

INSPECTION REPORT

RUSKIN INFANT SCHOOL

Wellingborough

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121889

Headteacher: Ms Heather Eley

Lead inspector: Mr Philip Gadsby

Dates of inspection: 6 – 9 October 2003

Inspection number: 260574

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	198
School address:	Ruskin Avenue Wellingborough Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN8 3EG
Telephone number:	01933 678448
Fax number:	01933 405640
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Waudby
Date of previous inspection:	28 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized infant school situated on the edge of Wellingborough, Northamptonshire. It has 198 pupils. Twenty-seven per cent of them are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. Over a third of pupils have special educational needs, which is above average. One pupil has a statutory statement of need. Nineteen pupils come from minority ethnic groups. There are two traveller children. The movement of pupils into and out of the school is average. Attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below average. The community the school serves experiences high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
5281	Philip Gadsby	Lead inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Mathematics Information & communication technology Art & design Physical education Music Design and technology
15522	Bernard Morgan	Lay inspector	
27710	Susan Guy	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Science History Geography Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

Parkman Ltd. in association with *PkR*
35 Trewartha Park
Weston-Super-Mare
North Somerset
BS23 2RT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school. It is improving under the very good leadership of its headteacher. It has recently experienced a period of instability due to changes in leadership and staffing and falling pupil numbers. Finances were affected and staffing was reduced. Standards and effectiveness dropped, but there has been improvement since April 2002. Teaching is now good. The school gives satisfactory value for money. Budgetary constraints and the long-term absence of the deputy head are barriers for the school as it continues to work for improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those from minority groups.
- The very good leadership of the headteacher is clearly focused on improvement.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils are good, and they all are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- There is good teaching, particularly in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils are well cared for by all staff.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory, although the school is working hard to improve it.
- Standards in English are too low.
- The governors' role and functions are underdeveloped.
- The work of subject co-ordinators does not raise standards sufficiently.

Since its previous inspection the school has experienced a lack of continuity in leadership, high staff turnover, falling pupil numbers and consequent budgetary issues. As a result standards fell and the overall effectiveness declined. This has been arrested and clear improvement is now taking place. The leadership of the head is very good, teaching and the curriculum are good and pupils are achieving well, although this has not yet resulted in sufficiently high standards, especially in English. The long-term absence of the deputy head and the fact that the leadership and management effectiveness of governors and subject co-ordinators are not as good as they should be are issues for the overall leadership of the school. There is, however, a clear emphasis in the school's improvement plan on developing governance and subject leadership, and evidence of improvement was found in the inspection. All members of the school community are committed to achieving higher standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	C	D	E	E
Writing	C	C	E	D
Mathematics	D	C	E	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Overall, pupils are achieving well. They enter the school with levels of attainment well below expectations. They are now making good progress through the school, although their attainment is still low when they enter the Reception class. By the end of Year 2 good progress has continued and they reach standards that show they have achieved well over time, a fact confirmed by data available from the Northamptonshire baseline assessment scheme used by the school. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that standards are not high enough, especially in English, and its focus is on achieving this. National test results for seven-year-olds in 2002 showed that at that time standards in

reading, writing and mathematics were well below national averages. The national test results for seven-year-olds, for 2003, show significant improvement. Results for reading are average, those mathematics above average and those for writing well above average when compared with similar schools. The school's targets for the future are challenging. Standards seen in subjects other than mathematics and English are close to those expected, except in music, where they are above those normally found.

Pupils' personal qualities develop well, although attendance remains unsatisfactory, despite some improvement as a result of the school's hard work in this area. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, enjoy school and behave well. Good relationships throughout the school have a positive effect on learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good throughout, particularly in the Nursery and Reception classes. As a result, pupils achieve well and standards are beginning to rise. There is a need to review the timings of some lessons so that quality can improve further.

The curriculum is well planned and, although there has been a sharp emphasis on English and mathematics, this has been appropriate. However, the school is rightly focusing on ensuring that other subjects are developed. Thus science is a major focus in the current annual plan. There is still room for improving the ways in which other subjects are used to develop pupils' skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Parents are supportive of the school and there are good links with the community and the junior school. The curriculum is enriched by the provision of out-of-hours clubs, as well as by educational visits and visitors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the headteacher, who has been in post since April 2002, are very good. She is very aware of what the school has to do to continue to improve. Clear strategies to achieve this are contained in the school's current improvement plan. The absence of a deputy head is a handicap to leadership and management overall. The contribution of governors has been limited. Although they are very supportive of the school, they do not have in place effective structures for monitoring and evaluating its strengths and weaknesses so that they can make more informed strategic decisions and fully support the head in her work. At present they rely too heavily upon her. Although some subject leaders are becoming more effective, in general they are not making enough contribution to raising standards. Both governance and subject leadership are priorities for development. The school continues to face difficulties with its budget and there is a shortfall for the coming financial year.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are positive about the school. Some parents have real concerns about the ways in which the Nursery and Reception classes are organised. Inspection evidence shows that provision for these classes is good. There is no doubt that pupils enjoy their school and are happy in it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English.
- Improve attendance.
- Improve the governance of the school.
- Improve the effectiveness of subject leaders.
- Use time more effectively in lessons.
- Use computers in lessons to help pupils learn as well as they can.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils are achieving well. They are attaining at least satisfactory standards in all subjects by the age of seven, except in English, where standards remain too low. This has a detrimental effect on standards in other subjects. However, standards in music are good. Since the school's previous inspection, standards rose before falling again in 2002. Current standards represent satisfactory improvement since then.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in music are good.
- Standards in national tests are improving and targets are challenging.
- Standards in English are too low.
- Standards overall represent good achievement from when children enter the
- School.

Commentary

1. When children enter the school their attainment is very low and well below expectations for this age group. This is particularly so in their personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy, where very many have particularly poor speaking and listening skills. By the end of the Reception year most are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical and creative development. It is unlikely that the majority of children will achieve the goals in personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy or in mathematical development. Nevertheless, the standards in Nursery and Reception years represent good achievement from the starting point of most of the children.
2. The results of the 2002 national assessments for seven-year-olds show that standards were well below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. They were well below the average for reading and mathematics and below average in writing, when compared with similar schools. However, when data from the Northamptonshire baseline assessment scheme, administered to pupils when they enter Reception year, is analysed, it indicates that the progress that they make from Reception to the end of Year 2 is above average. A provisional analysis of the assessment results for 2003 indicates that standards have risen significantly, with writing well above the average of similar schools, mathematics above average and reading in line with the average. The standard of work seen during the inspection confirms this pattern of improvement, although standards do remain too low, particularly in English, where the 2003 test results remain below the national average. The good achievement of pupils is in response to good teaching in Years 1 and 2, the improvement of which is the main focus of the leadership of the headteacher. The challenging targets for attainment in the 2004 national assessments are likely to be achieved.
3. Pupils' skills in numeracy and in information and communication technology (ICT), where standards are developing well as the new computer suite is used, are satisfactory but in literacy, standards remain below average. This makes it difficult for them to gain access to the whole curriculum and the need to improve standards in all areas of English must be a priority for the school.
4. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in other subjects, where there is sufficient evidence to make a secure judgement, and in music achievement and standards are good. Pupils with special educational needs, travellers and those from minority ethnic groups are all fully included in school, are well supported by staff, achieve well and reach satisfactory standards. Pupils with

special educational needs mostly achieve the appropriate targets set for them in their individual education plans (IEPs). The most significant feature of pupils' attainment and achievement is that they are showing clear signs of improvement following a period of decline when the school was suffering a significant degree of turbulence. This improvement is due to very good leadership from the headteacher and generally good teaching.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Overall these are a strength of the school. Pupils' attitudes to the school and learning are good. Their behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. Their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education is good. Attendance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships throughout the school have a positive impact on learning.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy succeeding.
- The personal development of pupils is good.
- Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good.
- Attendance is currently unsatisfactory but is improving as a result of the school's recent efforts

Commentary

6. Attendance is unsatisfactory, but the school is working hard to reduce both authorised and unauthorised absence. It has good monitoring procedures and follows up all absences assiduously. As a result, things are improving, although the position is still considerably worse than the national averages.
7. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Teachers receive and value their ideas, developing their self-esteem. Pupils respond positively to this approach. School assemblies, for example on bullying, offer them opportunities for reflection on their feelings and those of others. Pupils gain much from lessons, for example music, and participate enthusiastically. Other opportunities are provided by staff, for example in a Reception class where pupils were engaged in caring for animals. Collective worship meets statutory requirements.
8. Provision for pupils' moral education is good. They are taught the difference between right and wrong. They are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and to see how their actions affect others. They are being helped to develop self-control and to think carefully about their work and relationships. Adults in the school are good role models.
9. Provision for pupils' social development is good. The good relationships seen throughout the school contribute much to social development. Boys and girls of all ages co-operate well in lessons, for example in a Year 2 ICT lesson where they worked in pairs, sharing ideas and helping each other. The school's programme of personal, social and health education contributes well to this area. Pupils play together happily and without rancour and the school's lunchtime arrangements are well organised to provide a pleasant, sociable experience.
10. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. In lessons, they learn about their own culture and that of others, for example when looking at how people on the imaginary island of Strauy live. When painting portraits they were introduced to the work of a range of artists from different times and backgrounds. They enjoy music and participate enthusiastically. Opportunities are regularly provided by visitors for them to experience other art forms. They are also encouraged to learn about other cultures in assemblies.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.0
National data	0.5

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

Exclusions

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	180	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11. The quality of education provided by the school is good. The teaching is good throughout and this leads to pupils having positive attitudes and behaving and achieving well. The curriculum is comprehensively planned, although there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply and develop skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects. Some lessons are too long and the time within them is not always used well enough.

Teaching and learning

Overall the quality of teaching is good. It is particularly good for children in the Nursery and Reception unit. Pupils respond well and are making good progress to achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Behaviour management is good throughout the school.
- There is good lesson planning, clearly focusing on what pupils are expected to learn.
- Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is good.

- There is very good use of teaching assistants in all classes.
- The use of time within lessons does not allow pupils enough chance to be involved in their work.
- The systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is not consistent in all subject areas.

Commentary

12. The strengths in teaching far outweigh the weaknesses. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and as a result pupils' achievement is good. Teaching by all adults in the newly organised Foundation Stage unit is good. As a result children feel safe and secure and achieve well. Systems for the monitoring of teaching and learning are being developed.
13. In all lessons seen teachers' very good relationships with pupils ensured a positive approach and good attitudes to learning. Children in the Foundation Stage have settled very well and take part confidently in activities.
14. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this results in good behaviour throughout the school. Teachers use their good knowledge of individual pupils so that any challenging behaviour is handled appropriately. The staff in the Foundation Stage unit have already established a calm atmosphere where children behave well.
15. Teachers plan lively lessons which ensure that children are motivated. In mathematics and English work is planned at several levels to meet the needs of groups of pupils of differing abilities. The objectives of the lessons are made clear to pupils to help them to understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers use effective questioning to extend pupils' learning and to check what they have learnt. They plan for a variety of teaching methods, which help pupils to sustain concentration and to learn well. Teachers plan opportunities for children to work independently; for instance, in a Year 1 class pupils were developing their speaking and listening skills in 'The Three Bears' Cottage'. In the Foundation Stage classes there is a good balance between activities where adults work with the children and those where children are able to develop their own play and ideas.
16. Teachers understand the way in which pupils learn and they have a secure knowledge of the curriculum subjects. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies appropriately and have rightly adapted the teaching in Year 1 to match the needs of the pupils. The school has recently developed a marking policy, which is improving consistency although it does not always focus clearly on what pupils need to do in order to improve their work.
17. Teaching assistants provide valuable support in the school. They work closely with the teachers and know the pupils very well. They are used imaginatively and effectively in lessons. For example, one teaching assistant took notes for Year 2 children when they were predicting the end of a story. They make a particularly good contribution to the management of behaviour and to the learning of pupils with special educational needs. In the Foundation Stage teaching assistants are used very well to support individuals and groups of children.
18. The use of time within some lessons does not allow enough opportunities for pupils to be involved in their own work. They sometimes spend too long sitting on the carpet, which limits the amount of time for them to complete tasks. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their own writing skills. Evidence from pupils' work in religious education, history and geography indicates that there are only limited opportunities for independent writing.
19. The systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is not consistent in all subject areas. In some subjects management is good. Some co-ordinators have developed monitoring systems, such as looking at pupils' work and analysing data, which result in appropriate decisions about priorities for development. All co-ordinators need to become more effective in order to raise standards in all subjects.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	16	8	0	0	0

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

The curriculum

20. The overall quality of the curriculum is good. It meets all statutory requirements. Recently there has been a sharp focus on English and mathematics, with an appropriate emphasis on implementing the national strategies for raising achievement in literacy and numeracy. This has led to the emphasis on other subjects being reduced. The school is aware of this, and plans to focus on other subjects more, such as science, which is a priority in its current improvement plan. There is also a need to increase the opportunities the pupils have to apply and develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good long-term planning to ensure that all of the curriculum is covered.
- The way in which teachers plan to teach the curriculum in the medium and short term is good.
- The environment and the provision of resources have a positive effect on pupils' learning.
- There are not enough opportunities planned and provided for pupils to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in the different subjects.
- Because of the way in which curriculum time is allocated through the timetable for Years 1 and 2, some lessons are too long.

Commentary

21. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for pupils are satisfactory. There has been a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, which is now resulting in rising standards. This has had some impact on the time available for other subjects, but careful long-term planning ensures that they are all covered. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are all met. At present too few opportunities are provided for pupils to apply and develop important literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. The curriculum is enriched through after-school and lunchtime clubs, visits out and visitors to the school.
22. All pupils are able to take full advantage of the curriculum opportunities the school offers. Those with special educational needs are particularly well supported in this regard, as are the traveller children in the school. Individual education plans, the quality of which has improved significantly recently, are used well by staff, who adapt the planned learning to meet the needs of individuals. Pupils from ethnic minority groups are also fully included. The major factor limiting pupils' access to the whole curriculum is low standards in English, particularly speaking, listening and writing. Opportunities to extend and improve these across the whole range of the curriculum are not planned for thoroughly enough.
23. Pupils' achievement is beginning to be monitored systematically in English and mathematics. Performance in national tests is analysed and the information gained is used to inform future planning and the setting of targets to raise achievement further. Assessment and monitoring are much more limited in other subjects. It is thus more difficult for planning to take account of pupils' needs. Personal, social and health education is taught and satisfactory attention is given to sex education, drugs education and citizenship.

24. The school building and its grounds, for which the school has appropriate plans for development, support quality. Teaching and support staff have created a bright and stimulating learning environment. Resources are sufficient to support the curriculum generally, and in most subjects are good, although more computers in classrooms would assist in extending the pupils' use of ICT skills they learn in the computer suite. Support staff are very well deployed and make an important contribution to the achievement of all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

25. The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good. Learning and development are supported and promoted well. Health and safety procedures are good. Good arrangements are in place to monitor the personal development and achievements of pupils. This aspect is a strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Care is taken to keep pupils safe and secure.
- Induction arrangements are good.
- Each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school.
- Support staff have a positive impact on learning.

Commentary

26. The school is a secure environment in which pupils try hard and enjoy learning. All staff work hard to care for pupils, who respond very well to the positive relationships throughout the school. All staff are well aware of child protection arrangements, and the designated person has been suitably trained. The school has been successful in developing an environment which is fully inclusive and promotes racial harmony.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the local community is good. Links with other schools are very good. The liaison with the associated junior school to which most pupils transfer is a strength.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel that the school is working hard for their children and is improving.
- Overall communication with parents is good with some very good features.
- Reports on pupils' progress are very good.
- The school has established comprehensive procedures for consulting parents, as it did with the plan to reorganise the Foundation Stage.
- The work of the Friends of the School is helping to promote pupils' development well.
- A few parents have expressed concern about the reorganisation of the Foundation Stage.
- Links with local schools are very good.

Commentary

27. Parents are supportive of the school. They are confident that staff are committed to their children's well-being and development. They are aware that the school is improving and have confidence in its leadership. The school takes care in its communication with parents and works hard to keep them well informed about its activities through regular newsletters, for example. Written reports on pupils' progress are very good, focusing closely on what they have learnt and how they have developed since the last report. The work of the recently formed Friends of the School is supporting pupils' personal development well. Parents are appreciative of the induction arrangements which enable their children to settle quickly and happily to school life. Inspection

evidence does not support the concerns expressed by a small number of parents about the new arrangements for the Foundation Stage.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

28. The leadership and management of the head teacher are very good. She has a clear vision for the future of the school and focuses on what will lead to improvement. The governors are fully supportive of the school but do not have adequate means of knowing how well it is doing. As a result, it is difficult for them to have an informed, strategic impact on its development. The role of subject co-ordinators is under developed. The long-term absence of the deputy head is a barrier to improvement, as is the school's budget deficit.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good.
- Leadership at all levels is aware of the need for improvement and is committed to achieving it.
- The senior management team is weakened by the absence of the deputy head.
- The governing body has weak systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school.
- The role of the subject leaders in raising achievement is not fully developed.

Commentary

29. The headteacher has been in post for four terms. Before her appointment there was a significant degree of instability in the leadership of the school. Both before and since her appointment there have been numerous changes in teaching staff. Half of the staff in Years 1 and 2 were appointed from the September preceding this inspection. There was a staff redundancy last year as falling pupil numbers led to a reducing budget. Within this context the head has very quickly identified what needs to be done to improve the school. Systems for rigorous self-evaluation are now in place. Pupils' achievements are tracked in order to monitor their progress and to set targets for further improvement. The school improvement plan identifies clear actions with specific, measurable success criteria. Performance management systems are now fully in place.

30. Governors are very supportive of the school and have been effective in managing staff redundancy and sorting out recent problems with the school's finances, although the budget remains difficult. The governing body meets all of its statutory responsibilities. However, it has not developed good systems for knowing how well the school is doing, relying too heavily on information from the headteacher. Consequently, it has been difficult for them to make a meaningful contribution to the strategic vision for the school. They are now aware of this and are working closely with the headteacher to develop better systems for monitoring and evaluation. They have a very strong commitment to becoming a better governing body.

31. The work of subject co-ordinators and their contribution to improving the achievement of pupils are limited. They are best in English and mathematics, where processes to analyse teachers' plans, pupils' work and performance data are in place. Pupils' achievement in these subjects is now tracked. The headteacher and science co-ordinator have worked together, as part of the school improvement plan, to establish a pattern of review which includes direct observation of teaching and learning in classrooms. The outcomes are fed into evaluation of provision so that further improvement can be planned. This will form a good model for developments in other subjects, where systems are, to say the least, embryonic.

32. Staff morale is good and they form an effective team. They are very clear about what they need to do to continue to improve the school and are committed to this. For example, all of them expressed a real desire to improve their performance as subject leaders within the constraints of resources. Some time has been planned to enable them to develop their subject roles. They are appreciative of this. The way in which staff at all levels work to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life is a strength. This is an inclusive school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good learning environment ensures a wide range of high-quality learning experiences for children.
- All adults relate very well to children and to each other.
- Induction procedures are good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The curriculum is well planned.
- There is a good balance between adult-directed and child-selected activities.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support children's learning.
- Management of the Foundation Stage is good.

Commentary

33. All children of Reception and Nursery age at present attend the school on a part-time basis. Reception children will attend full-time after autumn half-term. There are effective induction procedures and parents/carers feel welcome and receive good information. This year the provision for the Foundation Stage has been reorganised into a single unit. The learning environment is good and ensures that children have access to a wide range of high-quality experiences covering all areas of learning.
34. The unit is well managed and teachers, nursery nurse and teaching assistants have worked hard to develop a well-ordered atmosphere where children feel safe. The curriculum is well planned to ensure coverage of the areas of learning. All staff understand the principles of early years education and ensure that there is a balance of adult-directed and child-selected activities. All adults already know the children very well and are able to make provision for individual needs.
35. Monitoring and evaluation of the teaching in the unit are good and enable the co-ordinator to plan further developments appropriately. For instance, staff recognise the need to constantly review the effectiveness of provision and to adapt where necessary. There are good plans to develop the outdoor environment. This will further enhance the provision for the Foundation Stage children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Children achieve well.
- The learning environment enables children to develop independence.
- Adults relate very well to children and give them confidence.
- Independent tasks are not well enough structured to ensure that the older or more able children extend their learning.

Commentary

36. Most children enter the Nursery and Reception with immature personal, social and emotional development. The adults provide good role models and there is a very clear focus on developing children's ability to become independent, to take turns and to work and play together. Children behave well and move sensibly around the unit, appropriately selecting independent activities. Many are able to sustain concentration in a group. For instance, Reception children developed their learning in a session focusing on parts of the body. However, most children are not on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Children achieve well.
- Adult interaction with children extends their speaking and listening skills.
- Effective curriculum planning ensures a clear focus on the needs of the children.
- Children do not have enough opportunities for independent writing.

Commentary

37. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below national expectations, particularly in speaking and listening. On entry to Reception children still have immature skills in this area of learning. The majority of children are not on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. This affects their learning in other areas of the curriculum.

38. Staff place a high priority on communication and language skills and ensure that all activities provide opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. All adults interact well with the children and take every opportunity to extend their vocabulary, so that children achieve well.

39. There is a good emphasis on the development of reading skills. The literate environment is helping children to understand that words have meaning. Teachers are now having short focused literacy sessions with the Reception children, who achieve well. In one session children were able to discuss the front cover of a big book and were beginning to develop their knowledge of letter sounds.

40. Teachers help children to develop their writing skills. For instance, a group of Reception children were making books about themselves. There are some opportunities for children to write independently. However, this needs to be developed, especially for Reception children, where focused tasks would help concentration and learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Children achieve well.
- All adults make use of opportunities to develop children's learning in mathematics.
- Independent tasks are not yet structured to ensure that the older or more able children extend their learning.

Commentary

41. Children enter the Nursery with few mathematical skills, but good teaching enables them to make good progress. Despite this, however, most children are not on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. The more able children are working at national expectations and are able to match numbers to 10 and count up to 20.
42. Teachers plan group times with mathematical focus, and children achieve well in these sessions. All adults also use every opportunity to develop children's understanding; for example, snack time was used well to develop counting and number skills. Many opportunities for mathematical development are also available through the independent activities. In the home corner, for example, children matched crockery and cutlery to the number of children. However, some tasks are not structured to enable the older or more able children to extend their learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

The provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Children make good progress.
- Children are achieving in line with expectations.

Commentary

43. Many children enter the Nursery with little understanding of this area of learning. The wide range of experiences in the unit and good teaching enable them to make good progress and they achieve well. Most are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.
44. There is a good balance between adult-directed and child-selected activities. With good questioning by the teacher Reception children were able to make predictions about sinking and floating. There is an appropriate emphasis on ICT, and children use computers, listening centres and language machines confidently. There are many opportunities for them to learn about animals and plants. For instance, they enjoy looking after the fish and the guinea pig.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Opportunities for physical development are well planned.
- Children achieve well and are on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals.
- Appropriate plans are in place to increase opportunities for physical development.

Commentary

45. Most children enter the Nursery with physical skills below those expected for their age. Pencil skills are particularly underdeveloped. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage so that many are expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Because teachers plan activities where children are able to manipulate materials such as clay, they achieve well. Many children are able to throw and catch large balls with confidence because there are lots of chances for them to practise and make good progress in developing the skill.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- There is an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-selected activities.
- Children achieve well and are on target to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.

Commentary

46. Most children enter the Nursery with creative skills below those expected for their age. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress and are on target to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception.
47. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills through role-play, art and music. Reception children, supported by adults, were able to draw representations of a model with pastels and play 'Twinkle Twinkle' on chime bars.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests for seven-year-olds have improved and the school has set challenging targets for 2004. However, standards in English are still too low.
- Teaching overall is good.
- Teachers manage behaviour very effectively.
- Teaching assistants are used well to support children, including those with special educational needs.
- The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well.
- The use of time within some lessons does not give pupils enough opportunity to be involved in their own work.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use language and literacy in other areas of the curriculum.

Commentary

48. Pupils achieve well in English, although standards are still below expectations. The school's results in the 2003 national tests improved following a decline in the previous years. Simple tests taken when children first join the school indicate that they make above average progress from their entry to the Reception class to the end of Year 2. Evidence from data and from the inspection shows that pupils are achieving well. Challenging targets have been set for 2004 and evidence suggests that the good teaching in Year 2 will enable pupils to achieve these targets.
49. Pupils' standards in speaking and listening are below the national expectations. Throughout the school there is an appropriate emphasis on the development of these skills during the literacy sessions. All staff use good levels of vocabulary and act as good role models. The good relationships with adults encourage pupils to be confident in speaking.

50. Standards in reading are below the national expectations. Pupils make good progress through the school and most are expected to achieve the standards appropriate for their age by the end of Year 2. Individual, group and whole-class reading sessions are used well to enable pupils to develop their reading skills. Progress to the higher levels is sometimes prevented by pupils' limited range of vocabulary.
51. Standards in writing are below national expectations, although pupils are making good progress, particularly in Year 2. Standards of handwriting are showing considerable improvement as a result of teachers' clear focus on the presentation of work and the use of a recently purchased scheme. The quality of spelling is below the expected level. However, pupils are now systematically learning spellings of common words and spelling patterns. They do not do enough independent writing to enable them to make further progress.
52. Teaching in English lessons is good overall. Teachers plan lively lessons, which ensure that children are motivated to learn. Work is planned at several different levels to meet the needs of groups of pupils of differing abilities. The objectives of the lessons are made clear to pupils and this helps them to understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers use effective questioning to extend pupils' learning and to check what they have learnt. They plan for a variety of teaching methods, which help pupils to sustain concentration and to learn well. Teachers plan opportunities for children to work independently; for instance, in a Year 1 class pupils were developing their speaking and listening skills in 'The Three Bears' Cottage'. The school has a recently developed marking policy. However, it is not yet fully implemented.
53. Teachers have effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy. The structure of the sessions is appropriate and pupils are able to work independently. Teachers in Year 1 are rightly adapting the structure to suit the needs of their pupils. Throughout the school the use of time within lessons sometimes limits pupils' opportunities to do their own work. There is also a need to ensure that there are enough regular opportunities for all pupils to write independently.
54. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has developed monitoring systems, such as looking at pupils' work and analysing data, which enable her to make appropriate decisions about priorities for development.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. There is an appropriate emphasis throughout the curriculum on the development of language skills. For instance, music is used very well to develop pupils' listening skills. They are encouraged to read regularly and books are taken home each day to share with parents/carers. A writing workshop for Year 2 pupils offers the opportunity for extended writing. However, not enough use is made of subjects such as history, geography and religious education to develop pupils' independent writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improving standards in national tests.
- Good teaching of the subject.
- Using and applying mathematics are weaker than other aspects of the subject.

Commentary

56. The standards pupils achieved in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2002 were well below the national average and also well below the average for similar kinds of school. The national comparison mirrors the situation when the school was previously inspected in 1998. Since then, standards in tests improved before declining again in 2002. However, children make good progress over their time in the infants. Analysis of the results of the 2003 tests shows a significant improvement in mathematics. Analysis of the work of the Year 2 pupils who left the school in July 2003 confirms that the standards in the books were consistent with those in tests. The standards of work seen during the inspection confirm that pupils are achieving well and are on track to reach the challenging targets the school has set itself for the 2004 tests, in a group which has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
57. Pupils in Year 1 can count reliably, order numbers and perform simple addition and subtraction mentally. Higher-attaining pupils can perform these operations to 20 and beyond. They can sort and classify objects by shape, colour and other attributes, and they know simple properties of shapes. They are beginning to discuss and understand the various strategies they use to solve problems. In Year 2 pupils are using and understanding place value with tens and units, can count reliably to 100 and beyond, are aware of order, sequence and pattern in number and can perform addition and subtraction operations. These include using money. Although higher-attaining pupils are challenged to extend their learning through more open-ended investigations, this is an approach which could be extended, with more activities related to using and applying mathematics in different contexts and for different purposes. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the work being tailored to their needs and through good support from teaching assistants.
58. Teaching seen during the inspection was good. It is guided by the National Strategy for Numeracy. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally high, although not enough is expected of how much work they can produce in the time given and the extent and quality of their recording of mathematics. Although pupils generally achieve well in response to effective teaching, sometimes they are handicapped because the whole-class sessions are too long and the amount of time available for individual and group work is reduced.
59. The subject leader is also the leader of the Foundation Stage. Her duties there sometimes mean that she cannot always be fully involved with teachers of Years 1 and 2, which is a barrier to the effectiveness of her role. She does see planning and sees a need to ensure that there is continuity of provision between the Foundation Stage and the pupils in later classes. She has carried out an extensive analysis of the national test results to identify strengths and weaknesses in the performance of the school. Pupils' progress in their mathematical achievement is now tracked systematically using a computer program and the information is used to set targets for future attainment. The subject leader is also keen to extend the use of investigative and practical mathematics and is aware that the use of ICT is underdeveloped in the subject. She liaises well with the subject leader in the junior school.
60. Although the previous inspection report did not make an obvious judgement of mathematics provision in the school as a whole, it is clear that improvement has been at least satisfactory since then.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The development and application of pupils' mathematics skills in other subjects are limited. Data handling and measurement are planned in some science lessons but overall the provision for mathematics across the curriculum is not systematic enough. ICT is not used widely in mathematics lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well organised and there is some good teaching.
- Pupils make good progress in their learning in response to good teaching.
- The timing of lessons does not always enable pupils to achieve as well as they might.

Commentary

62. The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books indicates that standards are about average. They can use simple recording methods, including diagrams, to describe their ideas and observations. Pupils in Year 1 could generalise about how people change as they grow, using pictures of themselves now and as young babies. They are aware that living things grow. In one lesson observed in Year 2, although pupils were making some progress as they learned about different levels of care necessary for the young of different species, the variables were too similar for them to fully understand the concept. The balance between whole-class discussion and allowing pupils to work collaboratively, developing their speaking and listening skills and, importantly, increasing the quantity of work they record is not always right. Pupils achieved best when the ideas were presented practically and visually. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and good when the learning targets are presented in an interesting and challenging way.

63. Classroom assistants give good support to pupils, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers are trying to plan more challenging work for able pupils.

64. Science is currently an area of focus in the school improvement plan. The subject leader is working in collaboration with the headteacher to implement a clearly-focused action plan. Teaching is guided and supported by the national QCA scheme. Medium-term planning is monitored by the subject leader, and advice and support are offered. She has attended training and this forms the basis of in-house training for other staff. So far, this has covered science investigations. Resources are in place and are satisfactorily organised. With the head, the subject leader has carried out monitoring by direct observation of teaching and learning in classrooms. Findings have been fed back to staff, and areas for further development incorporated into the plan. These include the need for a closer analysis of the end of key stage teacher assessments of pupils' standards, and greater attention to how literacy, numeracy, and particularly ICT, are applied and developed in science. There is also a need for greater liaison with Foundation Stage staff to ensure that learning there is systematically built upon. The role of the subject leader in science is developing well and provides a model for other subjects and areas. There has been satisfactory improvement in science since the school's previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective use of the new ICT suite is leading to an improvement in standards.
- Pupils' learning is hampered by poor literacy skills.

Commentary

65. The school is making good use of the recently installed computer suite, including the interactive whiteboard, to improve pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. They are

becoming increasingly proficient in using the keyboard, mouse and screen icons to carry out tasks, such as editing texts and using simulation programs to model environments. Some can produce their own text documents and use programs such as "My World" to produce and print images. Where possible, and within the constraint of there being few computers per classroom, teachers are giving opportunities within other subjects for pupils to practise, apply and develop the skills they have learned. However, the use of ICT across all subjects is inadequate. The achievement of a significant number of pupils is limited because of their poor reading skills. They cannot access certain programs or carry out some tasks because they cannot decipher the on-screen instructions. In the school's previous inspection standards in ICT were found to match those expected nationally for pupils of this age. This remains the case. However, it is fair to point out that the requirements of national standards are now higher.

66. The recently appointed subject leader for ICT is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She has carried out an audit of resources, which are satisfactory. She looks at colleagues' planning and offers help and support. As yet, though, she is not aware of standards across the school, because there is little opportunity for her to observe teaching or carry out other monitoring and evaluation activities. She is aware of the school's priority to improve this and is very keen to do so.

HUMANITIES

67. It was only possible to observe one lesson of religious education and one lesson of geography. Comments are based on these lessons, on teachers' planning, on an analysis of pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils and co-ordinators.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the lesson observed teaching was good.
- Real objects are used well to support pupils' learning.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their independent writing skills.

Commentary

68. Standards at the end Year 2 are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They are developing an understanding of different religions; for instance, they were able to discuss the importance of the Torah Scroll to the Jewish religion. Pupils were able to make links between the Ten Commandments and the rules of the school. Year 2 work shows that children know the story of Joseph and the Good Samaritan and understand the importance of Easter.

69. The comprehensive long-, medium- and short-term planning ensures that, over the year and the key stage, pupils experience the full range of the required syllabus. There are examples of good links with other curriculum subjects; for example, Year 2 pupils had produced observational drawings of the Torah Scroll. However, evidence from pupils' work indicates that there are only limited opportunities for them to develop their writing skills through religious education.

Geography and History

Provision in geography and history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the one lesson observed teaching was good.

- There are examples of good cross-curricular links.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their independent writing skills.

Commentary

70. Discussions with pupils and evidence from the observed lesson show that standards in geography and history are in line with national expectations. Pupils achieve well in skills and understanding, for instance of the importance of different forms of transport. However, this is not demonstrated in written work, which reflects pupils' more limited literacy skills.
71. The comprehensive long-, medium- and short term-planning ensures that, over the year and the key stage, pupils experience the full range of the curriculum. The use of published schemes of work, adapted by the teachers, supports continuity and progression. Teachers have made good links with other curriculum subjects; for instance, Year 1 pupils make toys as part of their history topic. There are examples of pupils using independent writing in history and geography, for example, Year 2 pupils' letters to Florence Nightingale. However, these opportunities are too limited.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

72. No lessons were observed in art and design or design and technology. Inspectors did look at examples of work done by pupils in these subjects and discussed it with some of them. They looked at the way teachers plan the work and discussed provision with the member of staff responsible for leading the subjects. Photographic evidence of previous activity in the subjects was considered. The evidence altogether indicates that provision in the subjects is satisfactory. Three lessons were observed in both music and physical education. Singing was observed in school assemblies. Planning in these subjects was analysed and discussions took place with subject leaders, teachers and pupils.
73. In art and design, and design and technology, resources are satisfactory, but the subject leader is clear that there is a need for a more thorough audit and organisation of them if provision is to improve. Teachers' planning is guided by nationally published schemes of work, which indicates that most elements of the subjects are covered. At present, however, there is no systematic process for the subject leader to find out how good provision and standards are so that she knows where to target efforts to improve them.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and sometimes very good teaching leads to pupils learning well.
- There are high standards in singing and pupils' knowledge and understanding of music.
- Pupils have positive, enthusiastic attitudes, and all of them are fully included in lessons, which they enjoy.

Commentary

74. In the lessons observed the teaching was good or very good. All pupils are fully involved, including those with special educational needs. They respond to the teaching with great enthusiasm and achieve well. They sing with a very good sense of rhythm and melody. Their knowledge and understanding of different musical instruments are good, and many are beginning to see how there is a connection between different instruments and elements of music such as pitch, duration, tempo and dynamics. They are beginning to understand how sounds can be represented symbolically.

75. Teachers' planning is guided by a nationally available scheme of work, which ensures that lessons build on the pupils' previous learning, although importantly the content is adapted and pitched appropriately for the pupils. Resources are satisfactory. The subject leader has only recently been appointed and as yet is not able to monitor and evaluate music, although she is keen to do so. Pupils are able to participate in an after-school choir which meets at the associated junior school.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn new skills quickly and achieve well.
- Lessons are too long.

Commentary

76. In the school's previous inspection physical education was judged to be unsatisfactory. It has now improved. The teaching seen was generally good. Lessons are planned well, resources are well organised and the behaviour of pupils is well managed. As a result, they make good progress in their learning, for example, of ball skills and control and co-ordination in their movements, and they achieve well. However, the lessons observed were too long, so the quality of teaching and learning declined towards the end of them. All pupils are fully included in lessons and those with special educational needs, including those with physical problems, are supported well by teaching assistants, who ensure that they take part in all activities.

77. Co-ordination is underdeveloped as there is little opportunity for the subject leader to monitor quality and standards. An after-school cricket and football clubs enrich the subject for some pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is planned into the curriculum.

Commentary

78. The arrangements for personal, social and health education (PSHE), including drugs education, are satisfactory. A scheme of work is available to guide teachers, and the subject is supported by a co-ordinator. The programme of work is taught partly through other subjects. Thus pupils learn in science about healthy eating and in physical education about the importance of exercise. Outside visitors, such as the community police officer, who spoke about bullying, add quality to the provision. Pupils are clearly taught about the need to play a positive part in their school community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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

