

INSPECTION REPORT

JOHN RAY INFANT SCHOOL

Braintree

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114941

Headteacher: Mrs V Hackett

Lead inspector: Mr D Speakman

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th September 2003

Inspection number: 260942

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 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	258
School address:	Notley Road Braintree Essex
Postcode:	CM7 1HL
Telephone number:	01376 323071
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Clare Avery
Date of previous inspection:	21 st September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This average sized infant school serves the local area. Although the area is mixed, a high proportion pupils come from a disadvantaged area close to the centre of the town. An above average number of pupils join or leave during the school year. Most of the pupils are White British, with about four per cent coming from other ethnic backgrounds. Six pupils speak English as an additional language and all are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below average, although the most recent Year 2 group of pupils had a much higher than average proportion. Special needs include moderate learning difficulties; social emotional and behavioural problems; speech and communication and autism. The proportion of pupils claiming a free school meal is about average. Pupils' attainment on entry to Reception is below average. The school has been granted the Essex Award for Promoting Positive Behaviour, the Investors in People Award, and both ordinary and advanced Health Promoting School Awards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20086	Mr D Speakman	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), provision for pupils with English as an additional language.
9391	Dr N Ball	Lay inspector	
32133	Mrs J Elton	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education.
22092	Mr D Watts	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education, special educational needs.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This **effective** school provides a good quality of education and gives satisfactory value for money. Starting from a below average base, children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and attain the standards expected in all areas of learning, as a result of good teaching. In Years 1 and 2, where teaching is satisfactory, achievement is satisfactory overall, but pupils achieve well in English, art and design and information and communication technology and attain above average standards in these subjects. Achievement is very good in music and standards are high. Throughout the school good attention is given to the full inclusion of all pupils in learning opportunities and there is a very good ethos of care. Almost all aspects of leadership and management are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement of children in the Foundation Stage is good because the quality of teaching is good.
- Attainment in pupils' writing and speaking and listening is above average, Standards in art and design and information and communication technology are above those nationally expected for pupils at the end of Year 2, and in music they are well above.
- As a result of good provision for their personal development, most pupils behave well, although a minority of pupils still present some inappropriate behaviour.
- Assessment procedures are good. The information is mostly used well to ensure that pupils at all levels of attainment are provided with challenging work to do.
- The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is of a good quality. The whole-school curriculum benefits from good levels of enrichment.
- There are insufficient opportunities for independent investigative work and research.
- The school looks after its pupils very well and this reflects its caring ethos.
- Almost all aspects of leadership and management are good and combine well to provide an effective drive for improvement.

The level of improvement since the previous inspection has been good. There has been a significant improvement in provision and achievement in the Foundation Stage and this is now a strong part of the school. In information and communication technology there has been a very good level of improvement. Assessment procedures are better and used effectively. The care for pupils and the links with parents and the community show good improvement. The school has met all the key issues from the previous inspection well. Although attainment in English has improved, in mathematics it has fallen back.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is good overall. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well, and most attain the goals children are expected to reach by the end of Reception. Overall achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, but it is good overall in English and information and communication technology, and very good in music. By the end of Year 2, attainment in speaking and listening and in writing is above average, and it is average in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in art and design and information and communication technology are above those nationally expected, and well above in music. Standards in all other subjects are in line with the nationally expected levels.

Pupils' personal qualities are satisfactory. There is evident improvement in pupils' behaviour and this is satisfactory. This is supported through **good provision** for their **moral, social and cultural development**. Pupils' attitudes towards school and learning are satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Teaching and learning are good overall. They are consistently good in Reception and although satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 there are strong aspects. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations and use good quality resources well to engage pupils in their learning. Occasionally, management of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is weak and has an adverse effect on learning. Teaching assistants provide effective support, particularly for pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language and with information and communication technology. The curriculum is satisfactory but good in Reception and good in English, information and communication technology, music and personal, social and health education. It is enriched well with a good range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors but pupils' opportunities for independent research, problem solving and investigation are limited. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language is effective. The good links with parents, the community and other schools contribute well to the standards achieved.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good. The headteacher has a clear vision of the school's needs based on rigorous and reliable self evaluation. Plans for school improvement are well thought out and effectively worked through. The headteacher is supported well by other staff with leadership responsibility. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory overall, but good in the Foundation Stage, English, information and communication technology and music. Governance is good. Together, the headteacher, staff and governors have developed **good management systems** that are effective in identifying the school's needs and moving it forward at a good pace.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with nearly all aspects of the school. A number of parents expressed concern about their children being harassed by other children, but the inspection team could find no evidence of this. Pupils also have positive views about the school. They enjoy school and feel that they are finding out new things. They feel they will be well supported if they have problems. Some show less positive views towards behaviour in school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 by improving the quality of teaching and learning where there are weaknesses.
- Provide more opportunities for independent learning, such as problem solving and investigating in mathematics and science, and independent research in humanities.
- Improve the consistency of behaviour management in Years 1 and 2 to improve the pace of learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Starting from below average attainment on entry to the school, pupils achieve well in Reception and satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are in line with those expected for pupils of this age.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are above average by the end of Year 2.
- Attainment in art and design and in information and communication technology is above that nationally expected for pupils at the end of Year 2, and in music it is well above.
- Children in Reception achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good in English and information and communication technology, and very good in music.
- Higher-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good gains in knowledge.
- Pupils are not effectively developing their problem solving and investigation skills in mathematics and in science, and this restricts their achievement.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school with levels of attainment that are below those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching, an effective learning environment and good attention to the learning of basic skills, children in Reception achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1, the school's assessment records and inspection observations confirm that most achieve the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage in their personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; their physical development and creative development.
2. By the end of Year 2, standards in English are above average overall and are average in mathematics. The school has concentrated hard on improving the provision in English, with the intention to raise standards. This has been effective in speaking and listening and in writing where standards are now above average. Standards in reading are average. The school has emphasised development in writing and more recent initiatives to improve standards in reading have not yet had an impact, but there are signs of improvement. This is reflected in the results of the National Curriculum attainment tests. In other subjects, pupils demonstrate good language and literacy skills, especially speaking and listening. Standards in mathematics and science are average. This is because pupils are not effectively developing their problem solving skills in mathematics. Similarly in science, pupils' investigation skills remain underdeveloped. Standards are currently better than indicated by the National Curriculum test results in 2002. There was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group and this had the effect of depressing these results.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16 (16.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	15.1 (14.9)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	15.9 (16.3)	16.5 (16.2)

There were 75 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Pupils with special educational needs generally attain standards that are below average, but most achieve well from their prior attainment. This is because they receive effective help from learning support assistants and work is well matched to their needs. Those with English as an additional language make good progress and, through the school's commitment to full inclusion, are enabled to take an effective part in all learning opportunities.
- The school has worked hard to improve standards in information and communication technology and they have been effective. Attainment is now above that nationally expected at the end of Year 2. Pupils' experience with computers begins in Reception and this means that, from an early age, they develop secure basic computer skills. As they get older, they are able to learn new skills effectively and work confidently with computers, both in information and communication technology lessons and in other subjects.
- Standards in music are well above those expected for pupils of this age. All are able to participate in making group music and appreciate the combined effect. Performance skills in singing and in playing instruments skills are at a level usually expected from pupils of an older age.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory and there is satisfactory development of pupils' personal qualities. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural education is good with spiritual education satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Monitoring of attendance and punctuality is good.
- Good systems are in place to promote good behaviour and raise confidence and self-esteem.
- In classes where pupil behaviour is not managed well, teaching and learning are adversely affected.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

- Attendance is satisfactory and similar to the national average. Office staff, in partnership with the headteacher and class teachers, monitor attendance and punctuality well. Diligent follow-up with parents, and constant reminders of the need for regular and prompt attendance, help maintain attendance levels.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.6

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0.2

National data:	5.4
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National data:	0.5
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The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

7. Pupils are warmly welcomed into school and enjoy their time there. Personal development begins at an early stage in Reception, where they are taught to be courteous, consider others and to be independent, making their own choices where appropriate. They work and play well together, sharing resources without arguments and have respect for all adults. In Years 1 and 2 behaviour is satisfactory overall. More often it is of a good quality, but when inadequately managed, teaching and learning suffer and achievement is restricted. Most teachers explain why some actions are wrong and try to make sure pupils understand the effects of their actions on others. Staff provide good role models and use counselling effectively to assist in individual incidents, so pupils learn from their actions. When petty arguments and disruptive incidents do occur, they are usually dealt with quickly in accordance with the school's policy. Parents and pupils both feel the school is fair in the way it deals with incidents, and that pupils learn from these actions.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	247	4	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	3	0	0

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

8. Staff take pupils' views seriously and encourage extended answers in class discussions whilst other pupils listen to these with interest. The pupils compile classroom rules and the school council is an active one, making decisions that affect provision. This encourages pupils to feel valued and build positive attitudes. Extra-curricular activities are well attended, with pupils showing interest through good levels in participation. Activities at break-time are particularly well organised, with a good variety of apparatus, well-trained supervisors, and voluntary help from pupils. They take their responsibilities, such as the playground squad and school council, seriously and do their jobs effectively.
9. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils learn the responsibilities of living in a school community and in the wider world well. They raise money for charities, recycle paper and have designed a Friendship Bus Stop. Health education is particularly strong and the school has achieved its advanced certificate. In cultural education, pupils are taught to understand their own culture and be aware of and respect the culture of people from a good range of other cultural backgrounds. Through the school's agreed approach to full inclusion for all pupils, teachers and support staff ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability or background, are equally valued and provided for. This is reflected in the good relationships found between pupils.

10. Spiritual education is developed satisfactorily through self-knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings and to carefully consider the feelings of others. Assemblies give pupils appropriate opportunity for quiet reflection. Visits and visitors extend the curriculum well, and pupils are taught to respond to musicians and artists in order to produce their own creations. However, such moments are underdeveloped and not formally planned for.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 it is satisfactory with strong features. However, there are some aspects of behaviour management that need improvement in some classes. The assessment of pupils' work is good, and the data is mostly used effectively to ensure appropriate match of work to individual pupils' needs. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, because there is insufficient emphasis on independent work skills. It is good for children in Reception. Curriculum enrichment is good. Links with parents and the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good; they are consistently good in Reception and, overall, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. However, even in these year groups teaching and learning are good in English, information and communication technology and very good in music. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all other subjects inspected. Assessment is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge.
- Planning is good, based on reliable assessment data. As a result teaching usually meets all pupils' needs and enables good learning, but mathematics teaching is less effective in some classes for average and lower attaining pupils.
- Teachers mostly have high expectations of their pupils and set challenging tasks. However, expectations of behaviour in some lessons are too low.
- The good quality resources are used effectively to support learning.
- Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good; teaching assistants often provide valuable support and are effective in what they do.
- All pupils are fully included in all learning opportunities, regardless of ability, gender or background. Teachers and assistants are fully aware of inclusion issues.

Commentary

11. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Leadership and management have ensured that all of the issues that were weak in the last inspection have been fully addressed and areas that were weak then, such as teaching in the Foundation Stage, teachers' knowledge in teaching information and communication technology and their use of assessment, are now often strengths of the school. At the time of the previous inspection, nine per cent of teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory and 14 per cent of a high quality. This has now improved, with no unsatisfactory teaching and more of a high quality.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	9 (20%)	22 (49%)	14 (31%)	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.

12. Based on their good subject knowledge, teachers give clear explanations in their teaching and give good guidance so pupils feel confident to move forward. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress that they make. All teachers are fully trained in teaching the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the quality of teaching and learning in English is good overall, with an effective emphasis on the development of writing. In mathematics it is satisfactory. In English, assessment data is used well and work is carefully matched to individuals' needs so that pupils feel confident and learn well. In mathematics pupils are grouped on the basis of on-going assessments and this gives teachers opportunity to focus on the learning needs of pupils. This is effective with higher-attaining pupils, but less so in some classes for average and lower attainers. Staff knowledge and understanding in information and communication technology is good. Both teachers and teaching assistants have been trained effectively to use resources and they do this well, both in class and in the suite, giving pupils good opportunities for hands-on experience which pupils use well to result in good learning. Often, teaching assistants will teach half a class in the classroom whilst the teacher teaches information and communication technology skills well in the suite and both groups of pupils learn equally well. Specialist teaching in music is very effective in ensuring pupils enjoy their lessons, show high levels of interest and learn very well.

13. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good support both in class and in small withdrawal groups. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs receive effective support from learning support assistants, particularly in English and mathematics during the morning sessions. The good specialist teaching and support enables pupils to make good gains in their learning. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and needs are good. Individual educational plans are clear and appropriate and targets within are translated into 'pupil friendly' language and shared with individuals. Pupils are therefore clear about what they are to learn and feel confident in the learning situations, such as recording orally their responses in English instead of writing, which they would find difficult. This enabled pupils to focus on their thoughts about a story and learned effectively how to interpret written text through reading. Pupils with English as an additional language are carefully considered in teachers' approach to lessons. Any specific or new vocabulary is explained clearly before it is used in lessons such as science, so that these pupils fully understand and are included in all learning opportunities.

14. On the whole, teachers have high expectations of the quality of work they accept from pupils and of the standards of behaviour in class. In English, pupils are organised into groups of similar attainment and well-focused activities support good learning and lead to good achievement and high standards. In mathematics, pupils are also set into groups with similar attainment. In general, when expectations in relation to pupils' behaviour are made clear and pupils know that good behaviour is the norm, and then they respond appropriately, the behaviour in class is good and the quality of learning is good. However, occasionally teachers sometimes accept behaviour that is inappropriate and does not permit good learning for all pupils. In a mathematics lesson for lower-attaining pupils, the behaviour was not effectively managed, the low level of pupils' attention was not challenged and this meant that pupils did not work hard enough and valuable learning opportunities were lost.

15. The school encourages pupils to think creatively and do things for themselves. Pupils exercise choice and work independently from the Reception classes upwards. Nevertheless, in some lessons, pupils

are not sufficiently encouraged to be independent in their work. Occasionally, pupils spend too much time listening to lengthy introductions and too little time engaged in practical co-operative work. Also, teachers' questions are occasionally restrictive and there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to be independent and do their own research.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Enrichment, however is good, as are accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for Years 1 and 2 is broad, but there are some weaknesses in the balance; opportunities for independent study and research are limited and there are insufficient opportunities for investigative work in mathematics and science.
- The curriculum for children in Reception is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The curriculum for English, information and communication technology and music is good.
- There are good opportunities through clubs, visitors and visits for children to learn new things.
- Accommodation is well organised and maintained, and provides an attractive learning environment.
- Resources are good overall and very good in music and personal, social and health education.

Commentary

16. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good. It is well planned and all areas of learning receive appropriate attention. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection. In Years 1 and 2, all National Curriculum subjects, health and religious education are taught. Whilst the curriculum is broadly based, there are some weaknesses in the balance. There are insufficient opportunities for investigations and problem solving in mathematics and science and the time allocated to mathematics and science is below recommendations. Learning opportunities in design and technology are limited.
17. The provision for English, information and communication technology and music is good, and this contributes to the above average standards attained in these subjects. Opportunities for pupils to apply and develop speaking, listening and writing skills across the curriculum are good. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning in a range of subjects. This subject has improved considerably as statutory requirements were not being met at the time of the last inspection, but are now. Opportunities for pupils to use and develop independent study and research skills, in subjects such as geography and history, are limited.
18. All pupils, regardless of ability, background and gender have good access to the school's range of learning activities. Pupils' needs are generally well met in lessons. Provision for special educational needs is good and this enables these pupils to make good progress. The part time co-ordinator is experienced and effective. Learning support assistants are well trained and deployed effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language.
19. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and the school recently received a Health Promoting School Award at advanced level. Issues such as healthy food, the importance of exercise and healthy minds, information at appropriate levels on sex and relationships and harmful substances are promoted well throughout the school.
20. A good range of activities are arranged out of class for pupils. These are interesting and relevant to their school work, and are well attended. A good range of visits to such places of educational interest supports pupils' learning in lessons well and contributes positively to the progress they make. Through visitors to the school from faith groups or from other cultures, such as Indian dancers, the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils is extended and they develop a clearer understanding of the world outside school.
21. The school has a good level of teaching staff and teaching assistants, who are appropriately trained to teach pupils of this age. They are deployed efficiently and work effectively. Accommodation is spacious, well organised and well laid out, with good displays providing stimulating learning areas for pupils. Concerns relating to resources and accommodation in the last report have all been addressed. Recent developments in the school have led to a very sensible reorganisation of space to provide a well designed central courtyard and a much needed Special Needs base. Every effort is made to ensure that accommodation is accessible for all pupils, and the site manager takes great pride in maintaining the school very well. Resources are good overall and very good in music and personal, social and health education. Resources and accommodation for pupils with special educational needs are good.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a very safe and caring environment for all pupils. Staff assign a high priority to the development of pupils and this is well monitored. Pupils are well involved in the life of the school and their views and ideas are sought and well respected.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good care and welfare arrangements, especially for child protection.
- Matters of health and safety, including risk assessments, are very important to staff.
- The good care the school provides is extended by good links to a range of support agencies.
- Good relationships are evident between adults and pupils so that pupils have confidence in confiding their concerns.
- Induction arrangements into Reception and from Reception to Year 1, and finally to the Junior School, are very well organised and supportive to pupils and their parents.

Commentary

22. All staff treat the care, welfare and safety of pupils as a high priority. Pupils are well supervised, regular health and safety checks are carried out, and sensible and kind arrangements are made for pupils who are upset or unwell. All staff understand child protection procedures, which are well managed, including links to support agencies. Pupils understand how to look after and use equipment, and behave sensibly and safely, such as in physical education when using a range of apparatus and equipment.
23. Assessment procedures are good and pupils' personal development is sensibly monitored and recorded by staff, who have a good knowledge of all groups of pupils in their care. There are very good arrangements for introducing pupils and parents to the school, and for ensuring their smooth transfer to the next stages of education. Parents and pupils feel well informed about changes that are to come and these changes are therefore less stressful. The good links with the junior school are especially effective in helping pupils feel confident and happy about changing schools. Parents' views about their children and their development are valued by Reception staff, and the introduction of children into the school is well planned so that they, and their parents, feel comfortable and confident about starting school life.
24. The school is fully aware of inclusion issues and takes great care to seek the views of all to ensure no one feels left out. Pupils recognise that their views are important and are pleased that many of their suggestions have been taken up by the school. The School Council is an important part of the school and regularly puts forward sensible ideas to improve school rules, resources and activities. For example, a friendship bench has been placed in the playground for children who are alone at playtime and want to find a playmate. Pupils contribute to the class rules in all classes and do discuss whole-school initiatives such as the healthy living initiative the school has undertaken. On an individual basis pupils are aware of their own targets and talk to their teachers about how well they are doing.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are well developed, and there are very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good informal opportunities, such as tea and chat afternoons, are well used to strengthen links with parents.
- Communications between home and school, and the quality of information to parents, have improved.
- Parents' views are sought and valued on a regular basis.

- There are good links with the community, including local businesses and facilities such as the library.
- Very good links with the junior school ensure the smooth transition of pupils to the next stage of their education.

Commentary

25. The good partnership with parents has been maintained since the last inspection, and there has been an improvement in the range and quality of information provided by the school. Parents are pleased with the school and especially that their children like school and are expected to work hard. Parents are kept well informed about how well their children are doing at school through clear and helpful reports and well-organised parents' meetings. The school has established effective partnerships with the parents of children with special educational needs. Meetings are held each term with parents to review the progress of their children. The informal tea and chat meetings provide for good social contact between staff and parents, but also for the transfer of helpful guidance on such matters as the importance of good attendance and how to help at home with homework.
26. Many parents help the school, especially through the Parents Association, which is very active and supportive in fund raising and organising social events. Parents' views are canvassed regularly by the school on a range of issues, including policy changes. The views of parents are greatly valued and used well by the school to support pupils and bring about important changes. For example, funds raised by the Parents Association are used well to help with the cost of out-of-school visits to places of interest for pupils.
27. The school has a network of good and valuable links with the local community. During the inspection, for example, professional football coaches worked with the pupils and representatives of Christian Youth Outreach in Braintree led a whole-school assembly. These events are effective in bringing good knowledge and skills into the school and effectively encourage pupils' participation in school life. Local businesses provide support and help in practical ways, and a good range of support agencies help support and extend the work of teachers in guiding and caring for pupils. Local amenities such as the public library are also well used to support and extend the learning opportunities of pupils. The recent appointment of a Campus Community Liaison Officer is a much valued addition to the support network provided for pupils and their families within the community.
28. Links to other local schools are well established and are used efficiently to enable pupils to move to the next stage of their education confidently. Links with the junior school on the adjacent site are especially strong and a regular exchange of staff and visits by pupils between the schools is a positive dimension to the strong partnership. During the inspection, pupils in Year 6 from the junior school joined the Maths Games lunch-time club and pupils of different ages mixed very well, enjoying both computer games and the more traditional snakes and ladders.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is providing good leadership. Leadership in the school as a whole is good. Management systems are effective and support school development well. The governance of the school is good and there is a good vision for their further development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school enables them to be effective in governing the school.
- The headteacher, assistant headteacher and senior management team have a clear vision for the development of the school.
- There is a clear understanding of the difficulties the school faces.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage, English and information and communication technology are good, and in music very good. This leads to above average standards in these subjects.
- The school has good systems for self-evaluation and these are used effectively to improve identified weaknesses.

Commentary

29. The headteacher was appointed to her post shortly before the previous inspection and the quality of leadership and management was judged to be good, based on a wise evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The quality of her leadership has been maintained and her effective leadership is still based on secure evaluation of what the school does well and where it faces difficulties. She receives effective support from the assistant head and other members of the management team, who make a strong team and lead a hard working and dedicated staff, committed to school improvement and providing good levels of care for all.
30. Curriculum co-ordination is satisfactory in most subjects, but good in the Foundation Stage, English, information and communication technology and music. This positively contributes to the good level of improvement since the previous inspection and above average standards in these subjects. In some other subjects, such as mathematics, there are good ideas for improvement, but progress has not been as quick due to the slower implementation of improvement initiatives and standards remain average. The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced and provides effective leadership and management. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is managed effectively.
31. There is a clear vision for the future of the school, and all staff and the governing body share this. The headteacher maintains a strong ethos of care which supports pupils' welfare, building on the school's strengths and dealing effectively with any concerns. The school takes good care to ensure that all pupils are included in the opportunities it has to offer.
32. The monitoring of the school's work is good and is well rooted in self-evaluation. The headteacher and members of the management team are aware of where improvement in standards and performance is needed. They monitor the performance of the teachers. Each has their own area of responsibility in this monitoring process and this, together with the good performance management procedures, maintains the good aspects of teaching and learning and identifies weaknesses. Effective monitoring in the Foundation Stage and in information and communication technology has led to improvement in teaching since the previous inspection. Outcomes of the observations are discussed and targets are set for development. These are then reviewed at a later stage.
33. Governors make a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school, and their contribution is significant in ensuring its successful future. This represents a good level of improvement in their work in the time since the previous inspection, when the work of some governors new to their role had not had sufficient opportunity to impact. They know the school well through regular visits and through the reports from the headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators to them. Those governors responsible for specific areas of the curriculum are all involved in monitoring. Governors are fully

involved in the school improvement planning process and through this they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All governors speak with knowledge and understanding about their role, responsibilities, and what they see in school.

34. Under the good leadership of the chair of governors, governors fully evaluate their own performance and working practice. To ensure efficiency and enable all governors to have a wide knowledge of the school, they re-formed into two main committees to make informed decisions about the school and have become questioning and challenging in a friendly and supportive way. Staff value their interest and contribution to school leadership. There are plans for the further development of the governors' work in the school, showing that they continue to strive to improve.
35. Financial management of the school is good through the high level of financial knowledge of the chair of the governors' resources committee and finance officer. They provide good advice to the headteacher and governing body, and together they monitor this area efficiently and prudently. All funds, including specific grants, are carefully matched to the priorities that have been established in the school improvement plan. There are clearly defined routines, which enable the headteacher, finance officer and governors to monitor the deployment of resources and their impact on standards. Best value principles are used well when measuring improvements in the quality of teaching and standards achieved, and when purchasing resources. The school is in the process of completing a building improvement programme and the high financial carry forward in the table below is to support this development.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	649,631
Total expenditure	574,999
Expenditure per pupil	2,367

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	55,000
Balance carried forward to the next	129,632

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. This is a strength of the school and indicates a very good level of improvement from the previous inspection judgement. Despite below expected levels of attainment in all aspects of development when pupils start in Reception, the attainment of a large majority of the children is in line with those levels expected nationally by the end of the Reception year. Children make good progress because of good, and sometimes very good, teaching, and because the leadership of the Foundation stage is so effective. Staggered entry and a very good ratio of adults to children ensure that the needs of all are well met.
37. Classrooms are well organised, resources are good and, together with an exceptionally good outdoor play area, learning in all aspects of development is well supported. A good balance is achieved between activities led by adults and opportunities for children to work at activities they have selected themselves. Pupils are warmly welcomed into school. Routines and procedures are established and understood by everyone. Movement between classes for lesson changeover is already smooth despite the inspection taking place near to the beginning of the school year.
38. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Effective planning across the three classes provides clear objectives and appropriate assessment. Staff plan interesting activities, which develop previous learning, using strategies to successfully achieve children's active involvement in lessons. Staff are confident with subject knowledge and motivate and encourage the children to persevere. Relationships are very good. Teachers concentrate on speaking and listening and basic reading and number skills. They introduce the children to new vocabulary and provide good opportunities for speaking and listening in groups.
39. Leadership and management are good. This has the effect of building a strong team, with staff who work well together and share information and ideas to provide continuity for the children. Teaching assistants also make a positive contribution to children's learning and personal welfare, although on occasions they need to be more pro-active when the activity is teacher-led. The co-ordinator has introduced the Foundation Profile a year earlier than most schools, and is now beginning to refine assessment procedures and use data from teaching. She has monitored teaching and provided a very good role model for new staff.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The orderly environment and good procedures help children to quickly learn the correct way to behave.
- All adults encourage the development of social skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

40. Children achieve well and are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. They learn to wait their turn, and to use the social conventions of 'please', 'thank-you' and 'excuse-me', and show good manners in their contact with other children and adults. There is a high expectation of good behaviour, which is met. Children are also made very aware of safety precautions. They frequently remind each other, for example, of the need to wear helmets when riding the various buggies in outdoor play. Fairness is taught and children can maintain the rules of simple games. Emphasis is placed on developing independent learning, taking responsibility and making informed choices. Before one playtime the children made sandwiches, using their own choice of filling, shared them with others and ate them at table in a social setting. Afterwards they waited until everyone was finished, stacked crockery and utensils for washing and took full responsibility for tidying the activities away. Various strategies using the senses such as dance and singing are deployed across the range of teaching to sustain full involvement and concentration, aid the memory and enhance instant recall. Children are at ease when working together, discussing their feelings and making solo contributions to full class lessons.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Speaking and listening are given priority across the curriculum.
- Staff provide good role models in enunciating Standard English.
- Very good open questioning by teachers.
- Structured approach to the teaching of reading and writing.
- Strategies to involve all children during question and answer sessions are good.

Commentary

41. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children achieve well and are generally set to meet the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Speaking and listening are developed effectively through role-play activities, through co-operative group-work with other children and because of the good adult to child ratio. Opportunities to share ideas and news with an adult are plentiful. Teachers are particularly skilled at effective questioning, and build lots of examples and prompts into their speech to maintain pace and ensure full participation. Children are already beginning to give longer and fuller answers, to self-correct and make additional comments after sustained listening. Teaching assistants work with the less able and more reticent children on these occasions to ensure their full inclusion.
42. Teachers use a good range of attractive resources to reinforce teaching points and capture the children's imagination. In one lesson teaching rhyming word pairs, magic wands and magic bags of objects, pictures, cards and soft toys were all used in a series of games and activities. It was also noticeable how carefully children handled such resources.
43. Reading is taught in a structured way, with appropriate attention to phonics, and this is beginning to show results. Skills involving word recognition and sequencing are regularly practised in activities appropriate to children's differing needs using a good variety of resources, including computer software. Lower-attaining children receive concentrated input from staff on these occasions, whereas

the average-attaining and more able children progress at their own pace on more complex sequencing. When teaching and consolidating children's knowledge of initial letter sounds and simple words, teachers develop children's early handwriting skills well by getting them to draw the correct formation of the letters in the air and make appropriate body shapes.

44. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and their enthusiasm for the various activities is infectious. They all use imaginative ideas to sustain interest and provide smooth links between activities.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development **is good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and structured, with clear learning intentions identified.
- Mathematics is developed well across the curriculum.

Commentary

45. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Every opportunity is used across the curriculum to develop mathematical understanding and teachers always use the correct mathematical terms when speaking to the children. For example, when organising the next activity the teacher refers to children on the round table and the long thin table, effectively developing children's understanding of shape. Lessons also provide good links between mathematical development and other early learning goals, such as creative development and language and literacy. A story about Kipper and the library elicits the response "Kipper was only allowed four books, he has too many. How many should he take back?" In one such lesson, children created faces using coloured paper squares and then used sponge printing with similar shapes. Such activities motivated the children and kept them on task. They also provided good opportunities for speaking and listening and to develop vocabulary such as corner, sides, shape, circle and square.
46. Lively and enthusiastic approaches with lots of praise and encouragement characterise the teaching, and the children enjoy their learning. "I like that and I can do bigger numbers too," one child remarked. The youngest children in Reception, who had been in school for three weeks at the time of the inspection, could all count to ten and most could recognise the number digits. However, many struggle with the meaning of the numbers and how to check for accuracy. Teachers also use strong questioning and interesting resources to check children's knowledge and understanding. Children are continually urged and challenged to estimate, check and strive for greater speed and accuracy.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

47. It is not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this wide area of learning but the teaching and learning were good in the activities seen. Construction work is purposeful and the children's concentration is sustained in child- and teacher-directed projects. They use their hands and small tools accurately to carefully shape dough and select from a range of materials to build three-dimensional structures. Use of building bricks shows children working at a very simple level, however,

with no understanding of bonding between bricks, only making simple outlines and constructions, which can be easily destroyed. Information and communication technology is used well in other subjects and the more able children demonstrate good mouse control, the ability to follow instructions, to self-correct and give a commentary of why they have made certain choices.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good resources, accommodation and grounds.
- Good support for individual children.
- Fine motor skills are not as developed.

Commentary

48. Good teaching enables children to achieve well and the majority are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some good robust, energetic and imaginative play was seen during the inspection in an excellent, well-equipped, outdoor area. Children ride tricycles with increasing co-ordination and control, balance as they walk across cut logs, move easily in and out of forts and homes and run, jump and hop confidently as they explore their environment. In all these activities, children work well with others and show great interest and enthusiasm.
49. Children are developing their use of small tools, but standards remain below expectations for many. They persevere, but find cutting with scissors and bonding with masking tape difficult without adult support, because hand-eye co-ordination is weak. They are aware of safety, for example, they heed prompts on how to hold scissors when passing them over to other children. However, when children become frustrated with their lack of skills, they resort to tearing tape with their teeth, particularly when the teacher is away from them.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well planned and structured lessons, with clear objectives and interesting activities.
- Enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise of staff.

Commentary

50. Children and teachers enjoy music and are good at singing. Children show good development in musical skills and knowledge. They are able to combine words and actions, maintaining a steady beat and also invent new actions to accompany songs. They link movement to music accurately and respond to the beat well. They learn to recognise the names of the instruments they play, for example bells and tambourines.

51. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and there is a progressive structure to them. Activities are interesting, and teachers use a variety of support and strategy to prevent loss of momentum. In one music lesson, for example, the teacher allowed pupils to get up and move to the music so as to experience the beat. Her strategy also prevented restless and inattentive behaviour. In the same way, the use of a letter to stimulate house construction, along with interesting materials and stimulating questions, kept children on task productively for a sustained period of time.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average in speaking and listening by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- Standards in writing are above average by the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning in English are good with very good examples seen during the inspection.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to listen, talk and write in English and in other subjects.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop independent study skills across the curriculum are limited.
- The assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress is effective.
- English is well led and managed.

Commentary

52. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening and writing are above average and most pupils, including higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are achieving well. Those pupils with English as an additional language also achieve well in acquiring levels of English to enable them to be fully included in all learning opportunities. Pupils are taught well and have good opportunities to apply and develop language and writing skills in English and in other subjects. Standards in reading are average by the end of Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in speaking and listening and in writing have improved since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be average in all three areas of English.
53. In speaking and listening, most pupils by the end of Year 2 listen carefully to their teacher and their peers and show interest in stories and discussion. They express ideas and opinions about stories or plays. Higher-attaining pupils talk with confidence and use a range of interesting vocabulary.
54. By the end of Year 2, most pupils read simple passages of writing accurately. Lower-attaining pupils recognise simple words in reading matter and employ their knowledge of sounds to read new ones. Higher-attaining pupils read independently with expression. In one Year 2 lesson seen, a group of higher-attaining pupils read a play script accurately and with expression as they acted out the parts. One pupil confidently took on the role of narrator.
55. The school has emphasised the development of writing and teachers pay good attention to the quality in English and other subjects. As a result standards are above average. Most pupils by the end of Year 2 develop ideas into sequences of sentences with capital letters and full stops. Higher-attaining pupils

write detailed and extended pieces of writing, which are clear and well structured. Spelling and punctuation are usually accurate, including the use of speech marks. By the end of Year 2, most pupils' writing is clear, fluent and joined, due to an effective and consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting. Pupils use information and communication technology well to enhance their writing. For example, letters, stories and reviews of their favourite books are word processed competently.

56. The quality of teaching is good overall. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. Lessons are well planned and structured with clear learning intentions identified, which are effectively shared so pupils know what they are expected to learn. The teaching of phonics is given good emphasis by teachers and learning support assistants. As a result, pupils use these confidently when reading. Teachers use very good questioning techniques to check pupils' understanding. Their approach is often lively and enthusiastic and this motivates and engages the pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Teachers organise their classes well. Pupils are appropriately organised into small groups of similar attainment and tasks are well matched to their different attainment. Those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language receive effective support from learning support assistants. This helps to ensure that all pupils are suitably challenged and they make good gains in learning, particularly in their writing where there has been a focus. Older pupils have well-developed skills in collaborative working and are given appropriate opportunity to work effectively with other pupils of a similar attainment level. Teachers use the end of the lessons very well for pupils to share and review their learning, so that they are aware of how well they are doing. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or very good, the management of pupils is less effective, pupils are less well settled and this impedes the rate of learning.
57. The subject is well led and managed by an experienced co-ordinator. She leads by example in the classroom by teaching English very well. There have been opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe and support teaching and provide effective support where weaknesses have been identified. Teachers' planning is monitored and staff collaboratively assess and moderate pupils' written work against National Curriculum levels, supporting the accurate assessment of pupils' work. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress are well developed and this enables teachers to match tasks well to pupils' attainment and needs. The headteacher and co-ordinator analyse National Curriculum tests well and use this information effectively to guide future planning and teaching. The school has a good range of books and other learning resources, which are used well to promote learning. Overall, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection except in reading standards, though these have been maintained.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. The school has made speaking and listening across the curriculum a priority for development. Pupils are given good opportunities to listen and talk about a range of issues in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Pupils apply and develop their language skills well, and this contributes to the above average standards and good achievement in speaking and listening. Pupils apply and develop their writing skills across the curriculum well too. For example, pupils write clearly written reports of visits in history and religious education. However, pupils' opportunities for independent study, using a range of texts in subjects such as science, history and geography, are limited.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Setting in mathematics enables teachers to focus well on pupils' ability.
- Assessment is used well to target pupils' needs.
- The management of pupils' behaviour is inconsistent.
- Problem solving skills are less well developed.

Commentary

59. Most pupils enter Year 1 having achieved the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage, and by the end of Year 2, overall standards remain average. Achievement is therefore satisfactory. The setting strategy of grouping pupils with similar prior attainment enables teachers to move learning on at a pace appropriate to need, extending learning by specifically targeted tasks. Although standards are average overall a good number of pupils, including higher attainers, attain standards that are above those expected for their age. Results of the National Curriculum tests in 2003 indicate that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level is above the national average. Those with special educational needs make sound progress in consolidating their knowledge and understanding, but often do not reach the level expected for pupils of this age. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily.
60. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 1 have a good recall of number facts and use it well in quick-fire activities that are designed to stretch and test pupils' knowledge. They count in tens, starting at any digit, and very quickly switch from counting forward to backwards and then forwards again. This shows a good understanding of counting that is better than average for their age. By Year 2, the great majority of pupils have mastered the basic concept of number and measures. For example, when pupils programmed a robot, they estimated distances up to three metres and, initially with some help, converted these into centimetres so that they could instruct the robot how far to travel. This demonstrated a good knowledge and understanding of number and distance, especially as the movement of the robot became more accurate as the lesson progressed. Pupils also have a good knowledge of three-dimensional shapes and distinguish between prisms and pyramids, and recall accurately the names of a good range of flat shapes such as hexagons. Lower-attaining pupils consolidate their learning well, but attainment generally remains below average. They are able to compare accurately the lengths of objects and arrange them in order, saying which is the longest or shortest.
61. Pupils are less effective in solving problems and in independent investigations, where they use their knowledge and understanding of numeracy. The school has identified this as an area for attention.
62. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Some weaknesses in the teaching of lower-attaining pupils limit their attainment, and occasionally the quality of their learning is only satisfactory. In these lessons, tasks are not always well matched to pupils' needs because they are given the same work as that given to the pupils of average attainment in the group. As a consequence, they fail to engage themselves in the tasks and do not sufficiently settle. Otherwise challenge and high expectations, together with appropriate praise and encouragement, enable other pupils to enjoy their mathematics lessons because they are kept occupied, feel confident and know they are achieving well.
63. Curriculum co-ordination of mathematics is satisfactory overall, although there some strong features. The strength lies in the identification of development areas that are clearly outlined in the subject action plan, including those to do with problem solving skills identified by this inspection. However, the rate of improvement has not been as rapid as that in English, and the school now realises that some of the initiatives implemented in English would be of benefit to improving standards in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. This is satisfactory overall, but good in instances where numeracy skills are developed in conjunction with information and communication technology where pupils used their good knowledge and understanding of length and estimating to program the movement of a robot. It is satisfactory in science, but pupils have little opportunity to decide on their own methods of recording results.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use of resources.
- Teachers encourage speaking and listening skills.
- Work is practical and scientific terminology is used well.
- There is too little attention paid to the learning needs of pupils at different levels of attainment.
- There is no evidence of real independent enquiry.

Commentary

65. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average and all pupils achieve satisfactorily. They have a sound knowledge of a satisfactory range of scientific topics. For example, they differentiate between man-made and natural materials, know the effects of heat on everyday substances, they test various insulators for effectiveness, and can predict and prove which objects float and which sink. Pupils present their work in a variety of forms, including tables, diagrams and text.
66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but some good teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers motivate pupils well and use stimulating resources to do so. This raises their interests and enthusiasm and they respond well to questions, often giving extended answers to which other pupils listen with interest. When pupils are working at follow-up activities, teachers give good, individual support, encouraging pupils to gain in confidence in what they do. Teachers encourage pupils to work together and share ideas and thoughts. As a consequence, pupils rehearse effectively their responses in pairs before contributing to class discussion. At the end of lessons teacher effectively go over the objectives for the lesson to carefully check and consolidate learning. This effectively raises pupils' awareness of how well they are doing. However, there are weaknesses in the quality of marking. Written comments are very general and not specific enough to indicate where improvement is needed. Computers are used well to support learning and add interest to what pupils are doing.
67. Lessons tend to be organised for the whole class with too little attention to the learning needs of pupils at different levels of attainment, apart from additional support for pupils with special educational needs or lower-attaining pupils. More able pupils, therefore, too often go unchallenged and, because work is mainly teacher-directed and restricted to an hour, there is little independent investigation where pupils test their own ideas and make choices as to the method, manner of recording and choice of equipment. Teachers make sure that pupils are aware of the meaning of any specific vocabulary used and this helps pupils with English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily.

68. Resources and co-ordination of this subject are satisfactory. An effective recording system is used to record termly assessments of pupils' work, measured against National Curriculum levels. This data has been used by the co-ordinator to bring about satisfactory improvement in, for example, the re-organisation of the science timetable so that more topics could be covered in detail before assessment. There has been little opportunity to observe lessons and therefore insufficient opportunity to build a good understanding of the impact of teaching and learning on standards. Development since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well over their time in the school and standards are higher than usual for pupils of this age.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- There is good use of information and communication technology in other subject areas.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Assessment of pupils' progress and achievement is good.
- The accommodation and resources for the subject are good, and are used effectively by staff.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the good progress that pupils make.

Commentary

69. At the time of the previous inspection pupils made unsatisfactory progress and standards were below those expected for pupils of this age. Since then, the school has improved resources and now has a dedicated suite and other computers in the classrooms. All members of staff, including teaching assistants, have been trained and now show good levels of competence in teaching and providing for this subject. The curriculum co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the profile of information and communication technology throughout the school. Consequently, pupils have a good range of valuable experiences using information and communication technology equipment, and attain standards that are above those expected for pupils by the end of Year 2. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language, achieve well. All are all fully included in lessons and have the same opportunities.
70. Pupils' experiences with computers begin at an early age in the Reception classes and provide a good foundation for further work and good progress. Younger pupils use computers effectively to simultaneously develop language skills and widen their knowledge of the human body in science. They show good skill in using the mouse to 'drag and drop' names of parts of the face around the screen and locate them next to the appropriate feature. They do this accurately and quickly, and routine skills quickly develop from the early start in Reception. This enables teachers to give pupils good opportunities to learn higher order information technology skills. In Year 1, for example, pupils are able to access a program through the icons on the desktop screen. This was good for pupils in Year 1 at this early stage in the school year and provides a sound basis for subsequent work in science, when they will use this skill to identify parts of their own body.
71. Pupils in Year 2 make good use of art programs, for example, to produce good quality art work in the style of Mondrian. This also makes a positive contribution to their cultural development. Procedures

such as saving and printing are routine to these pupils, and their good knowledge and skills indicate a good level of understanding of how computers work. Although pupils with English as an additional language are at early stages of acquiring English, they are sufficiently aware of letters of the English alphabet on the keyboard, and of the symbols used as icons, to enable them to make the same good progress as other pupils. In this sense they are fully included in all aspects of work.

72. The quality of teaching is good and teaching assistants work well with the class teachers to enable all pupils to achieve well. Both teachers and teaching assistants have been effectively trained, have good subject knowledge and approach their teaching with confidence and good knowledge. Interesting activities are planned and, based on teachers' high expectations, are challenging at all levels of attainment. Pupils are inspired by the teachers' approach and opportunities to work with computers, often to the point of excitement. Consequently they try their hardest to do well and show high levels of enthusiasm. Teachers are confident, not frightened to explore new territory, and offer a good range of opportunity that meets National Curriculum requirements well.
73. Curriculum co-ordination is good and has led to a very good level of improvement since the previous inspection when provision was judged to be unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to lead improvement in resources, teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge and confidence and to implement developments very effectively. This has resulted in better provision and higher standards. Resources are good and teachers make good use of them. However, the co-ordinator has good plans to develop further the resources and to provide more professional development for all staff to enable them to continue to improve their teaching and so raise standards even further.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

74. Information and communication technology is used effectively to consolidate existing knowledge and to raise standards in a wide range of subjects such as English, mathematics, science and art and design. This is planned well, and teachers are aware of the opportunities for the use of resources. In literacy, for example, the teaching assistants enable pupils to use tape recorders to record their retelling of stories.

HUMANITIES

Religious education, history and geography were only sampled as inspectors were not able to see enough teaching to make secure provision judgements in these subjects.

75. Inspectors saw only one lesson in history in Year 2 and geography only in Year 1. Standards were as expected for pupils of this age and teaching was satisfactory. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although opportunities for them to carry out independent study and research are limited.
76. In religious education, standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and most pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In Year 1, pupils explore and describe different feelings such as sadness, surprise, anger and happiness. They begin to understand other people's feelings and why people feel as they do, and this makes an important contribution to pupils' personal development. In Year 2, they develop this understanding and, by the end of the year, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of major world religions, including Islam and Judaism. They show knowledge and understanding of Bible stories

that form the foundations of Christianity. Pupils apply their writing skills well when retelling stories and, for example, when reporting on a visit to a local church.

77. A good lesson was seen in Year 1 where pupils were given good opportunities to explore their own and others feelings. The teacher used photographs of children's faces well to stimulate interest and promote discussion. The teacher also used effective questioning, which engaged all pupils. Pupils listened well and were keen to talk about their feelings and experiences. Pupils were given good opportunities to reflect on the feelings of others and how they treat other people. Learning is supported by visits to the local church, but there are no visits to places of other faiths.
78. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator views samples of pupils' work to monitor standards and coverage of the curriculum. However, there have not been opportunities to observe and support teaching and learning in lessons. A system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment has not been established. The school has a good range of resources for religious education including photographs and artefacts, which are used well to support learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music and physical education were inspected individually and are reported in full below. There was not enough evidence to report on art and design or design and technology fully as only two lessons were seen in art, both in Year 1, and none in design and technology. However, work was sampled in displays in both subjects and discussions were held with the curriculum co-ordinators. The work seen indicates that standards in art are above those expected for pupils of this age. Displays indicate the use of a good range of materials. The work of a wide range of famous artists is used as a basis for much of the pupils' work. Samples of pupils' work in design and technology provided by the school indicate satisfactory standards, with pupils using an appropriate range of craft materials.

Music

Provision for music is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is valued highly in the school.
- Staff expertise in the school is good.
- Insufficient time is given in lessons to encourage pupils to appraise and appreciate music.

Commentary

79. Standards by the end of Year 2 are well above average and pupils achieve very well. This means that progress has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils show musical skills that are expected for pupils much older. They sing in tune and with feeling, altering the tempo and volume to very good effect. They maintain a beat well and give a song light and shade, so that standards of performance are very good. They can use symbols to represent sounds and all children can understand simplified notation. The more able are taught recorder and are taught standard notation. They can all participate in an instrumental ensemble, and appreciate and enjoy the combined effect. Pupils improve their work after additional instruction or more concentrated listening.

80. Teaching and learning are very good. The part-time specialist teacher makes a considerable contribution to the musical experience on offer to the pupils, and the school is fortunate in having several pianists on the staff. Music is given high priority and pupils have access to quality tuned and untuned instruments, according to their ability and the demands of a task. Pupils respond very well to this quality provision and show high levels of enjoyment and interest in lessons, even being seen to thank teachers at the end of lessons. Teachers use their skills very effectively. The specialist teacher listens constantly to the quality of sound and demonstrates the correct hold and posture to improve performance. This inspires pupils, who copy the very good role model and show pride in what they achieve. Pupils concentrate and there is little off-task misbehaviour. Planning is very good and sessions are skills based, enabling pupils to improve as they progress through lessons. However, because three classes are taught during an afternoon, time is limited and classes cannot benefit from additional practice. Pupils enjoy music and benefit greatly from these lessons.
81. The co-ordination of music is very good. The co-ordinator leads by example and uses her good skills to assist non-musicians in ensuring good quality teaching leading to pupils' good levels of achievement. Her support and advice to teachers in planning ensure that all pupils receive a balanced and progressive musical curriculum throughout the year.

Physical Education

Provision for physical education **is satisfactory.**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good resources.
- Good teaching of health and safety.
- The restless behaviour of some pupils is distracting during lessons.
- Occasionally, activities are undemanding.
- Very good additional input from specialist trainers and coaches enhances provision.

Commentary

82. Satisfactory provision and standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The subject is co-ordinated to a satisfactory standard and resources, both large and small equipment, are good. Outdoor resources are also good and much enjoyed by the pupils. The indoor and outdoor accommodation is good and supports the delivery of the curriculum well.
83. Good teaching of health and safety enables pupils to describe the effect of exercise on their bodies. Pupils also know the importance of warm up before an activity and relaxation afterwards. In the lessons seen, pupils at all levels of attainment achieved satisfactorily and attained standards appropriate to their age. They listen to instructions carefully and then carry them out appropriately. They remember, reproduce and explore simple movement with satisfactory control and co-ordination, and can develop a series of moves into a sequence, both individually and with a partner. They can also reflect on these moves well and suggest improvement.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although some very good teaching was seen. In the best lessons procedures are well established, and teachers and their assistants co-ordinate their roles. Lessons progress smoothly and teachers with specialist skills demonstrate what is expected well,

simplifying a movement into smaller steps, for example, and making useful ongoing assessments of pupils' work. This provides pupils with a good example of what they should be aiming for, how to achieve their goal and supports their learning effectively. Clear evaluation of standards by the teachers leads to much improving standards in lessons and sometimes better achievement. In less successful lessons activities are physically undemanding. This is because not enough active participation is organised and the pace of learning slows. Lessons, which are otherwise well structured and planned, are sometimes less effective because of the teachers' failure to control misbehaviour as soon as it occurs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- A broad and well-balanced curriculum is provided and supported by a good range of resources.

Commentary

85. The school has a good, carefully constructed, broad, balanced and appropriate provision. It is designed well to help all pupils to develop the confidence to make the most of the skills and abilities they possess. Pupils are especially encouraged to feel positive about themselves, to be actively involved in the life of the school and the wider community, and to make wise choices about developing a healthy and safe lifestyle. The school's needs for supporting pupils' personal development have been successfully identified as a result of good analysis by the management team.
86. The school has achieved the Health Promoting School Advanced Award and this has a significant impact on promoting pupils' health awareness. Good provision takes place both in and out of class. Good social skills are encouraged well generally through the school's approaches to behaviour management. A good range of extra-curricular activities provides pupils with the opportunities to work, less formally, alongside other pupils with whom they do not normally have daily contact and therefore develop their social skills. There are a number of initiatives, such as the Playground Squad, the Time Out Bench and the Find a Friend Bench that all support the development of pupils' personal skills. The School Council makes a positive contribution to the life in school and there are plans to extend the impact that these pupils have on the life of the school, and thereby develop citizenship further.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	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	3
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	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).