus' are enhancing this aspect. The school has recently been awarded a significant grant through Children's Centre Status towards the development of further provision for pre-school care with scope for 'wrap around' care.
42. Links to other primary schools are good, mainly via the secondary school 'Cluster Organisation'. There are good procedures for transfer to the partner junior school. Overall, there is a good partnership with parents and the community which benefits the quality of education provided.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the leadership and management of the school are very good. The school is well governed, led by an enthusiastic chair, and in most areas of their work governors make an effective contribution. The headteacher provides excellent leadership with significant support from the senior teachers. Management is very good with systems and procedures effectively implemented to underpin the work of the school along with a very good application of the principles of best value.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clarity of vision of the headteacher, which is shared by all members of the school community, has created effective teamwork.
- The very effective leadership of the headteacher, in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and senior teacher, ensures a clear focus on raising standards.
- There is continual and rigorous school monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.
- The very good quality school improvement plan reflects the school's aims and the determination to raise standards.
- The analysis of test data establishes a clear picture on standards.
- The governing body need to develop more formal systems for monitoring teaching and learning.
- The school has been successful in attracting extra funding.

Commentary

43. The headteacher provides a very clear, shared educational vision for the school along with a determination to achieve the highest possible standards in all areas of the school's work. The leadership of the school has improved further from the strong judgement made at the last inspection. The personal commitment of the headteacher to the needs of the staff and pupils is excellent. He leads in close partnership with the deputy headteacher and senior teacher, focusing and steering the work of the staff to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This has led to a shared sense of purpose and created effective teamwork and a learning community. This is a very inclusive school, with a caring ethos, where all pupils are valued. Although there is very successful inclusion of the significant minority of Traveller children, their seasonal absences have a negative impact on their achievement.
44. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs is very conscientious, works hard and, in conjunction with the deputy headteacher, uses her time effectively in managing the support programme. The organisation of learning in literacy and numeracy is particularly effective making very good use of learning assistants and information and communication technology. There is a good policy which is thorough and inclusive. The arrangements have a positive impact on pupils' learning, where very good progress is made and pupils grow considerably in confidence and self-esteem.
45. There is a clear agenda for continuing improvement. This is reflected in the comprehensive school improvement plan which clearly identifies where the school needs to improve further. Improvements are based on continual school self-evaluation which enables the headteacher and staff to identify the school's strength and weaknesses and take action to meet the pupils' needs, for example, the strategies planned to improve the attainment of boys. Staff development priorities are closely linked to the school improvement plan, which helps to develop and support staff in their work. Staff in senior positions are good role models, leading by example and working sensitively to develop and support other members of staff in their work. The development of the roles of the subject co-ordinators was an issue in the previous report; this has been very successfully addressed. They are now more effective in relation to monitoring and evaluating provision and standards in their particular areas.
46. The management of the school is very good. The school is very well provided for in its teaching and support staff. The very good procedures in place enable the school to function smoothly on a daily basis. The school administrator is very efficient, providing effective

secretarial and financial support which makes a significant contribution to the life of the school. Grants and funds for special educational needs are used to good effect and the learning assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.

47. The headteacher and senior management team regularly monitor teaching and learning by observing lessons. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Individual feedback is given to staff and common issues are addressed at a whole-school level and inform the school improvement plan. Effective action is taken to raise the quality of teaching and learning as a result of the monitoring including, for example, raising the attainment of higher attaining pupils or how teachers use target setting to move pupils' learning on. These have contributed effectively to improved teaching and learning.
48. Test data are carefully analysed by the headteacher and senior staff to provide detailed information and establish a clear picture of standards and improvement for staff and governors. The headteacher rigorously monitors the progress of different groups of pupils, such as how boys attain compared to girls. Effective monitoring systems, linked carefully to the provision of special educational needs, enable the school to effectively target provision where it is most needed in order to raise standards.
49. Performance management strategies and professional development have been used effectively to acknowledge strengths and improve weaknesses. The performance management cycle is well established and includes the learning assistants. Challenging targets are set for the headteacher which are based on the school's priorities. Targets are also set for teaching and support staff which have an impact on raising pupils' attainment.
50. Overall the governance of the school is good. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and benefits from a well-informed and enthusiastic chair. There is a suitable committee structure to support its work. Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher so they know the strengths of the school and where development is needed. Their role in planning for improvement could be further extended. Governors are aware that there is a need for them to develop a more formal role in their monitoring of teaching and learning. Some governors visit the school during the school day but the present arrangement is insufficiently focused to deepen their insights into the school's work.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	563,129	Balance from previous year	34,414
Total expenditure	535,484	Balance carried forward to the next	27,645
Expenditure per pupil	2,666		

51. Financial planning is thorough. It is based on a good understanding of the school's priorities. Money is used wisely with a good understanding of its impact on, for example, improving the quality of accommodation and resources to create the school's very special learning environment. Also, the decision to allocate considerable funds to maintaining the levels of classroom support staff is well judged and has had a very positive impact on learning. The headteacher is pro-active in gaining extra funding to benefit the school; for example, he has secured substantial funding to create a children's centre to develop 'wrap around care' to support children of three years and over and their families. This will enhance pre-school provision and may impact on raising the achievement levels of pupils when they enter the Nursery. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. Children are given a very good start to school life in the Foundation Stage. Standards reached are similar to those described in the previous report. The overall provision, both locally and within school, is being significantly enhanced. Locally, a 'Sure Start' project to support parents and children from birth to four years is being developed. Just prior to the inspection the school had confirmed its designation as a 'Children's Centre', bringing with it very significant funding; there are early plans to develop 'wrap around care' for parents and children from three years of age. The school is very positive about the opportunity to work with very young children and their parents. Children can start at Nursery in the term after they reach three years of age, attending part time for three, four or five terms prior to starting the Reception Year. Nursery children work in a separate classroom close to the main building. At the time of the inspection the Nursery teacher was on sick leave and was replaced by an experienced supply teacher. The teacher is very well supported by the experienced nursery nurse and the learning assistant. Most Reception children are in a class in the main building. There is also a small number of Reception children who work alongside Year 1 pupils; in spite of the organisational difficulties, the teacher is working very effectively to ensure that the provision for this small group is appropriate for their age and needs.
53. On entry to the Nursery the attainment of most children is well below what could be expected and a significant number of the children possess poor speaking, listening and communication skills with a number having poor social skills. Assessments made on entry identify this low level of attainment in basic skills which has an adverse effect on learning in most areas of experience; staff have analysed this data which show that boys consistently attain less well than girls. Although children make good progress in the Nursery, by the time they enter the Reception year standards are still below what could be expected.
54. Observations of the children and assessments undertaken indicate that, although they mainly achieve well in relation to their abilities, a number will achieve only the lower levels of attainment in the Early Learning Goals identified as targets for the end of the Reception year. Because a significant number of Reception children are unlikely to reach the appropriate reading and writing levels, only around half are likely to reach the goals in communication, language and literacy with just a smaller number likely to exceed them. In the mathematical area of learning just over a half are likely to reach the goals with a small number exceeding them. In the personal, social and emotional area of learning, which is less dependent on literacy and numeracy skills, the majority of children are likely to meet the goals with around a quarter to a third likely to exceed them. In the physical area of learning, the picture is similar, where many achieve well in large motor skills, such as when pedalling tricycles and playing with large toys.
55. Standards in the four areas of learning described above were made the main focus of the inspection of the Foundation Stage. The other two areas were less of a focus. Nevertheless, the good quality assessment data collected by the school indicate that in knowledge and understanding of the world and in the creative area of learning, most children are likely to achieve the goals by the end of the Reception year with between a quarter and a third likely to exceed them.
56. Most children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. The only time it is not as effective is when the group size for particular activities is too big for successful teaching and learning. There are very good systems in place to track the progress of individual children through the 'stepping stones' which lead to the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of learning. The curriculum, with half-termly topics and 'continuous' provision, is appropriately

planned to provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities, which are well matched to children's needs. All adults set very good role models for the children and manage them well. There is a good ratio of adults to children in the Nursery and an adequate ratio in the Reception classes, ensuring that the needs of all are well met. All staff work very well as a cohesive team, carefully monitoring all children's progress. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and management. The accommodation inside and outside is of a very high order and resources are very good. The only barrier to learning is that, for the small number of Traveller children, attendance is poor and this has an adverse effect on their progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well, some making great progress in their social development, because of the very good teaching and high expectations of the staff.
- Members of staff provide very supportive relationships and give children very good opportunities to work and play together.

Commentary

57. This area is appropriately seen as a priority and most children make very good progress. Some children enter the Nursery with underdeveloped social skills and find it hard to consider anything but their own needs. However, high expectations together with clear boundaries and the consistent role models set by the staff, ensure that children know what is expected of them, so that most quickly learn to behave appropriately. They learn to select and use activities and resources independently; for example, when making choices from water and sand play, role play, construction, painting and writing. They show politeness to themselves and the staff such as in 'snack time'.
58. Children begin to develop positive relationships and learn about the feelings of other people in activities such as 'circle time'. This progress continues throughout the Reception Year. The children are enthusiastic about their learning and become well engaged, staying on task for good periods of time. The adults treat the children with respect and friendliness and help them to become independent. A very positive feature is the amount of praise given, which helps to promote the children's self-esteem. The teaching in this area, much of which is incidental, is very good.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Thorough assessment arrangements mean that needs are well met.
- In the Reception Year children are given very good opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills.
- Although there are very good opportunities for developing speaking and listening skills through activities such as role play, better opportunities could be given in 'large group' time in the Nursery.

Commentary

59. Staff plan the work carefully in this area in order to support the significant number of children with speech and communication difficulties and children achieve well. Many opportunities are given to promote speaking and listening through stories and rhymes, through role play and

through work with puppets and small world equipment. Work is most effective when it is in small groups. 'Large group' time in the morning is when the children all come together under the direction of the teacher. The Nursery could usefully consider splitting the children into three groups, with each group being led by one of the three very competent adults in the Nursery. This could better promote the speaking skills of the children who could make a more active contribution in small groups. Children enjoy stories such as 'The Three Bears' and 'The Gingerbread Man'. They are learning to follow instructions; for example, when playing shape recognition games. All staff take every opportunity during all activities to successfully develop the children's vocabulary through clear, focused questioning.

60. Children benefit from a wide range of imaginative provision to stimulate spoken language; for example, they enjoy playing together and talking together in the ever-changing role play areas such as 'The Three Bear's house', a 'travel agents' and 'Santa's Workshop'. They practise their language skills with puppets. They benefit from hearing stories when taking home 'story boxes' which contain books and artefacts.
61. Children copy adults' writing and, often during the Reception Year, start to write independently. In Reception, children are able to improve their knowledge of the sounds of letters and improve their writing skills. Increasingly, they are showing good word recognition skills. A good range of information and communication technology programs helps the children to reinforce and practise their skills. Examination of current planning indicates that there is a good emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills throughout the Reception Year. Children listen carefully to rhyming words and are beginning to recognise their own name and some words from the Reception word list. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is usually good.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide range of activities to support learning which ensure that children achieve well.
- Every opportunity is taken in all activities to promote children's mathematical development.
- Reception children benefit from well-organised work which effectively develops their understanding of numeracy.

Commentary

62. Nursery children are beginning to use mathematical language and this is promoted all the time. They sort and match objects and talk about sorting and threading. They benefit from a good range of jigsaws. All children like to join in number rhymes such as 'One Little Finger' and 'Five Brown Teddies' and counting games and they begin to learn to write numbers. They learn to sequence events such as the times of the day. A good range of mathematical experiences is given to children, including practical activities which promote discussion using vocabulary such as 'more than' and 'less than'. Very focused questioning helps to extend the children's learning.
63. Reception children say and use number names in order up to ten. Children can count reliably up to five objects, describe the characteristics of shapes and confidently use mathematical and positional language such as 'bigger', 'smaller', 'above', 'below' and 'behind', for example when they are working with sand and water. Good teaching and learning was observed in this area of development with a wide range of imaginative provision making use of the good range of resources.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve better in large physical activity than in the development of fine control.
- The children's needs are not well met when there are large groups in outdoor play.

Commentary

64. This area is well resourced, especially in the quality of the outdoor play provision. The lack of provision for Reception was an issue in the previous report which has been fully addressed through the creation of an imaginative play area. This means that there are now two separate areas, one for Nursery and one for Reception. In the case of many children there is greater competency with large physical skills than there is with fine control.

Nursery children learn to hold a pencil, use scissors and control a paintbrush effectively and can join pieces of construction kits. Fine motor skills are developed through a good range of activities such as cutting and modelling. The children have daily access to the very good outdoor play area which is well resourced. They use bikes and large toys gaining a lot of pleasure from playing outside whilst at the same time developing their social skills. The staff could usefully review the morning outdoor play session when the space available is used by the large group of up to twenty-three children; some good teaching and learning was observed in the afternoon session when just nine children were being well supervised and supported by two adults.

65. In the Reception Year, children continue to be given good opportunities to develop their fine skills with a good range of materials and, as a result, most control their fingers and hands well. They handle tools, objects and materials safely. They use the computer mouse with increasing control. The Reception children gain valuable experience in physical education lessons in the school hall where they develop their early gymnastic skills. Each afternoon time is set aside for outdoor play for the Reception children. This was observed during the inspection when all, or virtually all, of the children went out at the same time and, as a consequence, there was little rotation of activity and little adult-child interaction. Children were not systematically making the progress observed in virtually every other aspect of the curriculum. The school could usefully review this large group arrangement to see if it could be improved.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

66. Very little teaching was observed in these two areas of learning. As a consequence it was not possible to make secure overall judgements on provision in these areas, although the school's record keeping and assessment procedures give clear indications of likely standards by the end of the Reception Year.
67. In knowledge and understanding of the world, planning indicates that children are given a good range of experiences to help them to find out about the world and their place in it, including valuable opportunities for visits and visitors. In the creative areas of learning, children have good opportunities for creative work in the role play area and in all the singing opportunities. Work on display and in booklets, indicates that children have good opportunities to work, often co-operatively, with a variety of media, including paint, clay and collage.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very high in reading and writing compared with those found in similar schools.
- Girls' attainment is higher than that of boys.
- The subject benefits from excellent leadership and management.
- Teaching is very good with high expectations of pupils' performance.
- Learning assistants play a very important part in lessons, especially in supporting pupils with special educational needs.
- There is great emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills.
- Lessons, especially reading sessions, are very well structured enabling pupils to make very good progress.
- Very efficient tracking of pupils' attainment ensures that very clear areas for development are identified.
- More use could be made of information and communication technology to support writing skills during lessons.

Commentary

68. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach the standards expected for pupils aged seven in reading and writing. Standards have improved since the time of the previous inspection. National Curriculum results over the past few years show an overall steady upward trend. This is because of the school's focus on improvement. The attainment of boys has been consistently lower than that of the girls; data show that boys start school with lower levels of attainment. Listening skills are good across the school. Although most pupils speak willingly and confidently, a significant number have unclear speech and find some difficulty in answering questions precisely because of their restricted vocabulary. The early signs are that the newly introduced on-site speech and language support service is having a very positive impact.
69. Teaching is never less than good and is sometimes excellent. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. The high quality of teaching, together with the very positive attitudes shown by the pupils towards their work, makes a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve. Teachers show good subject knowledge and plan lessons with clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and then used to review learning in very useful final review sessions. In one particularly effective review which made use of pupils' work, the teacher succeeded in assessing pupils' understanding of the objectives, moving learning forward to the next stage and also showing how some pupils' writing could be improved. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their approach to work. Written work is usually well presented. These high expectations, together with the brisk pace shown in lessons in Year 2, is enabling pupils to make the most of their learning opportunities.
70. In all classes there is a wide span of ability. Activities and support are planned to meet pupils' differing abilities which ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, the higher attainers, and the Traveller children who have significant absences from school, are able to take an active part in all aspects of the lessons and achieve very well. The school has developed a tight, very structured approach to teaching basic skills which is making a significant contribution to the standards pupils are achieving. This is especially effective in daily group reading sessions, where staff are used particularly effectively to provide small group work for all pupils. Pupils are clear about the strategies they need to use to read

unfamiliar words and sentences and most tackle new material with confidence. The consistent approach of all staff is brought about by the very good planning and channels of communication between teachers and support staff. The use of information and communication technology is contributing to the improvement in standards. The school is hopeful that this will be an added stimulus for boys. There is a need to review the use of the very good facilities to ensure efficient use of equipment to better support writing activities.

71. Tracking of pupils' performance is very thorough and regular assessments are made of the progress being made. Very good use is made of national data as part of the school's self-evaluation. The need to target boys' attainment is well documented and understood by all staff. Teachers are ambitious in their expectations of pupils' achievement and are constantly looking to move pupils to the next level. The high expectations of the headteacher and the excellent work done by the English co-ordinator act as a stimulus for other staff and contribute well to the consistent approach to learning seen through the school. The subject meets statutory requirements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. The development of language and literacy is the school's number one priority. Many pupils enter the school with poorly developed speaking and listening skills and a restricted vocabulary. The school makes every effort to redress the balance. Oral sessions in lessons across the curriculum are used effectively to develop speaking and listening skills. Lesson plans usually include a list of target words. Pupils are given frequent worthwhile opportunities to practise their writing skills in such subjects as history, geography and science.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve very well because of the very good teaching and learning, especially in Year 2.
- The work is very carefully planned to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those who are Traveller children are very well supported.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes and work hard to do their best.

Commentary

73. Many children start school with a low level of mathematical understanding. As a consequence of the high quality of teaching they receive, they make good progress, most notably in Year 2, so that standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average and well above those for similar schools. These standards, which are very creditable, are reflected in the 2003 results.
74. The school keeps very detailed records of pupils' attainment and progress and is well aware that there are significant differences between the test results of boys and girls. The headteacher's scrutiny of data over several years confirms that in general boys attain lower than the girls. This is very clear in assessments made on entry to the school. Although the school has targeted raising the attainment of boys and across the school pupils achieve better than they did previously, the difference in attainment between boys and girls remains. National performance data show that the performance of girls in mathematics over the three years from 2001 to 2003 significantly exceeded that of boys, more so than in reading and writing. There are firm plans to continue to address this issue, partly through contact with a school which has had success in the area of raising boys' attainment.

75. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well in relation to their abilities because of the very good level of support they receive. Many Traveller children do not achieve as well as they could because of seasonal absences when they are travelling with their families. The staff work hard to provide for these pupils, providing 'catch up' strategies and a very good level of individual support for those who have difficulties in mathematics. The school monitors performance closely with high aspirations for each pupil to perform as well as possible.
76. There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is now higher, the work is planned very effectively and there are very good practices for assessing how the pupils are doing, tracking their progress and setting targets for improvement. The National Numeracy Strategy is well established and has been well used to improve the quality of education in mathematics.
77. Overall the quality of teaching and learning are very good; a key factor is the very good quality of support provided by the learning assistants. Teachers engage pupils well and have high expectations; these high expectations are well met, so that pupils are well behaved, well motivated and keen to improve. Most of the teaching moves at a good pace, making very good use of time. Teaching involves very clear explanations and instructions and very good use is made of the interactive whiteboards. The work in the computer suite makes very good use of a structured mathematical support program, which enables the pupils to gain extra practice in developing their number skills in well-organised sessions before school, at break times and at lunchtime. This is proving to be effective motivation for many of the boys. Attendance is very good at these 'voluntary' sessions.
78. Homework is carefully planned and monitored and makes a positive contribution to the standards being achieved. Parents receive very helpful termly newsletters which give clear information on the 'key things your child will be learning'.
79. The marking of pupils' work is consistent and of a good quality. It helps the pupils to understand how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve. Presentation of work by pupils is usually good.
80. Leadership and management of the subject are very good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The knowledgeable co-ordinator has a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for development in the subject. There are very good procedures for monitoring the teaching and learning in mathematics and the subject is well set to continue to improve. Mathematics meets statutory requirements.

Mathematics across the curriculum

81. Pupils make effective use of mathematics as part of their work in other subjects and this helps them to begin to develop an appreciation of the practical uses for their skills. For example, they use graphs and tables to record data in geography and science; they use measuring skills in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide interesting practical, first-hand experiences for their pupils and teaching and learning is good overall.
- Pupils achieve very well as a result of the quality of teaching especially in Year 2.
- Assessment is well planned and impacts on teaching and learning.
- The use of information and communication technology to support science is underdeveloped.

Commentary

82. Standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average. Overall standards are higher than those identified at the last inspection. Standards are rising as a higher proportion of pupils now gain the higher Level 3 than seen previously. The majority of pupils enter school well below average in their understanding of the world about them and this has a negative impact on the standards they reach by the age of seven. However, all pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment, including those pupils with special educational needs. No differences were observed in science between the achievement of boys and girls or other groups. This is the result of good teaching.
83. The quality of teaching is good overall with very good teaching in Year 2. The quality of teaching has a significant impact on the progress pupils make and on their very good achievement seen at the end of the key stage. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge which is reflected in their detailed planning and in the technical language they use in lessons. Planning has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is now a clear identification of the knowledge, understanding and skills to be developed. Most lessons have a good pace, which keeps pupils interested and eager to participate. Teachers use questioning to good effect to move learning on and they take time to consolidate new learning and clear any misconceptions.
84. Pupils enjoy their science lessons which often involve them in practical activity and first-hand experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils investigate how to make a bulb light up using a battery and wires. From an early age these simple experiments enable teachers to encourage their pupils to make simple scientific deductions. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils deduced that darkness increases as the amount of light decreases and in a Year 2 lesson, pupils deduced that electricity flows in a circuit from the battery back to the battery. All teachers manage their pupils effectively so that pupils work very well together. At the end of each science topic, teachers carry out assessments of pupils' learning and use the results to effectively plan future learning. Tracking and recording pupils' progress is now embedded into current practice. These are significant improvements in assessment and monitoring since the last inspection.
85. A variety of presentation methods are used by the pupils in their work including tables, drawings, graphs and writing. Pupils' work is well presented and teachers challenge the unacceptable to keep the standard high. The use of information and communication technology to support the teaching and learning can benefit from further development.
86. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has made an impact on the teaching and learning of science by producing a scheme of work based on national guidelines, a commercially produced scheme and curriculum planning software. This has given teachers a structured programme to work to which has successfully addressed the issue raised at the last inspection. Science is well resourced. The subject meets statutory requirements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good ICT facilities.
- ICT is used very effectively to support work in literacy and numeracy.
- The pupils behave well and show enthusiasm in their work.
- There is very good leadership and management of the subject.
- More efficient use could be made of equipment at certain times of the day.

Commentary

87. Pupils are attaining appropriate standards at the end of Year 2, maintaining the standards found at the previous inspection but accessing an increased range of ICT opportunities. Most achieve well, although a small minority are disadvantaged by extended absence from school.
88. The pupils are systematically learning to use technology as a tool to support other learning. Mouse and keyboard skills are generally good and many pupils can load programs and save, modify, print and retrieve their work. Planning documents, record books and examples of pupils' work indicate that pupils are receiving a broad range of experiences, including story writing, picture making, constructing graphs and instructing and operating a programmable toy. Objectives are displayed in classrooms alongside examples of pupils' work. The school is keen to make pupils as independent as possible in the use of the technology. Year 1 pupils write instructions for using cassette recorders. Year 2 pupils use a digital camera to produce photographs to accompany their written work. Monitors set up and operate the music system in the hall for assemblies and other lessons where music is used. Pupils, throughout the school are keen to learn, are interested in their work and behave very well which impacts positively on how well they achieve.
89. The school has a very good level of equipment and resources. In addition to the two computer suites, there are classroom computers and Year 2 classrooms have laptops and interactive whiteboards. A third portable system is available elsewhere for small group use. This technology is very new and staff are still undergoing training in its use.
90. Very good use is made of ICT to support literacy and, more notably, numeracy. The regular use of a structured mathematical support program is having a significant impact on achievement. This innovative organisation makes very good use of time before school, at break times and lunchtime sessions to give pupils regular practice of basic skills. A learning assistant oversees this work and gives help where necessary. She monitors the progress through the programs own recording system. There is some evidence that boys' enjoyment of these sessions leads them to achieve better than girls supporting the school's target to use technology to engage boys more fully in the learning process.
91. Learning assistants often work with a group of pupils, especially pupils with special educational needs, during literacy hour. The very limited amount of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good. In the one lesson seen there was a wide range of ability within a small group of pupils with special educational needs. Two of the pupils were seriously disadvantaged by extended absences from school. The quality of instruction was good enabling pupils to learn effectively. Pupils co-operated well to produce short stories.
92. The headteacher leads the subject very well. He is able to monitor closely what pupils are doing and to give some support in lessons. He has high expectations of the future use of technology in the school. Assessment is effective. Each pupil has an Assessment Log Book where attainment is recorded. The teacher fills this in for younger pupils, but Year 2 pupils are being trained to fill in their own log. The subject meets statutory requirements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

93. All work done in ICT supports work in other areas of the curriculum. Although equipment is used very well during some parts of the day, there are periods when it could be used more efficiently to support this work further, especially in light of the quest of the school to use it as a tool to raise boys' achievement.

HUMANITIES AND CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

The work in geography and history and in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education meets statutory requirements. These subjects were not specific areas of focus for the inspection and only a limited range of evidence was sampled. As a consequence there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on the quality of the provision. The available evidence did, however, indicate that standards in art and design are good across the school.

Geography

94. Only one lesson was seen in geography. Judgements about attainment and achievement are based on evidence obtained in the lesson, from discussions with pupils, from an analysis of their work and from work on display. From a very low starting point when they enter school, pupils achieve very well throughout Year 1 and Year 2. The standards seen in the work of the pupils currently in Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make very good progress throughout the school.
95. Pupils in Year 1 can plan a route to the nearby junior school which effectively develops appropriate early mapping skills. They are able to offer opinions as to what they find attractive and unattractive features in the local area; for example, the local junior school is having extensive building work carried out and one boy described the site as 'muddy and untidy but it will have a gym when it is finished!' The work effectively develops pupils' understanding of the wider environment and what can be done to improve it. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate an awareness of localities beyond their own, such as the seaside. They write a postcard from a seaside location and describe some of the physical and human features. The use of literacy skills could be further developed in the subject and the school is aware of this as it forms part of the geography co-ordinator's action plan for the subject.
96. The scheme of work has been improved since the last inspection when it was judged to provide insufficient guidance. The school's programme of work for the subject follows national guidance which promotes continuity and progression of teaching and learning. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is also more fully developed. At the end of each unit of learning, assessments are made to enable teachers to plan the next steps in teaching and learning. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning to check subject coverage, and observes lessons. Feedback is given to individual teachers and whole school issues are addressed and action taken.

History

97. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2. In the two lessons seen, teaching was good with some very good features and pupils were achieving well. Lessons were well prepared. In one lesson where pupils classified toys into old and new, the good range of bears and dolls captured the pupils' imagination. In the second lesson, pupils compared their experience of visiting the war memorial for a Remembrance Day service with that which took place in Whitehall. They showed good understanding of the significance of the poppy as a symbol of remembrance, and also the relevance of the ceremony describing the two minutes silence as 'a very special moment'.
98. In both lessons, the strong emphasis on language development was apparent. The good quality of the questioning helped the pupils to look more closely at the evidence and make informed judgements. Teachers focused well on the development of vocabulary and speaking skills. One lesson also focused well on writing skills and some pupils used information and communication technology to record their observations. The school's next focus is to further use historical texts to develop literacy skills.
99. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the work done. There is a good level of resources and pupils benefit from visits to places

of historical interest. Planning documents indicate that pupils are receiving a relevant curriculum and simple assessments are made at the end of each unit of work.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are clear plans in place to further develop the religious education curriculum.
- The work benefits from good links with the local church and its minister.

Commentary

100. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to match the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Although an appropriate amount of time is given to religious education, during this inspection no lessons were observed. As a consequence, there is insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. Evidence considered included a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, teachers' planning and observations of acts of collective worship.
101. The available evidence indicates that pupils are still achieving standards which are broadly in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Year 1 pupils learn about the significance of baptism. They consider the importance of family life and write about their 'precious gifts'. Year 2 pupils learn about the work of great people, such as Mother Teresa, and write about their own close friends, identifying their good qualities. Across the school pupils are given good opportunities to learn about the main Christian festivals and they hear stories from other cultures and beliefs, such as about the Chinese New Year and Diwali. They study and make comparisons between Christianity and Sikhism.
102. The co-ordinator, who leads the work well, is working with colleagues in the local pyramid of schools to develop planning materials which it is hoped will be in place by September 2004. The work is well resourced. Visits to St Peter's Church and visits to school by the minister of that church enhance the pupils' understanding. The work in religious education and the collective acts of worship meet statutory requirements and also reflect the ethos and values of the school.

Art and design

103. No art and design lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements about attainment and achievement are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work on display and an examination of the portfolio of pupils' work. Standards are good in art and design across the school which is similar to the judgement made at the last inspection. Many pupils produce work of a good standard in a subject which is not affected by the earlier poor basic literacy skills of a number of the pupils.
104. The examples of work on display throughout the school and in the art portfolio show that pupils experience a wide variety of media. These include paint, textiles, card, collage, pastels and charcoal. The printing work is of a particularly high standard with pupils creating effective designs on different types of paper and fabric. They use natural objects to make repeating patterns, use cutting tools to carefully design in polystyrene and use this as a printing block.
105. Skills are systematically taught to enable pupils to achieve very well. For example, all the pupils interviewed across Years 1 and 2 described in detail how to mix colours and use different brushes effectively. This is evident in the Year 1 paintings of 'Ourselves' which show large, bold brush strokes and in the Year 2 detailed paintings of 'Fireworks' which show

very effective colour mixing and brush control. Year 2 pupils know that pencils have different lead types to create different shading effects which impacts on their good drawing skills.

106. The artwork on display is of a good standard and the careful presentation helps to create a stimulating environment in keeping with the ethos of the school. There are good links with information and communication technology through the use of the 'Dazzle' software program. The leadership and management of the subject are good and the co-ordinator has recently developed a system to allow teachers to effectively assess and record pupils' progress. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection. Studying the work of artists from non-European countries could be further developed.

Design and technology

107. No lessons were timetabled during the inspection and the limited work available for examination, including photographic evidence, does not allow a secure judgement to be made on standards within design and technology. There is evidence of designing and making, as seen in the photographs of Year 1 pupils preparing a fruit salad. There is also evidence that pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work; for example, in the Year 1 work undertaken on making a sliding device to incorporate in a Christmas card. One lower attaining pupil commented, 'The slider is too narrow and there are too many eyes'. Pupils successfully use different methods to join materials including glue, masking tape, treasury tags and split fasteners. Older pupils effectively use triangular card corners to make a wooden frame when constructing a moving vehicle. They also use simple stitching to carefully join pieces of fabric when making a glove puppet. Pupils' work shows care and attention to detail.

Music

108. In discussion with pupils, it became clear that they enjoy this part of the curriculum. They especially enjoy singing and their part in the public performances to celebrate harvest time and Christmas. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements on standards and teaching in music. Just one lesson was observed during the inspection, of Year 2 taken by the co-ordinator when teaching and learning were very good. The lesson involved singing and creating long and short sounds with percussion instruments. In pairs, the pupils created their own compositions, developing simple notation in the process. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good, enabling them to achieve well. In the singing heard in classrooms and in assembly, the pupils sang tunefully and enthusiastically. Overall there is little evidence of work in music in exercise books.
109. Good use is made of a scheme of work to guide the teaching and learning, based on national guidance. This ensures that pupils have access to the appropriate range of experiences in performance, composition and the appraisal of music. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who annually monitors teaching and learning in each class, leading to helpful feedback. Simple assessments are undertaken to monitor pupils' progress. The subject is well resourced. The work benefits from an annual performance from the local education authority's music service. A group of older pupils take part in a valuable pyramid singing day. Performances such as those at Christmas, including one for the local elderly people, are highlights of the school year.

Physical education

110. As only one lesson was observed during the inspection, there was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on the quality of teaching and the standards reached. In the lesson seen, the teacher explained tasks clearly, moved the lesson on at a good pace and had very high expectations of the pupils' attainment. Pupils showed a good level of enthusiasm, worked hard and responded well to the teacher's clear instruction. Good use was made of pupils' performances to praise good work and show key skills which were being developed.

Pupils did not move on to the next activity until the teacher was satisfied with the standards being produced. Consequently learning was thorough.

111. Physical education is well planned. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of what needs to be taught and has introduced a scheme of work which breaks down into good quality lesson plans which provide good continuity and progression. Pupils experience the full range of activities. The good quality of accommodation provides well for both indoor and outdoor work. Pupils' attainment is assessed on a regular basis. Adults from local football and basketball clubs have worked with pupils in the past but this has met with mixed success.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Overall the quality of the provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are well promoted in all aspects of the school's life.
- Valuable learning opportunities are provided in the weekly timetabled programme for the work.
- Members of staff provide very good role models.

Commentary

112. Following an audit by the deputy headteacher, this area has been well developed in recent times, partly through an action plan incorporated into the school improvement plan. It is led by a policy and scheme of work and documented in class planning for PSHE and 'circle time'.
113. Good quality teaching and learning was observed in a 'circle time' with Year 1 and one with Year 2. In the well-planned and well-managed Year 1 lesson, the children considered how they could help people less fortunate than themselves. In the Year 2 activity on a similar theme, pupils considered various emotions and the value of what can be bought for a pound. This led to the passing round of 'Pudsey Bear' (from Children in Need), whilst pupils described their own teddy bears. In both lessons pupils were helped to appreciate the responsibilities involved in making choices.
114. The school's programme for PSHE is well organised and includes work on diet and healthy eating, sex and relationship education and personal safety. All this work contributes to the caring, community ethos of the school. Co-operative relationships are encouraged throughout the school and the staff set very good role models treating all pupils and each other with care and respect. Young as they are, pupils are developing a very good awareness of how to behave in a community and they work very well together in a supportive and caring way. The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is just one of the many features which make this a very good school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
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	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
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).