

INSPECTION REPORT

WHITESTONE INFANT SCHOOL

Nuneaton

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125545

Headteacher: Mrs G Gothard

Lead inspector: Mr J Earish

Dates of inspection: 7th – 9th October 2003

Inspection number: 260931

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:	4 to 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	341
School address:	Magyar Crescent Nuneaton
Postcode:	CV11 4SQ
Telephone number:	024 7634 7813
Fax number:	024 7638 8660
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Philip Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	28 th September – 1 st October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Whitestone Infant School is situated in the Whitestone Ward on the outskirts of Nuneaton. This former mining community is now a dormitory town for the adjacent cities of Coventry, Leicester and Birmingham. The school is larger than most infant schools. There are 341 boys and girls on roll aged 4 to 7 years. Almost all of the pupils are from the immediate locality, and are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds. Most live in owner-occupied accommodation, but there is also some privately rented and council housing. Unemployment in the area is low. Ten per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs (SEN). This proportion is below the national average, and there are two pupils with statements of special need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, at 6.4 per cent, is also below the national average. Very few pupils come from ethnic minorities. One pupil who has very recently joined the school speaks English as an additional language (EAL). Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23216	Mr J Earish	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Information and Communication Technology; Physical education.
13762	Mr N Shelley	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
18709	Ms N Bee	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Art; Religious Education; Special Educational Needs; English As An Additional Language.
23658	Mr S Parker	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; History.
20063	Mr G Slamon	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage Curriculum; Mathematics; Music.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school in which pupils achieve well above average standards by the age of seven years. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good and excellent teaching. Leadership and management are very good. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards achieved in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average by the age of seven years, and pupils achieve well.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and most exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception.
- The headteacher, senior management and governors provide very good leadership, and all work very effectively as a team.
- Teaching is good overall, with just under half of the lessons observed being very good or excellent. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their good behaviour contribute to the very good relationships within the school.
- Some younger pupils who enter Year 1 are not yet ready to adapt to the National Curriculum or to the structures recommended by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy.

The school is more effective than at the time of the last inspection. Standards have improved in reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and physical education. Staff show a clear commitment to maintaining standards and improving them further. The school now provides more opportunities for the pupils to become independent, to make choices, and to take responsibility. Good improvements have also been made to the range of activities outside normal lesson times. These were key issues at the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	B	A	A	B
writing	B	A	B	C
mathematics	B	C	A	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*

Pupils achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and most exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also achieve well and attain standards that are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in information and communication technology are also good.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are very good. Opportunities are well planned and fully integrated into the overall curriculum framework.

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and this has a positive effect on both the quality of their education and the standards of work they achieve. Pupils' good behaviour, very good relationships, and personal development all contribute to an effective environment in which pupils learn well. Attendance is above the national average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good.

The quality of teaching is good overall. For the Foundation Stage in Reception, teaching was consistently very good or better, and pupils learned very well. In Years 1 and 2 teaching was good overall, with eight out of ten lessons good or better. The best teaching and learning was seen in Year 2. In Year 1, there are a small number of pupils at the start of the school year who are not yet ready to adapt to the structures recommended by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and this affects the rate at which they learn. All teachers are enthusiastic and are very clear about what they expect pupils to learn. They have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. A particularly good feature of teaching is the very good assessment of what pupils can do, and the constructive help they receive to help them improve.

The curriculum is broad, balanced, and of good quality. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion. Boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities are provided with well-planned activities that help them make progress and achieve well. There is a very good range of activities for enrichment.

Care, welfare and support are very good. The school cares for its pupils very well in a warm and friendly environment. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school continues to have very good relationships with parents, who make a valuable contribution to their children's learning at home. The school maintains very good links with partner schools to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. The school also enjoys strong relationships with a university and college of further education, and is currently promoting adult education courses for parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher, teachers and governors provide very good leadership. The headteacher and deputy, in post for two years, are giving the school a very clear lead in direction and purpose after a period of uncertainty. The governors are very effective in their role, and hold the school accountable for its actions. All members of the school community work extremely well as a team, and are committed to school improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express very positive views about all aspects of the school. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons, and feel safe and secure. They feel reassured that adults quickly sort out any misbehaviour or bullying

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Give greater consideration to the children's different stages of development at the start of Year 1 when work is being planned for the few pupils who are not yet ready to adapt to the National Curriculum, or to the structures recommended by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy.

(This has been identified by the school, and an action plan is being implemented).

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and most exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, and by the age of seven they reach standards that are well above average in all core subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and the majority exceed the goals for learning.
- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are well above average by age seven.
- A small number of the youngest pupils who enter Year 1 are not yet ready to adapt to the National Curriculum or to the structures recommended by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy.

Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and, by the end of their time in Reception, the majority are exceeding the early learning goals in each of the six areas of learning.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.4 (17.2)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.4 (15.7)	14.4 (14.3)
mathematics	18.0 (16.5)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 117 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Standards achieved in the national tests in reading and mathematics were well above the national average in 2002. In writing they were above average. When compared with those of similar schools, with about the same proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. Standards in reading and writing have been above or well above average for the last four years. Standards in mathematics have been average or above, but have recently improved and are now well above average.

3. In 2003, the cohort of pupils in Year 2 contained significantly more pupils needing additional support. Realistic yet challenging targets were set for these pupils, on the basis of the school's very good assessment system. All the targets were achieved. In mathematics, the number achieving Level 2 and the higher Level 3 exceeded the target.

4. Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving well in all of the six areas of learning. This is due to the quality of teaching, which is consistently very good. Teamwork amongst all teachers and support staff is of a very high quality. Planning and expectations of what children can achieve are very high and this results in very good learning. The provision for children's personal and social development is excellent and makes a significant impact on their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

5. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are also achieving well. The present cohort of pupils in Year 2 is on course to be well above average in reading, writing and mathematics by the age of seven years. This is confirmed by inspection evidence and by the challenging targets set by the school, based on their own systematic monitoring over time. Standards in information and communication technology and physical education are now good. This is an improvement on the standards reported at the

time of the last inspection. In Year 1, there is a small number of pupils at the start of the school year who are not yet ready to adapt to the structures recommended by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, and this affects the rate at which they learn. Some of these pupils do not listen carefully enough to instructions, and this affects their learning. They respond better when they are given varied practical tasks during the instruction part of the lesson. By Year 2, however, pupils can take a full part in class discussions. They are very eager to participate, and especially to answer questions when there is an element of competition. This has been recognised by the school as a result of its regular monitoring of teaching and learning. In order to improve transition to work in the National Curriculum, the headteacher and staff are implementing plans to extend the Foundation Stage principles to Year 1 at the beginning of the school year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes, are keen to work, and realise that hard work will produce good results

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are enthusiastic about school and their lessons.
- Pupils relate very well to one another and to adults.
- Attendance is above average and punctuality is excellent.
- Pupils have a very good appreciation of spiritual, social and moral values.
- A small minority of pupils in Year 1 do not listen carefully enough and sometimes distract others.

Commentary

6. Pupils are very keen to come to school, because they enjoy their lessons and all the activities in which they take part. Parents, staff and pupils work together as a family unit, with a strong ethos in which mutual respect and harmonious relationships help to promote an effective teaching and learning environment. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about coming to school and enjoying lessons. They made comments such as: 'We get 'stickies' when we do something well...and have to go to the 'sad' side of the classroom if we are naughty...but we all know that we must work hard and always do our very best...we don't like sitting on the carpet...we just want to get on with our work'. The school's golden rules, 'to be kind, listen and try your very best', are very well promoted and adopted.

7. Pupils are very aware of the need for self-discipline, with the result that behaviour in and around the school is good. Neither bullying nor bad language were observed, and there have been no exclusions in the last three years. A small minority of the youngest Year 1 pupils, mostly boys, find the long morning periods of intensive literacy and numeracy extremely tiring. They find it difficult to listen carefully enough and sometimes distract each other.

8. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils, and between older and younger pupils, is very good. The pupils genuinely value one another, respect each other's opinions, and work together amicably. The pupils welcome visitors to the school easily, engage them in conversation, and take pride in their appearance, in their school and in their work.

9. Attendance is above average, and pupils invariably arrive in good time for the start of school. Prompt contact is made with parents when reasons for absence are not given. However, requests for absence during term time, owing to family holidays, are increasing.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002

Authorised absence	
School data	94.5
National data	94.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
National data	0.5

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

10. Pupils have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The scheme of work for personal, social and health education emphasises the need to tell the truth and be fair in all dealings. There is a strong commitment to sharing, and children develop a respect for themselves and others. The school is very successful in fostering in pupils a sense of dignity, value and worth, and an appreciation of achievement in themselves and others. There is also a firm commitment to promoting friendly relationships and to socially integrating all pupils, which the school does very well. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. All adults working in the school actively support pupils, showing care, concern and interest. Pupils recognise the high demand made on them in terms of their social behaviour, and they respond well. There are very well planned opportunities during assemblies to reflect on the importance of spiritual values. Pupils are given time to reflect silently, and are encouraged to do so through personal and shared prayer. Teachers also give pupils very good opportunities to experience a sense of awe and wonder during lessons. For example, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the wonders of science and mathematics, the beauty of art and music, and the richness of language.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

11. The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good overall. For the Foundation Stage in Reception, teaching was found to be consistently very good or better. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. Care, welfare and support are very good. The school cares for its pupils very well in a warm and friendly environment. The school maintains very good relationships with parents, who continue to make a very good contribution to their children's learning at home. The school sustains productive links with partner schools to ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stages in their education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils learn well. Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' work are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' academic performance are very good.
- The teaching assistants play a valuable role in giving pupils help and support.
- A small number of pupils find it difficult to adapt to work in the National Curriculum at the start of Year 1.

Commentary

12. The quality of teaching is good overall. For the Foundation Stage in Reception, teaching was judged to be consistently very good or excellent, and pupils learned very well. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when just under three quarter of the lessons were good or better. In Years 1 and 2, teaching was good overall, with eight out of ten lessons good or better. This, too, represents an improvement since the last inspection, when just under half

of the lessons were good. The weaknesses identified in the report on that occasion related to inadequate opportunities for pupils to work independently and to show initiative, and the issue has been successfully addressed. Parents indicate that they are happy with the quality of teaching in the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2.2 %)	19 (41.3%)	21 (45.7 %)	5 (10.9 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)	0 (0 %)

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

13. The very good teaching in the Foundation Stage results in pupils learning very well. Staff are calm and friendly in their management of the children, who are made to feel valued and confident. The teachers have a very good understanding of the curriculum and of how children of this age learn. Explanations are very clear, and carefully phrased questions help children to think. Adults give high priority to encouraging language development when pupils are engaged in group work, and this results in very good learning. There are very good systems in Reception for keeping track of each child’s progress, and the information is used well in the planning of future work. Teachers, classroom assistants and parent volunteers work well together in setting clear expectations about children’s behaviour. Their discussions and interventions are highly effective in getting children to talk, to think, and to behave well. The quality of teaching and care children receive in the Foundation Stage ensures that their early experiences of school are very happy ones.

14. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are of good quality overall. The best teaching was seen in Year 2, where it was often very good and resulted in very good learning. During these lessons, pupils benefited significantly from challenging tasks that captured their attention and focussed well on previous learning. Pupils were challenged to do well through the interesting tasks given to them; they concentrated well, and the relationships between teachers and pupils made learning a very constructive experience. The combination of good teaching and a very positive attitude to learning ensures that pupils make good progress in the majority of lessons. In Year 1, however, this is not always the case. At the start of the school year there is a small number of pupils who are not yet ready to adapt to the structures recommended by the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Lessons are sometimes focused too narrowly on academic targets, and fail to catch their interest. This affects the rate at which they learn. The school has identified this concern as part of its programme of regular monitoring. The headteacher and staff are now taking steps to introduce the Foundation Stage principles into Year 1, to ease the transition to work in the National Curriculum at the beginning of the school year.

15. Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils’ academic performance are very good. The school has a very clear view of what each pupil is achieving and the standard of his or her work. Pupils are regularly assessed, and the analysis of this information enables the school to track individual pupils, classes and cohorts. The information also leads to the setting of challenging targets for pupils in the core subjects, and this in turn makes a major contribution to raising standards and setting appropriate work for pupils of all abilities. The assessment information helps to identify any areas of weakness in English, mathematics and science, which in turn informs the school development plan and the programme for developing the skills and competencies of members of staff.

16. The support assistants are involved in class planning, and they play a valuable role in giving pupils appropriate help and support.

17. Teachers are aware of the needs of higher attaining pupils and generally use targeted questions well to challenge these pupils, or to demand that they explain their answers more fully. They also provide pupils with a greater range and frequency of well-planned opportunities for study and research. For example, there are weekly lessons in mathematics designed to challenge and extend the most able pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good overall, and very good in the Reception classes. Learning is extended through a very good range of out-of-class activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is stimulating and very well resourced.
- The range of after-class activities is very good.
- Very good care is taken to give pupils equal access to learning.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to promote learning in most subjects.
- Some pupils find difficulty in adapting to the demands of the curriculum at the start of Year 1.

Commentary

18. The curriculum is broad and balanced, with appropriate emphasis on English and mathematics. Planning for all subjects is well founded on official guidance, and pupils are well prepared for the transfer to junior school. Since the previous inspection there has been a good improvement in the curriculum, resources and staffing for the Foundation Stage, all of which are now very good. Provision for ICT has also improved and is now very good. The new computer suite is used to very good effect. Lessons in some other subjects are regularly taught in the suite, enabling pupils to learn ICT skills through a wide range of purposeful tasks.

19. Learning is successfully extended through a stimulating range of special events, focus weeks and visits. Such experiences are used well to broaden pupils' experience and focus their learning. For instance, a visit to Tamworth castle last year led to detailed drawings and accounts of features that had caught pupils' interest. Some were keen to search for more facts in reference books and on the Internet.

20. There is a good scheme of work for PSHE, giving teachers detailed guidance. Topics covered through the curriculum include sex education and drug awareness at an appropriate level, and a range of visitors develop pupils' understanding of the responsibilities of citizenship. The school has made very good progress in developing pupils' awareness of safety issues, and as a result has achieved the Gold Level of the School Safety Merit Award.

21. The school takes very good care to ensure that all pupils are fully included. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with individual education plans (IEPs) of good quality. Their targets are clearly focused on their identified needs and adjusted in the light of regular assessments, so that they make the best progress as their needs change. The one pupil for whom EAL is well supported. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are taught separately for English once a week, so that the work closely matches their needs. Planning in all lessons takes account of the needs of different ability groups. However, some pupils in Year 1, mainly boys, are finding difficulties in transferring into the National Curriculum, which is significantly different from the curriculum of the Foundation Stage. Sometimes the content of lessons is focused too narrowly and intensely on academic targets, for example spelling patterns, with not enough to catch their interest, such as exciting stories or more varied content. Some pupils are also easily distracted in the open-plan areas by people passing through and by noise from other classes, and their restlessness then distracts others.

22. There has been a good improvement in the range of clubs and other after-class activities since the previous inspection. These are now very good, are well attended, and meet with widespread approval from parents. The French club is open to children in Reception and continues in the subsequent years. There is also a mathematics club. There is good provision for sport,

including ball skills for Year 1 and football and short tennis for Year 2. The good provision for the arts includes a school choir and a dance class for Year 2, while all pupils benefit from an Arts Week which involves visiting artists. Some activities take place at lunchtimes so that pupils taken home immediately after school are not always disadvantaged.

23. The school is well staffed and teamwork is a strength. Teaching assistants play a good supporting role in lessons, particularly with lower attaining groups, and lead a whole class at times, for instance reading them a story at the end of the day. The accommodation has been improved since the previous inspection. The outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage is now securely fenced and the new outside classroom is a very useful addition, allowing a wide range of practical activities under cover. Seating and play equipment make the grounds attractive and stimulating. Teaching areas are generally adequate, though one temporary Year 2 classroom is very small and this restricts practical activities. The school has enclosed some areas which were formerly open-plan, and reports that this has improved pupils' concentration. Resources are satisfactory overall, and are good for reading, mathematics and ICT. The many colourful displays around the school help to make it a lively and interesting place in which to learn.

Care, guidance and support

The standard of pastoral care and the arrangements for pupils' welfare are very good. The school provides good support, advice and guidance to pupils, and seeks, values and acts upon their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils feel safe, valued and supported because of the way they are treated.
- Procedures for child protection and health and safety are very well implemented.
- Induction procedures are very good.

Commentary

24. The inspection took place at the start of the new academic year, which was a good time to find out how well the school helps its new pupils to settle. Comprehensive arrangements are in place to introduce and integrate new pupils into the school. Teachers visit families in their homes as a prelude to the children starting school, and Reception staff work very closely with pre-school groups to assess children's different experiences. All adults work hard to instil a sense of belonging, based on personal care and making children feel comfortable and liked.

25. The school has sustained the high standards of care for its pupils. Child protection procedures are firmly in place, and the training of staff is up to date. Any pupils who are causing concern are carefully monitored. All members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are trained in first aid procedures. Regular safety audits and risk assessments are carried out and carefully recorded in detail. The school site, both inside and out, is kept clean and tidy and provides a safe environment for pupils.

26. The school continues to give good support and guidance to its pupils, in line with its stated aims. A firm commitment to the welfare of pupils contributes to the good progress and development of all pupils. The headteacher and her colleagues accept their pastoral role with real enthusiasm and diligence. Pupils feel constantly supported within this integrated community without any loss of their independence. Parents in turn feel that the school is a safe, sensitive and caring environment, which they trust and value.

27. There are good systems for checking pupils' progress and identifying those who may be slipping behind. The school has introduced a system to monitor individual achievement and progress for each group of pupils, and pupils' personal development is also carefully monitored in an informal way. All this information is being used well to provide additional support during lessons for those who need help, and additional teaching for those pupils who are more able.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a very good partnership with parents, who have a high regard for the school. The school works very well with other schools and colleges and has good links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Parents express very positive views about all aspects of the school.
- Parents' involvement in the school and in pupils' learning is very good.
- Links with other schools and colleges lead to significant benefits for the school.
- Annual school reports do not describe pupils' attainment clearly enough.

Commentary

28. The school continues to maintain very good relationships with parents, and these are reflected in the very positive comments about the school from the questionnaires, parents' pre-inspection meeting, and interviews during the inspection. The school works closely with parents to ensure that new pupils entering the school are very well looked after, and that the procedures for transferring to the local junior school are clearly understood by all. The school has carried out a survey to evaluate the quality of service provided for parents, pupils and other users. An analysis of the results has helped inform governors, headteacher and staff of the things they do well and things they could do better. Areas for improvement have been included in the school development plan.

29. The quality of documentation produced for parents is very good and the prospectus and governors' report meet statutory requirements. Pupils' annual reports to parents are good overall, and are clear about what pupils know, understand and can do, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, some reports do not always reflect pupils' individual attainment clearly enough, as it is compared with the class average rather than the national expectation for the age group.

30. Parents make a very good contribution to their children's learning at home, mainly through helping them with their reading, spelling, number work and occasional projects. The school is well supported by the parent-teacher association, which makes a significant contribution to the finances as well as to the life and work of the school.

31. The school's links with the local nursery and its partner junior school ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the next stages in their education. The school also enjoys strong relationships with a university and a college of further education. As a result, trainee teachers and students pursuing vocational qualifications and work experience are welcomed to the school and provide extra support which reinforces the quality of teaching and learning for the pupils. An education business partnership is currently promoting adult education courses for parents by offering introductory 'taster' sessions in partnership with the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership, and are dedicated to ensuring the highest possible standards and achievement in all areas of the school's work. The school is very well managed. Self-evaluation is well established and embedded within the culture of the school, and it pervades the whole organisation. The governing body make a very good contribution to the leadership of the school and its success.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, and has clarity of vision and sense of purpose.
- Self-evaluation is well established and embedded within the culture of the school.
- Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school, and contribute substantially to its effectiveness.
- The school's strategic plan and the annual improvement plan are of very good quality and clearly map out future development.

Commentary

32. The headteacher provides very good leadership, which gives a strong sense of purpose and direction to the school. Her clarity of vision and sense of purpose are excellent. These qualities have been important for the development of the school, which had previously been through a period of uncertainty in respect of its senior management. The headteacher and deputy were both appointed about two years ago. They are personally committed to building an effective partnership between the school, the home and the community. The senior management team work very closely with teachers and governors in striving to achieve education of the highest quality for every child entrusted to their care.

33. The headteacher manages change effectively. Self-evaluation is well established and embedded within the culture of the school, and it pervades the whole organisation. A very good example of this is the way in which the school's own monitoring system revealed and dealt with a weakness in the development of practical skills in science. Staff have adjusted the curriculum accordingly, and have been focussing on the development of these skills during the last academic year; this is already having an impact on the standards achieved by the age of seven years. The headteacher and subject coordinators regularly visit classrooms to monitor the quality of the curriculum, and give feedback on the quality of teaching and learning. The governing body is very supportive and successfully fulfils its role as critical friend to the school. It is very well organised and fulfils its legal responsibilities by means of an effective committee structure. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and contribute substantially to its effectiveness. They have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses, and are very active in holding the school to account for its performance and in discussing ways in which standards may be improved. They have complete trust in the headteacher but expect her to be fully accountable to them.

34. The school's strategic plan and the annual improvement plan are of very good quality, and clearly map out future development. The strategic plan covers a four-year period, provides a good analysis of the school's context, and sets out precise and measurable targets for the future. The annual improvement plan contains good detail about the school's targets, and sets out a clear time-scale for each initiative. There are also clear guidelines on how teachers can judge how successful they have been at making improvements.

35. The school had a carry-forward figure of just over six per cent last year. However, a significant proportion was due to the readjustment of staff costs during that year. Figures for the current financial year show that the projected carry-forward will be about two and a half per cent.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	608,609.00
Total expenditure	615,185.00
Expenditure per pupil	1809.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	45,602.00
Balance carried forward to the next	39,026.00

36. A wide range of indicators, including the quality of teaching, the quality of leadership and the good improvement made since the last inspection, show that the school is effective. When the expenditure per pupil is considered, the school gives good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Reception classes is very good and is a strength of the school.

Particular strengths:

- The quality of teaching is consistently very good.
- This aspect of the school's provision is very well led and managed.
- Teamwork amongst all teachers and support staff is of very high quality
- Planning and expectations of what children can achieve are very high.
- The provision for children's personal and social development is excellent.
- The highly organised outdoor accommodation is well used.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is very good and activities are carefully planned.
- There are outstanding working relationships between all adults and parents.
- There are very good links with pre-school providers and parents before children start school.

Commentary

37. The development of children's personal and social development is given high priority and underpins all the work in the Reception classes. As a result, by the time the children enter Year 1 most will have achieved the learning goals, and a significant number will exceed them.

38. Children quickly settle into a caring and safe environment where basic routines and high expectations are fostered. The outstanding working relationships between all members of staff and parents are effective in showing children how to relate to one another. The school takes care to assess children's different experiences before they arrive, and adults work hard to instil a sense of belonging, based on personal care and making children feel comfortable and liked. Good social development results from the very good teaching, which emphasises kindness to others, and from planned activities which call for co-operation. Staff place great emphasis on the development of children's self-esteem, confidence and independence. As a result, children respond well to new challenges, such as changing independently for physical education lessons and tidying away after activities. Girls and boys are encouraged to play and work together and to get the best out of rich learning opportunities, so that they develop a good range of skills across all areas of learning.

39. The school has very good links with the pre-school, and its induction arrangements, which are highly structured, include visits to the home. These activities do much to ensure that the children's experiences are happy ones.

Communication, language and literacy

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- All adults engage children in talk at every opportunity, throughout the school. No opportunities for learning are missed.
- Adults use questions very well to develop children's confidence in speaking and listening.
- There are very good opportunities to develop reading skills.

Commentary

40. Nearly all the children currently in the Reception classes are likely to reach the early learning goals by the time they begin the National Curriculum in Year 1, with a significant number likely to exceed the recommended standard. This is the result of very good teaching, and of the many opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills through stories, poems and rhymes.

41. Teaching and learning are very good. Very effective questioning encourages children to give considered answers, and builds on prior learning. In one literacy lesson seen, the teacher reinforced children's use of vocabulary by asking a boy 'how did you describe this shell a few minutes ago?' The child replied that he had said it was spiky, so the teacher now challenged the class to find 'the spiky, rough shell', thus giving more complex instructions. There is very good provision for reading development. Children share big books, reading together in groups and engaging in individual reading at home and in school. They have a growing number of words they recognise in tests. The teachers take every opportunity to emphasise the sounds that different letters make and to extend vocabulary.

42. After a short time at school nearly all children can write their names. By the end of the year, several are able to write phrases or sentences, especially when a teacher or other member of staff supports them.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Adults make very effective links between different areas of learning to review and consolidate children's mathematical understanding.
- Children are introduced to a wide range of mathematical language and practical activities.

Commentary

43. Most children are on course to reach or to exceed the early learning goals for mathematics because of the very good teaching they receive. They learn to count with increasing confidence and work well when investigating numbers. Teaching and learning are very good. All adults use a wide range of teaching methods and resources so that children develop a practical understanding of all aspects of mathematics. They make very good links with other areas of learning such as literacy and art to make the tasks meaningful to the children. For example, children engaged in one activity had already gained a good understanding of repeating patterns from their artwork of the previous day, and the teacher used this very well to consolidate and extend their learning.

44. Adults introduce mathematical language very effectively. Consequently, children can name shapes such as squares, triangles and circles, and use terms such as 'in front of', 'more than', 'less than', 'odd' and 'even'. They learn to write numbers and become familiar with the concepts of addition and subtraction. Teachers plan a very good range of practical activities to further children's understanding of number, shape and measures.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There are many imaginative activities to engage the children, and these also involve parents.

Commentary

45. Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching and learning are very good. Adults provide well-planned activities, such as nature walks around the school, to develop children's knowledge of nature and of the local area. As a result, the children are able to talk about features of the local environment, and describe them with confidence. Information and communication skills are very well taught, and are used well to support teaching and learning. Children were observed opening programmes and controlling the mouse effectively to move objects on the screen and to control a programmable toy. Teachers and support staff are successful in teaching children that some families within the community have beliefs similar to their own, but that others do not. They do this by celebrating Christian festivals and those of other communities such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali. Parents are successfully involved in the planning of these activities and provide artefacts. For example, one mother made mini saris for the girls and waistcoats for the boys, so they could wear them during the Diwali celebrations. Children were also given chopsticks to eat with during the celebration of the Chinese New Year! As a result of this very good, imaginative provision, most children are on course to achieve the expected standard, and a significant number will exceed it.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good relationships ensure that children enjoy physical activities and have 'fun'.
- There are frequent opportunities during the day for pupils to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

46. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. By the time they leave the Reception classes, almost all children reach standards appropriate for their age, and a significant number exceed these. Children receive regular opportunities for physical activities such as running, jumping, climbing and balancing, both in timetabled lessons in the school hall and during the regular opportunities for physical activity in the very well organised and resourced outdoor learning area. The very good relationships established by the class teacher and support staff ensure that all children have 'fun' during these activities, and all are willing to 'have a go' during physical activities. Children are given frequent opportunities during the school day to use small tools and instruments, such as paintbrushes, pencils, scissors, and crayons, to develop their fine motor skills. Management of the children is very good, which ensures their safety when using apparatus and tools.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- All adults in the school value children's creativity and are skilful in helping them to respond creatively to their surroundings.

Commentary

47. Children are provided with a rich environment in which creativity and expression are valued. Teaching and learning are very good. Members of staff are very skilful at enabling children to respond sensitively and creatively to what they see, hear, feel and imagine. By the end of their time in Reception, most children reach the standard expected for their age, and a significant number exceed it. Their creative development is successfully fostered through a wide range of experiences such as mixing paints, choosing particular colours for a purpose, and making constructions, collages and paintings. They are given many opportunities to glue, stick and join materials together, which they enjoy very much. For example, a group of children were building a house, using large construction kits. They insisted that hard hats should be worn and worked together very well to assemble the 'bricks'. They were seen concentrating very carefully on the shape and design of the 'house' as they tried different ways of fixing the 'bricks' together. In music lessons, children also have very good opportunities to explore how sounds are made, by using large outdoor chimes and simple paper instruments and through singing. The well-designed role-play areas give the children very good opportunities to play co-operatively and develop their imagination. They extend their language skills by re-enacting familiar situations or making up their own. Such experiences make a good contribution to children's spiritual, social and cultural development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in reading and writing are well above average by the end of Year 2.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- Assessment information is used very effectively to guide pupils' progress.
- A small number of pupils in Year 1 do not listen carefully enough and sometimes distract others.

Commentary

48. Year 2 test results have been above or well above the national average since 1998, and the school has been successful in sustaining high standards since the previous inspection. Standards in the present Year 2 are average in listening, above average in speaking, and well above average in reading and writing. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

49. Pupils generally use a good range of vocabulary and sentence structures in their speech, and this is reflected in the quality of their written work. Some pupils in Year 1, mainly boys, do not listen carefully enough to instruction, and this is a weakness affecting their learning. They respond better when the interest level is high and questioning is brisk and vigorous, and when they are given

varied practical tasks, such as using a writing tablet, during the instruction part of the lesson. By Year 2, pupils as a whole take a full part in class discussions. Many are very eager to answer when there is an element of competition. They speak clearly but quietly. Most explain their ideas in full when prompted. Sometimes teachers set a speaking task and then give individual coaching, though this could be done more often.

50. The school has worked very effectively to improve its reading resources. These are drawn from a range of sources to ensure high interest and are carefully graded for difficulty so that pupils make progress in small steps. As a result, the pupils are confident and show strong interest in reading. Letter-sound patterns are taught very thoroughly, with the result that pupils across the age and ability range have very good skills in sounding out unfamiliar words and are not afraid of a challenge. Pupils with special needs are given extra help and make good progress. The school has identified a number of pupils with very high attainment in reading and ensures that they are consistently challenged. Reading as a homework activity is well established and carefully monitored.

51. Almost all pupils write successfully for a wide range of purposes by the end of Year 2, and a good number achieve the level above that expected for their age. Higher attaining pupils achieve very well in writing long stories, using speech and description for dramatic effect. Standards of spelling and punctuation are very good overall. The school has identified the need to review the handwriting policy. At present, some Year 1 pupils do not form letters correctly, though by the end of Year 2 many use a joined script. Pupils with special needs make good progress because their individual education plans set out specific targets, for which they are well supported in lessons.

52. Teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen, it was very good in two, good in over a half and satisfactory in the remainder. Lessons are well planned, with clear targets and tasks adjusted for groups of differing ability. Teachers offer good models in their own speech and writing. They explain language features clearly and spread their questions well to involve pupils across the ability range. Pupils are particularly keen to use their writing tablets to try out ideas and spellings. Study texts are well chosen for the quality of their language and their appeal to boys and girls alike. In some lessons, though, too much time is spent studying language features, such as spelling patterns. As a result, some pupils lose interest, particularly Year 1 boys. More emphasis needs to be given to enjoying the language and ideas of texts studied in the first part of the literacy hour. Routines are well established, so pupils waste little time when settling to individual work. They behave well and stay on task. Teaching assistants give good support, mainly to lower attaining groups. Marking is well informed, though pupils do not regularly do corrections or follow up work in response.

53. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator and senior management have a clear agenda for improving standards, based on close monitoring of pupils' progress. Thorough assessment procedures for reading and writing play a key role, giving teachers reliable information to guide their lesson planning and indicating where improvements in overall provision are needed. For example, a new reading scheme was chosen for its likely appeal to boys, who were under-performing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are taught as a group for one lesson per week to ensure they make the best possible progress.

54. Assessment information is also very effectively shared with pupils in the form of individual targets to guide their progress in reading and writing. Less information is available on standards of speaking and listening, and provision is not so consistently focused on these elements. Teamwork is strong, with teachers in each year group planning together, sharing ideas and identifying how teaching assistants are to be fully involved.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop literacy skills through other subjects. They read information books confidently and write good factual accounts. English lessons taught in the ICT suite give pupils very good opportunities to learn word-processing, with very good achievements as a result.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well and attain very good standards by the end of Year 2.
- The school is committed to raising standards.
- Planning is very good and is based on what pupils know and understand.
- The subject is very well led and managed.

56. At the beginning of Year 1, not enough use is made of knowledge of the previous development of some pupils when work is being planned to meet their needs.

57. Pupils are offered a broad and balanced curriculum, covering all aspects of mathematics, with a strong emphasis on basic numeracy. The good teaching, supported by confident, well-prepared teaching assistants, allows pupils to achieve well in the subject.

58. The overall standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2 are well above the national average. This represents good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be above average. During the inspection no difference was apparent between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in basic numeracy are high because there is a strong emphasis on this aspect of the subject and it is very well taught. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils understand the place value of numbers to 1000 and use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20 in problems with larger numbers. Higher attaining pupils work out whole number problems involving multiplication and division, including those with remainders. There is a very good emphasis on pupils devising their own strategies, and teachers challenge them to explain these to the class.

59. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, and do better in national tests than they did at the time of the last inspection. The school is justifiably proud that more pupils than previously are now achieving at the expected level or at a level above that normally expected for their age. In order to achieve an even greater rate of progress, the school should consider the needs of the few pupils entering Year 1 who are not yet ready to adapt to structures recommended by the National Strategy for Numeracy. The school has identified this concern as part of its monitoring procedures. It is working at extending the Foundation Stage principles into Year 1 to improve the transition to work in the Numeracy Strategy at the beginning of the school year for this small group of pupils. However, these plans have only just begun to be put into practice and are yet to make a significant impact.

60. The school is strongly committed to raising achievement, and is very well placed to succeed. It carries out a thorough analysis of its test results to identify any areas of development, and found, for example, a weakness in using and applying mathematics. As a result, there is now a greater emphasis on this area of pupils' learning. Pupils are expected to present their work in an organised way in exercise books rather than on work sheets, so that they can discuss their findings and articulate their thinking. In this way, they are able to see the progress they are making, and this allows teachers' marking to show them how they can improve. Very good procedures are in place to measure the attainment and track the progress of different groups. Apart from the problem associated with pupils joining Year 1, teachers use assessment information well to plan future work for individual groups of pupils.

61. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator, who monitors teaching and demonstrates lessons so as to achieve consistency of practice. The initiatives include improved teaching, good use of the National Numeracy Strategy, and more substantial provision for higher attaining pupils, and they have resulted in better achievement for all pupils. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion, and boys and girls of all backgrounds and abilities are given good support to achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

62. The overall quality of teaching is good. It was very good in three of the seven lessons seen, and good in the other four. Lessons are always very carefully planned, and most move at a brisk pace because they are well structured to maintain a very good rate of learning. In the very best lessons, teachers ensure that pupils benefit from a high level of direct teaching as they work, so that their thinking is challenged at all times. The high expectations and warm relationships established by adults result in good behaviour and attitudes to the subject.

63. A thorough analysis of the work covered by pupils over the past year, as well as lessons seen, shows that all aspects of the subject are given due attention. Pupils are given a range of practical activities to consolidate their knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes and their properties. They are given many opportunities to measure length, time, mass and capacity, using non-standard and standard measures.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Skills in mathematics are well supported in other subjects, such as design and technology, science and geography. Data handling skills are being well developed and there is an increasing use of ICT to support this aspect and other areas of the mathematics curriculum. Programmable toys, for example, are used well to support pupils' learning in shape, space and measure. The co-ordinator has correctly identified the need to increase the use of ICT to support pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve well and reach high standards.
- The school places a high emphasis on investigational and experimental science.
- Assessment procedures are good.
- Occasionally, pupils who have difficulty acquiring basic writing skills do not achieve well enough.

Commentary

65. Teachers' assessments in 2003 show that standards in science were high. These results are much better than those of previous years, and represent good improvement since the last inspection. The school identified a weakness in the development of pupils' investigative skills and has successfully addressed this shortcoming.

66. An analysis of work, as well as discussions with pupils, confirms that standards are well above average. This is because pupils in Year 1 and 2 have a challenging curriculum, are well taught, and are interested in what they do. All teachers plan interesting activities which build well upon pupils' previous learning. In one example, Year 1 pupils confidently and enthusiastically used magnifying glasses to study their collections of leaves and bark. The teacher encouraged the pupils to make careful observations, and extended their knowledge and understanding by the expert use of questions. Pupils in Year 2 excitedly investigated the stretchiness in different types of sock. The teacher used this opportunity well to challenge pupils to think for themselves about the range of tests they could use to complete the investigation. All groups of pupils were absorbed by this activity because they found it interesting and challenging.

67. Teachers generally manage classes well, but in some lessons there are missed opportunities to promote independent learning and research. In the best lessons, teachers ensure that pupils have every opportunity to carry out their own experiments, to learn from their mistakes,

and to share their results with others. Teaching assistants are used well to support lower attaining pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those with EAL. Occasionally, pupils who have difficulty in acquiring basic writing skills are given tasks that are not sufficiently well matched to their individual needs.

68. Teachers are developing opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their scientific investigations. A scrutiny of previous work shows that pupils use their mathematical skills well to record information. They confidently use block graphs and charts, and a range of software programmes.

69. The co-ordinator has recently been appointed, so there is too little evidence to make a judgement on the quality of leadership and management. However, it is clear that the subject has been well led in the past.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A well constructed scheme of work is now supporting learning in many areas of the curriculum.
- Good teaching and well-planned activities ensure that pupils learn well.
- The purchase of computers and software of good quality has had a positive effect on the quality of learning.
- The contributions of a well-informed and hard working co-ordinator have ensured the rapid development of the use of ICT across the school.

Commentary

70. Information technology is now integrated into other subjects in the school. Pupils have lessons in basic information technology skills, after which they learn to use these skills to support work in other subjects of the curriculum. The success of this strategy owes much to the very good leadership and management of ICT. At the time of the last inspection the range of work covered was 'improved' but 'imbalanced'. The scheme of work is now good, and this is directly linked to the good rate at which pupils now make progress. Cabling for direct access to the Internet has very recently been completed, as well as the construction of new computer suite with good new computers and software. This, too, is having a positive effect on the quality of learning and the rate at which pupils make progress. Teachers are already planning how these will be used to support work across the curriculum.

71. Standards are good by the end of Year 2. This represents good progress since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory. The majority of pupils make good progress in word-processing skills. Pupils know how to enter text and manipulate it by changing font size, style, and colour. They know, for example, the functions of commercial word-processing programs, and confidently demonstrate how to select icons. Pupils combine pictures with text, and compose and edit their work on screen without difficulty. They check it for accuracy, and consider layout and presentation to make the greatest impact on the audience, for example when composing posters and presenting their poems. Pupils make good progress in handling information, and confidently check information held on electronic media such as CD ROMs and the Internet.

72. By the age of seven, pupils understand how to program the device to move in different directions, and they record their instructions, using agreed notation. The school wants to improve this area further though the purchase of new equipment when finances allow. Pupils are familiar with email, have sent message between classrooms, and are currently developing an email link with Australia. They were also able to email Buckingham Palace on the death of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother.

73. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good overall, and pupils now show good achievement during lessons. The teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to lead the activities with confidence, giving clear instructions to the class and skilfully ensuring that all pupils are involved. The pupils respond very well to challenges and to the teachers' high expectations of their work and behaviour. They answer questions enthusiastically and concentrate very well on their tasks.

74. There is very good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

75. Opportunities for ICT are now being identified in English, mathematics and science, as well as in the foundation subjects¹. The range of activities offered to all pupils is now good. The school has exciting plans to extend the opportunities for control and monitoring once the new equipment has been purchased.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

Provision for the geography and history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are interested in learning and achieve well.
- The curriculum is well planned to cover a wide range of topics.
- Good use is made of visits in the local area and further afield.

Commentary

76. Standards were above expectations in geography and history at the time of the previous inspection. However, not enough work has been completed so far in the present year to enable a secure judgment to be made on standards or the quality of teaching overall in either subject. One lesson was seen in geography in Year 1 and one in history in Year 2. Work completed by pupils last year is above national expectations in both history and geography, and pupils had made good progress through Years 1 and 2. In both subjects, tasks are adjusted so that all pupils take a full part in lessons. Those with lower attainment or special needs record their learning in pictures, labelled diagrams and brief statements, while those with high attainment write in more detail and find information for themselves in reference books. Geography and history are well managed. The co-ordinator has a good oversight of standards because the scheme of work is based on official guidelines, and pupils' achievement in each unit of work is assessed against recommended benchmarks.

77. Good use is made of the locality for study. Pupils draw detailed maps of the area and their journey to school. Those with higher attainment identify many significant features and add a key to the symbols used. The study of Kenya makes a good contribution to their understanding of a different culture and climate. Pupils achieve well, drawing plans of traditional villages and identifying differences between life there and their own experiences. Year 1 pupils are presently making good progress in understanding key features of a town by using an ICT 'town planning' programme. When questioned, they gave very good reasons for their choice of location for different kinds of building in their plans.

¹ These are subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
Whitestone Infant School

78. Teaching was satisfactory in the lesson seen. Year 1 pupils responded keenly to discussion of what Barnaby Bear needed to pack for his summer holiday, and the teacher held their attention well by demonstrating the packing process. However, the task that followed did not catch the interest of some boys, and their lack of concentration led to underachievement.

79. The history curriculum is well planned to cover a wide range of topics. For example, pupils study the lives and significant contributions of several famous people, such as Louis Braille and Mary Seacole. Pupils show good skills in interpreting evidence in pictures and objects of times past, and they make perceptive comments on changes over time. A visit to Tamworth Castle last year led to very good work by Year 1, who showed great interest in the topic and produced detailed drawings and written accounts. Pupils show good understanding of some features of family life in Britain during the Second World War, such as rationing and air-raid shelters.

80. Teaching was good in the lesson seen. In discussion, Year 2 pupils showed good understanding of changes in over time forms of transport. The teacher led them very well in identifying evidence in pictures, and showed high expectations for their explanations of significant changes. In the task that followed they persevered well, despite the fact the photocopies of past and present vehicles did not give the fine detail they needed to take their learning further. A collection of photographs and reference books for pupils to consult during the task was a good feature.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve standards that are above those expected for their ages.
- The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
- Teachers plan lessons well and make lessons interesting and exciting for the pupils.
- The assessment procedures in use are very time consuming.

Commentary

81. Pupils achieve well and reach standards higher than expected for their ages. The subject is well led and teachers have good guidelines to follow when planning lessons, which results in lessons being exciting and interesting. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection, and the co-ordinator is well aware of the strengths and the areas for improvement within the subject. For example, she has identified the need to review the way in which teachers assess what the pupils know, understand and can do, so that it should be less time consuming.

82. Only two lessons were seen, so there is too little evidence to make a judgement on teaching. However, in the two lessons seen, in Year 2, teaching was found to be good. Pupils in Year 2 are currently looking at special journeys and special places, and pupils were seen pretending to be pilgrims as they set off on a 'pilgrimage'. Words specifically related to the subject, such as 'pilgrims and pilgrimage', were brought home to the pupils as the teacher clearly explained what they meant and wrote them on the board. The focus of this activity was to look for places that pupils felt to be special to them within the school grounds. Learning was good; all pupils spoke with confidence because they knew that the teacher would give them time to think. Speaking and listening skills were promoted well during this lesson. For example, one boy pointed to a bench and said that it was special to him because 'it was where he met his mum at the end of the day'.

83. Good achievement was evident as pupils spoke of the differences between Christian and Islamic faiths, in particular as they compared the differences between how Muslims and Christians pray. Pupils of all abilities correctly used vocabulary related to subjects, such as the Qur'an and Bible.

84. Assemblies make a genuine contribution to pupils' religious education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well in project work, particularly when they learn about different religions, visit places of worship and work together in classes, sharing ideas and thoughts. Pupils in Year 1 have recently visited the local church. Such visits into the local community promote social and cultural development well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are above average.
- The subject is well managed.
- Pupils achieve well because teachers have clear guidelines to plan and then to develop interesting activities.
- Pupils have many opportunities to use in other subjects the skills they learn in art and design.

Commentary

85. Standards are above those expected for pupils in Year 2, and the majority of pupils achieve well. This high standard in art and design has been maintained since the previous inspection. No lessons were seen but judgements have been made by looking at the good quality work on display around the school and by talking with pupils and teachers.

86. The provision for the subject is good, and this results in the good achievement shown by most pupils. Art is a high profile subject, and pupils have many opportunities to link art with other subjects. For example, pupils in both classes use their ICT skills as they work on art programs. Pupils in Year 2 have made detailed pictures of seaside scenes, using the computer. In Year 1, art was linked with history when pupils looked carefully at a portrait of Queen Elizabeth 1 and then painted portraits of their friends. They used photographs to help them get the detail correct. These portraits show that pupils are taught to look very carefully when drawing and painting and to develop good observational drawing skills. As pupils develop pieces of artwork, they carefully and accurately use a range of tools and materials, showing good control and a good idea of proportion, particularly when drawing people. Pupils in Year 2 reflected upon what other planets might look like, and used their imagination well when developing three-dimensional pictures.

87. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. Teachers plan interesting and exciting activities, using the clear guidance developed for them. In addition, good assessment procedures have recently been devised. These will clearly reinforce the good progress pupils make as they move through the school. Art displays create an attractive visual environment and clearly demonstrate the good achievement made in art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The subject enhances other areas of the curriculum.
- Skills are well taught.
- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject.
- The subject is well led and managed.

88. Two very good lessons, both in Year 2, were seen during the inspection. Although design and technology was not being taught in Year 1, it was clear from teachers' plans, discussions, and work on display that the subject is regularly taught during the year. Evidence from the lessons seen indicate that, by the end of Year 2, pupils attain good standards, as they did at the time of the time of the last inspection.

89. Skills of designing, making and evaluating are systematically developed. Work produced during the recent Design Technology and Science Week shows how well the subject is linked to pupils' work in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 1, for example, followed up their reading of 'Little Red Riding Hood' by designing and making bags for the girl to carry apples to her grandmother. They discussed and designed healthy diets for grandmother, and made graphs, including pie charts, to represent their information about healthy diets. Pupils in Year 2 based their work on the story 'Billy Goats Gruff' as they used their scientific knowledge to make alarms for the Trolls' Bridge, and to design and make boats strong enough to carry 52p across the river. This work resulted in a high level of interest and a lot of imaginative writing. In the lessons seen, pupils responded very well to the highly challenging work. They concentrated very well as they designed and made winding mechanisms, using their knowledge of how axles and gears work. They went on to produce well designed boxes to make their pulleys stable. A special feature of these lessons was the depth of teachers' questioning as pupils worked. It helped pupils to think ahead about their work and to identify how they might improve the quality of their machines.

90. Pupils are also given good opportunities for independent decision-making when choosing tools and materials and when using these in a variety of ways to achieve their intentions. Lessons end with a very good evaluation session in which pupils share ideas and suggest improvements to their own work and that of others. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator ensures that pupils are offered a rich and interesting curriculum which meets National Curriculum requirements, as well as the needs of boys and girls of all abilities.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are above average.
- The subject is well managed.
- Pupils achieve well because teaching is good and lessons are carefully planned.
- Pupils have many opportunities to appraise their own work and that of others.

91. Standards are above the expectations for pupils of a similar age, and all groups achieve well. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be satisfactory. Year 2 pupils are able to perform synchronised sequences of movements and balances on a variety of apparatus. They arrange and move gymnastics equipment with confidence, and have very good awareness of safety procedures. The very good use of questioning by the teacher enables pupils to improve their movements and make very good progress. In a good creative dance lesson in Year 1, the teacher made good use of music to set the theme of a 'Commotion in the ocean', and her careful and creative use of vocabulary stimulated the pupils' imaginative and artistic movements. Pupils studied one another's movements, and appraised the work of others with sensitivity. By the age of seven, pupils also develop good ball skills through a good range of team games. Using these opportunities, pupils are developing the ability to judge quality and standards for themselves. There is equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, who are well supported.

92. Teaching is good overall. All the lessons were at least good, and two out of five were very good. Teachers dress appropriately for all physical education lessons ; their planning is thorough, and learning intentions are clearly identified. All lessons contain brisk warm ups, and some give opportunities for cooling down. Teachers set high standards of attainment and behaviour. Work is very well focused to improve techniques and quality of movement, and pupils are encouraged to evaluate how well they are doing.

93. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of the subject, and is clear about what needs to be improved. Considerable work has been carried out to bring about good improvements to the curriculum.

MUSIC

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The overall quality of teaching is good, and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are given good opportunities for public performances, which support their learning and increase their interest in the subject.

94. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards in all aspects of music. However, in the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good overall. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons well to include an interesting range of activities, resulting in good behaviour and a good level of pupil involvement. In a good Year 1 lesson, for example, the class teacher held pupils' interest as they sang 'Take the Hat and pass it round' as a warm-up to the lesson. She had placed cards in the hat to indicate whether the pupils should sing *quickly, slowly, softly or loudly*. A second activity challenged pupils to read the name of the instrument to be used by a pupil to accompany the song. This also made a good contribution to pupils' reading skills as they identified words such as *tambour, tambourine, triangle, xylophone* and *maracas*.

95. During the inspection a specialist teacher, who teaches all classes at some time during the year, was taking lessons in Year 2. Pupils and teachers benefit from her expertise, which ensures good progress in pupils' learning. As a result, by the end of Year 2, most pupils use their voices expressively through singing a range of songs from memory. They sing with confidence, taking part with enthusiasm and with considerable enjoyment. They use a range of percussion instruments to accompany their work, and readily offer ideas as to which instruments will be the most appropriate. In one of the Year 2 lessons, pupils showed a good knowledge as they identified instruments such as *the French horn, piano, and clarinet*, whilst listening to the *Cuckoo* from *The Carnival of the Animals*. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development when they are given opportunities to investigate and express their views and feelings on music by use of movement, dance and expressive and musical language.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Commentary

96. The pupils are successfully learning to play an active role as citizens. They are well informed about the need for rules in school and the community, and are able to make decisions and discuss their ideas on issues relevant to their own lives. The school council is involved in selecting books for the library and also discusses some aspects of school policies. Pupils have a good grasp of the consequences of anti-social behaviour and the need for laws in the wider world. They are also very aware of a variety of religious and ethnic groups and the need for tolerance.

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	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
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	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	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).