

INSPECTION REPORT

HALAM C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Halam, Newark

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122761

Headteacher: Mrs C Brown

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 23rd to 26th February 2004

Inspection number: 260708

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	111

School address:	The Turnpike Halam Newark Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG22 8AE

Telephone number:	01636 813062
Fax number:	01636 816708

Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Thompson
Date of previous inspection:	5 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is much smaller than average. Currently there are 111 pupils on roll who are taught in four classes. At the time of the inspection there were only three pupils in the Foundation Stage. Eleven more children will join them in the summer term. This is a common pattern with a high proportion of pupils being summer born in most year groups. These children spend only one term in the reception group. Attainment on entry is above average.

There are very few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and none who speak English as an additional language. Almost all pupils are of white UK heritage; two pupils are of mixed race backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is small overall with the highest proportion being in the older age groups where there are quite high levels of mobility. There are no pupils with a statement.

The school has for some years been organised so that teaching groups in Years 1 and 2 are relatively small and much larger in Years 3 to 6. There have been a number of changes in the teaching staff over the last 18 months, including a new headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Christopher Parker	Lead inspector	Mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology physical education, special educational needs
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector	
20911	Judy Dawson	Team inspector	English, history, geography, religious education, music, Foundation Stage.

The inspection contractor was :

Inspire Educational Ltd

The Coach House
132 Whitaker Road
Derby

DE23 6AP

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good and effective school. The headteacher has a clear vision for its future development and is well supported by the staff and an active, committed governing body. The standards the pupils achieve are above, and often well above, average because they are well taught. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The teaching is good. As a result, the pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Standards in reading are high throughout the school.
- The opportunities provided for the pupils' personal development are very good.
- The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of activities.
- The pupils are highly motivated and behave very well.
- The provision for music is very good.
- The marking of the older pupils' work does not consistently help them to improve and is not clearly linked with targets.

Since the last inspection, the school has maintained many of its strengths and consolidated its position. The governors continue to seek improvements to the accommodation but it remains unsatisfactory. The information for parents has improved and the school's increasing openness is appreciated. However, there is scope for further improvement in the information the school provides about homework and how well the children are doing.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Overall **the pupils achieve well** and make good progress. The children currently in the Foundation Stage are all on course to meet or exceed the goals expected of them by the end of the reception year. At the end of Year 2, the results of national tests show that standards are consistently well above average, and in 2003 they were in the top five per cent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the results were very high. It is clear that high standards are being maintained.

At the end of Year 6, the results in 2003 were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. This represents a dip in the performance data. For the previous three years, the results had been consistently well above average and in many cases in the top five per cent nationally. When the 2003 results are compared to schools with similar prior attainment they are below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. However, a significant proportion of the pupils in this small cohort left and others joined indicating that these comparisons should be viewed with considerable caution. The school's own tracking of the pupils' performance shows that they do well. Currently, standards are above average. The pupils are making good progress and achieving well, though the presentation of their work is not as good as it should be.

The **pupils' personal development is very good**. They are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility and to help others. They behave very well and are enthusiastic about their work and the other activities the school offers. The rate of attendance is very high and the pupils are punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education provided by the school is good**. The lessons are well planned and challenging and the **teaching is good**. As a result the pupils are engaged, encouraged and motivated. The presence of a teaching assistant in lessons provides good, effective support, particularly for lower attaining pupils but the amount of time available is not sufficient to allow this to be a feature of all English and mathematics lessons. The assessment of the pupils' work is generally satisfactory, but the teachers' marking is not consistently effective in helping the pupils to improve their work. This is particularly so in the case of the oldest pupils.

The curriculum is well planned with increasingly interesting links between the subjects. The school is rightly developing broader opportunities for the pupils. Literacy and numeracy are used well across the curriculum but ICT (information and communication technology) is not yet used as widely as it should be. The school's recently acquired excellent resources for ICT provide the opportunity for extensive use across the curriculum. The provision for PSHE (personal, social and health education) is very good. The pupils are well cared for because relationships between adults and children are very good. The school consults and involves the pupils well in its work. Through the school council, the pupils get very good opportunities to have their say and do their bit for the school community.

The school is open and welcoming to parents and provides them with a good quantity and quality of general information. However, information about the curriculum, homework and the pupils' progress is not consistent across the school and the diaries used by the older pupils are not proving effective in conveying this information to parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall **leadership and management are good**. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the future development of the school, and as a result, there is a strong, common commitment to ongoing improvement. She works effectively with the governors who provide very good support and direction for the school. The monitoring of the teaching and the tracking of pupil performance are comprehensive.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Taken overall, parents are very satisfied with the work of the school. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are making good progress and most of the pupils feel they learn new things in lessons. However, a minority of parents consider that they are not kept well enough informed about how well their children are doing and the homework arrangements. The inspectors found that the school fully meets its obligations and, therefore, do not agree that more information is required about how pupils are progressing. However, inspectors found that homework arrangements are not clearly communicated.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In order to bring about further improvements the school should:

- Make full and effective use of the excellent new ICT resources across the curriculum
- Establish consistent and effective marking of the pupils' work and ensure high standards of presentation
- Clarify homework arrangements and communicate them effectively

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards in all the core subjects are presently well above average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are high throughout the school
- The pupils are achieving well and making good progress
- In music, achievement is good and standards are above average
- The presentation of the older pupils' work is not as good as it should be

Commentary

1. The few children currently in the Foundation Stage are all on course to meet or exceed the early learning goals set for them by the end of the reception year. In their language and mathematical activities, they work comfortably alongside the Year 1 pupils, making good progress in their learning.
2. At the end of Year 2, the results of national tests show that standards are consistently well above average, and in 2003 they were in the top five per cent nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to similar schools the results were very high. Over half of the pupils attained higher levels in reading and mathematics and a third did so in writing. There is little difference over time in the achievements of boys and girls. Currently, the pupils are achieving well in reading, writing and mathematics, and standards remain well above average. It is evident that high standards are being maintained.
3. In 2003, the results at the end of Year 6 were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. This represents a dip in the performance data. For the previous three years, the results had consistently been well above average and in many cases in the top five per cent nationally. Furthermore, when the 2003 results are compared to schools with similar prior attainment, they are below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. However, a significant proportion of the pupils in this small cohort left and others joined during the course of Key Stage 2 indicating that these comparisons should be viewed with considerable caution. The inward mobility of pupils is likely to have a similar impact on results in 2004 and 2005 because a higher proportion of the pupils in these classes are on the school's special educational register than in other year groups. In the current Year 6 cohort, for example, half of the pupils have changed since Year 1. Currently, above average standards are being maintained in English and mathematics because the pupils are making good progress and achieving well although the presentation of their work is not as good as it should be. Standards in science are well above average.
4. The school's very good provision for music results in above average standards. Above average standards are being maintained in ICT but it is not being used as extensively as it should be right across the curriculum. The quality of the pupils' work in art and design and design technology is in line with expectations, but the range of work they currently undertake is quite narrow. However, the school's move towards a broader curriculum is beginning to improve these areas and generate opportunities for greater progress.
5. Over 90 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire agree that their children are making good progress. Nevertheless, a few consider that the work is not well matched to their children's needs and abilities and that they do not receive sufficient support. In most of the lessons observed, there was a good degree of challenge in the tasks set for the pupils. The needs of all

abilities were well catered for, particularly where a teaching assistant was supporting lower attaining pupils. However, without the support of a teaching assistant, the lower attaining pupils occasionally encounter difficulties. Conversely, there are occasions when the most able could be moved on more rapidly.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.9 (17.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.6 (16.8)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	19.0 (17.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 18 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (29.3)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (30.7)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.8 (31.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 13 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They behave very well and benefit from the wide range of opportunities for personal development the school offers. The rate of attendance is very high.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are enthusiastic about their work and the other activities the school offers
- They are encouraged to be supportive and responsible within the school community
- The Christian ethos promotes a sense of spirituality in the school
- Relationships are very good throughout the school

Commentary

6. The pupils speak enthusiastically about their school and the older ones are proud to represent it, for example when they compete with other schools in sporting events. The pupils love all the clubs and extra activities available to them, especially music, and the take-up is very good. They also value everyday life in school. In conversation, one pupil said that the best thing about the school is 'friendship'. The pupils concentrate hard in lessons and even the youngest apply themselves diligently to their tasks. Positive attitudes are reinforced by classroom displays, but some of the older pupils, whilst contributing fully in lessons, do not always present their work as well as they could.
7. The pupils' behaviour is generally very good overall, both in lessons and around the school. The key to this is the quality of relationships within the school. All members of staff encourage the pupils to respect and support one another, and this is evident in all aspects of school life. The pupils assist one another in lessons and show concern for others through numerous events to support charities such as Children in Need, UNICEF and Shelter. The school takes advantage of its small size by giving the pupils, particularly the older ones, good opportunities to take on responsibility, and they respond very ably to the challenge. Older pupils are also encouraged to show their maturity by helping some of the younger children with their reading. They have a

generally caring attitude towards the younger children who consequently feel settled and secure in school.

8. The school has a strong Christian ethos. A sense of spirituality is present in assemblies and in the emphasis placed on the development of the pupils as individuals. The school seeks to give them an insight into their own worth, their place in the school and in the wider world. As a result, most of the pupils are confident and contribute purposefully in lessons. The strong moral and social development of the pupils is exemplified by 'The Circle of Friends' that has been set up to help a few older pupils who experience difficulties in their interactions with others, particularly when they first arrive at the school. A teaching assistant is very active and successful in organising, managing and monitoring this activity.
9. The pupils enjoy coming to school because it offers them so much, and their parents make sure that they are not absent unless they are ill. As a result, attendance levels are high, and ensure that the pupils do not miss out on work. Punctuality is also good because the parents make sure that their children arrive on time each day, so that the morning session gets off to a good start.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.0
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.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. A wide range of activities enriches the curriculum, the pupils are well taught and their progress is carefully tracked.

Teaching and learning

The teaching and learning are good. The assessment process is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lessons are well planned and challenging
- In many lessons, the pupils are engaged, encouraged and motivated
- The teaching assistants provide good support, particularly for the lower attaining pupils
- The teachers' marking is not consistently effective in helping the pupils to improve their work.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	4	20	4			

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

10. The teaching of the small number of children in the Foundation Stage is well managed. The teacher ensures that their social and physical needs are met through good opportunities for role-play and practical activities. The children work comfortably alongside the slightly older pupils on tasks that are modified to interest and motivate them. The teacher works closely and effectively with the very good teaching assistants. They consistently display high expectations of the children, treating them with respect and ensuring that they are given full consideration within the mixed age class.
11. Throughout the school, the teaching is lively and engages the pupils in interesting tasks that are generally, although not always, modified to meet their different needs and abilities. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. The work is appropriately challenging, and where teaching assistants are present the needs of all pupils are well met. However, when a teaching assistant is not supporting the lesson, it is much more difficult for the teachers to respond rapidly to the needs of the different groups within the large classes of older pupils. The teachers expect the pupils to behave well and concentrate on their work and in the vast majority of lessons they respond exceptionally well. The teachers provide frequent opportunities for the pupils to contribute to lessons and as a result they ask and answer questions and offer their views confidently. The teachers plan their lessons so that they are very clear about what they want the pupils to learn. For instance, they motivate them through rapid mental activities at the start of mathematics lessons. They use very good resources to interest them by providing, for example, a considerable collection of springs for a science lesson on forces.
12. Although the teaching is good throughout the school, the assessment and marking of the pupils' work is inconsistent. In Years 1 and 2 it is very good. Here the teachers' comments not only commend the pupils for their efforts, but also show them how to improve. The marking is less effective in Years 5 and 6 where comments that help the pupils to improve are infrequent and not closely linked to short-term target setting. Moreover, it is not always followed up and the teacher rarely comments on handwriting and presentation, which are not of a consistently high standard.
13. The recent arrival of new ICT resources provides the teachers with the opportunity to make much wider use of software to support learning right across the curriculum. At the present time, ICT is not as well integrated into the lessons as it should be, but the teachers are very aware of the need to extend its use further. Accordingly, they have undertaken additional training to enable them to exploit these excellent resources more fully.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad and interesting with very good opportunities for enrichment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned with increasingly interesting links between the subjects
- Literacy and numeracy are used well across the curriculum
- The provision for music and personal, social and health education is very good
- Accommodation remains unsatisfactory, particularly for the provision of physical education

Commentary

14. The subjects of the curriculum and the Foundation Stage curriculum are securely based on national guidelines and initiatives. This is a thinking school where the curriculum is evolving to generate meaningful links between the subjects. The application of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is very good and the recent formal provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship has had a positive effect across the curriculum. The provision for music is very good. The specialist music teacher who teaches all the classes is very effective

and the pupils' achieve very well. The staff makes good use of further training opportunities and the priorities are closely linked to school improvement. A significant strength of the school's curriculum is the good number and range of out of school activities and the very good curriculum enrichment through visits and visitors.

15. The pupils with special educational needs are provided for well. Their individual education plans have targets which are developed into very precise plans that enable the teaching assistants to provide effective support. The staff works hard to ensure equal opportunities for all groups of pupils in the school.
16. There are extra-curricular activities for all pupils and opportunities for the juniors to work in single age groups for some activities. The teachers recognise that pupils have different learning styles and have introduced a "Brain Gym" to enhance thinking skills. There are good links with the local secondary school and the pupils have both curricular and sporting contacts with their new school to ease the transition.
17. The school has a good complement of full-time and part-time teachers to support the year-group classes and music. They are very effective in extending the curriculum and pupils' learning. The teachers and the support staff form effective teams, but the support is thinly spread. The school deploys the teaching assistants in a flexible way and responds to specific needs. However, any re-allocation of their services necessarily impinges on another class.
18. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school hall is far too small for whole class and whole school activities. It is not possible, for example, to provide physical education lessons in this space. However, a full physical education curriculum is provided for the pupils by transporting them to make use of the local secondary school's facilities. The school office is also inadequate. It is very small and shared by the school secretary and the headteacher.
19. Overall, the learning resources to support the curriculum are good, and the school has just taken delivery of a set of laptops that provide the opportunity to extend the ICT curriculum. A school priority is to improve the use of ICT across the curriculum because it is not yet used as widely as it should be.

Care, guidance and support

The care of and guidance for pupils are good. The school consults and involves them very well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relationships between adults and children are very good
- The daily routines are well organised and run smoothly
- The pupils get very good opportunities to have their say and do their bit for the school community

Commentary

20. The teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and take very good care of them throughout the day. As a result, the pupils feel confident that they have someone to turn to if they have a problem. The headteacher gets to know the pupils very well by teaching PSHE throughout the school. This is a good strategy which works well. At break and lunchtime, the staff do their best to cope with the cramped dining facilities and their supervision is careful and cheerful. A good range of play equipment ensures that the playground is an exciting place for pupils of all ages to spend their time.
21. All classes have representatives on the school council, who can put their ideas forward not only to senior staff, but also, on occasions, to the governors. This means that pupils' views on issues that matter to them are well known and considered at the highest level. The pupils are also

trusted to be involved in “The Circle of Friends”, a support network for particular individuals. Those included in each circle plan ways to help their friend in class and in the playground. As a result, children and adults are making decisions together about how to support those who need it, rather than adults taking those decisions alone.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with the parents, the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is open and welcoming to the parents
- The quality and quantity of general information are good but information about homework arrangements is inconsistent
- The school has a high profile in the local community

Commentary

22. The headteacher and her staff are readily available and accessible to parents every day, and relationships between them are good. The headteacher has consulted the parents about their views of the school and is keen to hear their ideas. The school makes every effort to tell the parents what is going on at the moment and what is being planned for the future, so that they do not feel they are missing out on anything. The prospectus, governors' annual report and regular letters and newsletters give the parents a full and lively picture of school life.
23. Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school, with high levels of agreement to almost all of the statements on the pre-inspection questionnaire and much support voiced at the pre-inspection parents meeting. However, a minority expressed concerns relating to the information they receive about how their child is getting on and to homework arrangements. The inspectors found that the school fully meets its obligations by providing termly opportunities for consultation with parents and through an annual written report, and therefore do not agree that more information is required.
24. However, the targets set in some annual reports are not as sharply focussed as they should be. Inspectors found that homework arrangements are not consistently communicated. Whilst the reading diaries in the Years 1 and 2 classes are a good channel of communication, the diaries used by the older pupils are not as effective. Homework tasks are recorded by some pupils and not others and the listing of subjects taught during the day, for example, 'spellings, science, music' adds little to curriculum information provided for parents by the class teachers. The information provided about the curriculum is generally good but here again it varies in its range and depth.
25. The school works productively in partnership with other local schools, including the nearby secondary school. This helps to broaden the range of experiences available to the pupils, through sport and drama for example, and to prepare them for the next stage in their education. Consequently, the pupils mix with the other children and spend time in the larger school, so that they adjust and settle more quickly when they make the move. The school is a focal point in the village community and plays a major role in village life and events. The relationships with the church and the minister are especially close and help to underpin the Christian ethos of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good, and the governance is strong.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides a clear vision for the future development of the school
- The governors give very good support and clear direction
- The headteacher, governors and staff team work together very well
- The monitoring of the teaching and the tracking of pupil performance are comprehensive

Commentary

26. The headteacher and governors work together very well to shape the vision and direction for the school's work. Recent moves to broaden the range of opportunities for the pupils across the curriculum are already evident in the school's provision and well exemplified by the governing body's decision to invest in up-to-date ICT resources. In this expenditure, the governors sought to get best value not only in terms of value for money, but also in the most appropriate resources. To this end they consulted with national organisations and the local education authority. The governors have also responded to some parental concerns about the wireless technology now being used in the school through further consultation with the local education authority.
27. The governing body supports the school very effectively. It compares the school's performance with that of others, both nationally and locally, consults with local education authority officers about the school's effectiveness, considers the views of parents and allocates the resources at its disposal to improve the provision made for the pupils. The recent appointment of an additional teaching assistant was approved as the result of a strong case made by the headteacher. The governors plan to evaluate the effect of this decision in the near future. They have begun to make regular visits to the school and report their observations to their colleagues. Consequently, they can see for themselves how the school operates and are better placed to challenge its performance.
28. The governors ensure that the school meets all requirements, for example, in respect of the curriculum and health and safety matters. All aspects of governance are thorough, and the governors' considerable commitment to training ensures that they are fully conversant with their roles and responsibilities.
29. The school development plan gives a clear outline not only of the areas for improvement, but also the context within which the plan is to be implemented. The plan is strategic and based on the evaluation of progress made during the last year. It takes full account of an analysis of the pupils' progress. The headteacher works with all staff and governors to identify issues and areas for improvement. ICT is a focus for improvement because the headteacher and governors recognise that it has a very important role in broadening the curriculum and meeting the needs of all the pupils. There is a strong commitment to ongoing improvement.
30. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. As a result, the school has a very caring yet purposeful ethos. Positive relationships and effective teamwork result in good management of the curriculum. Each of the subjects has a co-ordinator, but the curriculum is sensibly managed by the staff team as a whole. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and the standards the pupils attain in their work is undertaken primarily by the headteacher and the staff team examines the outcomes.
31. The governors and the headteacher are conscious of the need to provide the pupils with best possible resources whilst managing the budget appropriately. The large credit balance accrued and carried from previous financial years is earmarked to cover the imminent need for a new boiler and the possibility of a new school hall, which the governors have been pursuing for a number of years.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	326,182
Total expenditure	303,929
Expenditure per pupil	2,666

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,721
Balance carried forward to the next	47,974

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

Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage

32. At the time of the inspection, the three children in the Foundation Stage were placed in the class with Year 1 pupils. These children joined the school with knowledge and skills that are above those expected nationally and are already working successfully and confidently within the first levels of the National Curriculum in all areas of learning. The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage, successfully linking the Foundation Stage curriculum to National Curriculum subjects to cater for these children.
33. Children are admitted to school at the beginning of the term of their fifth birthday. The teacher carefully assesses their attainment, using both the National Foundation Stage Profile and her own assessments that relate specifically to reading, writing and numeracy skills. Although these children are mature and competent learners, the teacher ensures that their social and physical needs are met through opportunities for role-play and practical activities. There is very little difference in the age of the reception children and their classmates in Year 1, and the teacher's planning, adjusted to meet individual needs, sits comfortably with both year groups. No children in the Foundation Stage have special educational needs, but a child with well-above average abilities has her needs met effectively. The teacher works closely and in a complementary manner with the very good teaching assistants.
34. Too little evidence was collected to enable judgements to be made about the provision in **knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development**. Nevertheless, it is evident from an analysis of the teacher's planning that there is an appropriate curriculum to support children's learning. The teacher's planning is based on the National Curriculum subjects with reference to the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage. This is appropriate for these above-average attaining children.
35. In a religious education lesson, the children showed a good understanding of their own culture and how they spend their leisure time. They learnt about the Shabbat and at the end of the lesson could recall the essential facts. They are knowledgeable about people who help them, and, remembering the fire officer's visit very well, they know how to keep safe.
36. In a dance lesson, the children showed a good awareness of space and controlled their movements well. Good teaching stimulated the children's imagination so that they used a variety of movements to depict the action of different toys. However, the hall is far too small for the children to move with speed or even to stretch out on the floor. All three children control writing instruments well, although they do not always hold them correctly.
37. The children take care with their work, which includes good quality illustrations and a range of models, such as Chinese dragons. They sing very well, joining in with the whole school in assemblies and hymn practices. They all make very good use of their imagination in role-play, story telling, writing and dance.

Personal, social and emotional development

The provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well and already exceed the expected goals for their age
- Staff promote empathy, discussion and teamwork and an understanding of the lives and needs of others

38. Children enter school with confidence and well-established social skills. They settle in rapidly and the calm, purposeful atmosphere of the classroom enables them to learn the school's routines and expectations swiftly. Independence is encouraged within a carefully planned personal, social and health education programme. At present, for example, the children are learning about communities and people who help them. Alongside a visit from a fire officer, for example, they listened to a story about a "joey" that played with matches and were adamant about the safety issues involved. The associated paired-discussion was very effective. The children were on task throughout and had valid opinions. They have very good relationships with their classmates and a secure understanding of right and wrong. All three children show empathy with the characters in, for example, the 'Three Bears' when the bears find their porridge eaten and chairs broken. In a religious education lesson, they listened avidly when learning about Judaism. They showed great interest and respect as the teacher showed the Tallit and the Kippah and described the Shabbat; as a result, they understand that people have different beliefs and customs. The children's success is due to their maturity on entry to the school and the high expectations of the teacher and teaching assistants, who treat all with respect and ensure that the whole class community is valued.

Communication, language and literacy

The provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children attain the early learning goals, and standards in communication and reading are well above average
- The good marking and assessment enables the children to achieve well
- The interesting curriculum makes good use of the children's extensive vocabulary

Commentary

39. On entry to school, the children are already articulate and have a wide vocabulary. The adults respond well to their needs by encouraging them to discuss issues, give opinions and talk about their experiences and the things they learn. Subject-specific vocabulary, such as that relating to the Jewish artefacts, and mathematical and scientific activities, is carefully taught and used as a matter of course by adults and children. The children listen to their teachers and to each other very well. The adults generally set a very good example by allowing time for the children to speak and to give extended replies to questions. The parents are very supportive and the children have plenty of experience of books and stories at home. They read regularly for pleasure and already use books for research. They are systematically taught the essential skills and can read a range of simple words; the most able child has knowledge of the sounds of letters that is well above average.

40. The children have made very good progress in writing during their time in school. One child has progressed from virtually no writing to constructing simple sentences, while the most able child writes extended text and makes a very good attempt at spelling unfamiliar words accurately. Effective marking, linked to simple targets, shows the children how to improve. The good teaching and the teacher's high expectations are extending learning to include an understanding of rhyming words and phonemes. As a result, the children are very keen to write and work hard. For example, the children set the scene for an alternative story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears well, showing considerable imagination and style.

Mathematical development

The provision for the children's mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve well and exceed the early learning goals
- The resources are used effectively to support learning
- Individual targets help the children improve

Commentary

41. Children join the school with a good mathematical understanding, and the detailed assessments carried out during the first few weeks ensure that the work is accurately matched to their individual needs and abilities. Throughout each day, all members of staff promote the use of mathematical vocabulary, counting and ordering skills and encourage mental calculation. As a result, the children exceed the early learning goals for their mathematical development and attain standards well beyond expectations. In one lesson, for example, the children counted in twos and recognised odd and even numbers. They add items valued at one or two pence, generally write numerals accurately, recognise and name simple shapes correctly and sort objects by size.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are well above average throughout the school
- Writing standards are well above average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6
- The curriculum is interesting and challenging for all pupils
- The quality of marking is inconsistent

Commentary

42. In the lessons observed during the inspection, almost all the teaching was good and some was very good. The teachers make the most of their pupils' rich vocabulary and very good communication skills, and consequently drama and debate feature in many lessons. Reading has a high profile in the school and the pupils are introduced to a very good range of authors and poets. This is helping them to improve their own writing for a variety of purposes and in a range of styles. There is a good library and books feature strongly in each classroom.

43. From the time they start school, the pupils are systematically taught the skills they need to become effective readers and writers. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented very well and in an imaginative way that reflects the abilities of the pupils. The content of the lessons is very challenging for all abilities and new learning is consolidated in ways that make the lessons meaningful and enjoyable. The youngest pupils, for example, wrote a letter of apology from Goldilocks to the Three Bears. Similarly, the oldest altered the ending of H. Belloc's humorous cautionary tale about Jim and the lion, so that Jim survived. In doing so, they maintained the rhyming couplets and the style extremely well. The extended writing sessions, giving the junior pupils an opportunity to work on projects in their small year groups, are proving effective, especially for the older pupils in each class. The lessons are well planned and the younger groups usually have a change of focus after playtimes to ensure that the sessions are not overlong.

44. The assessment and marking in Years 1 and 2 are very good. The teachers' comments not only commend the pupils for their efforts, but also show them how to improve their work. Consequently, new skills are applied consistently and the pupils make rapid progress. As a result of this marking and the termly assessments of the pupils' progress, the teachers are able to set challenging but achievable individual targets and group targets for those of similar abilities. The marking of the older pupils' work rarely includes helpful comments and is, therefore, less effective. As a result, the targets are not closely matched to the pupils' needs and although pupils are beginning to identify their own targets for improvement they are not all skilled enough to know what they need to achieve. Moreover, the marking is not always followed up and the teacher rarely comments on the pupils' handwriting and presentation. Although, the content of the pupils' written work is often well above average, its general appearance is not as good as it should be. Handwriting is taught regularly to the younger children and most generally form their letters and words well. However, not all of the pupils hold their pencils correctly when writing and some of the oldest pupils do not take enough care in their handwriting and presentation.
45. The pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress throughout the school. The work is carefully matched to their needs. Their progress is at its best when the teaching assistants support them. The challenging lessons ensure that the able and talented pupils make good, and often very good, progress. Sometimes the pupils with special educational needs struggle to complete their work because they do not have enough support, especially in the older classes.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. The pupils make good use of their literacy skills and the teachers encourage them to use a wide range of styles and genre. Much of the work in humanities relies on information that the pupils acquire through their own research, and which they organise for themselves. This often relies on the use of reference books with glossaries and takes the form of newspaper reports and eyewitness accounts in the present or past tense to report the facts. The content is very good, showing mature vocabulary and a pleasing, confident style. Sometimes, however, the pupils' handwriting and general presentation diminishes the quality of the finished work.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good overall
- The pupils are achieving well because the teaching is good
- The effectiveness of the marking is inconsistent

Commentary

47. The results of national tests in mathematics have been consistently well above average for the last three years. In 2003, the results at the end of Year 2 were in the top five per cent nationally but at the end of Year 6 they fell slightly against the national average. They also fell considerably when compared with schools where pupils had attained similarly high standards at the end of Year 2. However, the number of pupils tested was quite small and the cohort had changed due to pupils leaving and joining the school. The school's thorough analysis of the results and the progress made by the pupils illustrates well the considerable impact of this mobility. It also demonstrates the disproportionate effect on the overall results when one or two pupils in a small cohort do not achieve the expected level.
48. In Years 1 and 2, present standards are again well above average. The pupils are achieving well and making good progress because the teaching is good and the tasks are modified for different

groups of pupils. In Year 1, additional adult support is used effectively to help the lower attaining pupils, and the tasks set for higher attaining pupils have an appropriate level of challenge. This was evident, for example, when they were 'shopping' for items to fill party bags. In Year 2, the lessons are well planned and carefully modified for different abilities although there are occasions when the most able could be moved on more rapidly. Otherwise, the lessons are very well organised and the pupils achieve well. The initial mental activities are brisk and feature good use of mathematical games to motivate and interest the pupils. The pupils' work is well presented and thoroughly marked; individual targets are set to help the pupils to improve.

49. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching is lively and concepts such as place value are very thoroughly developed. The pupils are 'kept on their toes' by good questioning, good levels of challenge and good pace. In a lesson on pictograms and block graphs, for instance, the needs of the different ages and abilities were well met and additional adult support aided the management of the pupils.
50. Currently, the standards being attained towards the end of Year 6 are above average, and almost all pupils are achieving well. For example, in one lesson, in Year 5 and 6, the pupils were set an interesting and challenging problem requiring them to identify the fractional parts of 'crazy rectangles'. The more able pupils used a good range of strategies to quickly find solutions. Most of the pupils did well in this lesson, but one or two of the lower attaining pupils struggled before they were set a more appropriate task. In other lessons, where teaching assistants are well deployed these situations do not arise because they provide good support for the lower attaining pupils. Many of the older pupils present their work with care, but some do not. In some cases sloppy presentation leads to confusion in solving problems. Although the teacher makes comments about 'unacceptable in some pupils' work, subsequent improvements are often minor and short-lived. Generally, the marking of the older pupils' work does not help them to improve and is not well linked to short term target setting.
51. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. In Years 3 to 6 the work is appropriately challenging and where the teaching assistants are present the needs of all pupils are well met. However, when no teaching assistant is available it is much more difficult for the teacher to respond rapidly to the needs of the different groups within the large classes.

Mathematics across the curriculum

52. The pupils utilise their mathematical skills well in various other contexts, for example science, geography and design and technology lessons. A good example of the good cross-curricular links that are emerging is evident in geography in Years 3 and 4. The work on weather and clothes has required the pupils to find out about the Beaufort Scale from the Meteorological Office website.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average
- The pupils have a very good range of opportunities to investigate and experiment
- The teachers engage the pupils in interesting activities

Commentary

53. Standards in science are well above average. Although no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 scrutiny of the pupils' work confirms the teacher assessments that standards are high. The pupils' work shows improvement at a good rate. Their recording becomes more detailed and accurate in a wider range of tables, drawings and diagrams. The work is carefully presented and thoughtfully marked. In Year 1, the pupils begin to carry out investigations, for example into materials that have suitable properties for wrapping presents. In Year 2 they use fair tests, for example to see how far a toy car travels down a ramp when increasing its elevation in stages, but keeping all the other variables constant.
54. In a good lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher encouraged the pupils to investigate the properties of springs as part of a unit of work on forces. This made very good use of a range of resources to motivate and interest the pupils not only to find out about springs but also to consider how they might be used in a design and technology task.
55. This strong investigative and exploratory approach is built on very effectively in Years 5 and 6. Here the pupils plan and carry out their own fair tests making carefully considered decisions about how they will record their observations. In one lesson, some of the most able pupils checked the accuracy of their observations by repeating the same test several times to find the most representative results. In this lesson, the pupils used a spreadsheet to record and present their findings. At the end of the lesson, they were encouraged to evaluate their own learning. The quality of the presentation of work by the oldest pupils is variable, but there are good examples of very well presented group investigations into how high different balls will bounce. The work is marked with some useful comments, but there are few examples of these either being followed up or having an impact on subsequent pieces of work. The marking is not well linked to target setting.
56. The teaching is good overall. The pupils learn well because they are set a good range of interesting tasks that are increasingly linked to other areas of the curriculum. The pupils respond well and the oldest ones display very responsible attitudes and a good degree of independence in their work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school now has excellent resources
- ICT is not yet used across the curriculum as extensively as it should be

Commentary

56. Standards in ICT have been maintained since the previous inspection and remain above average. The pupils are very confident and approach the tasks they are given with an eager enthusiasm. The school is currently working to extend the uses of information technology across the curriculum. The inspection evidence indicates an increasing use of the ICT facilities to support learning in other subjects, but there is still scope for much greater application and integration now that the quality and range of the equipment has improved significantly. The pupils now have access to excellent resources in the form of laptop computers that are linked by a wireless network. They supplement the desktop computers that are always accessible, but not routinely used by the pupils during lessons.
57. In Year 1, the pupils are learning to use word banks to extend and develop their writing skills. They have also created decorated labels containing their names. In a lesson in Year 2, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed 'composing' musical sequences. They demonstrated a good level of skill in

loading software, moving icons and selecting options. In Years 5 and 6, the teacher taught the pupils how to enter data into a spreadsheet, find the average and create a graph. Later in the day during a science lesson, they utilised the skills they had learned to record their observations and present their findings very effectively.

58. The teachers have undertaken extensive training in the recent past to help them to make more effective use of the resources they have available. It is clear that the range of opportunities they provide and their confidence in teaching ICT are growing. All of the lessons seen provided the pupils with appropriate opportunities to extend their skills and knowledge.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59. The pupils talk confidently about ICT and some use it to enhance the presentation of topics and themes. In some activities, the pupils have used the Internet to find detailed information about mountains as part of a geography investigation. They also make use of the Internet when they are given homework activities related to work they are doing at school. Whilst the use of ICT across the curriculum is broadly satisfactory, the teachers are very aware of the need to employ it more fully across the curriculum. The governors are actively involved in promoting the wider use of ICT and it is a current priority for school improvement.

HUMANITIES

The inspectors observed three lessons in religious education and one in geography. In addition, they looked at samples of work and the teachers' planning, and talked to the staff and pupils about their work.

It is evident from the teachers' planning and the sample of pupils' work that there is an interesting curriculum for **history** and **geography**. From this it is evident that the pupils are achieving well and taking a pride in their work. One of the most interesting aspects of both subjects is that the older pupils organise their work in their own way and much of the content is based on personal research. As a result, there is a good range of writing styles and forms of presentation, including books, charts, newspaper accounts and diaries. The teachers make good use of pupils' holiday experiences, and there are displays to show where they have travelled. The infants take Barnaby Bear on holiday and he has travelled extensively. In the geography lesson observed in the oldest class, the pupils planned a presentation for the teacher's son, who is in Australia for his gap year. The group topics are far ranging and include large cities, physical features, currency and exchange, culture and Aborigines. The work is generating very good links with other subjects. The pupils have good skills in both history and geography, for example, they understand the importance of first hand evidence and clearly explain time differences around the globe. The teachers suggest research projects for homework, but the pupils understand this to be optional and there are no time limits. At present, there is little evidence of the use of information and communication technology, but there is a well-stocked library and books support both subjects well.

There is a very good range of visits and visitors. For instance, the pupils have experienced Tudor life and have had a Chinese day as a whole school activity. The teachers make very good use of the local area to support both subjects.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average and boys and girls achieve well
- The subject contributes significantly to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- There are good links between religious education and other subjects
- The teachers are knowledgeable and the pupils retain their learning well

Commentary

60. The teaching was good in all the lessons observed. A distinctive feature is the way in which the teachers encourage their pupils to express opinions about their learning, to respect the traditions of the religions they study and to empathise with the characters in the sacred stories they hear. The youngest pupils, for example, listened with interest and respect as they were taught about Jewish customs and the Shabbat. The good resources and teacher's subject knowledge enlivened the lesson and the pupils achieved well. Some lower juniors made very good use of their literacy skills to produce a newspaper account of the healing of the lame man. Others wrote as the lame man and described how they felt. As they watched a video version of the story, there were gasps of delight as the lame man walked. Older pupils recall their learning about Islam very well and show great respect for the handling of the Qur'an. The pupils with special educational needs and the able and talented pupils contributed fully in all lessons.
61. The pupils' work shows that they cover a good range of topics throughout their time in school. Those in Year 6 have a good recall of the main attributes of the different religions they have studied and can compare and contrast them accurately and sensitively. However, they do not record their work in religious education. While this does not effect either their understanding of the subject matter or their response to their learning, it is an anomaly in a school where writing for different purpose is highly regarded.
62. There is a good range of resources and local religious leaders are regular visitors to assemblies. The pupils visit local places of worship and visitors to school have included members of different faiths. The curriculum will be amended when the teachers have undergone in-service training related to the introduction of the new Local Education Authority Agreed Syllabus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two music lessons, one **art and design** and one physical education lessons were observed during the inspection. No design and technology lessons were seen. A sample of the pupils' work on display in the classroom and in their folders was scrutinised.

The school is seeking to broaden its curriculum and in doing so has held occasional days when the pupils have focussed, for example, on the work of famous artists by researching their painting and creating pictures in a similar style. Some of the oldest pupils found out about Monet and his garden at Giverny to produce paintings that are now displayed in the library. In discussion with pupils, it is clear that they really enjoyed the opportunity not only to be involved in this work but also to be given the time to complete it. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 created collages of owls, painted fairy tale characters and made Chinese dragons. In a good lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher made good use of Renoir's picture 'The Umbrellas' to encourage the pupils to experiment with colour and texture using different techniques to apply the paint. The pupils were very well motivated and behaved very well in conditions that are quite cramped for this type of activity. The quality of the work on display is of the standard expected for the pupils' ages, but the range of work is relatively narrow. Clearly, the moves that the school is making to extend the range of the pupils' knowledge and skills are necessary and entirely appropriate.

A similar situation exists in **design and technology**. Here again standards are in line with expectations, but it is clear from the older pupils' designs that they are not very familiar with the processes associated with designing and making. They use a pro forma outline for their designs, and the research and assessment of need are not as well developed as might be expected. Nevertheless, they construct stable structures using wood and card and create direct drive mechanisms using circuits and motors. The curriculum developments are creating better links between subjects and this was evident in a Year 3 and 4 science lesson on forces where the pupils

were learning about the properties of springs in advance of using them in a design and technology task.

In the one **physical education** lesson observed, 20 of the youngest pupils were involved in a dance activity around the theme of toys. The teacher managed the lesson well and created imaginative opportunities, but the space available for the pupils was wholly inadequate and prevented them reaching the standards of which they are capable. The inadequate accommodation makes it impossible for the older pupils to have physical education lessons on site. However, they travel to the local secondary school for gymnastics lessons and to a local pool for swimming lessons. The school has a good size field for games activities and provides a good range of extra curricular sporting activities that are popular with the pupils. These arrangements and facilities enable the school to provide the pupils with an appropriate physical education curriculum.

Music

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well and attain above average standards
- The teaching is very good
- The pupils are very enthusiastic and strive to perform well

Commentary

63. The school benefits from the expertise of a part-time teacher who has considerable skills in teaching music. She teaches all the pupils and is responsible for the very good extra-curricular provision in the subject. Her excellent teaching and organisation of the whole school hymn practice ensure that the quality of pupils' singing is well above average. The Year 6 pupils, for example, sing a descant with very accurate phrasing, maintaining the depth and accuracy of the melody without increasing the volume. This is mature music making as the temptation is to sing loudly to help maintain the melody against the main body of voices. The teacher uses very effective, introductory warm-ups to the lessons, and has high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and the effort they must put into their work. As a result, the pupils make good progress overall, and very good progress in singing.

64. Many of the older pupils learn to play musical instruments. Peripatetic music teachers teach strings, woodwind and brass, and some pupils have private piano lessons. They are encouraged to perform, and soloists volunteer to entertain at the end of hymn practice. The Year 3 and 4 pupils play the recorder, but there is no school choir because it is expected that everyone will sing. There are several concerts during each year, related to Christmas, Harvest, Easter and the Leavers' Concert in the summer term. The pupils perform with other schools and various performers have run workshops in school, for example, Steel Pan tutors. The pupils listen to a set piece of recorded music each week and older ones carry out research about the composer to share with the school. There is a comprehensive curriculum in which the pupils' skills are rigorously developed alongside a secure knowledge and application of musical terms. The pupils have maintained the good standards attained at the time of the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong focus on both the community and pupils' personal responsibility
- The curriculum is comprehensive, catering for healthy living and personal care as well as personal and social skills
- There are very strong cross-curricular links and the subject permeates school life

Commentary

65. The school has a strong commitment to promoting a sense of personal responsibility in the pupils. The thriving school council is democratic and the councillors are consulted and influenced through a suggestion box. The council has a growing influence on school life. The Circle of Friends, manned by volunteers, is a very good source of friendship and care for pupils who have trouble sustaining relationships. Careful adult support ensures that the systems of support are effective and are gently withdrawn at the appropriate time.
66. There is a scheme of work based on a two-year cycle. All lessons are taught by the headteacher to ensure that the pupils build on their previous learning. Much of the curriculum is based on discussion and the pupils' work shows that they have the capacity to relate their learning to their own lives. The older pupils study life skills and explore ways to keep safe. The curriculum is underpinned by outside support. The DARE programme, for example, promotes drugs awareness very effectively and the Life Education trailer is a valuable resource that deals with many aspects of the curriculum, including emotions and feelings. A local fire officer visited the infants with his rapid response vehicle in relation to their study "people who help us" and "keeping safe" within the community. The school has developed its personal, social and health education curriculum very well since the previous inspection.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	1
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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