

INSPECTION REPORT

COLD NORTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cold Norton, Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114904

Headteacher: Mrs A Church

Lead inspector: Mrs S D Morgan

Dates of inspection: 10th – 12th November 2003

Inspection number: 261409

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	139
School address:	St Stephen's Road Cold Norton Chelmsford Essex
Postcode:	CM3 6JE
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Pead
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cold Norton is a small primary school. It has 126 pupils in Years 1 to 6 and 21 children in the Reception year. There are more girls than boys in almost all year groups. A high proportion of pupils (95 per cent) are white British. No pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is relatively high. Almost 20 per cent of pupils did not start their education at the school and 50 per cent of pupils in Year 6 have not had continuous education at the school. The area the school serves has some social deprivation. However, the number of families claiming free school meals has declined and now represents about one per cent of pupils, which is well below average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the Reception year varies year-on-year from below average to average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, at just below 12 per cent, is below the national average and fluctuates from year to year due to the small number of pupils on roll. No pupils have a statement of special educational need. Pupils' needs mostly relate to learning difficulties and behaviour problems and a small number have a physical disability. A significant number of staff changes have occurred during the last two years. Currently, one post is filled by a temporary teacher. The school is involved in initiatives such as Safer Journeys to School and the Healthy Schools Initiative. It has gained the Schools Achievement Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1355	Mrs S D Morgan	Lead inspector	Science, Information and Communication technology (ICT), art and design, design and technology
9053	Mrs V Phillips	Lay inspector	
28069	Mr D Mylroie	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, physical education, religious education, English as an additional language
30669	Mrs M Sandercock	Team inspector	Foundation stage, English, music, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cold Norton is a good and effective school. The headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by key governors. This has ensured that standards have been maintained and some aspects of the school's work have improved during a period of staff changes. Pupils' achievements are good overall. The quality of teaching is good with some strong features. Pupils are valued and supported well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Results in end of Year 6 national tests in 2003 were very high.
- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Very good provision is made for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Very good use is made of classroom assistants, particularly to support pupils with special educational needs.
- Standards of writing and the presentation of pupils' work require improvement.
- Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory but improving.
- The school values its pupils and supports them well.
- Good use is made of assessment information in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics to help pupils learn effectively.
- Good leadership by the headteacher has ensured that standards have been maintained and aspects of the school's work improved.

Improvement has been satisfactory since the school was last inspected. Standards in national tests have fluctuated, however, results in Year 6 for the last two years have been very high and show that pupils achievements were very good in relation to their test results at the end of Year 2. Almost all of the strengths identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and teaching and curriculum planning have improved. All of the issues raised in the last inspection report have been dealt with systematically.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievements are good. Overall, results in the end of Year 6 national tests in 2003 were in the highest five per cent when compared to those nationally. Children's attainment when they start school varies from year to year from average to below. In the Foundation Stage children achieve well because teaching is very well planned and organised and provides a range of interesting learning experiences. In Years 1 and 2 pupils achievements are satisfactory overall. In the current Year 2 pupils' achievements are good in mathematics, science and religious education. Pupils' achievements in English are only satisfactory due to weaknesses in writing. In Year 6 current standards are well above average in mathematics and above average in English, science, history and religious education. Standards are not as high as last year in English, mathematics and science as the current Year 6 does not have as many high-attaining pupils. Pupils are not achieving as well as they should in ICT in Years 1 to 6 as they do not cover all aspects of the National Curriculum and apply their skills in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well. Pupils' behaviour is **satisfactory** and this, together with satisfactory attendance and good punctuality, support pupils' achievement well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with a number of strengths. Although the school has been through a period of staff changes this has been managed well. The best teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. It is very well planned and organised and provides a range of interesting learning experiences which enable children to make very good learning gains. In Years 5 and 6 teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons are lively and interesting. In all other classes teaching is at least satisfactory. However, a weakness is the teaching of ICT. Not all areas required by the National Curriculum are taught and a lack of access to computers does not allow pupils to apply and develop their knowledge and understanding sufficiently. Throughout the school the work of teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory overall.

The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of activities. The school takes good care of pupils. It involves them well in its work by asking for and acting on their views on ways of improving school life. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory, as are its links with the local community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a clear vision of what the school should be aiming to achieve and is supported well by key members of the governing body. Together they have been successful in dealing with staffing difficulties and minimising their impact on pupils. Appropriate action has been taken to improve provision for ICT. Members of the leadership team are new to their role and are only temporary until a new deputy headteacher takes up post after Christmas. They are providing sound support for the headteacher.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most pupils say they enjoy school, as their parents confirmed. In general, parents are quite pleased with what the school does for their children, with a majority who are appreciative and supportive of the school's efforts to raise standards of behaviour and academic performance. Set against this, is a minority of disgruntled parents who feel that they are less well informed, involved and consulted. Inspectors found that the school works hard to involve all parents in its life and with their children's work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Raise the standard of writing and the presentation of pupils' work.
- Raise standards in ICT by ensuring that the quality and range of resources are improved and pupils use and apply their ICT skills in other subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Ensure that all aspects of the ICT National Curriculum are covered.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Cold Norton is a relatively small school. The numbers in each year group vary considerably and are often small, for example, fourteen pupils in the 2002 – 2003 Year 6 cohort. This means that the performance of one pupil has a considerable effect on the proportion of pupils gaining a particular National Curriculum level. The level of attainment of each year group also varies and consequently results fluctuate from year to year. Significant staff changes in the last two years, particularly for the prior Year 2 cohort of pupils, has also had an effect on results and achievement.

Pupils' achievements are **good** overall. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and current standards are average. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is good and best in Years 5 and 6. Current standards are above average. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were very high last year.
- Pupils achieve well overall.
- Standards of writing and the presentation of pupils' work require improvement.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well.
- Pupils' skills and knowledge in ICT are below average and they do not develop them well enough in other subjects.

Commentary

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.2 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.6 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.2 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. In the 2003 national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 results in reading and mathematics were in line with expectations nationally. Results in writing were well below average. When compared to those of similar schools (that is, schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals), results were below average in reading and well below in writing and mathematics. Based on teacher assessments, attainment in science was above average. Improvement has been below the national trend.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.4 (31.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	30.4 (31.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	31.3 (31.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Results in Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated over recent years. However, improvement has been above the national trend. Overall, results in the 2003 national tests were very high (in the highest five per cent) when compared with those nationally, and well above average when compared with schools of a similar type.
3. In English and mathematics pupils attained standards that were very high when compared to those nationally and well above those of similar schools. Results in science were well above those found nationally and those of similar schools. Comparing the Year 6 2003 results with those of the same year group when they were in Year 2 shows that pupils made very good progress in the juniors. Boys performed similarly to girls and no significant differences were observed in the current attainment of boys and girls. The school exceeded the challenging target it set for English and mathematics tests in 2003.
4. The current attainment of pupils in Year 2 in English, mathematics and science shows improvement on the most recent national test results. Pupils are achieving well in reading, mathematics and science and satisfactorily in writing. In Year 6 pupils' current attainment is below that of the 2003 results in English, mathematics and science. However, analysis of their work and teachers' records shows that they are doing better than could have been expected. No significant differences were noted in the standards attained by boys and girls. Pupils' skills in English and mathematics are developed and used well in other subjects. In almost all other subjects pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory. However, in ICT standards are below those expected and pupils are not achieving as well as they should. This is because pupils have too few opportunities to use ICT to support their learning across the curriculum and to use all the applications required by the National Curriculum. The presentation of pupils' work also has some weaknesses, for example, in science insufficient attention is placed on ensuring that pupils take care when drawing diagrams and setting out tables to record results.
5. The skills that children have when they enter the Reception class vary considerably from year to year. By the time they enter Year 1, almost all children currently in the Reception class will be at the nationally expected level and this shows that they make good progress in their learning in relation to their starting points, and achieve well.
6. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that throughout the school work is well planned to meet the needs of pupils of differing levels of attainment. The school's analysis shows that although pupils with special educational needs related to learning difficulties generally attain lower standards than others, their achievement is as good as that of other pupils. Their learning keeps pace well due to the accurate identification of their needs, clear targets for learning and the very good support they receive.
7. As required, the school has a register for gifted and talented pupils. The school's regular and accurate tracking of attainment in the core subjects of English and mathematics ensures that these pupils achieve well and attain the standards they should.
8. The school is successful in meeting its aim to ensure that all pupils achieve equally well. It makes good provision for those pupils who do not start their education at the school, and works hard to ensure that they attain the standards they should. At their meeting, a few parents expressed the view that changes of teacher during the past year had disrupted their child's education. The leadership and management of the school are very aware of these difficulties, and much has been done to lessen the effects of changes in staffing during the year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to learning are good and standards of behaviour satisfactory, which, with satisfactory attendance and good punctuality, support achievement effectively. The school fosters personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils arrive on time, enjoy school and respond well to the educational opportunities offered.
- The school encourages pupils to try hard and develop their personal qualities well.
- Relationships are good, which helps pupils to feel happy and want to do well.
- Staff set a good example of the high standards of behaviour the school expects.
- A few pupils do not work as hard or behave as well as the majority, in spite of the school's efforts to encourage them to do better.

Commentary

9. Most pupils say they enjoy school, as their parents confirmed. This is because the school tries hard to make them feel well cared for and valued so that they want to arrive promptly, work hard and make the most of the interesting opportunities they have to add to their knowledge, skills and understanding. They enjoy the good range of clubs and the most interesting lessons, such as an imaginative afternoon of activities linked to better understanding of the celebration of Diwali capture their enthusiasm. Their concentration and skill in listening to the teacher and each other are not always strong enough to steer them through less stimulating parts of lessons, so attention wanders when teaching does not catch and hold their interest fully. Well motivated pupils, particularly more mature girls, work hard and take pride in their achievements, as seen when Year 6 received 'well done' certificates. With high quality support pupils with special educational needs work equally hard and as successfully as other pupils.

10. The school is clear about the conduct it expects. Staff set a good example of high standards of behaviour and hard work. In general, behaviour supports learning reasonably well. A few pupils in each year group do not behave quite as well as their classmates and are less interested in doing their best in lessons, although they receive as much encouragement as everyone else does. They show less interest in learning and listening to teachers and less respect for other pupils' ideas than others do. When asked about this, one or two pupils said that school was not important to them and that they had heard at home that 'education doesn't matter'. Most pupils behave quite well with no evidence of the bullying and bad behaviour suggested by some responses to questionnaires. In discussion, pupils suggested that there has been an improvement since one or two 'troublemakers' left to go to secondary school and as a result of the positive way the headteacher and other key staff encourage better behaviour. The school did not exclude any pupils in the year before the inspection.

11. The school council has had a positive impact on improved quality of play, such as the 'friends' stop' system of finding someone to play with at break and lunchtime. Although boys, in particular, are still very active and children rarely make good use of the colourful marked playground for traditional games, good supervision and quiet areas mean that pupils usually enjoy their playtime. Good relationships among staff and pupils help to create an atmosphere where people trust each other, feel secure and are willing to have a go with something new. As a result, pupils are happy to rise to the challenges set for them, as when, in assembly, a group followed instructions to make a Christingle candle while the rest of the school watched with fascination. Experiences such as this, the chance to contribute ideas through the school council and positive, familiar everyday routines, encourage good development of pupils' personal qualities through careful attention to spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.7
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Asian or Asian British – Indian

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
132	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are good, with some strong features. The curriculum is well planned overall and provides a good range of experiences both in lessons and for clubs and visits. However, there are currently weaknesses in the provision for ICT. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress are good overall. They are good in English and mathematics, very good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in almost all other subjects, however, there are weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' ICT skills and knowledge. Pupils are cared for well and the school has a satisfactory partnership with parents, other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and the proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching was higher. Although the school has been through a period when there have been significant staffing difficulties this has been managed well. Throughout the school the work of classroom assistants made a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The best teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. It is very well planned and organised and provides a range of interesting learning experiences. This enables children to make very good learning gains. In Years 5 and 6 teachers have very good subject knowledge, lessons are lively and interesting and very good use is made of the time available. In all other classes teaching is at least satisfactory. However, a weakness is the teaching of ICT. Not all areas required by the National Curriculum are taught and a lack of access to computers does not allow pupils to apply and develop their knowledge and understanding sufficiently. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 which enables pupils to achieve very well.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The work of knowledgeable classroom assistants makes a positive contribution to pupils learning, particularly those pupils with special educational needs.
- The teaching and assessment of ICT is not good enough.
- Assessment systems in English and mathematics are good and very good in the Foundation Stage.
- Almost all pupils work hard and try to do their best.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	7	8	11	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. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching during a period when there have been significant staffing difficulties. Considerable efforts have been made to recruit appropriate staff. Both new and inexperienced staff are given good guidance and support. In responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting held for parents prior to the inspection parents were positive about the quality of teaching, although a few expressed concern about the effects of changes in staffing and classes being taught by more than one teacher. The inspection team found that the school had taken effective measures to minimise the impact of these factors on pupils.

13. Teachers plan work for each year group carefully. This ensures that mixed-age classes receive a curriculum which builds on work previously covered. Work for each term and lesson is planned in detail. Individual lessons have clear learning aims and these are shared with pupils before work commences. Classroom assistants are well briefed about what is to be covered and provide very good support for groups of pupils and those with special educational needs. They have a strong working relationship with teachers and discuss pupils' progress and plans for subsequent lessons. This enables them to make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

14. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good and meets the needs of the children very well. One excellent lesson was observed during the inspection, in mathematics. Teachers and support staff work very well together. They know the capabilities of the children in each area of learning extremely well, due to careful and regular assessments of what each child has learned. Planning is extremely good; the tasks presented, time allocated and resources for learning precisely match each child's needs. This ensures that children are usually eager to learn and not a moment is wasted. However, for many children, the skills of working independently and sharing resources in small groups are below what is usually found. Staff work very hard to nurture these important and all-pervading personal skills, which currently constrain children's learning; as yet, in spite of very good teaching, overall, learning is only good.

Example of outstanding practice

The teaching was excellent in one mathematics lesson observed in the Foundation Stage. The vast majority of children were still four and the focus of the lesson was using numbers as labels for counting.

The teacher's very crisp and lively introduction using rhymes incorporating the sequencing of numbers to ten and back to zero, provided opportunities to reinforce the children's early counting skills and set the tone of the lesson, so that they were eager to learn. The teacher had assessed the children's level of knowledge and understanding very accurately and had prepared an excellent range of tasks which exactly met their needs. Higher-attaining children, working with the classroom assistant, extended their knowledge by counting and sequencing numbers to twenty. They had to find large numerals and arrange them in sequence, and after some discussion this was achieved. The number four was missing and the children had a productive discussion about how 14 is different from 4. Two groups, the average and higher-attaining children, played fishing games in sand or water and each collected stars or fish in a particular colour, not only counting how many, up to ten or fifteen, but also counting the spots (from zero to three on each star or fish) up to twenty. The above average group had the additional challenge of finding out who had 'more', 'less' and 'most' spots. Lower-attaining children working with the teacher worked on 'one more' or 'one less' up to ten, and were given very precise teaching about pointing as they counted, thinking and sequencing numbers carefully and holding pencils properly to write the numbers. The teacher's excellent preparation of colourful and exciting resources contributed significantly to the very high level of achievement evident in the lesson.

15. Throughout the school good relationships are evident between staff and pupils. The contributions made by pupils in lessons are valued and encouragement and praise given. This helps to build pupils' self-esteem and confidence. For example, in a Year 5-6 science lesson the classroom assistant working with a small group of pupils, quietly discussed possible answers to a question posed by the teacher, and encouraged them to put forward their ideas. This enabled them to participate fully in the lesson, gain confidence and apply successfully the knowledge they had.
16. Teachers provide a variety of activities. This ensures that pupils work hard and are challenged. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson looking at odd and even numbers and counting in 2's on completion of the whole-class introduction pupils were divided into groups and given tasks of differing complexity. This ensured that all pupils achieved well. Most pupils try to do their best and they respond very positively when the teacher is enthusiastic. For example, in a Year 1 drama lesson "brain gym" activities were used well to encourage pupils to concentrate and listen carefully. The story of "Mr Bear's busy day" was then used very effectively as a stimulus for role-play activities. Parts of the story were read very well and sound effects used to encourage pupils to think about how Mr Bear was feeling at various points. Pupils were encouraged to share their thoughts in preparation for writing a story. The session captured pupils' interest and they worked very productively.
17. Overall, the teaching of English is good. Teachers are articulate and use good vocabulary to stimulate learning and enhance the knowledge of their pupils. The school has recognised that the teaching of writing, particularly to younger pupils, requires some improvement. At present writing tasks are not always planned precisely. This results in some pupils not feeling confident about writing independently and not achieving as much as they could. In mathematics lessons work is well matched to pupils' needs and is challenging. Teaching is systematic and teachers have good subject knowledge and this leads to pupils learning well. The teaching of both English and mathematics in other subjects is good.
18. Pupils who have behavioural problems are usually well managed. However, in some of the lessons that were satisfactory there was a weakness in managing the behaviour of a few pupils and this slowed down the pace of learning. For example, in a few lessons the teachers did not insist that all pupils listened carefully during whole-class sessions. This then led to a few pupils not fully understanding what they were supposed to do. The task had to be explained again which resulted in too much time being wasted. Many pupils find it difficult to work independently. In a number of lessons pupils were able to work much more productively when working under the direct supervision of a teacher or classroom assistant. Teachers encourage pupils to try and resolve difficulties for themselves, however, some find this a real challenge.
19. Throughout the school, the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is invariably good. Plans for lessons appropriately record learning objectives or tasks for these pupils; a reasonable and sometimes good range of additional resources is supplied and the additional support given by support staff is of a very high quality. The support staff work closely with teachers; together with precise targets for learning, which are regularly assessed and reviewed, this ensures that these pupils achieve what they should.
20. Improvements have been made in the teaching of ICT, however, weaknesses remain. Not all aspects of the National Curriculum are taught and access to suitable equipment has been limited. A new ICT suite has been built and is about to come into operation. When this is fully equipped the school will be well placed to deal with current weaknesses.
21. The assessment of pupils' attainment is very good in the Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school a good computerised system is in place to monitor pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The results of national tests and other assessments are analysed to check that pupils are making appropriate progress. The information gathered is used to predict the standard that pupils should reach at various points as they move through the school. Information is used well to ensure that pupils are achieving as well as they should and to identify areas that require improvement. The information gathered is used to set targets for pupils and is effective in helping them to improve. It is planned to extend the use of this system to incorporate assessments in

science. Assessment in almost all other subjects is satisfactory. The exception is ICT where current procedures are unsatisfactory. This has been recognised by the school and plans are in place to start a formal assessment system. Teachers mark pupils' books regularly. The quality of marking varies between classes. In some classes teachers write notes to indicate how pupils can improve their work whilst in others marking takes the form of ticks.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum provides **good** opportunities for pupils' learning. Enrichment through activities outside lessons is **good**. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very broad curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they are well prepared for Year 1.
- The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the children in the Foundation Stage ensures that their needs are very precisely met.
- Detailed planning ensures that throughout the school, the curriculum provides good continuity for learning.
- Not all aspects of the ICT National Curriculum are covered in sufficient depth.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school.
- Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned.
- Extra activities support and enrich the curriculum well.
- The match of support staff to pupils' needs and the requirements of the curriculum is very good throughout the school.
- The high turnover of staff has had a negative impact on pupils' results, particularly in Year 2 in national tests in 2003.

Commentary

22. The curriculum provided in the Foundation Stage is very good. The children, including those who attend part-time, have a very rich environment in which to learn. The six areas of learning are very well promoted and very good links are made between them. The daily programme is very rich and varied, enabling children to have access to a wide range of interesting and valuable activities.

23. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good. The staff fully understand the needs of these young children. They deploy themselves very efficiently; sharing tasks and intervening at just the right moment and invariably ensure that all children are very well supported. The rich programme engenders a real enjoyment for learning so that children achieve well and are eager and keen learners when they begin Year 1.

24. Detailed planning for learning from Year 1 to Year 6 ensures that the curriculum meets statutory requirements in almost all subjects well. The only weakness is ICT and the school is taking action to remedy the situation. The school fully meets requirements in relation to the daily collective act of worship. The curriculum is planned well. Plans ensure that areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are well linked to National Curriculum subjects and that pupils in mixed-age classes receive a progressive curriculum, using a two-year programme for learning in subjects such as history and geography.

25. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are provided for well and this is an improvement since the last inspection, when provision was satisfactory. The support these pupils now receive is consistently good. Support staff, working with small groups of these pupils, have a clear understanding of what each is to learn and provide very good support. Those pupils with individual education plans have them reviewed regularly. Support staff are very aware of the targets on pupils' individual education plans and are very well trained to help pupils' achieve them. At the time of the last inspection, these targets were too broad, but now they are finely tuned, identifying small and achievable steps for improvement so that progress can be carefully monitored. The

school works hard to ensure that all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or ethnicity have equal access to the good opportunities it provides.

26. Personal, social, health education are promoted well as are citizenship and race equality. A secure programme for teaching is well supported by visitors like the school nurse and community police officer. The school is in the process of achieving the “Healthy Schools Award” and is involved in the “Safer Journeys to School” initiative.

27. The school has improved the range of its extra-curricular activities. The range of clubs is wider than is usually found; it adds to pupils’ enjoyment and interest and supports learning well. Staff and helpers provide clubs for all age groups at different times of the year. A number of interesting visitors come into school. Many give good support to the personal and health education programme. For example, the ‘Waste Bus’ which promotes the protection of the environment and St John’s Ambulance to ensure that pupils are comfortable if ever they need to go to hospital. Pupils visit the local church to sing and to understand their local heritage and children from the Foundation Stage visit the local pre-school provision so that they familiarise the very young children with the idea of belonging to the school community.

28. Though the high turnover of staff has had a significant impact in some classes the school is currently adequately staffed to teach all aspects of the National Curriculum. Accommodation has been improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory, with the school ensuring that it is fully accessible to those with special needs. The new accommodation for the Foundation Stage is reasonably spacious and gives direct access to a secure outdoor play area. A range of climbing equipment is in place and play equipment for all pupils to enjoy at playtime and this has a positive impact on their behaviour. A computer suite to facilitate the teaching of ICT has just been built in order to improve standards in the subject.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes **good** care of pupils’ welfare, health and safety. It offers pupils **satisfactory** support based on its checks on their academic progress. It involves pupils well in its work by asking for and acting on their views on ways of improving school life.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good quality care acts as a firm foundation for raising achievement.
- Academic support is continuing to improve through better use of checks on progress.
- Good efforts are made to gauge and act on pupils’ views.
- Good induction arrangements help children to settle well when they start school.
- For pupils other than those with special educational needs, guidance is not focused sharply enough on careful assessment of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Commentary

29. The school makes good efforts to encourage pupils to feel happy, secure and ready to learn through its careful attention to their welfare. When pupils hurt themselves or feel unwell, they are looked after with care and kindness. All relevant policies, including those required for matters of health, safety and child protection are in place and followed with necessary vigilance. One or two parents’ concerns about the effectiveness of the school’s procedures for trips, visits, and dismissal at the end of the school day appear to be unfounded. However, parking problems and chatter mean that people do not always keep a close eye on their children once staff have let them go to join their parents. The school is committed to high quality care and reviews any loopholes in procedures appropriately. It wants to ensure that children are happy, safe and feel valued so that they can make a success of their time at school.

30. In lessons, pupils receive appropriate help with their work, although until recently, this has not always been focused sharply on the steps they need to take next to ensure that they achieve the standards of which they are capable. In English and mathematics the introduction of a system of tracking progress towards specific targets is helping to improve the quality of individual guidance given to pupils. Pupils with special educational needs already receive well-focused help with their work and where relevant, their behaviour. Adults in school know the children and their personal qualities very well, so they offer good support in dealing with everyday problems based on a relationship of warmth and trust. Staff take great care to welcome children and build their confidence when they start school, so they settle in well.

31. The headteacher sets a very good example in the way she listens to pupils and values what they say. The school values and supports all its pupils, including those who for whatever reason, are quite challenging. It is active in asking pupils for ideas of how to improve school life, particularly through the school council, which meets regularly and discusses concerns such as the current issues of resolving the problem of congestion in cloakroom areas and fairness of lunchtime arrangements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is **satisfactory** as are its links with the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes good efforts to foster productive links with parents to support children's learning and achievement.
- The quality and range of information for parents, including reports, is good.
- A few parents do not respond constructively to the school's efforts to work with them in support of their children's achievement.

Commentary

32. In general, parents are quite pleased with what the school does for their children, with a majority who are appreciative and supportive of the school's efforts to raise standards of behaviour and academic performance. Set against this, is a minority of disgruntled parents who feel that they are less well informed, involved and consulted. One or two parents are quite open about the fact that they do not value a good education. Most parents say that their children like school, make good progress, are expected to work hard, have a good range of activities to enjoy, are taught well, treated fairly, encouraged to become mature and behave well. Inspection evidence supports these positive views.

33. The school tries hard to involve all parents in its life and with their children's work through high quality, regular information, including an unusually lively governors' report to parents. Reports on pupils' progress are detailed, although their layout and presentation, using fonts that are hard to read, detracts from the quality of the most telling comments, including those written by the children themselves. A few parents are very actively involved in school life through the PTA (parents' and teachers' association) as governors and as helpers in and out of classrooms. Their support makes a significant difference to achievement of pupils because of additional resources, including time and practical help offered with activities such as reading.

34. Links with the local community, including the church and parishioners such as the elderly, support pupils' personal development positively. Links with schools, including those to which pupils transfer, are helpful in ensuring that transition to the next stage of education is reasonably smooth.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are **good**. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is supported well by key members of the governing body. However, governors are not meeting their statutory responsibility to ensure full coverage of the ICT National Curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has worked hard to build up an effective team despite a turbulent time with regard to staffing. She is prepared to tackle issues and take difficult decisions.
- Several key members of the governing body are very knowledgeable, they understand their roles well and provide good support for the headteacher.
- The school has good financial routines and takes “best value” seriously.
- Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are very good and a very effective team has been created.
- School development planning is still underdeveloped and processes are not understood by all members of staff.
- Although ICT provision is improving governors are not meeting their statutory responsibility to ensure full coverage of the ICT National Curriculum.

Commentary

35. The school is led well by the headteacher who has worked hard and built up an effective team despite a high turnover of staff. She has a clear vision for the school and is determined to build up a community in which all members' views are valued and acted upon. She is prepared to tackle issues and to take difficult decisions in order to lead the school forward. Her calm but purposeful manner has ensured that problems have been overcome and that the school runs efficiently and offers a good quality of education to its pupils. This is particularly evident in the provision made for pupils who are in the Foundation Stage. Here the leadership and management are very good and a very effective team works hard to ensure children get the most from their schooling. Other key members of staff share the headteacher's vision for the school. However, they are all new to their posts and are only holding them temporarily until the new deputy headteacher takes up her post in January.

36. Key members of the governing body, who are experienced and understand their roles well, work closely with the headteacher and provide good support. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They are committed to putting in strategies to overcome weaknesses and have recently set up a strategic development committee in order to increase the effectiveness of school improvement planning. The school currently has a satisfactory school improvement plan. However, it does not identify how improvements will be monitored and evaluated. Members of staff are also unclear as to how the plan is drawn together. Each subject co-ordinator has an action plan for their subject area and these feed into the improvement plan. However, the plans tend to be lists of jobs to be carried out rather than being focused on raising standards and priorities are not always linked to cost. Governors visit the school regularly and are beginning to develop their understanding of the curriculum through observation of lessons and discussions with staff. Although ICT provision is improving governors are not meeting their statutory responsibility to ensure full coverage of the ICT National Curriculum. Overall, governance of the school is satisfactory.

37. The management of the school is good and is one of the factors underpinning the good standards achieved by pupils. The school uses a commercially produced computer program well to track the progress made by pupils and to identify what each child needs to do to improve their work further. Targets are set for pupils in English and mathematics. These are understood by the pupils and are reviewed regularly: they contribute well to the pupils' understanding of their own learning. The governors, headteacher and staff review performance data regularly and compare results with other schools at local meetings. All staff are given opportunities to develop their careers through relevant training and conferences.

38. Recruitment of staff is still difficult throughout the local area. Although the school clearly makes staff feel part of the school team as soon as they have been appointed, this remains one of the main barriers to the school being able to plan with any certainty for the future. This has not, however, affected the high calibre of staff currently employed at the school. In addition to the teaching staff there is a group of highly motivated support staff who support pupils well and ensure they make good progress.

39. The school has good systems for financial management and planning which are overseen effectively by the school's and the local education authorities responsible officers. The school has clear financial routines and governors are given comprehensive and regular monitoring reports. Plans are in place to further improve aspects of accommodation using part of the school's financial balance. The school takes "best value" seriously especially with regard to consultation. All members of the school community, including the pupils, are consulted before decisions are made. The Governors have appropriate plans for using the current surplus to develop the school's facilities as part of their strategic planning for the future.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	430038
Total expenditure	373690
Expenditure per pupil	2632

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	66185
Balance carried forward to the next	56347

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

Main strengths

- Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable and the quality of teaching is very good.
- Teaching is based on very good quality assessment and focused very well on children's needs.
- Provision has improved since the last inspection and the Foundation Stage is very well managed.

Commentary

40. The Foundation Stage is very well managed and the provision for the youngest children has improved since the last inspection. The teaching which was judged satisfactory, is now very good, with some that is excellent. Similarly the curriculum has improved from satisfactory to very good, and is now very firmly rooted in the national guidance. Staff are well qualified and very knowledgeable about the requirements for these young children. They work very closely together to ensure that they provide the best they can. The indoor and the outdoor learning areas are satisfactorily equipped and staff make an extensive range of extra resources.

41. Children start school at the beginning of the year in which they will be five, though those whose birthdays fall between January and August only attend part-time until January. The induction process is good, as are the links with local pre-school providers, and both the children and their parents are confident when the children start school. The staff strongly encourage links between home and school. The children take reading books and small homework tasks home and many parents give of their time to support their children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching ensures that personal and social development are promoted in all activities.
- Children are very positively encouraged to be fair, to share and to behave well.
- Children are given a wide range of opportunities to foster their independence.
- Adults provide very good role models so that very good relationships are promoted.
- Many children start school with skills lower than are usually found relating to working together fairly and sharing resources and time.

Commentary

42. Children starting Reception have different levels of attainment in a range of social skills, though most achieve what is usually expected in aspects relating to personal confidence and self care. However, many children are not used to working independently, nor to being part of a small group where they will be expected to take turns and share attention and resources with other children. They have as yet limited awareness of the needs and feelings of others. Staff work very hard to nurture these important and all-pervading personal skills, which currently constrain children's learning across the whole curriculum. Staff are invariably patient and calm, providing very good role models and strongly encouraging consideration for the needs of others. They consistently use encouragement to inspire children and use praise to acknowledge good responses. As a result, children learn to co-operate with one another pleasantly. Very good teaching in this area of learning enables children to achieve very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths

- Teaching is very encouraging and precisely focused on children's needs.
- Teachers talk to children with respect, nurturing a mature use of vocabulary.
- Children are given very good opportunities to enjoy stories and develop reading competence.
- The teaching to develop writing is exciting and very well focused on developing skills.

Commentary

43. Teaching in this area of learning is very precisely focused on each child's needs. As a result, most children will achieve, and some will exceed the early learning goals by the end of Reception.

44. Very good teaching incorporates well-planned opportunities to speak and listen. Adults invariably show respect and use a good range of vocabulary when talking to children. Class discussions ensure time for thinking so that children gain in confidence and achieve well. Well-focused 'play' activities provide good opportunities to try out their own ideas in words. Children are encouraged to listen politely to each other and this approach ensures they respond appropriately.

45. Children experience a wide range of books, which are read to them very expressively, so that they are engrossed and appreciative listeners. This contributes very positively to the development of their early reading skills and their enjoyment of books. They join in enthusiastically with well-known text like 'Fee-fi-fo-fum...'. A very good range of strategies is employed to teach reading and this is supported by regular reading sessions with adults at school.

46. In writing, the analysis of work indicates that the skills of letter formation and the development of sentence writing are consistently and regularly taught. This careful attention to detail means that by the end of Reception, the majority of children achieve well and attain the expected level in writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths

- Teaching is based on very secure assessments and is exactly focused on children's needs.
- Teaching about numbers as labels is extremely good.

Commentary

47. Teaching in this area of learning is very good with extremely good teaching in the aspect relating to using numbers as labels. Simple counting activities, number rhymes, shape work, pattern work and calculating one more and one less are routinely incorporated into daily activities giving this area of learning a very high profile. In early mathematical skills, the range of attainment is what is usually found, though already many can already count to ten. Very secure assessments and extremely precise planning ensure that teaching meets each child's needs exactly. As a result the children experience the whole range of mathematical activities at exactly the right level to enable them to achieve and learn well. As well as short well focused whole class sessions, groups of children work together, some independently and some with adult support, and the organisation makes a very good contribution to fostering their personal and social skills. The very good teaching across this wide area of learning ensures that the vast majority of children will attain and exceed the early learning goals in mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths

- Teaching is exciting and very encouraging enabling children to develop a wide knowledge and range of skills.
- Across the whole area of learning, there is regular and accurate assessment of achievement.

Commentary

48. Teaching in this wide area of learning is very good. Many children enter the reception class with a satisfactory level of general knowledge but with shortfalls in particular aspects of the area of learning. Planning is extremely good and ensures that each aspect of the area of learning is very well promoted and that regular assessments are made. This means that children achieve well and make up their shortfalls so that by the time they enter Year 1, most will attain the early learning goals. Planning has already enabled children to think about the many uses of water; name the different parts of their body accurately using labels, create pictures on the computer, make Autumn leaf prints and Rangoli patterns and discuss road safety. When making bookmarks, teaching very precisely addresses children's needs. The need for safe use of scissors, advice about cutting out and gluing were all explored. Very good teaching ensures that children give close attention to detail like drawing, arms, legs and faces and remember to share materials and resources, so provides very useful links with other areas of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Good teaching ensures that children develop good physical co-ordination.
- The skills children need to enable them to use small tools and equipment properly are developed very well.

Commentary

49. Teaching in this area of learning is good. The play area has been developed since the last inspection and a range of wheeled toys is available to improve children's skills. Most are already able to ride a tricycle and steer without bumping, though some need reminding to consider others. During the inspection, the outdoor play session observed was shared with other pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 and this is not ideal to assess these physical co-ordination skills. However, other opportunities to use the outdoor area are planned into the week. Careful assessment is made of children's skills in using small tools and equipment such as scissors, pencils and crayons. Tasks like drawing, cutting and sticking are regularly incorporated in the programme. Several children are reluctant, at this early stage, to tackle some of these tasks and teaching very carefully supports their lack of confidence and enables them to achieve well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths

- Teaching provides very good opportunities to experiment with colour.
- Children have a range of opportunities to sing and play musical instruments.

Commentary

50. Many children enter the reception class with a satisfactory level of knowledge. Teaching in this area of learning is good and planning ensures that children have a range of opportunities across the whole area of learning. A good supply of materials promotes creative development and this has a positive impact on the children's achievement. Very good planning ensures their work in other areas of learning supports creative development very well. It provides opportunities for colour mixing when studying water and children use a range of brushes of different sizes to create good pictures for example about 'playing in our paddling pools' and dolphins in the sea. Autumn leaves are used for printing, and children's pictures representing themselves and 'Our School' show good use of primary colours. Simple songs are a regular part of the programme and children sing enthusiastically and tunefully. Musical instruments are readily available but were not seen in use and there was no opportunity to see imaginative work like dance during the inspection.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in the 2003 national tests were very high when compared with those nationally.
- Very effective classroom assistants support small groups and individual pupils very well.
- Whole-class introductions to lessons provide good opportunities for speaking and listening.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge; their use of vocabulary is stimulating.
- Pupils have clear targets for improving their work.
- Leadership and management are good.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is hampered because teachers do not always plan effectively for writing tasks nor do they have consistent expectations relating to presentation.
- ICT is not used sufficiently as a tool for learning in the subject.

Commentary

51. The results of the national tests taken in 2003 at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading were in line with the national average and standards in writing were well below. The results in writing have been particularly affected by the staffing changes. The current standard of work in Year 2 is average both in reading and writing. Year 6 tests in 2003 showed standards in English to be very high in comparison with other schools and amongst the top five per cent across the country. However, the current cohort is not performing at this very high level as there are not as many high-attaining pupils, though standards are above average.

52. Throughout the school, introductions to lessons are used well to encourage pupils to speak and listen and standards are above average. Teachers have good questioning techniques and give good opportunities for pupils to enhance their vocabulary. Teachers often use interesting language to encourage pupils and as a result, pupils achieve well, responding confidently. In Year 1, drama is well used to help pupils communicate; they become confident when speaking to other children about things that interest them and make suitable responses to questions. Year 6 pupils express their opinions clearly and discuss each other's ideas with a developing awareness of other points of view.

53. Throughout the school pupils achieve well in reading. Reading standards are average in Year 2 and good in Year 6. All staff work hard to support pupils and place a heavy emphasis on ensuring that pupils enjoy a wide range of books, injecting a feeling of excitement when reading to pupils, ensuring that pupils read regularly to an adult and giving opportunities to share fiction and non-fiction texts.

54. Home-school contact books are used effectively by adults in school though some, in spite of encouragement by the school, are not used as well as they could be by parents. Pupils enjoy the daily quiet reading session and use it well. Year 2 pupils enjoy books and have a reasonable range

to choose from. They know the difference between fact and fiction. Higher-attaining pupils can summarise a simple story confidently using the illustrations as prompts. Pupils with special educational needs recognise familiar words and carefully decode simple unknown words using their knowledge of letter sounds. The consistent approach to reading through the school ensures that in Year 6, pupils read well. Higher-attaining pupils can talk about their favourite authors and can use their reading skills to tackle difficult and complex Victorian text identifying differences in the use of language successfully. Year 6 pupils with special educational needs are very well supported so that they enjoy reading and are able to take a full part in lessons.

55. Standards in writing are average in Year 2. Higher-attaining pupils can put sentences in the correct order and use full stops to separate them, though capital letters are not yet used consistently. Writing is above average in Year 6. However, across the school, standards fluctuate more noticeably in writing than in other aspects of English. Factors which need particular attention are more precise planning of written tasks and more consistent use of punctuation and good handwriting.

56. The lack of precision in the planning tasks means that some pupils are not confident about tackling tasks when working in groups. Some are reluctant to start their tasks and others are not totally absorbed in their work and so do not achieve as much as they could. The lack of consistent emphasis on using punctuation and good handwriting mean that attainment in these areas, although average overall is not as good as it could be. The school has recognised that standards could be better and has included writing as an area for development in the coming year.

57. Pupils with special educational needs have clear targets to achieve and they are very well supported. Targets are reviewed and discussed regularly so that support is precisely focused and pupils are aware of how much they have achieved. Support staff are very well prepared; they challenge and encourage pupils at precisely the right level, keeping these pupils on task by constantly adapting what they teach. As a result pupils apply themselves well and their work although below the level of others shows the same achievement.

58. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Planning for teaching the wide range of English skills is firmly based on national guidance. Teachers are articulate and use good vocabulary to stimulate learning and enhance the knowledge of their pupils. Teachers have set clear targets for pupils' improvement and assess pupils' work regularly. Marking ensures that pupils know how well they have achieved.

59. Leadership and management are good. A knowledgeable co-ordinator ensures that planning follows the national guidelines; she has monitored teaching and this has been helpful in the identification of areas of strength and those requiring development. The plan for further development accurately identifies a need to focus on writing in the coming year. National tests are thoroughly analysed to identify weaknesses in performance and resources are audited and supplemented as necessary to support improvement. The use of ICT as a tool for learning in English is under developed although improvement is taking place. Overall, improvement has been good since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. Language and literacy are well used across the curriculum. Teaching positively encourages the use of books and texts for reference in subjects like history and teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to express their opinions. Teachers listen carefully and clarify what pupils say to ensure that pupils understand. In this way, they help pupils to achieve well across a range of subjects. Writing in different forms is encouraged so that pupils use lists and tables to record information, for example in science. However, writing opportunities although suitably included do not invariably focus on improving the standards in writing and the presentation of work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in the most recent end of Year 6 national tests was very high.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Overall, pupils achieve very well during their time at the school.
- The National Numeracy Strategy is used well in lessons and all aspects of the National Curriculum for mathematics are well covered.
- Leadership and management are good.
- ICT is not used sufficiently as a tool for learning.

Commentary

61. The results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 dropped in 2003. They were still in line with the national average but were well below average when compared with similar schools. This was as a result of the pupils having had seven teachers during Years 1 and 2 and the high number of pupils who started at the school during this period. The work seen during the inspection in pupils' books and during lessons shows that there has been a marked improvement so far this year. As a result of good quality teaching which builds on the very good teaching in the Reception class, pupils' standards are above average, particularly in number work and in applying mathematical knowledge to problem solving. This now represents good achievement.

62. Results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2003 maintained the standards of 2002. They were very high when compared with all schools and well above average when compared to similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the very good support they receive during lessons. This represents very good achievement for all pupils during their time at the school. The lessons observed during the inspection; the work seen in pupils' books and discussions with pupils indicate that in Years 3 to 6 they are continuing to work at standards above or well above national expectations. There is a good emphasis on manipulating numbers and on explaining how results have been reached. The very good teaching at the top of the school particularly, ensures that higher-attaining pupils are challenged to work accurately and think carefully about their work. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to discuss extremely sensibly with the inspector whether or not answers in mathematics could be a matter of opinion.

63. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and all elements of the National Curriculum are well covered. The work set for the pupils is well matched to their needs and teachers have very good strategies for ensuring that pupils behave well during lessons. Relationships between pupils and adults are also good which results in pupils being motivated to work hard and make the most of the learning opportunities offered to them. Teachers have a good understanding of mathematics and as a result they impart this enthusiasm to the pupils. They have high expectations and present increasingly challenging work through systematic teaching and frequent reinforcement. Overall, the quality of marking is satisfactory. However, there are some inconsistencies. All of the work seen during the inspection had been marked. In the best cases pupils were given suggestions about how they might improve their work. This was not the case, however, in all classes. The use of ICT as a tool for learning in mathematics is under developed and is currently unsatisfactory.

64. Good improvement has taken place since the last inspection. The subject is both well led and managed which has resulted in the good quality of work seen and the standards that are being reached. The co-ordinator has observed lessons and given feedback to teachers on how they can further develop their work. She has also looked at pupils' work in books and discussed this with the pupils concerned. The co-ordinator has an action plan which identifies how the subject can be improved further. This contains appropriate priorities for improvement but does not link these to cost or identify how success in achieving the targets will be measured.

Numeracy across the curriculum

65. Pupils' numeracy skills are promoted well in other subjects and a great deal of care and thought is put into how this may be achieved. In science, for example pupils use tables to record

results. They also draw line graphs to show the relationship between the time taken and the mass of a candle when it is being burnt.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been at least well above average for the last two years.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve very well because work is well planned to meet their needs.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning.
- Insufficient emphasis is placed on the presentation of pupils work, particularly the drawing of diagrams and recording of results.

Commentary

66. Results in national tests and assessments have shown considerable year-on-year fluctuation. This is due to two major factors. Firstly, the differing levels of attainment of the small number of pupils in each year group. Secondly, staffing problems, which have had an adverse effect on pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

67. In 2003, results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 were better than the national results at the expected level 2. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 was average. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have shown considerable improvement over the last two years. They were well above average in 2003 with a very high proportion of pupils gaining the higher level 5. The performance of girls and boys was similar.

68. Analysis of the results of Year 6 pupils indicates they achieved very well in relation to their performance in assessments at the end of Year 2. This is because work is well planned to meet the needs of individuals. Current standards in Years 2 and 6 are above average.

69. It was only possible to observe three lessons during the inspection. In the lessons seen teaching varied between satisfactory and very good. The best teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. Classroom assistants know pupils well and provide them with very good support. Teachers regularly use specialist vocabulary such as metamorphic and translucent, which develops pupils understanding of scientific terms. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good the organisation and management of pupils was not always effective and resulted in some time being wasted.

70. Work in pupils' books shows good coverage of the National Curriculum with regular opportunities being provided to plan and carry out investigative work. However, at present too little use is made of ICT to support pupils' work and insufficient emphasis is placed on presentation, particularly the drawing of diagrams and recording of results.

71. The subject is well led and managed. Through regular monitoring there is a clear understanding of areas of strength and those that require improvement. The subject action plan has clear and appropriate objectives although these are not specifically focused on raising standards. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Strengths identified in the last inspection have been built upon and the range of investigative work has improved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory** but improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A new ICT suite has just been built.
- Staff expertise is improving.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.
- Evaluation of cross-curricular provision and assessment procedures is not established.

Commentary

72. Pupils' ICT skills are below average and they are not achieving as well as they should. The work of younger pupils shows evidence, for example, of the use of paint programs. Older pupils word process some of their work, add images to their text and create simple programs to control a car. However, little use was made of computers in other lessons observed during the inspection and not all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered sufficiently.

73. The purchase of CD-ROM's and equipment such as a digital camera and digital camcorder has been beneficial in developing the use of ICT across the curriculum. An ICT suite has just been built and staff have received training. A detailed development plan for the subject is in place which sets out a programme for improving the range and quality of equipment available. All of these developments indicate that provision is now improving.

74. In the lessons seen teachers showed a good understanding of the programs being used and gave clear demonstrations of new techniques. Good use was made of a data projector, for example, to demonstrate how to combine text and graphics and how to use a paint programme to create various effects. Teachers effectively questioned pupils about previously completed work to check their understanding. Teachers used specialist vocabulary well, such as icon and drag. All of these features led to pupils learning effectively. Where pupils were given an opportunity to apply their learning they did this well and showed good levels of co-operation when sharing a computer. Pupils enjoy opportunities to use computers but during conversations commented that they did not use them very often.

75. The provision for ICT has not improved enough since the last inspection. Leadership and management have been unsatisfactory both at senior management and subject levels. Though there has been some monitoring of pupils' work and teachers' planning, this has not provided a clear overview of how each subject is meeting the National Curriculum requirements for ICT. The school has also recognised that assessment procedures are a weakness and this is being dealt with.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. Little use of computers was seen in the lessons observed. Samples of pupils' work indicated coverage of applications such as word processing, use of paint programs, creating pie charts, simple programming and research. This indicates that pupils do get opportunities to apply the skills they learn in direct teaching sessions. However, some pupils commented that they would like to use computers more regularly and others said they felt that they were rather left to work things out for themselves. Overall, at present insufficient use is made of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strength

- Attainment in religious education is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Commentary

77. Pupils' achievement and progress in religious education is good. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 their attainment is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils develop well their knowledge and understanding of the major world religions. Care is taken to ensure that pupils learn lessons from what they are learning and how it applies to their own lives. Work in religious education is linked well to PSHE and used as a vehicle for promoting pupils' personal development. Religious education is also used well for teaching literacy skills for example, pupils in Year 6 wrote about how music influences their feelings.

78. Only three religious education lessons could be seen during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching and learning. In the lessons observed the teaching ranged from satisfactory to good which supports the good learning that takes place and the standards that are achieved. Where the best teaching took place the lesson moved quickly; the teacher managed behaviour well, provided a good range of activities and made good links with other subjects.

79. The leadership and management of religious education are good overall. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject. She has identified the strengths and areas for development and has carried out some monitoring of work in the subject. At the time of the last inspection religious education was judged to be unsatisfactory. Improvement since then has been very good.

Geography

There was insufficient evidence to make an overall evaluation of provision. Geography is not taught during this term. Consequently no samples of pupils' work were available for scrutiny. It is, therefore, not possible to make any judgments about the subject.

History

Overall provision for history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in history is above national expectations.
- History is used well as a tool for teaching literacy.
- Costs are not linked to priorities in the action plan.

Commentary

80. Pupils' achievement and progress in history are good. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 their attainment is above national expectations. When learning about the Victorians, for example, they develop their factual knowledge at the same time as beginning to understand the relationship between cause and effect. They begin to evaluate evidence and suggest reasons for changes they have observed. History is used well by the school to develop pupils' literacy skills. For example, pupils write their own accounts of the Battle of Maldon when learning about Viking lifestyles.

81. It was only possible to see one history lessons during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgment about the quality of teaching and learning. In the lesson observed the teacher had

a good knowledge of what was being taught and as a result the pupils were enthusiastic, produced a good amount of work and learnt well.

82. The leadership and management of history are satisfactory. Some time has been given for the co-ordinator to monitor work in the subject. An action plan is in place outlining future developments. However, the priorities are not linked to costs. As a result it is not clear as to whether or not the plan can be implemented. Strengths identified in the last inspection have been built upon and good improvement has been made.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

One lesson was observed in music and work was sampled in art and design and design and technology, as it was not possible to observe lessons in these subjects during the inspection. Overall judgements about provision in these subjects cannot be made.

Commentary

83. Evidence from pupils' work and display around the school indicates that work is well planned in art and design. Pupils are taught a range of skills and use a variety of materials and techniques to produce work of good quality. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, pupils create illustrations for a moving picture book in design and technology and masks to support their work in geography. Pupils learn about the work of other artists such as Munch and Jackson Pollock and about other cultures such as Aboriginal art from Australia. Areas that require further development are the use of sketchbooks, which is not consistent between classes, and three-dimensional work.

84. In design and technology pupils work and photographic evidence showed that they design and make artefacts using a range of materials. Pupils in Year 2 used construction kits to make an axle and then used the knowledge they gained to design and construct their own wheeled vehicles. Older pupils successfully wrote out lists of ingredients, methods and illustrations when making bread, as well as evaluating a range of different breads from around the World. Work in design and technology is well linked to other areas of the curriculum such as science. For example, older pupils drew out circuit diagrams when designing and making simple alarms.

85. The lesson observed in music was well planned. A good game, which involved each pupil singing an answer, was appropriately managed and Year 1 pupils sang alone confidently. Good suggestions for the work on pitch were appropriately followed, with the teacher using small, large, fierce and soft puppets to stimulate a high or low response. The scheme of work gives good plans for each year group to cover all strands of the curriculum and suggests good strategies for teaching. The co-ordinator has checked teachers' planning and audited their professional development needs. A plan is in place to support teaching by developing the confidence of teachers. Performances are given to celebrate special occasions and these include the choir and percussion groups.

Physical Education

Overall provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links to learning in other subjects.
- Missed opportunities to discuss each other's work.

Commentary

86. Pupils' achievement and progress in physical education is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for the subject. Pupils learn that they need to warm up and cool down at the beginning and end of lessons. They perform sequences and learn a range of skills in gymnastics and dance. They also learn to use a range of apparatus. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 now attend swimming lessons and records of progress are kept. This was a key issue for action at the time of the last inspection.

87. It was only possible to see three lessons during the inspection so it is not possible to make a judgment about the overall quality of teaching and learning. In those lessons seen the teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to good. Features of the best teaching included a good variety of activities; the teacher modelled the activity and took part with the pupils and pupils' ideas were used to form the basis of further work. Some opportunities were missed, however for pupils to discuss each others' work and use these ideas to develop their own work.

88. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and have ensured that standards have been maintained. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only one lesson was seen that included provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education. Throughout the school, the provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned. Teachers appropriately respond to personal and social issues as they arise. Although many children who enter Reception have limited awareness of the needs and feelings of others, the weekly sessions throughout the school build up personal and social skills progressively. The sessions, often linked with religious or moral education ensure that pupils develop **good** attitudes and meet the school's expectations for how they should behave in a community.

The programme deals with the important issues of citizenship and the responsibility of living in a community, keeping fit and looking after the environment. The school's participation in the Healthy Schools Award and the Safer Journeys to School initiatives provide a range of supportive activities linked to the benefits of healthy eating and exercise and considerations for safety in the locality. Regular "brain gym" sessions and playground games ensure that pupils understand the need for exercise and activity to keep mentally and physically fit. The programme is well managed and well linked with subjects like science and physical education. The school has appropriate policies in place relating to sex education and drugs education.

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	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
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	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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