

INSPECTION REPORT

IMPERIAL AVENUE INFANT SCHOOL

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120014

Headteacher: Mrs Diana Mackey

Lead inspector: Dennis Maxwell

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th December 2003

Inspection number: 260627

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	259.5
School address:	Imperial Avenue Leicester
Postcode:	LE3 1AH
Telephone number:	(0116) 282 4503
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Trevor Worsfold
Date of previous inspection:	1 st March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Imperial Avenue Infant school and the associated Cherryleas Assessment Centre is a community school for children aged from three to seven years. The Cherryleas Centre provides a curriculum matched to the identified needs of children having a wide range of special educational needs in conjunction with a careful programme of assessment. There are 226 full-time pupils and a further 67 part-time children of nursery age. The school's intake is largely of White British background but there are also small numbers of children from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds who are valued as bringing diversity to the children's experience. Several children are at an early stage of English language acquisition and the proportion is high relative to national figures. The level of pupil mobility is a little higher than usual. The socio-economic circumstances of the families in the community serving Imperial are much less favourable than usual. Families with children at Cherryleas are more representative of the wider community in Leicester. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. On average, the children's attainment on entry to Imperial is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is around ten per cent. At Cherryleas all children attending the Centre are identified as having special educational needs. The school gained an Investors in People Award in 2002. It is in an Education Action Zone and benefits from the partnership with nearby schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8798	Dennis Maxwell	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education
9928	Alan Dobson	Lay inspector	Links with the community
30144	Edgar Hastings	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Provision for pupils with English as an additional language
30691	Kathleen Yates	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Music Provision for pupils with special educational needs The work of the special educational needs unit

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a good quality of education for the children because provision and the quality of teaching at Cherryleas and Imperial are good. The headteacher gives excellent pastoral care for all members of the school community. Arrangements to include all pupils in activities according to their needs are very good. At Cherryleas, members of staff employ a high level of professional skill to meet the diverse needs of the children. At Imperial, there is a very wide range of attainment amongst the pupils. Overall, attainment on entry to Imperial is well below average, particularly in early communication and language skills which are very low and act as significant barriers to learning. Standards are well below average by Year 2 but there is evidence of improving achievement because the school provides a very good climate of care and attention to basic learning skills. Pupils take a good interest in their activities. Behaviour is good at Imperial although several pupils have challenging behaviour at times. Leadership and management by the governing body and the senior staff are very good. Governors have made strong teaching appointments recently after a period of considerable staff turnover, which have resulted in improved teaching and subject management. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The high level of care and nurturing for all pupils helps prepare them to learn.
- The quality of teaching and of the curriculum is good. Pupils are included very well in activities.
- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour are shown by their good achievement.
- There are very good links with parents at both Cherryleas and Imperial.
- Standards are well below the national average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics, but pupils' improved speaking and listening skills are beginning to have an impact.
- Several assessment procedures help in planning lessons and provision but at Imperial these are not brought together sufficiently to track pupils and provide well-informed targets.
- Provision for outdoor play at Cherryleas is limited.
- The level of attendance at Imperial is well below that normally found in infant schools.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed and several worthwhile initiatives have been introduced. Imperial has adopted national guidance for all subjects and generally adapts these well for children at the school. Provision and attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education at Cherryleas are now satisfactory. The curriculum and assessment procedures at Cherryleas are good and provide for detailed planning. At Imperial there are several good individual assessment systems but whole-school procedures are not sufficiently rigorous. Standards in reading and mathematics have improved at a slightly faster rate than the national trend, because the school is beginning to see the results of a new and challenging language and reading programme.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The results for 2003 relate to pupils at Imperial only but for 2001 and 2002 results include pupils at Cherryleas.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	E	E*	E	C
Writing	E	E*	E	E
Mathematics	E	E*	D	B

*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*

The children at Cherryleas achieve appropriately in relation to their learning needs and identified targets. Well-chosen activities provide a good combination of time for social development and attention to specific skills for individual children.

At Imperial, children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because the good teaching and well-managed activities pay good attention to developing their early learning skills. A small proportion of high attaining pupils is likely to exceed the expectation in the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception but overall standards are well below average.

Pupils at Imperial achieve well through the school overall and slightly better than usual in Years 1 and 2 because good teaching, particularly of language skills, has a good impact on their understanding. The work of the skilled learning mentors is very effective in preparing children to learn. Pupils make more than the expected progress in reading in Years 1 and 2 through the effects of the well-structured scheme and the focus on word-building strategies, although standards in reading by Year 2 are below average. The school provides good support to meet the very wide range of social, behavioural and learning needs of the children, which are significant barriers to learning. Pupils' speaking skills and their confidence improve well, as shown during rehearsals for the Christmas production. Standards overall in the work seen, particularly in writing and mathematics are well below the national average by Year 2 but learning is good because most pupils take a lively interest in the activities. A few higher attaining pupils are on course to exceed the expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science, since they are usually challenged well by the tasks. The evidence available indicates that standards overall in the other subjects are mostly in line with expectations, or are below in subjects that require much writing, such as in history. The positive effects of improved behaviour management, the emphasis on oral and reading skills, and good staff deployment are combining and give good indications that standards will improve further by summer 2004. For the pupils at Imperial only, standards in the national tests of summer 2003 were well below the national average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. However, in relation to similar schools standards in mathematics were above average and in reading were average.

Pupils have good attitudes and behaviour at Imperial. At Cherryleas, while children generally take a good interest in activities, their behaviour is satisfactory since several children find maintaining self-discipline difficult. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory at Cherryleas. At Imperial attendance is well below average and punctuality is unsatisfactory, which have an adverse effect on those children's learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory at Imperial and at Cherryleas the children have a good awareness of these aspects.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching is good, particularly the way teachers encourage pupils to take part in the activities and their insistence on high standards of behaviour. Teachers provide good practical experiences and clear explanations which enable pupils to make good gains in their skills and understanding. Children's ability to talk about their observations during discussion with an adult is better than their ability to write independently. The level of care, welfare and nurturing for all pupils is very good. These aspects form a highly significant ingredient in the process of improving pupils' self-esteem and hence promoting their achievement. There are very good links with parents and the partnership with the community is good. Parents at Cherryleas value the regular contacts with staff and the care they provide.

At Imperial, teachers' strategies for explaining ideas and encouraging children to converse with talking partners are effective in helping to raise standards. The good use of ICT in subjects such as English, mathematics and history promotes good learning and indicates a good recent strength in provision. Daily assessments are generally good in identifying pupils' learning difficulties but at Imperial procedures to assess and record pupils' progress are not sufficiently rigorous or informative. The provision for outdoor play is limited and not readily accessible for all children in the Foundation Stage, particularly at Cherryleas.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher has introduced several very good initiatives at Imperial that are effective in helping to raise standards. She has particular skills in developing contacts that benefit the school. These have led to the creation of the multi-sensory room at Cherryleas and the Blossom community room at Imperial, both of which have a strong impact on pupils' learning. The deputy headteacher, the teacher in charge at Cherryleas and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator at Imperial provide very good leadership that has a clear impact on the quality of children's learning. Members of staff are encouraged to develop their expertise, which helps raise standards. The governing body provides very good strategic direction because it evaluates the effectiveness of decisions in relation to the quality of pupils' learning and standards. The governing body ensures that the school complies with statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents think the school makes good provision for their children. Many parents appreciate the early morning session at Imperial when they can work for a while with their child. Pupils demonstrate good feelings about the school in the way they work and play.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Establish rigorous and informative assessment procedures at Imperial to track pupils' progress; and to provide well-informed targets for pupils, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics.
- Continue to raise standards at Imperial, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, by extending the strategies promoting pupils' oral and writing skills.
- Improve opportunities for outdoor play at Cherryleas.
- Develop further ways to improve the level of attendance and punctuality at Imperial.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well at Imperial because a combination of strong nurturing support and well-directed teaching is effective. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and make good gains in skills through the impact of good activities and discussion. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is marginally better than expected but is likely to increase through the cumulative effects of good teaching and provision as recent decisions take effect. These decisions relate to staff deployment, the use of a carefully structured language programme and the support systems for pupils' personal development. **At Cherryleas, children are gaining a good range of personal and academic skills** through the sensitive and well-directed support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well from a low start.
- Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills, and in their reading, although standards in reading are below average.
- Pupils make good gains in ICT skills through tackling interesting tasks.
- Standards in writing and mathematics are well below average by Year 2.
- Standards in physical education and activities that require much writing are below the expected standard.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.0 (11.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	11.7 (10.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.4 (13.7)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 85 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Taking the results only for the pupils at Imperial Avenue Infant School, on average, pupils' performance in writing was around one year behind the expectation in the national tests of summer 2003. Standards were well below the national average in reading and writing and below the national average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools standards were average in reading and above average in mathematics; standards were well below average in writing. Very few pupils exceeded the expectation. However, the results of 2003 show good improvement over 2002. These gains look set to continue as good management and provision continue.

2. In the Foundation Stage, few children are on course to meet the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception because their attainment on entry to the school, particularly their language and communication skills, are well below average. Children achieve well, however, because the good emphasis on talking about the activities helps children to acquire vocabulary and speech patterns. Teachers read books expressively to create interest and enjoyment, as seen at Cherryleas, for example, during a story about a teddy's adventures. Teachers and other adults often, but not always, promote children's speaking and listening skills by engaging children in extended discussion. The good range of activities covering each area of learning provides good, stimulating experience so that children gain in self-confidence and in basic learning skills.

3. Standards in the work seen are below average in reading and well below average in writing, mathematics and science by Year 2. Pupils achieve well in the great majority of lessons because effective teaching and challenging tasks are directed towards identified learning needs. Over time, pupils achieve a little better than expected although several pupils rely on adult support to make progress. It is likely that the recently improved conditions for learning will help pupils to increase their achievement further and standards may improve as a result. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well, for example with talking partners, although at times pupils have less opportunity to take part in extended dialogue since the practice of asking children to explain their ideas further is variable. Most pupils concentrate well during lessons that offer challenge and interest, and this has a good effect on learning. They respond well to the stimulus of ICT, for example, and worked hard to make coleslaw and fruit salad during a lesson on food technology. There is every indication, from a sample of lessons, from pupils' previous work and from discussions with pupils that standards in the creative, aesthetic and practical subjects are broadly average by Year 2, although standards in physical education are below. Standards in subjects that require much writing, such as geography, history and religious education, are below average although pupils are gaining confidence in speaking about the ideas. Children with special educational needs make good gains in their personal and social development through the very effective work of the learning mentors and indeed all adults.

4. Overall, achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Work is suitably matched to their needs and pupils receive well-organised help from support staff.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good** overall while their personal development is **satisfactory**. Pupils' punctuality is **unsatisfactory** and their levels of attendance are **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy school.
- Consistently good teaching successfully motivates pupils to learn.
- Behaviour has improved and is now very well managed.
- The school works hard on pupils' personal development.
- The school has not yet implemented its planned strategies to improve attendance.

Commentary

5. Pupils are keen to get to into their classroom. They enjoy the friendly atmosphere and the interest shown in them by the many adults in the school. Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers and support assistants. However many pupils do not have a natural enthusiasm for learning. The teachers have to work purposefully on motivating the pupils and lessons have to be well planned with pace, variety and plenty of interesting activities. Most teaching is of consistently good quality and the pupils respond by being alert, attentive and wanting to join in. To sustain the pupils' interest throughout a school day, however, is hard work for the teachers.

6. The management of behaviour was criticised in the previous inspection. It is now good and well embedded into the school day. The school expects high standards of behaviour at all times. Rules are well publicised and clearly understood by the pupils, who think they are fair. Each class has a few challenging pupils but good staff training and a consistent approach is paying dividends. Teachers' strategies are usually effective and there is very little disruption to lessons. The learning mentors play a valuable and effective part in the school's approach to behaviour management. The overall atmosphere in the school is conducive to learning. Movement of children around the school is orderly. Lunchtime arrangements are good with a well-organised dining room and noise levels that allow easy conversation. Playgrounds have a happy feel and no signs of bullying or oppressive behaviour were observed. Bullying or racism are not tolerated and do not appear to be issues in the school. Any racial incident, however minor, is logged and handled well. All pupils regularly get an

opportunity to spend part of their playtime involved in a range of interesting activities organised by the learning mentors in a separate building. These sessions, where the pupils are allowed to choose what they do, are extremely popular. This contributes well to pupils developing a sense of responsibility for their own actions.

7. There were no exclusions in the last reporting year.

8. Pupils’ personal development has a high priority in the school. Much effective effort is put into teaching very basic skills – sitting still, paying attention, not shouting out, learning to take turns together, with a clear grounding in the difference between right and wrong. Most pupils are immature for their age when they start school, but by the time they leave their personal qualities including spiritual awareness, social skills, moral values and cultural appreciation have developed satisfactorily. All staff provide good role models. Assemblies are used well to begin to develop pupils’ spirituality and self-awareness. Individual targets are used positively in developing good habits for instance encouraging perseverance by sticking at a task for a certain amount of time. Very good use is made of photographs in boosting self-esteem by illustrating what pupils can achieve. Coping with responsibilities is encouraged by the buddies scheme at playtime when selected pupils wear a red hat and are expected to help pupils who want someone to play with.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.8	School data :	0.9
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.4

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

9. Attendance levels fluctuate from year to year but remain stubbornly in the ‘well below average’ category. The children’s poor attendance has an adverse effect on their learning. There is little evidence that the school has, until recently, tackled the problem with the same enthusiasm that it has given to other school issues. A start has now been made with a governor being given specific responsibilities for attendance and the subject is now listed as one of the school’s major priorities. Given the school’s current attendance rate of 91.4 per cent, the target of 95 per cent is unrealistic in the short term. School registers are well kept. Although most pupils are punctual, some parents are consistently late getting their children to school. At Cherryleas, children generally arrive in reasonable time, since they are dependent on funded transport. Their level of attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. It has made good improvements since the last inspection by addressing the weaknesses identified at that time. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, although there are elements of teaching and learning to improve in lessons that were satisfactory or good otherwise. The curriculum is good and generally provides rich and stimulating experiences for the children so that they achieve well. Children are provided with a very good equality of opportunity to take part in activities.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is **good** at both Imperial and Cherryleas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning in all areas are good.
- In English, good teaching is helping pupils to improve and to achieve well.
- In mathematics, children build basic skills through well-planned activities.
- In science, the good focus on practical investigation and enquiry skills is very appropriate.
- At Cherryleas, carefully chosen activities help children to gain social as well as academic skills.
- Good quality teaching helps all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who have English as an additional language, to make progress in their learning.
- The existing assessment procedures at Imperial are not brought together sufficiently to provide well-informed targets for pupils through the school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 53 lessons.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0 %)	5 (9 %)	33 (62 %)	15 (28 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

10. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage at Imperial is a particular strength. Teachers and learning assistants in the Foundation Stage understand that most children enter school with very poor speaking and listening skills. Children are also not used to playing cooperatively so activities are carefully planned to develop these skills through a wide range of experiences. Teachers plan well for rich and imaginative tasks so that children achieve well. Teachers choose stories to capture children's interest and they use a very good range of language expression to engage the children in speaking and listening. The teachers have good classroom organisation so that many and varied opportunities are available for children to explore and investigate simple properties of materials, such as ice and water. Adults also provide well for those who have little English, for example emphasising the colours and introducing new language. The accommodation is set out in an attractive and stimulating way that values the children's work, acting as a useful focus for effort and discussions. The assessment procedures are good and are formed from perceptive observations of the children. They are used carefully to plan further activities which are generally matched well to the children's needs.

11. In the rest of the school, the quality of teaching for English and mathematics is good because the introduction of several initiatives has channelled the drive for improvement. The school is involved in a challenging and highly relevant initiative to promote improvement in children's spoken and reading skills. The early indications are that this is beginning to have a significant impact on children's confidence and language, and hence on standards. It is effective also by enhancing teachers' understanding of how to promote talk with children. The programme also extends the pupils' knowledge and use of word-building strategies. The teaching of this programme is having a significant impact on pupils' achievement. In mathematics, the school has implemented the numeracy strategy successfully and teachers' good subject knowledge is demonstrated by their thorough exposition and focused questioning that promotes good achievement.

12. The teachers employ a good range of strategies that are generally matched well to the nature of the task and the learning needs of the children. For example, in a very good lesson using the white board in Year 2, the teacher slowly revealed words hidden behind a shape, providing just enough phonic clues for the children to predict the hidden words. The children were highly motivated and demonstrated good phonic knowledge by their answers. In general, teachers encourage pupils very well by their positive approach so that they achieve well and become engaged in the activities. The approach also ensures that pupils have very good equality of access to activities and the curriculum.

In addition, the needs of the different groups of pupils are carefully provided for. The classroom assistants give good, thoughtful support to children with learning difficulties. Children with more challenging behaviour are given very good support so that they may take as full a part in activities as is appropriate. In addition, the work of the learning mentors is highly effective in helping targeted children to improve their personal and social development. This is in keeping with the very good inclusive and nurturing climate of care in the school. Many pupils have low levels of understanding and good use is made of adult time to explain clearly the purpose of activities. Teachers are very caring towards all pupils including those who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. Children from Cherryleas are supported well during their integration visits and teachers and other adults provide a high level of care that encourages them to take part in activities.

13. The developing process of setting targets for language development is beginning to focus on children's learning needs although this is at an early stage at Imperial. While teachers make perceptive observations of the children and understand their learning needs well, at present there is a variety of assessment and recording systems across the staff that does not provide for continuity and easy access by others. In particular, whole school procedures that provide information on key areas of learning such as writing or mathematics are not in place to track pupils' progress term by term. Targets set for pupils with special educational needs are appropriate and are reviewed termly. Tracking of individual progress throughout the school to evaluate their achievement over time is not yet in place. The teachers' shared planning in year groups is effective in helping to provide a similar curriculum for all children. The further very good management strategy, whereby each teacher takes a class from Year 1 into Year 2, provides good curriculum continuity and a smooth transfer for the pupils. It also shares the demands that are placed upon Year 2 teachers across more members of staff and improves the potential for record keeping.

The curriculum

The school provides a **good** range of curricular activities and opportunities for enrichment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work based upon the literacy and numeracy strategies is effective.
- A reading and language programme, an oracy scheme and the 'Early Bird' project enrich literacy.
- Personal, social and health education is taught regularly and helps to strengthen pupils' relationships.
- Equality of access for all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, is a very strong feature of the school.
- The good quality of the Foundation Stage curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage in the learning.
- Teachers of good quality and well-trained learning support assistants support the curriculum effectively.
- The school provides good quality resources to support the curriculum.

Commentary

14. The literacy and numeracy strategies have become well-established in daily practice and are being used effectively to support pupils' learning. Due to pupils' low starting point the school has been innovative in introducing additional initiatives in an effort to raise standards from a consistently low base in English. The reading and language programme includes a systematic approach to phonics teaching that is benefiting all groups of pupils in their development of word attack skills, and literacy skills generally. The oracy project is providing a structured approach to the teaching and development of speaking and listening skills, and is being used successfully across the curriculum. The 'Early Bird' project successfully involves parents in their children's learning outside the school day, and positively encourages pupils in their writing and other curricular activities. The school has

ensured that the mathematical curriculum is suitably matched to the learning needs of pupils by ensuring that, where possible, all lessons place a strong emphasis on the use of practical activities.

15. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and the provision for design and technology is now much improved. Recent developments in the school in ICT have seen greater involvement of this medium across the curriculum, and in English, religious education and history in particular. Personal, social and health education is taught regularly, including 'circle time' that provides good opportunities to strengthen the quality of relationships, and to deal with issues of concern to pupils. All subjects have good quality resources to support learning. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage prepares pupils well for their entry into Year 1. There is a good programme of visits to places of interest to support learning in different subjects including places of worship, environmental areas, museums and houses of historical interest. A good variety of visitors come into school including musicians, and art and drama workshops.

16. The school is very successful in ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met, and are fully included in all areas of learning. There is a good integration programme for children from Cherryleas to visit on a regular basis and take part in selected lessons. There is good quality support for pupils who do not speak English as their first language, and the curriculum is suitably adapted to ensure their needs are fully met. There is good provision for all pupils with special educational needs. The school has a good complement of high quality teachers who bring a range of skills to support the curriculum, and work very effectively in partnership with the well trained learning support assistants.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are **very well cared for** at school. They are given **very good** support and guidance in helping them to develop. Procedures for considering pupils' views are **sound**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Child protection procedures are very good.
- This is a very caring school where pupils are treated as individuals.
- Pupils' personal development is very well supported.

Commentary

17. The school meets very well its number one aim 'To provide a friendly, safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment'. It has a strong friendly community feel where the care of every child is of paramount importance to all the staff. They positively want to do their best for the children. The result is that pupils feel valued and know that if they have a concern, no matter how trivial, it will be listened to sympathetically. The pupils are treated as individuals and the headteacher knows each by name. When in school all pupils are given tender loving care but not at the expense of their learning. Children from Cherryleas who visit on a regular basis receive a high level of care to support their integration. Parents are right to feel confident that their children are very well looked after. The school has very good induction processes for new pupils, including those with special educational needs. Good use is made of information gained from other agencies. The school has appointed two mentors who work closely with identified pupils on carefully designed programmes. They are helping to bring about a good improvement for pupils with behavioural problems so that they are able to work and play alongside others more successfully.

18. The school takes child protection very seriously. Staff are very well trained and very familiar with the school's procedures. They are good at noticing any changes in pupils' well-being and use their good knowledge of individuals to offer them good support. Relations with the outside agencies are good. The issue of playground safety mentioned in the previous inspection is no longer a problem. Playgrounds are now clearly and securely separated from areas used by vehicles.

19. Members of staff give very good support to pupils' personal and academic development based on very good knowledge of the pupils and their parents. This is in part due to the system of pupils having the same teacher in both Years 1 and 2. Teachers know parents very well as a result of the 'Early Bird' routine when many parents spend around ten minutes in the classroom before school starts each morning. At every level, support and guidance is very soundly based on

knowledge of the individual whether it be the headteacher with her good knowledge of the pupils and their parents or the learning mentor with her good knowledge of a pupil's recent achievements and future targets. The class teacher's comments on personal development in each pupil's report are of very good quality and give a very honest appraisal of the pupil's progress.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good**. The school has **good** links with the community and **satisfactory** links with other schools. The partnership with the community is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents like the school very much.
- The highly effective Early Bird scheme allows parents to be involved in their children's learning.
- Pupils' reports are well written and very useful for parents.
- Parents are not well informed on their children's future work.
- Provision for parents to extend their learning is good.
- Pupils benefit from the good links with the community.
- The work of the learning mentors is effective, and is funded by the Fullhurst Improvement Zone.
- The school is an integral part of the local community.

Commentary

20. Parents think very highly of the school and the headteacher. They particularly appreciate the good teaching, the good progress their children make and the strong sense of commitment by all the staff to their children's learning and their well-being. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are suitably informed about their children's progress.

21. The school has been very successful in getting parents into the classroom on a very regular basis. This is impressive in an area where many parents did not find their own education a particularly fulfilling experience. Every morning, before school officially starts, parents are invited to an 'Early Bird' session where they can spend around 10 minutes doing a task jointly with their child in the classroom. The tasks are clearly stated on a board and all involved understand the routine very well. This procedure is very successful – around half of all parents every day are involved on a task with their child in the classroom. The tasks are literacy or numeracy based and directly linked with what the child is currently learning in lessons. This allows parents to monitor very effectively the progress their child is making, discuss any concerns with the teacher and be actively involved in the learning. It also helps very effectively to break down any barriers between home and school. Parents appreciate this system very much and the easy approachability of the staff. If parents want to learn in more detail about their child's learning, regular courses are put on in conjunction with a local college. These courses are well run and carefully structured to help the parents as much as possible, but only a small number of parents take up the offer. Parents are not well informed of their children's future work but for those parents who go to the classroom, the week's objectives for literacy and numeracy are displayed on a board.

22. Pupils' reports are very easy to read and contain much information useful for parents. Targets are given for different aspects of English, mathematics, science and ICT. The quality of the targets is very good. These are usually specific enough for a parent to be involved in helping their child – for instance 'always remember to leave a space between words'. The headteacher's comments are pertinent. Attendance is always commented on and often a target given if attendance is poor, although there is no evidence that progress towards this target is monitored because staffing capacity is limited. The reports contain a very useful overview of what has been covered in all the other subjects of the curriculum but no details of what the pupil can do or understands in these subjects.

23. Pupils benefit well from links with the community. They visit local places of worship including a temple and churches. The immediate locality is studied together with visits wider afield including Belgrave Hall which gives a good insight into Victorian and Edwardian times. Visits to Foxton lead to a good understanding of the development of canals and this is recalled well through interesting displays in Year 2 classrooms.

24. Pupils are made well aware of the needs of others in the community through fundraising for both national charities and the local Rainbow Children's Hospice. In addition to having pupils from Cherryleas in some lessons, pupils at Imperial Avenue also benefit from mixing with pupils from a school for children with severe learning difficulties, some of whom visit the Imperial Avenue site once a week.

25. The school is a vital part of the local community. The Braunstone Community Association gives the school grants towards the cost of school trips. The local post office raises funds for school equipment and the school's central quadrangle has been transformed due to the voluntary effort of local pensioner keen on gardening. A few members of the community help regularly in the classroom, for instance by listening to children read. This voluntary help is very much appreciated by the staff.

26. Staff have a very good understanding of many of the particular problems of the local community through for instance, home visits when children first start school and the subsequent regular contact with parents when their children are at school. The school's premises are used when appropriate for community events. For instance, the Library service organises 'Family Fun and Learning' sessions for parents of preschool children but the adjacent secondary school is more normally used for community events. The local mini education action zone 'FIZ' centred on Fullhurst community college is very effective in supporting various initiatives particularly the learning mentors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school, including Cherryleas, are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior staff have provided purposeful and successful leadership to improve the school's effectiveness well since the last inspection.
- The leadership and management at Cherryleas Assessment Centre are very good.
- All members of staff form a strong team under the unifying management of the headteacher.
- The governors make an excellent contribution to decisions on the development of the school.

Commentary

27. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection because members of staff have worked closely with the headteacher to plan and make the necessary changes. All the issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. In addition, the school has embarked on several major initiatives and was the catalyst for the city-wide support for a structured reading and language programme. The introduction of these developments is managed very well by including all staff in the process of agreement and providing relevant training. Evaluation processes are thorough and include consideration of standards and how the children benefit in their personal development.

28. The headteacher provides very good leadership for school developments. In addition she has excellent qualities of enthusiasm, sense of purpose and high aspirations. She is supported very well by the senior staff so that there is a common drive to make the best provision possible. The school has good monitoring procedures. The shared lesson planning is a good open process and plans are checked by subject leaders as well as the headteacher. The headteacher makes regular lesson observations, using the information well to provide constructive feedback and to set targets for improvement. Her high aspirations for the children are matched by equally high expectations of the

teachers. Performance management is good. The deputy headteacher provides very effective and often unobtrusive leadership by helping to ensure that tasks are completed. She has established assessment procedures for some areas of learning although these are not yet fully effective in providing a simple but informative system to track pupils' progress through the school. The Foundation Stage coordinator also provides very good leadership because the teaching and curriculum enable the children to achieve well. The staff are encouraged to use their initiative and to develop their expertise, for example in the use of ICT in their teaching, and this is effective in promoting pupils' good learning and achievement. The arrangements for children from Cherryleas to be integrated with those at Imperial are good and ensure a high level of care is provided.

29. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs at Imperial is satisfactory. The coordinator makes appropriate arrangements to liaise with external agencies such as the educational psychologist. Arrangements for her to be involved in monitoring the progress of these pupils have only just begun. The present format of recording individual information of pupils with special educational needs is being revised to give more comprehensive detail.

30. The governing body provides very good strategic direction for school development, with children's learning and achievement in mind. The governors have a very good knowledge of the school and use this in a very considered way to inform forward planning and financial decisions. For example, they accumulated sufficient funds to redesign the car park and playground area to make it safe for children in case no external funding was made available. They have also been active in forming a partnership with a local Improvement Zone which has resulted in the excellent facility of a computer suite and community meeting room: The Blossom Room. The school improvement plan gives a good structure for forward planning and management of developments, to which the governing body contributes through discussions and agreeing priorities. There is a very clear evaluation of the previous year and supporting contextual data, including a statement of the Local Education Authority priorities which the school takes carefully into account. There is no indication of priorities beyond the current year, however, which would help to give a picture of longer term developments.

31. Financial management is very good and is supported by the local education authority bursar service. The governors take good account of the principles of obtaining best value in their financial decisions and evaluate the effects of their decisions very well. They ensure that the school complies with its statutory duties and that all statutory requirements are in place. The expenditure per pupil is a little above the average for infant schools because the Cherryleas centre has additional funding. The balance carried forward to the following year is higher than usual because governors are holding a figure in reserve against a likely drop in the pupil roll.

32. The school office runs smoothly and efficiently. The services of a bursar are bought in, which relieves the headteacher of routine duties. The headteacher is active in pursuing sources of funding that match the school's priorities and these are having a significant impact on pupils' achievement and personal development.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1 111 985	Balance from previous year	122 335
Total expenditure	1 029 661	Balance carried forward to the next	82 324
Expenditure per pupil	3 148		

THE WORK OF THE CHERRYLEAS SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT

What is the effectiveness of the work of the special educational needs unit?

The special educational needs unit is known as the Cherryleas Assessment Centre. Provision for pupils at the Assessment Centre is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are very good.
- Teaching is good and ensures that the children have a wide range of learning experiences.
- The curriculum is good and is adapted well for the needs of the children.
- There are limited opportunities to develop pupils' outdoor physical skills.

Commentary

33. Cherryleas Assessment Centre is a unit for children aged from three to seven who have special educational needs. It is located about a mile from the school site. The centre provides 30 places for pupils who experience a variety of complex needs. Currently, there are 20 pupils in three classes, some of whom have been diagnosed as having an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Half of the children do not have English as their home language. Significant features common to the majority of children at the unit include very short concentration spans, behavioural problems, poor coordination skills and very limited expressive language.

34. Leadership and management are **very good**. All of the issues raised as requiring attention at the time of the previous inspection have been addressed. Members of staff have a very strong commitment to understanding the diverse needs of the children and provide very well for them. The school liaises very well with parents and a wide range of outside agencies who contribute well to the very good care that pupils receive. Teachers and support staff work very well as a team and enjoy very good relationships with the children. Some children have only been in the unit for a short time, but all pupils usually respond well to the many interesting and stimulating activities offered to them. The attainment of the majority of the pupils is very low compared with the expected levels for their age but achievement in lessons is often good and over time it is satisfactory.

35. Teaching is consistently **good** and often it is **very good**. This is a major improvement since the time of the previous inspection when there was a high level of unsatisfactory teaching. The nature of the pupils' individual learning difficulties means pupils often have difficulty retaining new learning and teachers are well aware of this. They constantly assess individual needs and plan well to meet them. All adults praise children warmly for their efforts, reward good achievement and behaviour. For those pupils who have behavioural difficulties, good routines, such as sitting and listening appropriately to stories and remembering and applying table manners, are firmly established and children are learning to respect this.

36. The curriculum is broad and varied and meets the needs of individual pupils well. The addition of a Multi-sensory room, described by some pupils as a 'Magic Room,' enhances the learning of pupils and is used well by all classes. The school enjoys very spacious grounds and good use is made of these to engage pupils in many outdoor activities. On occasions children from Imperial school come to join Cherryleas children in social activities, which are enjoyed by all. Likewise pupils from the unit, accompanied by very dedicated and knowledgeable support assistants, visit Imperial main site on a weekly basis where they mix well and participate in a variety of activities that prepare them well for integration into larger classes. The distance between the schools and the lack of a minibus prohibits more frequent liaison.

37. There are limited opportunities to develop pupils' skills in the area designated for the adventure playground since the removal of large play equipment, which was deemed unsafe. As yet

there is no funding available for replacement and although the school has put in a number of bids they have been unsuccessful.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Overall provision for nursery aged children and those of reception age is **good**.
39. The Foundation Stage comprises four classes, three of which contain reception and part time nursery children. The fourth class contains older reception children. Overall the attainment of children entering nursery is well below the level expected, as it was at the time of the last inspection. This judgement is the case for all children including those with special educational needs, and those who do not have English as their mother tongue.
40. Teaching and learning in all areas is good. This is an improvement in Reception since the previous inspection. Support assistants have a good knowledge of what is to be taught and how it is to be organised. As a result, all children, including those with learning difficulties and those who have English as an additional language, achieve well. Induction arrangements help children to settle into school well. Checks on teaching and learning have begun using the foundation profile and are beginning to have a useful impact through identifying strengths and areas to improve.
41. Although a few children higher attaining children are likely to exceed the expectation in all areas of learning by the end of their time in Reception, and some others are on course to reach the expectation, overall standards are on course to be well below average. The children's poor language skills are a particular barrier to learning because they find talking about their ideas and listening to others difficult. They also have generally weak knowledge and understanding of the world around them. A few higher attaining children have good language skills and enjoy books.
42. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator manages the learning of children very well. She is a very good role model for her colleagues. Links with parents are very good and these help children to feel valued. There is very good teamwork among all staff in the Foundation Stage. This ensures a consistent approach to the planning of activities provided for all children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff enjoy very good relationships with children and parents.
- Adults promote children's independent learning well.
- Standards in children's personal development are below the expectation.

Commentary

43. All staff work extremely hard to ensure children are very well cared for and enjoy coming to school. The school provides a very secure, safe and stimulating environment which has a positive effect on their learning. Adults insist on high standards of behaviour and provide children with very good role models. This helps to dispel the incidents of aggression, which occur from time to time. There is a strong emphasis in all classes on active learning and for children to develop independent skills. Resources are arranged so that children can access them independently and classroom routines are well established. Many children in both classes have low self-esteem but Nursery children develop confidence as they distribute fruit and take responsibility for chores. Older children are given many opportunities to work in focussed groups often led by adults where they learn to be caring towards one another and to share resources sensibly.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers emphasise speaking and listening skills.
- Children's attainment in communication and language is well below the expectation because they enter school with very weak language skills that take time to develop.

Commentary

44. Most children enter school with very poor speaking and listening skills, and are not used to playing co-operatively. Teachers are well aware of this and activities are carefully planned to develop these skills through a wide range of experiences, including role-play, which make learning fun. Stories are chosen to capture their interest and to enthuse children to pick up books for enjoyment. Teachers question children constantly to engage them fully in speaking and listening to increase their vocabulary. More able older children are beginning to retell stories in short sentences, while less able children display their enjoyment of stories by their facial expressions. Higher attaining children are beginning to form letters accurately; they enjoy handling puppets and matching them to individual letter sounds.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults use resources well to make learning meaningful for children.
- Standards in mathematical skills and understanding are well below average by the end of Reception.

Commentary

45. Children's capacity to work without close supervision and organise some of what they do in lessons is very well promoted. Activities are of a short duration and match their level of concentration well. Very good opportunities are provided for children in nursery to handle shapes and to make imprints of triangles and circles in sand. More able children cut and stick these shapes to create recognisable pictures. Adults also provide well for those who have little English when they match colours and introduce the new language. In the Reception classes more able children participate well in games where they order numbers correctly and a few are able to say when one number is 'more' or 'less' than another. In all activities adults speak clearly, emphasising good mathematical language. They encourage children successfully to respond likewise. Carefully selected computer programmes also provide good reinforcement of mathematical skills.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for children to explore and investigate are good.
- Computer skills are well promoted.
- Standards in children's knowledge and understanding of the world are well below average by the end of Reception.

Commentary

46. Teachers provide many well planned opportunities for children to explore and investigate, for example, the properties of ice and water. Nursery children assemble an igloo out of bricks and reception children predict what will happen to ice cubes if left in the classroom. They busily engage in producing their own flavoured ice lollies. Adults help Nursery children gain confidence in the control of the 'mouse' when using the computer to distinguish shapes and name colours. More able Reception children confidently carry out simple functions unaided to create Christmas pictures but many children are less confident and wait to be helped. The arrangement of furniture in the computer suite enables adults to readily oversee all children at work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are imaginative and enjoyable.
- Children's physical skills and performance is well below average by end of Reception.

Commentary

47. Skills are very low when children arrive in school and adults spend much time engaging children in many exciting activities, which are imaginative and enjoyable. Staff place good emphasis on teaching children how to hold equipment properly to cut, paint, thread, spread and build. Staff readily praise children for their good efforts and this raises their self-esteem greatly. Reception children are keen to use pedal bikes and some do so vigorously in the spacious outside areas.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good use of role play to promote speaking and listening skills.
- Children's attainment in creativity is well below average. Many children find working independently with materials difficult and need constant support.

Commentary

48. Teachers use role play to promote speaking and listening skills effectively. Children in both classes enjoyed taking part in the Christmas production, 'The Bossy King' which they performed in front of a packed audience of delighted parents. Staff interactions during art activities encourage the children to experiment and to develop their creativity.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership is helping to raise standards.
- Standards are well below average in writing, and below average in reading, and speaking and listening skills.
- Good teaching is helping pupils to improve and to achieve well.
- Assessment procedures are not yet securely in place.

Commentary

49. There is good leadership and management of English. The drive for improvement has been led through the introduction of a number of initiatives. These include a systematic reading and language programme; an oracy project to help pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills; and opportunities for pupils to share the development of learning skills, especially writing, with parents in the 'Early Bird' scheme. Whole school planning ensures that all pupils have equality of access to the curriculum, and that the needs of the different groups of pupils are catered for specifically. Although results in the national tests show well below average attainment by the end of Year 2, the school has introduced initiatives that are having a positive effect upon standards, especially in the development of reading and speaking and listening skills.

50. Increased speaking and listening opportunities are helping to improve pupils' skills. In all lessons pupils have time to converse with their partners or neighbours, discuss their ideas or to give a set of clear instructions. In 'hot seating' the activities encourage pupils to ask questions and respond with creative and imaginative responses. Pupils demonstrate confidence in a variety of speaking activities and are beginning to develop their listening skills. There is a strong emphasis across other subjects to support the development of oral language skills. The value of music experiences assists the development of speaking skills, through committing words to memory. Within this context, pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress.

51. Reading skills are improving. The school uses an appropriate published reading scheme that is organised well to match pupils' individual reading levels. There are regular opportunities for pupils to practise their reading at school and at home. In Year 2 the more able pupils read fluently and with some expression. The average readers recognise most words and read them accurately and, like the more able, show good comprehension of the text they are reading. The less able group show confidence in recognition of a basic sight vocabulary and, in common with all other groups, use phonic clues, as well as a number of other strategies, to help them read unfamiliar words.

52. Writing skills are still the weakest area, and of concern to the teachers who have placed considerable emphasis on raising standards in the development of writing. Pupils are provided with opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Handwriting is taught in separately timetabled blocks to get pupils to move towards the development of a joined handwriting style and to improve their presentation skills. However, most pupils have weak writing skills. The handwriting generally shows many poorly formed letters. Their spelling of high frequency words is usually correct although many pupils are still at the stage of phonetic writing. They know about simple sentence construction and usually use capital letters and full stops correctly. The use of ICT in some lessons acts as a very good stimulus to writing using more interesting phrases and connectors.

53. Teaching is of good quality and ensures pupils achieve well in lessons. All groups are catered for in well-planned lessons. There are good relationships and this motivates pupils to work hard and apply themselves well. Learning support assistants are effective in their support of pupils, and this

enables them to make good progress. When ICT is used, challenging activities provide very good learning and reinforcement opportunities so that pupils achieve very well by applying their skills.

54. The necessary assessment information is being gathered together on the levels of pupils' progress. However, it is not yet being organised effectively enough to allow all staff to access it so that they can use it to plan to move pupils on to the next stages in their learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. The school has ensured that speaking and listening skills are promoted well, and that the use of talking partners is employed in all other subjects. Writing skills are developed through the use of ICT, and are used well to support pupils' development in history.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good - some very clear explanations.
- The subject leader promotes a challenging approach to teaching and learning.
- Good applications of ICT in mathematics have a good impact on learning.
- Good behaviour management maintains pupils attention well so that they make good progress.

Commentary

56. Most pupils enter the school with weak mathematical skills. Children in the nursery have very good opportunities to experience mathematical ideas in a practical way by handling shapes and counting or sorting objects. This good approach continues into reception where a strong emphasis on the language of mathematics provides a good basis for the forthcoming more formal requirements in Year 1.

57. Pupils achieve a little better than expected because good teaching with clear explanations concentrates on opening up children's minds to early mathematical ideas. For example, in an imaginatively presented lesson in Year 1, the teacher encouraged children to picture two triangles in their mind and to bring them together edge to edge. Several children described the resulting shape, indicating a good developing mental skill. They could also see in their minds the overlap, or intersection, of two triangles.

58. By Year 2 most pupils have the skills to skip count in 2's, 5's or 10's although many are less confident when the starting number is 3. Specific numeracy skills are taught well. For example the extension of the idea of repeated addition into the notion of multiplication using arrays was presented well. The teacher's good subject knowledge and clear explanation led to the pupils' good achievement. The higher attaining pupils expressed the situation well, as '6 rows of 4' and also that '4 groups of 6' was the same number. In general, teachers create a good sense of interest which holds pupils' attention well. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour are a positive influence on achievement. Previous work shows that they have the skills to set out their calculations in a sensible way, although they make many slips. Most pupils carry out simple additions and subtractions but tend to use counting methods to find answers because they do not yet have a good repertoire of number facts. They have also produced block graphs and know some of the everyday shapes. Several higher attaining pupils are on course to exceed the expectation by the end of Year 2, because good teaching and tasks challenge them well. However, overall, pupils' numeracy skills and mathematical understanding are well below average. In the national tests of 2003, standards in mathematics were well below the national average but in line with the average for similar schools. Pupils are nearly two terms behind the national average in their work overall but the trend is an improving one.

59. There is good developing use of ICT to promote learning in mathematics, which is encouraged by the good support of the ICT subject leader. The lower attaining pupils are given good opportunities to experience success, often with the support of thoughtful classroom assistants. Children who are at an early stage of English acquisition receive regular help for English and in mathematics lessons teachers and their peers provide good support so that they learn confidently.

60. The quality of teaching is good because teachers apply good strategies and have high expectations for all pupils. Relationships between all adults and the children are very good. This is encouraged by the frequent good use of talking partners to work out a problem in pairs before sharing with the class. This strategy is usually effective in confirming answers of brief reasons but is less effective in encouraging longer explanations or reasoning. Teachers usually have a simple practical approach, using a selection of geometric cylinders, for example or stars to set out in array. There are examples of a problem-solving approach in the teaching and learning of mathematics but there is less evidence of more open mathematical challenges. Teachers often use skilled questioning and discussion to extend pupils' thinking, although at times they do not probe pupils' understanding by following up with further discussion. The quality of marking is satisfactory, and teachers often respond verbally to pupils so that marking is brief. Assessment procedures are also satisfactory but there is not a whole school approach yet to recording and tracking pupils' progress. The subject leader has a good understanding of the role and, being newly in post, the leadership is satisfactory at this stage. There is a good supply of suitable resources which teachers use to good effect so that pupils learn well.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. The application of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. There are good links with ICT because teachers recognise the value that modelling mathematical ideas has for pupils' understanding. Everyday mathematical usage is found in physical education, science and ICT for example. Children's developing spatial understanding is explored through art and design and early ideas of division were demonstrated by sharing out the results of their preparation of fruit salad. In general, teachers apply mathematical ideas in most subjects but this is very seldom recorded within their planning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Coordination of science is not having sufficient impact on raising standards.
- Good emphasis is placed on investigations.

Commentary

62. Many children enter school with very limited knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of Year 2, standards in science are below the expected levels and for many pupils they are well below. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory as is the achievement of pupils. The good emphasis placed on investigations helps pupils who have poor speaking and listening skills and are unable to express themselves clearly to learn in a meaningful way. This focus on practical investigation and enquiry skills throughout the school is very appropriate and pupils respond well to practical approaches. In a Year 2 lesson, all pupils were provided with good opportunities to discuss the similarities and differences observed between a baby and a toddler. More able pupils who are able to write in short sentences produced a leaflet, which identified their needs while less able pupils who have poor writing skills sorted pictures and talked about the differences found. In this lesson the teacher did not present findings neatly in a clearly constructed table, which meant pupils were not well prepared for displaying the collection of evidence.

63. Both the coordinator and a Year 1 teacher have attended science courses and this is helping to ensure there is continuity and progression in the planning of topics. In a Year 1 lesson where teaching and learning were good, pupils learnt about the importance of wearing reflective clothing when we go out in the dark, to enable others to see us. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to test out the effectiveness of different reflectors, which related well to the topic of light and dark.

64. Leadership and management of science are not having enough impact on raising standards. The school does not monitor teaching and learning, nor currently analyses results of end of units of work to know how to help pupils to achieve higher levels. Records of pupils' achievement are not comprehensive. Assessment information is not collected in a systematic way so that it might be used to help to raise standards. Pupils are not provided with targets and teachers are not tracking pupils' progress so that they can diagnose the areas where pupils need more help in order to make better progress and reach higher levels.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject leader provides good support and direction.
- Well-chosen activities provide interest and challenge.
- There are several good applications in other subjects.
- Good teaching leads to good achievement by the pupils.

Commentary

65. Standards in the work seen are below the expectation by Year 2, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. However, pupils achieve well because good provision and early signs of strong subject leadership are having a positive impact on learning. Many pupils have little (prior) experience of ICT before entering school. Activities are chosen carefully to broaden their experience and to develop early skills such as mouse control and using icons to enter commands. By Year 2 most pupils have adequate skills at positioning the cursor with the mouse. They understand the basic operation of programs because teachers explain the steps clearly and illustrate an example of the task. In Year 1, for example, pupils built up a sequence of sentences about the Nativity by clicking the mouse on pictures or phrases. There was general delight when the computer voice synthesiser read their story. The few higher attaining pupils demonstrated good skill and typed in their own sentences using the keyboard.

66. By Year 2 pupils show good improvement on the work of earlier years. Their confidence and understanding is shown through how they settle to the tasks as well as their answers during discussion times. In Year 2 pupils moved from page to page on a web-site to research for historical information about Florence Nightingale, showing general confidence in the process and working cooperatively. Most pupils have good attitudes and behaviour when working with computers. They take a good interest, concentrate well and share with partners. A few pupils find cooperation difficult, deleting each others' work and being selfish about taking turns. The class teacher and classroom assistants usually ensure that all pupils have good access to the task, including those with learning difficulties.

67. There is a good emphasis on basic skills as well as understanding how to work through a program and use the facilities. In Year 1, for example, after a clear demonstration, pupils dragged shape tiles into position and most recognised simple properties that produced a pleasing design. A higher attaining pair of pupils fitted octagons together and found a square inside. The task offered all pupils good equality of opportunity because they all made patterns and designs according to the insights they had. In Year 2, pupils used their mouse control skills to drag counters into position to form simple arrays, following on from their lesson on multiplication.

68. The quality of teaching is good and the curriculum is planned well. Carefully chosen activities and programs provide good reinforcement as well as presenting new ideas. Teachers demonstrate growing confidence and generally good subject knowledge by good demonstrations and explanations. The subject leader is providing a strong lead and support which has a good impact on teaching and learning. The computer suite provides a very good facility for which all classes are timetabled. The very good additional suite in the Blossom Room is extending access for pupils at the school and to the wider community.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory overall but there are examples of good applications. In an imaginatively designed lesson using the white board in Year 2, for example, the teacher challenged pupils to predict hidden words using phonic clues from the letters she revealed from behind a series of shapes. Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to use the Internet and to search web-sites. There are several good links with English and mathematics, as pupils reinforce early literacy and numeracy skills.

HUMANITIES

70. Provision in **geography** is satisfactory. Although the subject was not a focus of the inspection, and it was not possible to observe any lessons, geography is planned for in line with the national guidelines. The scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work indicated Year 2 pupils had enjoyed some interesting experiences during a visit made to Foxton to make a comparative study, and complete a booklet with their findings. These include mapping activities based on the village showing important locations. In addition, pupils use maps of the British Isles to identify locations that they have visited. Useful cross-curricular links included the study of the local canal and swing-bridge, and pupils participating in canal art work and model-making of narrow boats. Standards, are a similar picture to history because of their poor writing skills, and are below average as a result.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of history are developing well but standards are below average due to pupils' poor writing skills.
- The history curriculum links well with other subjects.
- Teachers plan imaginative lessons.

Commentary

71. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In well-presented lessons Year 1 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of how early man lived through the study of cave paintings. They were provided with basic raw materials of chalk and charcoal to produce their own animal paintings, and had a memorable experience of examining them in darkened conditions to convey an element of reality. They have begun to appreciate how different life was then compared to their own of today.

72. In Year 2 pupils learnt about the lives of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale, and were able to make comparisons between the two famous people. They know about the Gunpowder Plot and the tradition of Bonfire Night, as well Remembrance Sunday and the story of the poppy. They are receiving appropriate experiences to aid their learning and their achievement is satisfactory overall, including their knowledge and understanding, but their poor writing skills mean that standards are below average.

73. The planned curriculum is supported by links to other subject areas. ICT is used effectively to enable pupils to access information for themselves from suitable websites in order to extend their knowledge and understanding. Literacy skills are employed to support their learning in history, especially speaking, but also reading and writing. The subject leader is new to the post. She is extremely enthusiastic and has good plans for the further development of the subject.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children benefit from imaginative use of ICT in religious education.
- The school makes worthwhile visits to support children's understanding.
- Standards of attainment are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, due mostly to pupils' poor writing skills.

Commentary

74. Three lessons were observed, and there was limited written work to sample since many of the activities in religious education are based upon discussions. The written work that was available was mixed in with the work in other subjects and was difficult to track down. However, overall and in most lessons, pupils displayed secure knowledge and understanding and were achieving satisfactorily. On a few occasions achievement was good because class discussion prepared pupils well for individual tasks.

75. In the lessons seen teaching and learning were satisfactory overall. It was clear that Year 1 pupils were much less secure with the sequence of the Christmas story than pupils in a Year 2 class who were able to write confidently about the celebration of Christmas by Christians around the world. They all wrote sentences although the quality of spelling was poor. ICT is used effectively to support the development of literacy skills in religious education using a program containing a word bank that pupils select to construct sentences telling the Christmas story. This helped pupils to develop their literacy skills alongside a better understanding of the events of the Nativity.

76. The curriculum is planned in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and it provides opportunities to study a number of other faiths as well as Christianity. There are visits to the cathedral and a temple to support this element of teaching, which are effective in giving children a better understanding of religious practices. The subject leader is new to the post and very keen and enthusiastic to develop the curriculum further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. Although little **music** was seen during the course of the inspection evidence indicates that attainment is broadly average. Pupils sing tunefully from memory and there is a good improvement from Year 1 to Year 2. Year 2 pupils have taken part in a FIZ (Fulhurst Improvement Zone) evening where they performed songs in the 'round'. They have the opportunity to take part in a weekly recorder or singing club.

Art and design and design and technology

Provision in art and design and design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Co-ordinators have expertise in the subject.
- Good links are made to other curriculum areas.
- Pupils' social skills are well promoted.

Commentary

78. Teaching overall is good. By the end of Year 2, standards are in line with expectations. For most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, overall achievement is good.

79. The co-ordinators have expertise in their subjects and this knowledge, together with their enthusiasm, is helping to raise the profile of the subjects. Displays around the school provide an array of evidence to illustrate the success of this and captions surrounding displays prompt pupils to read for information. A good example of this is colourful canal scenes pupils have produced using little dots in the style of the French artist Georges Seurat. Details of his life and pictures of his paintings are exhibited at pupils' height and encourage them to develop an understanding of different techniques.

80. Good links are made to other curriculum areas such as mathematics when pupils weave shapes such as pentagons and to literacy when they produce detailed plans of how to make puppets. Tally charts and block graphs are regularly used to present findings of surveys. Much inspiration was gained from a recent visit to Foxton, where Year 2 pupils made rubbings of gravestones and studied narrow boats on the canal. On their return, photographs taken with a digital camera were used to make a diary of the day's events. Pupils are delighted to share these with visitors and have very fond memories of this visit, which has done much to promote their knowledge and understanding of the crafts, in which people who live on narrow boats engage. Pupils have made accurate models of these boats and produced colourful plates, which they discuss readily. Their speaking skills, which are at a very low level when they enter school, are greatly enhanced by these experiences.

81. Teachers plan well to promote pupils' social skills in activities. In a Year 1 class very good relationships were forged when pupils from Cherryleas Assessment Centre were integrated well into a lesson, which involved a high level of group participation in the preparation of a fruit salad. All pupils thoroughly enjoy such experiences and know the importance of strict hygiene in any kind of food preparation.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide activities designed to provide enjoyment and opportunities to practise basic skills.
- Pupils have poor coordination.

Commentary

82. Standards in physical education by the end of Year 2 are below the expected levels. From observations in Foundation classes, many children enter school with poor physical coordination. Teachers offer a wide range of opportunities to run, jump, skip and crawl which have a positive impact on children's physical skills so that their achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, the majority of pupils has poor coordination and lack the skills, for example, to catch and throw a ball. Many are still at an early stage of personal development and use the lessons to play and experiment in a way

that has previously been absent. For example, many children in Year 2 did not attempt to bounce or throw a ball in a controlled manner so that they could catch it again - they wanted to see the ball bounce or fly through the air. A small number of higher attaining children has good skill and coordination, anticipating the flight of the ball well and moving neatly to catch it.

83. Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to participate. Teachers provide a safe and caring environment for physical education lessons, following the guidance of the subject leader. However, on occasions, they do not ensure that pupils are listening carefully before a demonstration commences with the result that learning is less effective. Teachers apply the good practice of inviting a few pupils to demonstrate their movements or skills which helps to make the teacher's expectations clear. However, while teachers and other adults are generally active around the lesson to maintain the focus, pupils are not given many opportunities to reflect on their performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to consider personal development.
- The learning mentors are very effective in improving children's social understanding and skills.

Commentary

84. The strong spirit of care and consideration through the school is also conveyed through the personal, social and health education curriculum and other subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage are encouraged to take turns, to listen quietly to others and to work together during activities. The teachers set high expectations for considerate behaviour which has a good impact on pupils' awareness of others. Class discussion times offer good opportunities for children to share experiences and learn to value others' contributions.

85. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is structured carefully to cover a good range of issues that promote pupils' understanding. Several helpful routines encourage social and personal development. For example, in Year 1, pupils choose a Star of the Week and all the other children take turns sensibly to say good things about the new Star. The routines give good recognition to friendly behaviour and helping others. However, the way these lessons are managed means that most pupils are not directly involved, other than listening, for most of the time. Several activities in other subjects promote pupils' personal, social and health education development well. For example in Year 2, pupils were helped to make choices and to express preferences in making a fruit salad. Pupils from Cherryleas were integrated well into the activities and very good relationships have developed between the class and these pupils. In preparing the fruit salad the teacher paid good attention to health and safety procedures so that pupils understood the need for cleanliness and care. At Cherryleas, equal emphasis is given to helping the pupils to develop social skills and to have consideration for others.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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