

INSPECTION REPORT

MONTALBO PRIMARY SCHOOL

County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114115

Headteacher: Mrs R M Rowe

Lead inspector: Mr Robert Robinson

Dates of inspection: 22–24 March 2004

Inspection number: 260508

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3–11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	113
School address:	Fairfield Road Barnard Castle County Durham
Postcode:	DL12 8TN
Telephone number:	01833 637718
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Lawson
Date of previous inspection:	20 September 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a smaller than average primary school for children aged three to 11. All pupils are of white ethnic background. Very few pupils are learning English as an additional language, though not at an early stage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about eight per cent, which is below average. The school serves a socially and economically average area. Children's attainment on entry is average. Fourteen pupils (12.4 per cent) are on the list of special educational needs, which is below average. Five pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs which is above average. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have specific, moderate learning difficulties, profound speech and communication difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties or physical disabilities. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is low. The 70-place Nursery provides education for pupils throughout Barnard Castle and many of these children leave to join Reception classes at their local schools. Twelve children (the school's admission number) transfer into the Reception class each year; the places are heavily over-subscribed because of the school's popularity with parents. Most pupils attending the school in Reception to Year 6 live in the immediate area. The headteacher joined the school in January 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21024	Robert Robinson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Religious education
8922	Brenda McIntosh	Lay inspector	
25431	Lesley Clark	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Geography History
29686	Stefan Lord	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Special educational needs English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's effectiveness is good and it gives its pupils a good education. The climate for learning is very good. Standards, by the end of Year 6, are high. Pupils achieve well because the overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is of a high standard. The leadership and management are very good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governing body are very good and they are assisted well by other senior members of staff.
- Pupils achieve very well in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 5 and 6 because of the high standard of teaching.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory and this limits provision, particularly in information and communication technology, science in Years 1 and 2 and special educational needs, as well as facilities for staff.
- Systems to set targets for improvements in pupils' attainment are not sufficiently rigorous to enable management to check the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils efficiently.
- Partnerships with parents and the community are very good.

Improvement since the last inspection in September 1999 is good. Standards have risen, particularly by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is better, although some weaknesses in the teaching in Years 1 and 2 remain. The school has developed well the roles of the co-ordinators and the monitoring of teaching, although target setting for pupils still remains underdeveloped. Pupils' spiritual development is now good. The leadership of the school, which was satisfactory at the last inspection, is now very good.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Key: A - very high (highest five per cent nationally) 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.

Achievement is good, overall, including pupils with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve very well, and are likely to exceed the goals expected of children of this age by the time they move into Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve satisfactorily, and standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6 are very good. Standards of the current group of pupils in Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. In the 2003 national tests, at the end of Year 6, standards were in the highest five per cent nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Caution must be taken when comparing year-on-year results because of differences in the composition of year groups in a small school.

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is very good in the Nursery and Reception classes, and in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, on balance, in Years 1 and 2. Overall, teachers have a good understanding of national guidance and use a wide range of teaching methods to push on pupils' learning at a rapid rate. Teachers have high expectations; consequently, pupils' behaviour is very good and pupils work industriously, both in groups and individually. Work is generally planned well to build on pupils' previous learning. Learning resources are used well to motivate and enhance learning. Teaching assistants provide very effective help for pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Weaknesses in teaching are seen when the teaching is not sufficiently well planned and organised and the pace of learning is too slow.

The school provides a good curriculum, which promotes good achievement. A very good curriculum for Nursery and Reception children gives them a very good start to their education. The curriculum is broadened and enriched by a very good range of after-school activities and promotes pupils' personal development well. The accommodation is unsatisfactory – some classrooms are rather cramped and there is no additional space for group or individual work, or for the headteacher to have an office. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance and involves them very well in its work and development. The partnership with parents is very good, as are the links with the community and other schools; these contribute well to pupils' learning and good achievement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide very effective leadership of the school and other senior members of staff assist the headteacher well. The governance of the school is very good. All statutory requirements are met. Management systems are good and effective, although the methods of recording pupils' progress and targets for improvement are not readily available in a suitable form for management to monitor efficiently.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the education the school provides for their children. They have no significant concerns about it. Pupils are very positive about the school, although a few would like more room in the cloakrooms and better toilets.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Seek ways to provide better accommodation for pupils and staff.
- Consolidate information about pupils' attainments and targets for future improvement into a succinct manageable system that is easily understood and available for staff and governors.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is very good in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 3 to 6. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Standards are above average generally, and are well above average in the current Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve very well and are likely to exceed the goals set for them by the time they start Year 1.
- The support the headteacher is giving to the teaching in Year 2 is helping to raise standards.
- Pupils' achievement is very good, overall, in Years 3 to 6, and standards, by the end of Year 6, are on course to be well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Boys and girls, including those pupils with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils and the very few pupils learning English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning.

Commentary

1. The children in the Reception class are on course to exceed the expected standards, by the end of the Reception Year in all their areas of learning. The achievement of children throughout the Nursery and Reception classes is very good; this is because of the high standard of teaching. The children make very good progress in their learning and this is an improvement, since the last inspection when children made good progress.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.9 (15.8)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.7 (14.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.3 (17.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Over time, standards, by the end of Year 2 have varied, mainly because of differences in the composition of cohorts in a small school. Standards in reading remained at the national average in 2003 compared to the previous year; however, standards in writing improved significantly from below the national average to above average. The reason for this improvement is that the headteacher identified that the teaching of writing was not good enough and so worked alongside the appropriate teacher, resulting in improved standards. Pupils' standards in Year 2, this year, continue to be above average in writing, even though the headteacher is no longer working with groups of pupils because the training given has had a good effect. A similar pattern is emerging in reading. Standards in Year 2, last year, were average but this year are likely to be above average as the headteacher is supporting the teaching of reading. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science is satisfactory. Higher attainers are now achieving satisfactorily, which was not the case at the last inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.3 (29.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.3 (28.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.9 (29.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 11 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards at the time of the last inspection in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were above average overall and in 2000 were average in English, mathematics and science; however, since the appointment of the headteacher standards have risen each year and in the national tests in 2003 were in the highest five per cent both nationally and compared to similar schools. The reasons for this, are the very good leadership of the school, the high quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 and the improvements in teaching in Years 3 and 4, which is now good. Pupils' performance is likely to be well above average rather than in the highest five per cent nationally, by the end of Year 6, because of a higher proportion of lower-attaining pupils than in the previous year, though almost all are likely to attain nationally expected standards. Pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 because of the high quality of teaching and pupils' very good attitudes to learning.
- No differences were seen between the achievement of boys and girls and the very few pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well, overall. The clear and appropriate targets for improvement on their Individual Education Plans enable them to make good progress in their learning. These targets are reviewed and revised regularly. The early identification of problems and the effective help provided make a significant contribution to the achievement of these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are a strength of the school and this represents significant improvement on the previous inspection.
- Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and are very keen to join in all the school has to offer.
- Pupils behave very well, both in and out of lessons, except in some lessons in Years 1 and 2.
- Very good relationships exist between pupils and adults, encouraged by the school's emphasis on harmony.

Commentary

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they get on extremely well with their classmates, teachers and other adults who work with them. They like the way teachers make learning fun and see school as an exciting, welcoming and friendly place to be. They express confidently the view that bullying is very rare and if it does happen they tell their teachers, who then help both the victims and the bullies. Pupils' keen interest in school life and the activities provided results in very good attendance. This very positive environment for learning and the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties have the same very good attitudes and values as their peers.

6. Nearly all pupils behave very well during lessons and at lunchtimes, but a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 need to improve behaviour in lessons. They know what is expected of them and have a very good understanding of right and wrong and always try to do what they know is right. There have been no exclusions. Through helping to formulate class rules, which supplement the school's rules, pupils are learning moral principles and are beginning to apply them to their everyday lives. The pupils, very willingly, take on responsibility; for example, through the 'Buddy' system.
7. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are very well motivated and enjoy learning, and this has a positive impact on how much they achieve in lessons. During the lessons observed, there were very good relationships between the teachers and pupils. Pupils participated eagerly, were keen to answer questions and concentrated well for extended periods. They discuss their work confidently with visitors and are very proud of their achievements, and of their school. Work, effort and achievement, both inside and outside school life, are valued and celebrated.
8. The good provision for developing personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enables pupils to become very caring, thoughtful and responsible. Pupils develop a good level of cultural awareness through such subjects as music, art and history and through the international Comenius project. As a result, pupils have a good awareness of differences in cultural traditions and beliefs, though their knowledge and understanding of living in a multi-ethnic society could be developed further. Spiritual development is a natural and integral part of the assemblies, which are planned around themes that pupils find relevant. They are held in an atmosphere of reverence and calm that helps pupils to reflect upon their personal feelings, values and beliefs. A singing lesson for pupils in Years 3 to 6, led by two inspiring gospel singers, was a very moving, spiritual experience as all the pupils sang heartily 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot', with accompanying actions.

Attendance

9. The attendance is well above the national average and is very good. The level of unauthorised absence is below the national average, with few parents failing to contact school about absence. Few pupils are late in the morning. The school carries out a regular analysis of attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.1
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is good. The curriculum is good. Standards of care, welfare and health and safety are high. Partnerships with parents and the community are very well established.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall. Very effective teaching leads to very good learning in the Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 5 and 6. The teaching is good in Years 3 and 4 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The checking of pupils' progress is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning ranges from satisfactory to excellent.
- The quality of teaching is very good, and sometimes better, in the Nursery and Reception and in Years 5 and 6.
- The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is rarely better than satisfactory.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the quality of teaching is good.

Commentary

10. The following table shows the range of the teaching seen during the inspection. The very good and excellent teaching was seen mainly in the Nursery, Reception and Year 5 and Year 6 classes. Most teaching in Years 3 and 4 was good. In Year 1 and 2 the teaching was never better than satisfactory, except on those occasions when the headteacher taught reading to pupils in Year 2. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in Years 3 and 4; however, there are still some weaknesses in the teaching in Years 1 and 2.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 22 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	10	3	6	0	0	0

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

11. The quality of teaching seen was very good in the Nursery and Reception classes in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Insufficient teaching was seen in creative development to make a secure judgement. The teaching of English, mathematics and science was good, overall; it was very good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The good quality of teaching enables pupils to achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, to reach high standards. It was not possible to judge the quality of teaching in other subjects as insufficient teaching was seen.
12. In the best teaching, teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects they teach and plan very carefully to interest pupils and to move pupils' learning on at a fast pace. Learning resources, teaching assistants and other adults are used very well to help pupils to understand new learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils to work hard and to behave very well and, as a result, pupils are industrious and work very well individually or in groups.
13. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching is generally satisfactory with strengths balancing weaknesses; for example, in a lesson in art and design, the learning was linked well to the previous day's religious education lesson about the Easter story. Pupils' understanding of language such as 'contrasting colours' was checked, and clarified by the teacher to ensure all understood the meaning. The planning of the lesson had not been careful enough to ensure pupils built on their previous learning at a good pace. The organisation of the lesson provided good opportunities for pupils to work together and for adult helpers to assist individual pupils; however, the teacher's management of behaviour was insecure, at times, and a few pupils needed too many reminders about their behaviour.
14. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, overall. During class lessons, pupils who find learning difficult are provided with unobtrusive help from teaching assistants, ensuring that they are involved fully in all activities and helped to meet the targets on their Individual Education Plans; however, limitations of the accommodation make it difficult to teach pupils in small groups outside the classroom.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum, which promotes achievement well. A very good curriculum for Nursery and Reception children gives them a very good start to their education. The curriculum is broadened and enriched by a very good range of after-school activities and promotes pupils' personal development very well. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Carefully managed innovations benefit pupils' learning, helping to provide equality of access and opportunity.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The range of opportunities for pupils taking part in sports, the arts and other activities is very good and pupils are well prepared for their transfer to secondary education.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good but the accommodation imposes some limitations on provision, overall.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory, overall, and hinders some aspects of teaching, learning and management.

Commentary

15. Much work has been done in the last three years to improve the quality of the curriculum, which is substantially better than it was at the time of the last inspection. The school meets all statutory requirements for collective worship, religious, health and sex education and drugs awareness. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been implemented well with developments that have contributed to the very high standards at the end of Year 6. Reading is taught separately and has a strong focus on developing the more advanced skills such as scanning texts for information. In mathematics, a system known as 'visualisation' has been introduced, resulting in a remarkably homogeneous approach to both teaching and learning and very high standards. In order to provide a better quality curriculum in music, the school employs a specialist teacher, a strategy which has effectively raised standards since the last inspection. The weekly tuition of junior pupils in gospel singing by a black band of musicians as well as broadening the curriculum is doing a great deal to promote racial equality in this all-white school through providing excellent role models. The match of teachers to the curriculum is good. Because teachers have improved resources and planning in nearly all subjects, pupils find lessons interesting and they really want to learn. The leadership and management are tightening up the curriculum for religious education to meet the needs of mixed age classes and to link in more effectively with personal, social, health and citizenship education.
16. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very well planned to provide learning experiences both outdoors and indoors which complement each other in an apparently seamless sequence of activities that promote very effective learning. Although the Reception classroom is extremely small and is barely satisfactory for the current group of fourteen children, judicious planning ensures that Reception children have many opportunities to use their own outdoor area and the extensive and imaginatively laid out Nursery garden and play area as well as the hall.
17. Two years ago, the school decided to provide an extended school day to broaden pupils' experience. The resulting provision for extra-curricular activities is very good and a large number of pupils, from Reception to Year 6, attend the extensive range of clubs which includes French, cookery, drama and tennis, among others. The breakfast club is a successful venture and the pupils who attend elect to use the time to do jobs around the school, taking responsibility for sorting out resources, for example, and filling water bottles

under the direction of the site supervisor. The school has a flourishing link with the local high schools and there are many joint sports and arts-related activities as well as opportunities for older pupils to spend several days in the school of their choice before moving up at the end of Year 6.

18. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school ensures that they get very good quality help and tackle challenging work; they, therefore, achieve well, often reaching the standards expected for their ages, like other pupils. The large proportion of pupils who have statements of Special Educational Needs is also well catered for and the curriculum is sensitively adapted to suit the needs of those on the autistic spectrum or with profound physical difficulties. The major drawback, however, is the accommodation. There is no room in the school to withdraw pupils and those who have an individual programme of work have to be taught in the hall. While the school does the best it can, this inevitably creates difficulties with regard to resources. Additional problems occur when confidential consultations are required between parents of children with special educational needs and outside agencies, as there is no private office space.
19. Pupils' learning in Years 1 and 2 is impeded by the cramped accommodation, which makes it very difficult for pupils to undertake the range of practical activities that they should, to support, for example, their learning in science and art and design. In addition, the room is a thoroughfare for Reception children, who need to pass through freely on their way to the cloakrooms or to the hall. The location of computers and numbers of machines is unsatisfactory for class teaching of skills; as a result, standards are lower in information and communication technology than in most other subjects. Music tuition takes place in cloakrooms when the staffroom, which doubles as the headteacher's office as well as a teaching space on occasions, is used for small groups. This means that resources for leadership and management are spread between the staff room and the school office, through which staff and pupils have to pass in order to enter the staffroom. This adds an unnecessary burden to both administration and management.
20. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. Well-planned activities, good teaching and tracking procedures ensure that these pupils make good progress. Targets are linked appropriately to Individual Education Plans. Good communication between teachers and support staff is ensuring consistent good quality instruction.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. The school provides pupils with good personal support and satisfactory academic advice and guidance and involves them very well in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is a welcoming place where pupils are cared for very well and helped to mature.
- Teachers and other staff provide good personal support for pupils; however, pupils have inconsistent knowledge of how to improve their own work.
- Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon. They contribute very well to the development of the school.

Commentary

21. Pupils are safe and secure at school and the very good attention paid to their care, welfare and safety allows them to concentrate on learning. Pupils like the school because it is small, cosy, warm and welcoming, and they feel they are well looked after. Records are kept of risk assessments of the buildings and problems are promptly dealt with. Child protection

procedures are very good and the staff know what to do if they have concerns about children's welfare. The school has not yet shared its policy on the safe use of the Internet with parents and pupils.

22. Pupils are well supervised and trusted by the staff. As a result of the staff's high expectations, pupils are caring and thoughtful, fully involved in all aspects of school life and very willing, as they mature, to take increasing responsibility for others. They offer very good help to each other. New pupils arriving at the school make new friends quickly and are helped to settle into their new surroundings. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to help sort out any minor squabbles that sometimes occur in the playground or to look after those who find playtimes difficult. Pupils are very confident that if they have any problems or worries there is an adult in whom they can confide. The school is always ready to listen to pupils and offer good personal support as their needs arise. Pupils with special educational needs are helped well in class so they take a full and active part in lessons and achieve as well as other pupils.
23. Information about pupils' academic achievements is used satisfactorily to guide future learning. The setting of individual targets for pupils' future learning and involving them in assessing their own work are inconsistent throughout school. Year 5 and 6 pupils have individual targets for mathematics and English, which guide them well to improve their learning and help them to achieve very well.
24. Pupils know that their views matter and the school will try and act upon what they say. The School Council has an influential role in this and is encouraged to think of ways to improve routines and facilities; for example, as a result of pupils' suggestions, the re-organisation of lunchtime arrangements has proved beneficial to everyone.
25. Early identification of pupils with learning difficulties ensures that effective support is provided as soon as possible, promoting good progress successfully. There is good liaison with external special needs support staff and other outside agencies; for example, very effective links have been made with a local special school to use their facilities, one day a week, to support the development of a pupil with profound learning difficulties.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is very good and the link with the community and other schools is also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good partnership with parents whose views are sought and acted upon. The resulting trust between school and home makes a good contribution to children's learning and achievement.
- Very good links with other schools enhance curricular opportunities for pupils.
- The school sees the community as a rich resource to strengthen and enliven pupils' learning.

Commentary

26. Since the last inspection, the partnership with parents has strengthened and is now very good. The school is very popular and highly regarded by parents. It has a strong standing in the local community and is oversubscribed each year, with many parents choosing to go to appeal to obtain a place for their children. Parents like the friendly, welcoming atmosphere at school and feel that they can come into school at any time. Teachers and support staff are always available to parents to discuss concerns and help them to understand the work their children are doing. The Friends' Association supports the school very well by organising a good range of social and fund-raising events. Money raised has helped purchase equipment used by the pupils to assist their learning.

27. The school communicates well with parents through a wide range of information about the school, the curriculum and children's progress. Sessions about the curriculum have been held to explain what children will learn in school and at home. Parents are happy to help their children when work is sent home. The school's website provides a wealth of information about the school, its organisation and forthcoming events and parents appreciate the ease of access to information. Parents of children in the Nursery and Reception classes are welcomed into the classrooms at the start of the day. In the Nursery, information about the curriculum is displayed so that parents are able to see to see what is taught each week. Parents of children with special educational needs receive good information about progress through the regular review meetings.
28. The school has developed strong links with two other small primary schools through a national leadership initiative and has strong links with a network of other local schools. The leadership qualities of the headteacher have been enhanced through professional dialogue with other headteachers of similar schools. They discuss openly common issues and share ideas and expertise. The links have also resulted in sharing of staff for after school activities and residential visits. Pupils regularly meet with pupils from other schools; for example, they perform in events alongside pupils from other schools.
29. The school uses local resources well to widen children's learning. There is a wide programme of visitors to the school, and children visit many interesting local places to enrich the curriculum. There are particularly strong links with the churches. The clergy from a local church are regular visitors in school to lead assemblies. There are useful links with a local business through the Chair of Governors; as a result, the school has benefited from receiving generous funding for after school activities. Pupils take part in a range of local initiatives and have regular opportunities for performing for, or meeting with, the elderly people in the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are very good, overall. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is assisted well by senior staff. Governance is very good. The management of the school is effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body has a very clear vision for the future direction of the school.
- The headteacher leads the school very well and provides a very good role model in the quality of her teaching and leadership of the curriculum.
- The deputy headteacher leads and manages the Foundation Stage and special educational needs provision very well and gives very good support to the headteacher.
- Other senior members of staff lead their subjects well.
- The management of the school is good, although consistent systems to track pupils' progress and to set targets for improvements are not in place.
- Finances are managed well and governors ensure money devolved to the school is used efficiently.
- The lack of accommodation space is a barrier to further improvement.

Commentary

30. The governing body embraced issues highlighted at the last inspection well, resulting in good improvements since the last inspection. It now monitors and evaluates the work of the school very well and has ensured stability during difficult periods of changes of senior staffing. Governors have a very clear understanding of the school through visits to school and links with curriculum co-ordinators; a strong feature of the visits is the high quality reports

prepared for the governing body for most areas of the curriculum. The governing body plans ahead very well and has been very much involved in formulating a detailed school improvement plan. Governors' expertise is put to very good use to assist the school in its work and development.

31. Strong leadership by the headteacher has resulted in significant improvements in standards since her appointment. The headteacher sets a very good role model for other members of staff and pupils through her teaching and leadership of assemblies. Her presence around the school assists the strong climate for learning. Stability of teaching staff has been achieved. The quality of teaching has improved, through informal and thorough formal monitoring of pupils' learning, as well as by the headteacher working in the classroom alongside staff. The headteacher is well aware of the limitations of some of the teaching in the Year 1 and 2 class, and effective action has led to a sharp improvement in academic standards. The headteacher has encouraged innovation within the curriculum, which has had a positive impact on standards; for example, changes in the teaching of mathematics. Her subject leadership of English is very good. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were unanimous in the view that the headteacher has brought about a 'phenomenal' improvement since the last inspection.
32. The deputy headteacher assists the headteacher very well and ensures that the Nursery and Reception classes are led and managed very well. As the co-ordinator for special educational needs, she is very conscientious and manages the support programme effectively. The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs have a positive impact on pupils' learning, and good progress is made, with pupils growing considerably in confidence and self-esteem. The leadership of other senior staff is good and they manage their areas of responsibilities well. They work hard to maintain high standards.
33. The school is managed well. Staff and governors are very aware of how well pupils perform in the national test results. Performance data is used effectively; however, the recording of pupils' progress and setting of clear targets linked to sublevels of the National Curriculum is an area for improvement to assist the management to maintain high standards. The governing body is rigorous in challenging the headteacher; for example, the performance management of the headteacher is taken very seriously and progress towards the objectives set are monitored termly. Similarly, the headteacher works with staff to set clear objectives that are linked to priorities in the school improvement plan; however, the measurement of the objectives linked to pupils' progress is not precise enough as the school does not set half-yearly or yearly targets for pupils' progress based on average point scores in each year group. As a result, the management are not able to assess accurately the progress pupils make in each year group.
34. Financial management is good. Well-organised clerical assistance provides good help to the headteacher in managing the financial allocation. The governing body takes its responsibilities for the management of the school's financial allocation well. Governors are very involved in monitoring the budget and making financial decisions. The large surplus carried forward has been allocated wisely for improvements of resources and premises. Governors have a good grasp of the principles of 'best value', particularly 'challenge', 'consultation' and 'competition' aspects of 'best value'.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	357,451	Balance from previous year	35,318
Total expenditure	375,579	Balance carried forward to the next	17,190
Expenditure per pupil	3,183		

35. The staff use the accommodation very well; however, the limited space creates a barrier to further improvement in provision for pupils and staff; for example, there is not a room for

private consultations with parents and outside agencies to assist further pupils with profound learning and physical difficulties. The Reception and Years 1/2 classrooms are cramped. Pupils do not have access to an appropriately sized computer suite, which limits provision in information and communication technology. The headteacher does not have an office, which creates difficulties when confidential discussions are necessary with parents and staff.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Teaching is very good throughout the Foundation Stage and children, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well. Overall provision, including teaching and learning, has improved a great deal since the last inspection. Assessment procedures are good. Standards at the end of the Reception Year are above average. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the Reception class and are on course to exceed the standards expected at the end of the Reception Year.
- Children settle quickly to the routines in the Nursery because of very well organised teaching.
- Children with profound learning difficulties are given very good help but the lack of space and facilities in the Reception classroom limits the provision.

Commentary

36. Children are likely to exceed the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1 because the teaching is very good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. The planning of activities encourages children to gain confidence and to work productively with other children. The high expectations of staff for work and behaviour result in children having a very good attitude to learning and having a very well developed understanding of the consequences of their actions on others. Children form very good relationships with other children and the staff. Because lessons are so interesting, the children maintain interest for a significant period of time and are very well prepared for learning in Year 1.
37. In the Nursery, the teaching is very good and activities to stimulate children's interest are well organised. The children come to school, generally, happy and keen to learn. They enjoy playing on a good range of wheeled vehicles and other equipment in the outdoor area before school starts, supervised by staff and their parents and carers. On entry to school, the children are encouraged to self-register their attendance and decide for themselves at which activities they would like to work. Parents are encouraged to work alongside their children for a short time and this helps the children to settle quickly. Members of staff engage children actively in discussions and this is particularly helpful to that minority of children who find listening and concentrating difficult, because it helps them to focus on their tasks. Members of staff celebrate with particular children improvements in behaviour during a lesson.
38. The help for children with special educational needs is very good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Members of staff make every effort to involve productively children with profound learning difficulties and hearing impairment in lessons. Children in the Reception class show an amazing kindness for children with special educational needs and do everything possible to include them fully in class routines. The members of staff who support children with profound learning difficulties are skilful and do everything possible to move learning on; however, the limited space available in the Reception room and the lack of suitable toileting facilities create difficulties.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good and they are likely to exceed the goals set for them by the end of the Reception Year.
- Role-play is used exceptionally well to assist learning, particularly considering the limitations of space in the Reception class.
- Children in the Reception class read very well.

Commentary

39. The quality of teaching and learning in both the Nursery and Reception classes is very good and, as a result, children are likely to exceed the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1. In the Nursery, children select books from the library and 'read' the books with interest. Members of staff spend time discussing and questioning children about the books. When children are working in their 'home' groups, they develop quickly an understanding of the sounds that letters make through association with actions.
40. Members of staff are creative in developing language through role-play; for example, children in the Nursery sat on the 'magic carpet' with their teacher to visit different places. This spurs learning on at a brisk pace because members of staff question children very well to develop their speaking skills. The Reception room is very small and does not lend itself easily to large role play areas; however, the teaching is so well planned that the lack of space does not stand in the way of learning, as is detailed in the following example:

Example of outstanding practice

As the follow up to the reading of the story 'Mrs Rainbow' in the Reception class, the teacher and a governor took up the roles of characters in the book.

The teaching assistant read expressively part of the story of 'Mrs Rainbow'. Children were encouraged very well to predict what would happen next. The children were very interested and expressed their views most willingly. Then, suddenly, the teacher, disguised as 'Mrs Rainbow', and a governor in the role of the 'Council Man', dressed up in a grey suit and bowler hat, appeared. The children could not believe their eyes and it took quite a while for some children to realise that 'Mrs Rainbow' was their teacher. One child said to the 'Council Man', 'I've read a book about you.' They questioned the adults very sensibly and recorded lists of words such as 'hat'. The role-play characters questioned the children very well, the children giving their views excitedly. The activity encouraged the development of speaking and listening skills very well and provided excellent opportunities for the children to express their views as well as to bring the book to life. Some children remain convinced that their teacher missed out on the whole experience.

41. The standard of reading in the Reception class is high. Most children are reading within the early stages of the National Curriculum. They read a good range of key words and are able to read words such as 'wind' in the context of the text correctly. Higher-attaining children read at the level expected of children in Year 2. These children recognise the title of the book and can talk about the story. They put expression into their reading in response to an exclamation mark, for instance. Lower-attaining children know simple words, such as 'big', and use picture clues to 'read' the story. Members of staff record clearly the progress children make, sharing this information with parents.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in both the Nursery and Reception classes because the teaching is very good.
- Most children are on course to reach the goals expected of children by the end of the Reception Year and a large proportion to exceed them.

Commentary

42. Children learn how number relates to quantity at a very early age, in the most enjoyable way, because teaching is very good. In very small 'family groups' attached to a special adult, children learn to count forward and back to ten accurately and receive lots of praise for success. The make-believe airport is used very well to develop children's mathematical understanding. Higher attainers begin to distinguish between 'light' and 'lighter' and 'heavy' and 'heavier' as they weigh different bags and arrange them on the imaginary conveyor belt, which is appropriately labelled.
43. By the Reception Year, the children are ready for more formal teaching which is blended effectively with very interesting activities to challenge the children's different abilities. Higher attainers, very quickly, understood that size of coins does not necessarily equate with amount of money and when they were told to join the group with the most amount of money almost all children realised that one 20p piece is the same as two 10p coins. The children went on to use their new found skills in the tiny newsagent's shop tucked into the corner of the classroom. The teaching motivates children well and lessons move at a good pace. Because of extremely good help from teaching assistants and other adults, children's learning is most productive. In one lesson, lower attainers had fun sieving through sand to find buried treasure and tried happily to write the value of the coins they had found on a cardboard paper pig having first popped the coins into the plastic pouch attached to its neck. Such things make learning highly enjoyable as well as very effective.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are likely to exceed the goals expected by the end of the Reception Year.
- Teaching and learning are very good and so children achieve very well.

Commentary

44. Standards are high because children are very well taught in both the Nursery and Reception classes. In the Nursery, activities vary from the routine selecting appropriate symbols in the Nursery to show what the weather is like, to making passports, looking at themselves in a mirror before drawing their features. By the middle of the Reception Year, children are able to predict and then test which materials might be waterproof, giggling when the toy duck, wrapped in paper, got wet. They delighted in being addressed as 'Mr' and 'Miss' and looked very important as they noted down their observations on their clipboards. The following is an example of how the teaching develops pupils' personal and cultural awareness:

Example of outstanding practice

A lesson in the Reception class effectively developed children's personal and cultural awareness when children practised their Spanish and learnt new words through trying Spanish food.

The lesson began with the children asking about the letter and paintings they had sent to the Spanish embassy expressing sympathy for the recent terrorist attacks. They then rehearsed the words they knew which ranged from 'hello' to understanding the difference in meaning between 'siesta' and 'fiesta'. They were eager to begin tasting the food and also somewhat wary. Each child was given the freedom to try whatever they wanted, the only condition being that they had to name the food and say 'please' in Spanish. They learnt rapidly the words for cheese and grapes. Some bravely tried the olives but found the word difficult to say. Very good relationships between adults and children made this a delightful, shared experience as well as giving explicit teaching about the importance of using the language of the country when visiting. The children successfully asked a friend for a particular type of food in Spanish and in just 20 minutes, a great deal was learnt. The next day a letter came from the Spanish Ambassador saying, 'How touching to receive those lovely paintings so full of youthful sympathy. Many, many thanks.'

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expected levels at the end of the Reception Year because teaching is very good.
- The outdoor learning environment for the Nursery is very well resourced and it is used very well to promote learning for both Nursery and Reception children.

Commentary

45. Children achieve very well as they learn to use pencils and scissors with skill and to run, jump and climb as well as to control a range of wheeled toys. In the Nursery, they used paint brushes skilfully to paint the outside fence with water and a large sack of miscellaneous wooden bricks gave endless scope for imaginative play. By Reception, a group of children of mixed ability organised a complex game involving transporting bricks from one place to another, negotiating the grassy slope with full trailer loads with great skill. The teaching is very good. In the Nursery, no opportunity is lost to reinforce language; for example, as lower-attaining children watched water running across the ground, the teacher pointed out that it was 'going on a journey just like the ball'. Standards are above average. In the hall, Nursery children managed to hop up and down on the spot and to jump, spreading their legs like scissors. In Reception, children climb and jump off apparatus with confident ease. Good provision is made for children with physical and fine motor difficulties to have access to activities within the range of their capabilities.
46. Too few lessons were seen to be able to make secure judgements on standards, teaching and learning in **creative development**. Thorough planning of this area of learning gives children the opportunity to take part in a wide range of learning experiences. A very good feature of the provision is the flexible approach which enables children with profound learning difficulties to join other class music lessons if this is appropriate to their needs at the time.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of attainment are on course to be above average by the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall, with very good teaching for older pupils.
- There is good support from the teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- The setting of targets for pupils and the marking of pupils' work are inconsistent.

Commentary

47. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. Over the last few years, pupils have maintained standards that are well above the national average and better than those of similar schools in the national tests for Year 6 in English. In 2003, standards were in the highest five per cent nationally. In the 2003 national tests for Year 2, standards were above the national average and better than similar schools, in writing. In reading, standards were in line with both the national average and similar schools.
48. Standards of work seen show that Year 6 pupils are on target to achieve highly, because a significant proportion of pupils are working at the higher Level 5; for example, one boy in his imaginative writing about 'The Night Shift' quickly grabs the reader's attention and creates an atmosphere of mystery through his adventurous use of words as he begins 'The night hung in a shadowy phase as a cloak of evil circled the cemetery. You could sense the evil in the air as the two men proceeded across the shadowy grounds with a handcart trailing slowly behind.' The standards seen in Year 2 indicate a good level of achievement in writing and a high proportion of pupils are achieving at the higher Level 3 in reading. Standards in reading have improved in Year 2 because regular guided reading sessions have been introduced, which are taught effectively by the headteacher and supported by teaching assistants. Similar management strategies have raised standards in writing, with a significant proportion of pupils' writing showing structure, clear ideas, interesting words and appropriate punctuation; however, there are insufficient opportunities for these pupils to write in a range of forms or in an extended way. The presentation of work has improved since the last inspection and by the time pupils leave the school the majority have a neat legible style of handwriting.
49. The quality of teaching is good overall but it varies from satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 to very good in Years 5 and 6. The high quality of teaching for the older pupils makes a significant impact on the standards they achieve. This was seen in a very good Year 5 and 6 lesson where the teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to present 'A Message From Galileo', a text very well matched to the pupils' ability, to develop their understanding of the language used in explanatory texts. The lesson went at a good pace, with skilful questioning, so that pupils all contributed and extended their learning rapidly. In Years 1 and 2, the teacher's planning is appropriate but does not take sufficient account of the needs of the more able Year 2 pupils which leads to their consolidating their learning rather than being challenged to progress at a suitably high rate. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of their approach to work, enabling pupils to make the most of their learning opportunities.
50. The teaching assistants make a good contribution to the overall quality of teaching. They are well informed and so are able to work effectively with pupils with learning difficulties, providing a good level of support in classrooms that enables these pupils to achieve well.

51. Relationships in classes are very good. Staff and pupils show great respect for each other. All pupils are very well behaved, listen intently and have the confidence to ask and answer questions, which enables them to make valued contributions during lessons. Pupils are good humoured and friendly because they have high self-esteem. This atmosphere has a considerable effect on the standards reached by the pupils.
52. The headteacher' high quality of teaching and her very good work done as the English co-ordinator act as a stimulus for other staff. Teachers check how pupils are doing through formal assessments and check pupils' understanding throughout lessons well. This leads to adjustments in subsequent planning and support where it is most needed. Teachers do not set consistently in all year groups annual targets for individuals and groups of pupils to allow them to check that all pupils are achieving as well as they are capable. The marking of pupils' work in Years 3 and 4 is good, because the pupils are made aware of their achievements and what they need to do to improve but this good practice is not consistent throughout the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Opportunities to talk, to ask questions and to discuss in different subjects are used very effectively to develop speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given worthwhile opportunities to practise their writing skills in such subjects as history, geography, science and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 because the quality of teaching is very good.
- The subject co-ordinator provides innovative leadership of the curriculum and provides an excellent role model for other teachers.
- Resources are used creatively to assist pupils' learning.

Commentary

54. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 6 are likely to be well above the national average by the time the pupils leave the school. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and high quality teaching has been maintained in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 2, standards are likely to be above average. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is good, overall; it is very good in Years 3 to 6 and it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
55. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well and has a very clear view of the way pupils learn mathematics. The co-ordinator's teaching is of a very high standard and has had a positive influence on the improvements of teaching in Years 3 and 4. In a lesson taught by the co-ordinator in the Year 5 and 6 class, the teaching was extremely well organised and engaged all pupils actively at different levels of attainment through challenging investigations. There was a strong emphasis on discussion and pupils justified readily the reasons for their answers. The very skilful teaching led to pupils achieving highly.
56. Consistent approaches to using readily available resources are pushing on pupils' learning at a fast pace in Years 3 to 6. Instead of using a wide range of learning resources, the teachers have explored, using a very limited range of resources, to help pupils visualise and in order to simplify understanding of mathematics. The stimulus came from a training course led by an eminent lecturer, attended by the co-ordinator; the ideas were adapted and used by all staff in Years 3 to 6. In essence, the teaching of number work is related to the use of plastic cups, known refrains and a range of hand signals to identify the operation 'add', 'subtract', 'multiply' or

divide, as well as a focussed teaching area 'the magic table' to gain pupils' attention. The commitment to the methods by both staff and pupils are exceptional and result in high levels of achievement in lessons. The following is an example of the teaching of this method:

Example of outstanding practice

A lesson in Year 3/4, which used plastic cups, signals and a special teaching area to develop pupils' understanding of fractions.

The lesson began with the questioning of pupils to check understanding of the mathematical term 'multiple'. A game was played and this helped pupils to respond quickly to division problems. Pupils were keen to answer and the lesson moved at a brisk pace. A specific signal from the teacher resulted in pupils' immediate attention. A 'magic table' with a black cover was placed in a central position with plastic cups on it. The simplicity of the resources positioned on the table focused pupils' attention very well on the teaching. The teacher demonstrated very effectively how fractions are part of a whole by cutting up the plastic cups into different fractions. Pupils were involved very well in discussions and, clearly, gained a much better understanding as a result. The learning was extended to equivalent fractions and pupils responded with a known phrase - 'same value, different appearance' - when, for instance, two-quarters and half of cups were shown. The excellent use of the white plastic cups on a black background helped pupils to move on their learning very well, with challenge from the teaching, to visualise fractions without the use of the cups; as pupils said, 'Make a picture in your head.'

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Numeracy skills are practised satisfactorily in other subjects, overall. Examination of pupils' work shows some examples of mathematical skills being practised and assisting the learning in other subjects; however, in science good use is made of mathematics in calculations, creating graphs and measurement. The school is aware of the need to integrate fully the development of the use of mathematics in all subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils achieve very well because the subject is well led and managed and teaching is extremely good in Years 5 and 6.
- Cramped accommodation limits the possibilities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to learn through carrying out investigations themselves.

Commentary

58. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6 and are above average by the end of Year 2. Standards rose three years ago under new leadership and management and have been very good ever since, peaking last year to be among the top five per cent in the country, with over 80 per cent of pupils exceeding the level expected nationally at the end of Year 6. Standards this year are set to be a little lower because there is some variation in ability between year groups; nonetheless, it is anticipated that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, will attain nationally expected standards and over half will exceed them. Standards in the current Year 5 are even higher. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, are making satisfactory progress to attain above average standards at the end of Year 2 for they enter Year 1 at an above average level.

59. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is very good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear overview of standards. Monitoring of pupils' work and observations of lessons highlighted the different approaches to teaching scientific vocabulary and presenting findings from class to class; this is now more consistent and all year groups follow a formal system of recording investigations.
60. The quality of teaching is good, overall, though it varies from satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 to very good, with some excellent features, in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is better in Years 3 to 6 because more spacious rooms allow for much more practical and investigative work to take place. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching encourages pupils to think and to work things out for themselves, learning from their mistakes. The teaching sets high standards; for example, pupils are expected to present results analytically, drawing on their mathematical knowledge to use percentages, graphs, equations and comparative statements as a matter of course. A fast pace and a formal procedure for recording what they are doing as they go along help pupils to predict, record and analyse as well as decide whether they can trust their results or not. This systematic approach leads to very high achievement by all.
61. The limitations of the accommodation make it extremely difficult for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to have a lot of hands-on experience. This prevents higher-attainers from pursuing further challenges on their own and makes it harder for lower-attainers, who have to learn through observation rather than through carrying out investigations for themselves. In one lesson, pupils clearly enjoyed watching adults mixing different substances with hot water and made reasonable predictions as to whether the materials would stay in a changed state or not as the liquids cooled. The activities were well timed and pupils were beginning to use scientific vocabulary well to describe what they observed; however, the excitement and immediacy of discovery was missing because there is not the space for pupils of different ages and abilities to pursue different investigations on their own with adult assistance.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

62. No lessons were seen in information and communication technology; however, from discussions with pupils, examination of pupils' work over time and through observations of small groups of pupils working on computers, it is clear that standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
63. The limited space in the school results in computers being crammed into various corners of classrooms and the library. This makes the teaching of skills difficult. Breakdowns of old computers are also a barrier to learning.
64. A governor with expertise in information and communication technology assists teachers very well by working regularly with small groups of older pupils; for example, Year 5 and 6 pupils worked in rotation with the governor and gained a much better understanding of writing programs to control a set of traffic lights. The task was very challenging and made the pupils think hard, although this was made more difficult because a lively music lesson was taking place in close proximity to the computers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. The inadequate resources for the subject limit the opportunities to use information and communication technology to assist learning in other subjects. Computers are used well, however, in Years 3 and 4 to help individual pupils with specific special educational needs to assist their learning in literacy and numeracy. Older pupils in Year 6 have accessed the Internet to find information to support their learning in other subjects; for example, pupils in Year 6 searched for information from the Internet to find facts relating to the Romans as part of a history project. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use computers to play games to develop literacy and numeracy skills, though the number of computers and low specification of the computers limits opportunities.

HUMANITIES

66. Only one lesson was seen in religious education and no lessons were seen in either history or geography. Limited work was available for examination, and so no judgements have been made on provision, standards, teaching or learning in these subjects.
67. In **geography**, the co-ordinator's monitoring of pupils' work shows that pupils use different methods to search for information and cover an appropriate range of topics following both local and national guidance. The long, medium and short-term planning shows that the subject is taught in depth and is well resourced.
68. In **history**, pupils cover a full curriculum which links in well with literacy and numeracy. The co-ordinator has monitored and reviewed the planning and scrutinised pupils' work throughout the school. The governor with special responsibility for history commented, 'I am very impressed with all the topics being covered thus far.'
69. In **religious education**, the school follows the local education authority's syllabus for the subject. The recording of work is very limited, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The subject has been identified, rightly, as an area for improvement in the school development plan. The subject co-ordinator's file indicates that the subject is managed soundly. A detailed report by the governor responsible for the subject shows a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development.
70. The lesson seen in the Year 1 and 2 class provided good opportunities to use the subject to assist learning in art and design. The pupils gained a satisfactory understanding of the significance of the celebration of Easter. The planning was brief and the questioning of pupils was not sufficiently focused, though pupils' discussion with a partner was encouraged.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

71. Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education were sampled, as insufficient lessons were seen to make judgements.
72. In the two lessons of art and design observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. The school covers the national guidelines for curriculum coverage and has put plans in place for dealing with mixed aged classes. Teachers have taken the time to check on the content of the curriculum as a whole to ensure that there is a balance across the subjects over time. From checking the guidelines, teachers' planning and the work on display, it is evident that the pupils are given opportunities to use a range of media. These include paint, various drawing materials, printing, textiles and sculpture; for example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, the pupils used textured, coloured paper to weave designs into card to make an Easter basket. Whilst the work was of an acceptable standard, there were missed opportunities to extend the pupils' range of weaving techniques, through the alternate interlacing of the materials, for example. In a lesson in Years 3 and 4, the pupils used their 'Dream Picture' sketches, as a stimulus for printmaking. They carefully glued string to wooden blocks and made designs in thin sheets of polystyrene to make repeating patterns on paper. The standards in printing were broadly in line with expectation for these pupils. In Year 6, the pupils created a visual story of the 'Night Shift' by attaching carefully cut felt images to a background by gluing and sewing. Once again, the standard of work was broadly in line with expectation, which is an improvement from the last inspection. Pupils are taught about the work of known artists and their work as a stimulus for their own. The work of local artists is also acknowledged, as was seen in the felt making and felt designs in Years 5 and 6. A scrutiny of pupils' sketch books shows that drawing skills are underdeveloped and a barrier to further improvements in standards.
73. In design and technology, no lessons were seen; however, examination of planning shows that all aspects of the subject are taught in line with national guidance.

74. Only one lesson was seen in music and so no secure judgements can be made about provision, standards, teaching and learning; however, it is very clear that music has come on apace since the last inspection and that standards are set to become higher than those reported at that time. The school has put a great deal of energy and thought into enlivening and enriching the music curriculum. Good quality specialist teaching in all classes means that pupils are learning well. Lessons are well planned and the curriculum is challenging. Very good provision has been made for those who are more able or talented to take their music much further by playing regularly in the school's newly founded orchestra. A notable feature of this is the extent to which boys are involved, a greater proportion than in most other schools. At present, a group of gospel singers are giving exceptional tuition to Year 3 to 6 pupils, which is further encouraging the participation of boys who are ready to volunteer to sing alone in front of others and do so quite unselfconsciously, inspired by their teachers. Pupils who have profound learning difficulties have additional access at all times to any music going on in school if it is appropriate to their needs at that particular time. Music is making a very good contribution to pupils' personal, spiritual and cultural development.
75. In the one lesson of physical education observed, the quality of teaching was good. Year 3 and 4 pupils clearly enjoyed an energetic and well-managed session aimed at developing skills in performing a gymnastic sequence with a beginning, a middle and an end. The teacher's enthusiasm, allied to her good relationships and skilful management of pupils, resulted in pupils making good gains in using different balances, linking movements and levels. The pupils have the confidence to perform their imaginative sequences in front of their classmates, who offer comments on originality and the quality of balance. The pupils' skills' level is above that expected for their age.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

76. There were insufficient opportunities to judge provision in this area of learning; however, the very good ethos of the school supports pupils' personal development very well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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