

INSPECTION REPORT

WATCHLYTES SCHOOL

Welwyn Garden City

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117348

Headteacher: Mr J Stephens

Lead inspector: Mrs H Ranger

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 February 2004

Inspection number: 262135

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
School category:	Community school
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	208
School address:	Watchlytes Welwyn Garden City Herts
Postcode:	AL7 2AZ
Telephone number:	01707 886222
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Johnson
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Watchlytes School is situated in a neighbourhood of Welwyn Garden City and almost all pupils live in the local area. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds which are average overall. Three per cent come from a range of ethnic minority heritages: all of these speak English as their first language. All other pupils come from white British families. A low number of pupils move into or out of the school other than at the usual transfer times, so the school's roll is stable. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in the nursery or reception classes is broadly in line with the levels expected at these ages. Sixteen per cent of pupils are identified with special educational needs and this is average compared with schools nationally.

The school has been awarded Investor in People status in recognition of its staff development efforts. It is a Partnership Promotion School which helps to train student teachers. It has been awarded the Football Association Charter Mark.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22223	Mrs H Ranger	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, mathematics, art and design, music
13895	Ms A Smith	Lay inspector	
32197	Mr M Dukes	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English, geography, history, physical education, religious education
13805	Mrs L Lowery	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Watchlytes School provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils. Pupils of all backgrounds make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is satisfactory overall and is best for the younger pupils. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported sufficiently by key staff and the governors. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well from the nursery to Year 2 because of skilled teaching.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in Years 3 to 6, while satisfactory, vary across the key stage and some lessons do not stretch the more able pupils enough.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their standards of behaviour and their maturity are very good due to the school's very effective provision in these areas.
- Although pupils in Year 6 are making sound progress in mathematics and science, attainment in these subjects remains below average in this age group.
- The headteacher effectively leads a staff team who are committed to raising standards further.
- The curriculum is enhanced very well by a wide range of extra activities.
- Staff and governors do not monitor some aspects of provision rigorously enough to enable them to plan further improvements.
- Arrangements for marking and assessment do not support pupils' learning as well as they should.

Overall the school has maintained the qualities identified by its last inspection and standards have risen in the younger age groups. There has been satisfactory action on most of the key areas for improvement from that time. Lesson planning is better and the building has been developed well. There have been improvements in mathematics provision, in the provision for the more able pupils and in teachers' marking, although other features of these aspects now need to be tackled.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the nursery and reception classes where the children are on course at least to meet the goals that are expected by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2. The current Year 2 attain average standards in all the subjects inspected, including reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress in relation to their capabilities and to their attainment when they joined the school. Achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6 and in most year groups pupils reach at least the expected levels in all subjects. Pupils in Year 6 achieve satisfactorily and their progress has been sound in relation to their test results at the age of seven. They attain average standards in English and in most of the other subjects inspected. Their attainment is below average in mathematics and science. This is because the school's recent initiatives for improvement in these subjects have not had time to have a full impact on the attainment of the oldest pupils.

The provision for pupils' personal development is **very good** in all age groups. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning and behave very well. Attendance is above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and are most effective up to Year 2. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and half the lessons seen in these age groups were good. However, the quality of teaching varies between classes in this key stage and is sometimes not challenging enough for the more able pupils. As a result, pupils' progress in learning is not as steady as it should be. All teachers promote very good relationships and behaviour so that lessons take place in a pleasant, orderly atmosphere. In the school as a whole, marking, target-setting and assessment procedures, while satisfactory, are not supporting the drive to raise standards as well as they could. A satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra activities, such as clubs, visits and tuition in music and sport. Procedures to ensure pupils' care and welfare are good. A good partnership with parents adds to the quality of children's learning, and there are effective links with the wider community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher leads the staff team well. Following a reorganisation of the senior management team, he has identified and started work on relevant priorities to raise standards further, although some of these have not had time to have a full impact on the older pupils. Senior staff provide satisfactory support, contribute well to the very good ethos in the school and are committed to improving standards. Subject leadership is satisfactory, but lacks rigour in some of the ways that standards, teaching and the curriculum are monitored and developed. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a reasonable understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are active in their support, but monitor the success of current initiatives at first hand too rarely. Statutory requirements are mostly met. The exceptions are that some required items are omitted from the prospectus and annual governors' report, and the governors' report is not distributed to all parents.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are good. Most are positive about many aspects of its work. A minority would like to be consulted more and to have more information about how their children are getting on. Inspectors endorse most of the parents' positive views, but agree that some of the information about children's progress could be improved, including the quality of the annual written report.

Pupils hold the school in high esteem. They enjoy their work, like their teachers and are keen to learn. They feel that any problems are resolved by the caring staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the consistency of pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 and ensure sufficient challenge for the more able pupils in all lessons;
- continue the drive to raise the attainment of the oldest pupils in mathematics and science;
- ensure that standards, teaching and the curriculum are monitored rigorously and that priorities for development are communicated clearly in the school improvement plan;
- bring all marking, target-setting and assessment up to the level of the best practice in the school.

To fulfil statutory requirements, the school should include all the required details in its prospectus and annual governors' report, and ensure that the governors' report is sent to all parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Attainment is **average** in the school as a whole, but below average in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has achieved good results in the Year 6 English tests in recent years.
- Pupils achieve well in reading.
- Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
- Achievement varies too much between classes in Years 3 to 6, especially for the more able pupils.

Commentary

At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress was good for the under fives and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The school has maintained and extended pupils' good progress up to Year 2 and progress remains satisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

The Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes)

1. The inspection took place when the majority of children were new to the nursery or reception classes. Most of the findings in this report do not relate to the newest children in the nursery who had only been in school for a few days. Children join the nursery with levels of attainment that vary considerably, but meet those expected for the age group. The children in both classes achieve well overall as a result of effective teaching and are likely at least to achieve the expected goals in all the areas of learning that were inspected. They do very well in their personal, social and emotional development and are on course to exceed the learning goals in this area.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

2. The school's results in National Curriculum tests in this age group in 2003 were above the national average and above the average for similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers' assessments of attainment in science were average. The trend in the school's results for the past five years has been above that of national improvement.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.5 (16.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.7 (14.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.1 (16.6)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 29 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Inspection findings show that the pupils who are currently in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Attainment by Year 2 is average in English, mathematics and science. While this may seem to indicate a fall in standards in English and mathematics compared with last year's tests results, this is not the case. The Year 2 class now has a higher proportion of pupils who find learning

difficult than last year's group, but these pupils make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. In the other subjects that were inspected in detail, attainment is in line with the nationally expected levels in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, physical education and religious education.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6)

4. The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 in recent years has varied considerably. English has been the strongest subject overall. Pupils have achieved results above the national average for the past three years, reflecting the success of the school's initiatives to improve this key subject. The results in English have also been well above the average of schools that have similar levels of free school meals. In 2003, pupils did very well compared with schools whose pupils obtained similar results in the national tests at the age of seven. Mathematics and science results were below the national average last year and well below the results of similar schools. The main weakness was that, while more pupils than the national average attained Level 4, the proportion who reached Level 5 was considerably below the national average in both subjects. These disappointing results compared with those in English have led the school to take action, especially to ensure that its more capable pupils achieve better. Overall, performance in this key stage has improved in line with the national trend over the last five years.
5. The school sets challenging targets for its pupils in this age group. These were not quite met in English last year and were missed by a wide margin in mathematics, where the school considers them to have been too ambitious.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.2 (28.1)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.8 (27.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	27.7 (27.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Inspection findings are that pupils in Years 3 to 6, including the more able, achieve satisfactorily overall in relation to their attainment on entry to the key stage. Their current sound progress reflects the success in most lessons of the initiatives to improve provision for the higher attainers. However, progress is not steady: it is better in some classes than in others and is best in Years 4 and 6. In some lessons, especially in Years 3 and 5, the more able pupils could still do better. Attainment in the current Year 6 is average in English and below average in mathematics and science. There are more pupils in Year 6 who have special learning needs than in other classes in Key Stage 2 and this is reflected in their levels of attainment. In Years 3 to 5, attainment is above average in English and average in mathematics and science. In all the other subjects that were inspected in detail, pupils' attainment is at least in line with nationally expected levels. It is above expectations in swimming, and in music for those pupils who learn to play an instrument.
7. In the school as a whole, pupils with special educational needs make similar rates of progress to their classmates, because the school is successful in helping these pupils to overcome their barriers to learning. Bilingual pupils and those from ethnic minority backgrounds make similar progress to other pupils. There are no significant differences in the progress made by girls compared with boys.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**. The provision the school makes for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** and pupils respond very well. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave very well in lessons and around the school.
- Relationships between pupils and with teachers are very good. Pupils show respect for others' values and beliefs.
- The school provides very good opportunities for the moral and social development of pupils from all backgrounds.
- The school council is very effective and pupils take this responsibility seriously.
- Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.

Commentary

8. Pupils of all ages have very good attitudes to school, to learning and to the people around them. They show great interest in school life. They speak highly of the adults in the school and of the range of opportunities they are given. Pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the school. This aspect has been maintained since the last inspection. There is a very strong and effective behaviour code and, as a result, no pupil has ever been excluded from the school. There is a very orderly, quiet and relaxed atmosphere. Pupils are keen to come to school and they settle quickly to work. They complete homework on a regular basis. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes who have only just started in these age groups have settled quickly and confidently as a result of the good provision they receive.
9. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good. Pupils respect each other and the adults with whom they come into contact. They are polite and helpful towards visitors. Older pupils show concern for the younger ones. The Year 6 pupils willingly help to care for the new entrants to the reception class and take their responsibilities seriously. They also enjoy the paired reading they undertake on a weekly basis with the Year 2 class. Pupils say bullying is rarely an issue, but that teachers would deal effectively with it if the situation arose. Pupils from different social backgrounds and from minority ethnic groups are very well integrated. There is no evidence of racism and no recorded incidents.
10. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility from a very early age. Through effective assemblies, religious education and lessons in personal and social education, pupils consider moral issues and develop their own values and beliefs. When Year 2 pupils visited the local church during the inspection they showed great respect for it as a place of worship. Lessons in religious education develop the pupils' sound awareness of the beliefs of others across a wide range of faiths, although pupils have relatively few planned opportunities to learn more about the diversity of modern British culture.
11. The school provides a strong moral framework and sense of community for its pupils. They have been involved in establishing the rules in their classrooms and are fully aware of what they are and what they mean. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for the environment and to consider those less fortunate than themselves. They have all been involved in working to provide the new fitness trail in the school grounds. Pupils are very willing to plan events to support a range of charities. Social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to work in pairs and small groups on a regular basis. They are quick to help each other or to offer advice and support. Pupils on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and seek the opinions of their classmates. They have successfully made a range of changes to the school's equipment and organisation in response to the views of their peers. The school provides three separate year groups with the opportunity to undertake a residential visit. This gives the pupils

the chance to develop their independence and self-confidence. The types of activities undertaken on these trips are often adventurous and provide children with real challenge. They require pupils to show initiative and to take controlled risks. The pupils at Watchlytes respond very well to these opportunities.

12. The school provides equally well for all pupils in these aspects of its work. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups are considered well and their response to the provision is as good as that of the rest of the pupils.
13. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above the national average and has maintained the good levels identified by the previous inspection. Unauthorised absence is similar to the national average. Parents and carers encourage the regular attendance of their children. Most pupils arrive in time for the beginning of the school day and are ready to begin lessons promptly.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.4
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **satisfactory** quality of education. Overall, teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Assessment is **satisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** and is **well resourced**. It is enriched **very well** by extra activities. The day-to-day care of pupils is **good**. There are **effective** links with parents and the local community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. They are satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective and promotes good progress up to Year 2.
- In Years 3 to 6 teaching is satisfactory, but varies too much between classes.
- There is a lack of challenge for the more able pupils in some lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed well and there is a pleasant, orderly atmosphere in lessons.
- Pupils do well when they are expected to work independently or in small groups.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, but marking, target setting and the assessment of the foundation subjects need to be more rigorous to raise standards.
- While teaching is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs, their individual education plans could be more effective.

Commentary

14. The school has maintained the quality of teaching identified by its last inspection. Teaching is still better overall for the pupils from the nursery up to and including Year 2. Because it varies more for the pupils in Years 3 to 6, their progress is satisfactory but not as good. Teaching is best in Years 4 and 6 in this key stage and leads to effective learning by pupils of all capabilities. In the lessons where teaching is not as effective, activities move at a slower pace, do not always challenge the more capable pupils, and topics are less interesting to the pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0(0%)	3 (10%)	18 (58%)	9(29%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. A considerable strength of the school is the pleasant atmosphere, very good relationships and orderly behaviour of pupils that are evident in all classes. These are all promoted very well by teachers and the adults who assist them. As a result, pupils approach lessons in a good frame of mind, are keen to learn and concentrate well. They respond well to situations where they can work independently or in pairs and small groups.
16. Key issues from the last inspection were to provide more investigative work in mathematics, to challenge able pupils and to increase the ways that pupils are shown how to improve. The management of the school has taken action on each of these areas. Investigative work is used successfully now in mathematics and in science. In several classes, action to provide more challenge and to improve feedback to pupils has been successful and helps pupils to improve their performance efficiently. However, variations between classes remain and these aspects can still be improved to raise standards.
17. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. These pupils are quickly identified and their learning needs are skilfully assessed. Teachers plan to meet the needs through small, short-term targets on individual education plans. This planning leads to very good communication between teachers and their teaching assistants, but the plans could be made more effective. For example, they often contain too many learning targets with insufficiently clear criteria for judging their success. Teachers often fail to refer to the targets in their lesson plans. The arrangements for reviewing the plans could involve parents and pupils in the process to a greater extent. Teaching assistants are well trained and usually deployed well to support individuals or small groups. At times they are underused in lessons, especially during the introductory session, although there are examples of good practice where they use this time to assess pupils' responses or to encourage individuals to participate.
18. Teachers gain a satisfactory understanding of how children are progressing through informal assessments, marking work and structured tests. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and some give useful written comments that help the pupils to improve, although this practice needs to be more widespread. Target-setting takes place with pupils. This practice is particularly successful in English, but is not yet consistently used in other subjects, such as mathematics or science. Periodic assessments of samples of pupils' work are rigorous in English, mathematics and science, where pupils' progress is checked every half term. All teachers keep detailed and comprehensive records of their pupils' achievements in these subjects. They often use this information well to set targets for pupils and to focus upon any newly identified areas of weakness. However, these assessment procedures represent a very heavy workload for teachers. The school should now seek ways of making assessment more manageable by reducing the time required to complete it. By contrast, the assessment of subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not yet sufficiently rigorous. Staff should address this in order that they may have a more accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses within all subjects and of the pupils' achievements and levels of attainment.

The curriculum

The statutory curriculum is **satisfactory**. It is enriched **very well** by extra activities. Accommodation is **satisfactory** and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is good for the Foundation Stage.
- There is a very wide range of visits and clubs that support pupils' development.
- Most practical resources are good, but the quality of computers does not always support efficient learning.
- Units of work in ICT are not always taught within the planned timescale.
- The accommodation has been developed well, but a few rooms remain cramped.

Commentary

19. The school has maintained the quality of its curriculum since the previous inspection. It meets statutory requirements in all age groups and makes effective use of the national and local guidance of recent years to support teachers' planning for all subjects and areas of learning. It gives satisfactory support to pupils with special educational needs. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory and has been identified by the school as a focus for further improvement.
20. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is planned well for all areas of learning. A high emphasis is placed on children learning through play and practical activities. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 benefit from a broad and balanced programme of work. The school's long-term planning ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education are covered systematically. However, the units of work that are identified to be covered in ICT are not always taught within the given timescale and this does not promote an efficient progression in pupils' learning. There is a satisfactory programme of activities in personal, social and health education and citizenship. The quality of curricular planning was a key issue for improvement from the previous inspection. It has been addressed satisfactorily.
21. The school offers pupils a wide range of extra activities, especially those pupils in Years 3 to 6. Several residential stays take place and pupils speak very highly of these. As well as supporting work in a range of subjects, these visits make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. There is a wide selection of clubs for pupils outside lesson times and they participate eagerly and in good numbers. They include a typical range of sports and arts groups, but also offer more unusual pursuits such as bowls and lacrosse. Pupils also respond very well to opportunities in music. There is a large choir and very good participation in the range of instrumental tuition that is provided.
22. There have been successful efforts to improve the building and outdoor site since the last inspection. A key issue from that time was to improve the ventilation systems. This has been done as far as the funding and the practicalities of the building will allow. Windows have been improved, but the noisy extractor and heating fans remain. Extensions to classrooms have provided more cloakroom and learning space and there are plans to continue this programme of work. A few rooms remain too small for a whole class, but the school makes good use of the areas between the class bases to maximise its space. Practical learning resources, including books, are mainly of good quality and are well organised. However, some of the computers are outdated and unreliable. They do not always support pupils' learning efficiently. The school has well-considered plans to develop an ICT room in the near future if it can secure the funding necessary to supplement its own savings. The school benefits from a relatively stable staff who are ably supported by a team of teaching assistants.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported **well**. The school has **good** provision for promoting the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils. There is **good** involvement of pupils in seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Day-to-day care is effective and the school encourages the very good relationships between pupils and all members of staff.
- Good induction arrangements ensure that children entering the nursery and reception classes settle into school routines quickly.
- The school actively listens to older pupils' concerns, seeks their views and acts on them through the school council, although younger pupils are not represented in this forum.

Commentary

23. Good provision has been maintained since the previous inspection. The school is a happy and caring community. Members of staff know the pupils well and work hard at developing pupils' confidence. Pupils benefit from the very good relationships that are promoted by all adults in the school. Teachers foster and monitor the development of personal and social skills, and pupils respond well to the many opportunities to take responsibility offered by the school. The good procedures for the induction of new pupils support the individual needs of each child. Induction arrangements for children in the nursery ensure that even those who have only been in school for a few weeks are confident and happy in their surroundings. Pupils' academic performance is monitored satisfactorily, as outlined earlier in this report.
24. Arrangements for care, welfare and child protection are good. Many members of staff have appropriate first aid training. Parents are contacted immediately if there are any concerns about their children during the school day. Pupils interviewed during the inspection confirmed they receive a good standard of support and advice and say they are pleased with the school's provision. Most pupils feel sure that they can rely on help and guidance when needed.
25. The support and guidance provided for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Staff review the effectiveness of pupils' individual education plans each term. They assess the progress of pupils and modify the future support and guidance in the light of this which helps to maintain the support at a satisfactory level.
26. The involvement of all pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good. The school council is a lively forum where pupils put forward ideas they have for the benefit of pupils and the school to the headteacher. At present, this process only involves older pupils as those in the reception class and Year 1 are not included. This limits the opportunities for younger pupils to take an active role in the life of the school and for the school to be aware of their views.
27. Overall, the good quality care and support offered by the school help pupils to feel secure and build their general self-esteem.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents and with the community. Links with other schools and colleges in the area are developed **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very positive about most aspects of the school.
- The quality of some information provided for parents is disappointing.
- Links with the local community are good.

- The headteacher is available to parents daily in the playground and is able to deal with many worries or problems at an early stage.

Commentary

28. The strengths identified by the previous inspection in the partnership with parents have been maintained, and links with the wider community and other schools are now more effective. The school is a friendly environment with an 'open door' policy. Parents are made welcome and are very positive about most aspects of the school. They often help with school activities and with their children's work at home, thus contributing well to the partnership. The headteacher actively seeks to foster good relationships with parents and is available in the playground at the beginning and end of most school days for informal discussion with parents and carers wishing to talk about personal matters that may affect their children. By this means, the views of some parents are gained and any concerns or complaints are dealt with speedily. However, the school does not ensure that it regularly seeks and takes account of all parents' views, for example, by surveys or questionnaires.
29. Written communication with parents is satisfactory overall. Regular newsletters keep parents well informed of termly and day-to-day matters, but information given in pupils' end of year reports is too often unclear and unfocused. This was a weakness identified by the previous report that has not been fully rectified. As a result, the reports do not give a clear enough indication of pupils' weaknesses or record ways in which they may improve. Class teachers send information about the curriculum to parents each term, but the quality and quantity of this information is inconsistent across the year groups. The joint publication of the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contains much useful information, but some pieces of information that are required by law have been omitted. Governors do not ensure that all parents receive a copy of their annual report as they should do. The school keeps the parents of pupils with special educational needs satisfactorily informed about their children's progress. Parents are invited to meet their child's teacher each term and the school informs parents when the pupils' individual education plans have been reviewed. The school could do more to enable parents and pupils to play a greater part in writing and reviewing the plans.
30. The school has good links with the local community, nearby church and local businesses. These links enrich curricular provision and offer pupils valuable opportunities to gain insights into the wider world. There are good arrangements for the smooth transition of pupils to secondary school. The school makes an effective contribution to the initial training of teachers and provides placements for further education college students as part of their child development studies.
31. The good quality links between the wider community, parents and the school demonstrate that many are keen to support the school and to make a positive contribution to what pupils achieve.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. Governance is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The clear vision and pastoral leadership of the headteacher creates positive relationships at all levels.
- The school improvement plan is not sufficiently clear in stating the most important areas for development and how these will be monitored by staff and governors.
- School leaders analyse pupils' results very thoroughly in key subjects, but the monitoring of some other subjects lacks rigour.
- The Foundation Stage is not considered enough in development planning.
- All sections of staff benefit from helpful appraisals of their work and good opportunities for training.

- The management of special educational needs, while satisfactory, needs to be kept under review pending the appointment of a permanent co-ordinator.
- Governors have a reasonable understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although their monitoring of progress on the main development initiatives should be improved.

Commentary

32. The strong leadership of the headteacher inspires a common sense of purpose and a caring atmosphere throughout the school. As a result, the staff share his vision and work extremely hard, while the pupils develop very positive attitudes both to each other and to their work. The headteacher has succeeded in establishing a climate where very good relationships permeate the whole school, between all sections of staff and pupils, and where the principles of inclusion are promoted well. He has successfully reorganised the senior management team to aid the drive for school improvement and this is having a positive impact on standards. Written strategic planning, as communicated in the school improvement plan, reflects the high aspirations of the headteacher. It does not show clearly enough which are the key areas for achieving improvements and which areas are more routine activities. Consequently, planning does not allow staff and governors to focus on the school's priorities as well as it might. The school improvement plan also contains little reference to the Foundation Stage in its own right. School leaders need to have sufficient involvement with the school's work for this age group to ensure good leadership and management of the provision for the youngest pupils. Teachers lead the curriculum subjects satisfactorily overall. They sample pupils' work and their colleagues' planning. However, a few are not rigorous enough in how they assess the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum and do not identify strengths and weaknesses sufficiently to raise standards rapidly.
33. The headteacher, staff and governors have a satisfactory programme for reviewing the strengths and weaknesses in the school. This incorporates the regular review of performance data. As a result, the school has an indication of how well it is doing and staff are beginning to focus on developing areas to improve the school further. This has led to improvements in pupils' writing and in speaking and listening. In other subjects, relevant initiatives have been taken. Some are quite recent and have not yet had time to have a similar impact on raising standards across the school, for example, in mathematics and science for the oldest pupils. The satisfactory level of leadership and management has led to average standards overall. The staff work hard and spend many hours on assessing English, mathematics and science. This produces very detailed information about the learning of individual pupils and contributes to improvements in teaching. However, this heavy workload on the staff could be reduced to make these procedures more manageable, while still providing sufficient information on pupils' progress.
34. The school manages the performance of staff well. All staff members, including all categories of ancillary staff, have their work appraised, and the quality of this is acknowledged by the school's 'Investors in People' award. This leads to staff having their training needs clearly identified and met. Personal targets for staff reflect the school's priorities for improvement. They have led to the achievement of school targets, for example, improvements in pupils' writing.
35. The leadership and management of special educational needs by the headteacher are satisfactory. He has taken on this responsibility very recently, as a temporary measure. Although the leadership and management were sound at the time of the inspection, the school should keep its current arrangements under review, due to other demands on the headteacher's time and his need for up-to-date training in the field. The headteacher has a strong commitment to equal opportunities and this is an asset. However, he has not monitored the work of the teaching assistants as part of this temporary management role. Consequently, he has insufficient knowledge about how the assistants are deployed by the teachers or how effective the assistants are in catering for pupils with special educational needs.

36. The financial management is good and is supported very well by efficient administrative staff. It reflects the principles of best value well and is linked firmly to achieving the priorities of the school. The last audit report was very positive. The school has a large carry-forward figure in its budget. This has been accrued to enable the further development of the accommodation and of ICT resources. These are relevant priorities for improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	638,598
Total expenditure	592,329
Expenditure per pupil	2,278

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	46,387
Balance carried forward to the next	92,656

37. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met with the exception of the content and distribution of the prospectus and governors' annual report, as detailed previously. Governors make a positive contribution to the school. For example, each governor is 'twinned' with a member of staff and they regularly visit school to meet with their 'twin'. This helps the governors to have a secure understanding of many of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. As a result, the governors are sufficiently well informed to debate suggestions put forward by senior managers. Although the governors regularly discuss progress on the initiatives of the improvement plan, they rarely focus their visits to school to see for themselves how these are being carried out in practice by staff and pupils. The governing body is incomplete with vacancies yet to be filled. Governors have responded well to this by changing the make-up of their committees, but this does not overcome the problem of having too few members who can share the workload.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

38. The school has maintained the good provision for this age group that was identified by the previous inspection. There are two main points of admission for the children to both the part-time nursery and the full-time reception class – September for older ones in the year groups and January for younger ones. At the time of the inspection, the school had very recently admitted its January intakes to both classes. As a result, the majority of children were very new to their class groups. While the new intake in the nursery was observed settling in, it was too early to judge many aspects of their attainment and achievement. Most of the judgements here refer to the rest of the children in the two classes. Most children join the school in the nursery at the age of three. Their attainment on admission varies considerably but, overall, is in line with the levels expected for the age group in all the areas of learning. Teaching is good overall and the children achieve well. The current staff work well together as a team. They offer the children a good quality of education and a secure start to school. Relationships with the children and between the adults are very good and this promotes a very pleasant atmosphere in both classes. The teachers plan well, and in line with national guidance, to ensure that children are given a wide and relevant curriculum. They are supported well by regular volunteer helpers.
39. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher works closely with the class teachers to ensure good quality teaching and learning on a day-to-day basis. However, the needs of this age group are not reflected well in the school improvement plan. Assessment procedures have not been developed systematically. The staff keep adequate records of the younger children's progress and these ensure that work is mostly planned in line with individual needs. However, there are too few records kept of how the children achieve in relation to the main milestones that lead to the early learning goals. The records that are kept for children in reception are mainly related to Key Stage 1 work and are not appropriate for most of the children at this stage of the year. This is an area for improvement. Children benefit from very good accommodation and resources. They have spacious classrooms and outdoor facilities, and the nursery building is of particularly good quality.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality of relationships between children and adults creates an effective atmosphere for learning.
- Children are introduced very well to the routines of school life and achieve and settle in rapidly.

Commentary

40. Children make very good progress in this area of learning in both classes. This is due to very good teaching and the provision of interesting and relevant activities. Adults have high expectations of behaviour and they insist on good manners. Factors such as these promote the children's very good relationships very well. Activities are planned well, for example, to encourage children to negotiate with each other for the toys they want to use outdoors. By the time they are in reception, children are on course to exceed the learning goals that they are expected to meet by the end of the year. Almost all of those who were new this term have settled to learning at an impressive rate. A few in the nursery are still very dependent on adults and receive the caring support they need. Their classmates who are more experienced show

good levels of confidence and maturity. Children behave very well and maintain their concentration during activities.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily activities are planned well to encourage the full range of skills that are required.
- Reading has a high profile and is supported by high quality resources.

Commentary

41. All activities offer the children good opportunities to extend their language skills. Teaching is good and the children achieve well, especially in reading, where staff provide frequent, well planned opportunities for their development. Children are on course to meet the expected levels by the end of the year in both classes, and to exceed them in reading. In both classes, the children share books with adults and start to read independently. They are keen to read and are interested in their books. In the nursery, the staff have compiled excellent activity packs for children and parents to use at home. These include books, games and suggestions for activities, and have proved very popular. All opportunities are taken to extend speaking and listening skills. The adults know the children well and talk with individuals at the right level for them to make progress in their vocabulary and speech. The older children in reception write short sentences with some adult help. They have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make which supports their progress in reading and writing. They are taught well how to form their letters.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and emphasises practical activities.
- Mathematical skills are applied well to other areas of learning.

Commentary

42. The teachers plan lessons well in both classes. This leads to good achievement and children are on course at least to reach the expected levels by the end of the year. Activities are interesting and fun, such as the 'Spots and Stripes' day when the children came dressed in clothes with spots and stripes and pursued activities relating to shape and pattern. Basic number skills are taught well. The older children in reception count accurately to 20 and beyond and are beginning to learn simple addition and subtraction facts. In both classes, the children use their mathematical skills across the curriculum. Nursery children made jam sandwiches and cut them into the shapes they had learned about. In reception, the children began to relate their simple knowledge of clock times to the regular events of their own lives, such as getting up and having lunch.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The nursery building is organised and used imaginatively to cater for the children's needs.
- Free choice for the children is combined well with more focused activities that are led by adults.

Commentary

43. Teaching is good in this area of learning and the children achieve well. They are on course to achieve the levels expected for their age in both classes. Early experiences in science, technology and humanities are all planned well. These include regular opportunities for early work in religious education, such as recent learning about Christmas traditions. A strength in provision is the use of the very well-equipped nursery building. This is used well for both classes, as the reception teacher uses it on some afternoons when the nursery is not in session. The teachers make good use of areas in the nursery such as the imaginative play space. During the inspection, this was set up as a hospital and children talked knowledgeably about its function, naming items such as a stethoscope and describing their appointment system. In reception, the children explored and described the scientific properties of a range of materials. The teacher's planning of this activity showed good use of her evaluation of previous sessions to ensure that the lesson built well on what the children already knew. In both classes, activities are planned efficiently to ensure that children cover the required curriculum through working with adults in large or small groups. Children's general learning skills are also promoted well by the many opportunities for them to choose and plan their own activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The nursery's outdoor area is used well for both classes.
- Older children learn to work effectively in large groups.

Commentary

44. Teaching is good and children achieve well in both classes. They are on course to meet the levels expected by the end of the year. The nursery has a large, well-equipped outdoor space and children from both classes have regular opportunities to move around and to use the large wheeled toys. The reception class is introduced to work in the school hall. In a lesson seen, they found pathways around a range of large and small apparatus. They used the space well and showed due concern for the safety of others. In their day-to-day work, the children develop satisfactory hand skills through experiences with tools such as pencils and scissors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

45. No lessons were observed in this area of learning, so no judgements can be made about the overall provision or quality of teaching. Evidence from the children's previous work, from displays and from teachers' planning and records indicates that children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children have regular access to paint, collage, dough, water, sand and role-play activities. They pursue these both in focused activities with adults and from their own choice. They have learned and practised a repertoire of songs and rhymes. Good use is made of volunteer helpers. A group of children from the reception class worked well with a visiting helper to make collages representing faces during the inspection, showing sound levels of control and imagination.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English are above average in most classes and pupils achieve particularly well in reading.
- Teachers plan their lessons well and most assess pupils thoroughly.
- Pupils are not always aware of the purpose of their lessons.
- Lessons too often contain insufficient challenge for the more able pupils.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

46. Standards in English are rising because of the school's focus on improvement in this subject. This is evident in national test results over the last few years. For example, the results for 2003 showed that in Years 2 and 6 standards were above average. There have been some variations year by year because of the make-up of particular classes, such as the proportions who find learning more difficult and the proportions of more capable pupils. The standards attained by the pupils currently in Years 2 and 6, for example, are average, while in the other year groups they are higher.
47. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. The achievement of Years 1 and 2 is good, and is higher than it is for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. This is because the teaching is better overall in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates and there is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls. The more able pupils achieve satisfactorily but they could do better; their work does not always challenge them enough in some classes.
48. Standards in speaking and listening are average across the school. This had been an area for further development, recognised by the staff. As a result, the school has been focusing on improvements. Both the planning and the assessment of this area of English have improved and teachers now continually find ways of encouraging children to talk to the class and to each other through discussions and presentations. Consequently, pupils are confident and clear in their speaking, and most listen carefully for sustained periods, showing respect for those speaking.
49. Pupils achieve well in reading because teachers give the subject a high priority. Standards are above average in all year groups, except Years 2 and 6 where they are average. Pupils are taught strategies for tackling new words confidently and teachers provide good opportunities for group, paired and silent reading. Book areas in classrooms are well organised and the school libraries have attractive and up-to-date books, which interest the pupils. Displays in the classrooms inspire pupils to read and teachers are also successful in encouraging pupils to read to parents at home. This contributes significantly to children's progress.
50. Standards in writing have improved since the last inspection. Attainment is now above average in all classes except Years 2 and 6 where it is average. Staff have worked hard to achieve this. For example, they:
 - implemented successful methods following staff training;
 - regularly assess pupils' writing to ensure they are making good progress;
 - ensure pupils write frequently;
 - plan lively and interesting lessons;
 - motivate pupils by celebrating their work in displays.

51. These strategies have led to improvements in pupils' writing, such as in the writing of café menus in Year 1. By Year 6, pupils used paragraphs well in their writing of arguments for and against computer games. They are motivated to present their work as neatly as possible because teachers create displays and make class and individual books that celebrate pupils' achievements.
52. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good, with a higher proportion of good and very good lessons in the infants than in the juniors. This is having a positive impact on learning, especially for the younger pupils. Teachers assess the pupils' progress in English very thoroughly and use the information well to set targets and plan future lessons. The lively teaching in most lessons captures the interest of pupils, who behave well and work hard. Where teachers have begun to follow the school's new policy for marking, this gives clear help to pupils on how they can improve. However, some marking has not reached this good standard. Teachers' lesson plans are mainly good. They show that teachers routinely plan work which is modified to match the abilities in their classes. This is normally successful for the pupils of average ability and those with special educational needs who are well supported by teaching assistants. The most able pupils are sometimes set work which is well within their capabilities and, consequently, it fails to challenge and extend them as well as it should. Sometimes teachers do not make clear to their pupils the purpose of their lessons. As a result, pupils are unable to focus on what they are expected to learn or evaluate how well they have done in relation to the lesson's main objectives.
53. The subject leader is effective. She is experienced and knowledgeable. She monitors her subject well and has begun observing lessons and guiding staff towards further improvement. This has so far had a sound impact on pupils' achievements and she has a clear view of what needs to be developed further.
54. Following the last inspection, the pupils' results fell to below average in both Years 2 and 6. Since that time, they have risen and returned to being above average in 2003, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Inspection findings show that recent improvements in teaching are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. However, the improved teaching has not been in place long enough to show in improved results for all year groups. Therefore, improvement is judged as satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. This is good. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. They have many opportunities to practise and consolidate their use of information books when undertaking research in history and geography. Teachers help pupils to use the correct technical terms in subjects, such as science and mathematics. Writing skills are developed well through history, geography and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and pupils' achievements, while satisfactory overall, vary between classes.
- There is improving attention to the practical and investigative aspects of mathematics.
- Some lessons are not challenging enough, especially for the more capable pupils.
- The ways that teachers assess progress and tell pupils how they have done, while satisfactory, are not rigorous enough to contribute to the drive to raise standards.

Commentary

56. Mathematics has been a focus for improvement in recent years. Standards have risen and this has been most successful in Year 2. In this age group, pupils' performance in national tests has improved well, so that last year results were above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The performance of pupils in the national tests in Year 6 has varied considerably from year to year. Last year it was below average and well below that of similar schools, but it had been better than this in the previous two years. The current group of pupils in Year 2 attain average standards and they achieve well. There are more pupils in the class who find learning difficult than in last year's Year 2. As a result, their current performance is not as strong as last year's results indicated. Similarly, Year 6 contains a larger number of pupils with particular learning needs than other classes in Key Stage 2. While most are working within the expected level for their age (Level 4) and their achievements are satisfactory, few are presently on target to achieve Level 5. Their overall performance is, therefore, below average compared with schools nationally. Standards in this age group are lower than at the time of the previous inspection.
57. The school rightly identified that it needed to improve pupils' skills in investigation and problem-solving. This has been a recent focus and pupils in all classes are given good activities to promote these skills. These have yet to have a full impact on the attainment of the oldest pupils, but are improving all pupils' ability to apply their mathematics skills to practical situations. Pupils' number skills are mainly sound and they are encouraged to use a wide range of calculation methods. However, their recall of multiplication and division facts is sometimes too slow to support efficient calculation – a weakness identified by the previous inspection that has not been fully remedied.
58. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but they vary between classes. This means that pupils' progress is inconsistent over time, especially in Years 3 to 6. During the inspection, teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory. The very good provision for pupils' personal development means that all lessons take place in an orderly atmosphere where pupils respond well to their teachers and are keen to learn. Most lessons are based on written plans that include the range of attainment in each class. In the best lessons, this planning means that all attainment groups achieve well. In weaker lessons, the achievement of the more capable pupils is satisfactory, but sometimes they are not stretched enough. They spend some of their time on work that is quite easy for them, rather than on more challenging activities. The unsatisfactory lesson seen was conducted at a very slow pace and lacked interest. As a result, pupils did not learn enough or enjoy their work. An analysis of pupils' work and test results shows better progress in some classes than others. This mirrors the quality of teaching in lessons seen during the inspection.
59. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but the quality of written marking varies. In general, it does not give pupils enough information about how well they have done or how to improve. It is not linked to pupils' individual learning targets often enough. There are good assessments of how the class as a whole has done in relation to the main learning objectives of units of work and regular checks of individual attainment of National Curriculum levels. However, the assessment systems result in a great deal of paperwork being collected and a heavy workload on teachers. The systems would benefit from review and from being streamlined.
60. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has worked closely with colleagues to keep pace with national improvements in most respects and has received valued support from the local education authority's numeracy consultant. Pupils' test results are analysed well to contribute to the agenda for improvement. The subject leader has not had many recent opportunities to observe teaching and learning in practice to help to judge the quality of current provision and to add to the rigour of monitoring. While teachers base their planning on the National Numeracy Strategy, they use a range of materials to support lessons, such as a published scheme. The way that such materials are used is not agreed across the school. This does not support the efforts to make pupils' progress consistently good as they move from class to class. This is a current focus for improvement by the subject leader.

61. At the time of the last inspection, improvements to some aspects of mathematics were a key issue. These have been achieved satisfactorily. The school has extended its provision for investigative work and the contribution made by ICT. However, as outlined above, it has not improved pupils' recall of their multiplication tables sufficiently.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. The use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. Pupils practise and apply their skills in subjects, such as science and design and technology where they take measurements and handle data. They use ICT independently to construct tables and graphs. These add to the quality of work in a range of subjects and show that pupils can apply data handling skills adequately when using computers.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership of the subject is good and is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, teaching and learning.
- Good emphasis is given to the development of pupils' investigative skills.
- The more capable pupils have underachieved in recent years, but are now making satisfactory progress.
- Pupils enjoy the subject.
- Marking is not consistently used to tell pupils how to improve their work.

Commentary

63. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests, Year 6 pupils' standards were below average overall. Although a greater than average proportion achieved the nationally expected Level 4, fewer than average reached Level 5. This brought the school's overall results below the national average and this has been the case in most years since the last inspection.
64. Standards at the end of Year 2 are average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, although their oral work is much better than their written work would suggest. Achievement is now satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, although standards are below average by Year 6. The standards attained by the oldest pupils at the time of the last inspection were above average. They are lower now. The new science subject leader has analysed the reasons for the underachievement of the more capable pupils in the past and has introduced sensible strategies to overcome the problem. These are working well and have had a positive impact on achievement in all age groups. Pupils in Year 6 are now making good progress, but the strategies have not been in place long enough to improve their standards sufficiently this year. Most are working at the nationally expected Level 4, but too few show higher attainment for them to be in line with recent national average standards. Year 6 pupils are using effective revision strategies and have excellent opportunities to develop their investigative skills. They are very enthusiastic about their learning and are developing a love of science.
65. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has a clear vision for its future development. She has correctly identified the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Her management is secure and is resulting in improvements in teaching throughout the school. She has correctly identified the development of pupils' investigative skills as having been a weakness in the school. She has significantly improved resources in order to ensure that teachers have everything they need to plan an interesting range of investigations. She monitors teachers' planning to ensure that every class has sufficient opportunities to undertake investigative work, covers the required curriculum and that lessons build on what has gone before. She has successfully raised the status of the subject in the school to ensure that all

teachers plan their lessons in more detail. As a result, teachers are beginning to identify how they will support the lowest attainers in lessons as well as providing extra challenge for the most able pupils. This is resulting in greater consistency of experience for pupils as they move through the school. Since the subject leader's appointment, significant initiatives have taken place and have ensured satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

66. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and very good practice. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and these result in very good behaviour by the pupils and a desire to please. Teachers mainly use questioning well to find out what pupils already know and to get them to apply what they know to new situations. They plan interesting activities, linking them whenever possible to ongoing work in other subjects. Teachers use science well to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The subject also contributes positively to pupils' social, moral and personal development. Computers are used regularly to support or extend learning in science.
67. The quality of marking varies among the teachers. There is some very good practice, which identifies what pupils have done well and tells them how they can improve. Teachers usually mark work frequently, but sometimes this is not done as carefully as it should be and results in some inaccuracies. Teachers share the marking of pupils' work with each other at times to agree standards and consistency. This is a positive improvement since the last inspection, but has yet to lead to individual science targets for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are confident and enjoy working on computers.
- Teaching assistants are used well to promote pupils' learning.
- Resources are becoming dated and restrict the work of the oldest pupils, but the school has good plans to improve this.
- Not all units of work are completed in the stated timescale.
- Monitoring by the subject leader is not rigorous enough and teachers are not assessing pupils' work systematically.

Commentary

68. Attainment by Year 2 and Year 6 meets the nationally expected levels and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 2, pupils are developing good levels of confidence when working with computers. As pupils move through the school, they extend satisfactorily their range of skills and levels of independence, retaining confidence and enjoyment in their work. They talk enthusiastically about their work. Pupils say that access to computers has improved considerably. They now use them regularly to support work in most subjects, and the oldest use them independently as their work requires.
69. Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching staff have benefited from staff training in recent years. The school makes good use of teaching assistants to work with small groups of pupils. This is particularly effective in Year 6. Occasionally, not all classes cover all the units of work that are recommended for their age group. This results in gaps in their knowledge and progress that have to be remedied later. The cumulative effect is that Year 6 pupils need to work extra hard to compensate for lack of sufficient experiences lower down the school. The school has a satisfactory ratio of computers to pupils, which is an improvement on the last inspection. However, these computers are now relatively old and are regularly out of action, which has an adverse effect on pupils' learning. Current resource levels mean that pupils learn most of their computer skills while working as individuals or in small groups. Their learning is satisfactory, but they do not make the most efficient use of time. The school has sufficient funds to improve

its resources and has planned well to do this. Over recent years, the school managers have set aside capital and applied for grant funding to develop a new computer suite. They have recently reorganised the classrooms to set aside a suitable room for this purpose.

70. The school is not currently assessing pupils' work in ICT systematically. An assessment scheme has been purchased, but is not yet in regular use. Pupils' work is frequently not saved. The school needs to decide how it can overcome these difficulties in the short-term to ensure teachers have an accurate knowledge of each pupil's level of achievement to aid their future planning.
71. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. This includes the strategic management of the subject by senior managers and governors. The subject leader has a vision of the future development of the subject and is actively pursuing plans to achieve this. However, his monitoring of aspects of teaching and of the curriculum lacks rigour. For example, he is not sufficiently aware of the gaps in coverage of the activities that the school's planning documents set out for each year group.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. There is satisfactory use of ICT across the curriculum. Computers are frequently used to support work in English and mathematics. Pupils produced healthy eating booklets in science in Year 3. Pupils in Year 2 made puppet designs for their work in design and technology and pupils in Year 6 have researched John Lennon as part of their studies in history and music. Older pupils use the computerised microscope regularly, for example, when studying the growth of mould and the formation of salt crystals. Year 5 pupils produced a class tape-recording of their research into the formation of caves, using the Internet. Digital cameras are used widely to record pupils' work in all subjects and as a stimulus to work in art, geography and science.

HUMANITIES

73. In humanities, work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with no teaching seen in either subject. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. There are indications from pupils' previous work that standards are average, as they were at the last inspection.
74. In both subjects, a range of visits and visitors plays an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. Parents consider this is a strength of the school and the visits help to bring the subjects to life. For example, in geography, pupils pay study visits to The Lake District, North Wales, Digwell Lakes and local farms. In history, there are trips to Hatfield House where pupils use drama to learn about the Tudors, to York Railway Museum and the Imperial War Museum.
75. Pupils' books show that they are covering a suitable range of topics in both subjects. Pupils of all ages show pride in their work, which they present neatly. Work in history and geography helps develop the learning from other subjects. For example, detailed writing about Florence Nightingale, The Blitz and VE Day helps to develop literacy skills. Mathematics is used in graph work to show transport use in Kenya. Art skills are developed as the pupils portray Roman soldiers, Henry VIII and wildlife of The Great Rift Valley.
76. The leadership and management of these subjects are satisfactory. The subject leader checks teachers' planning to make sure pupils receive the teaching they should. She monitors pupils' work and advises staff on how to improve their teaching. She has not begun to observe teaching directly. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory because in most classes they are not regular or rigorous enough to help teachers to plan work that is based securely on what the pupils already know.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lively teaching captures the pupils' interests.
- Pupils have a high regard for the subject and show pride in their work.
- The marking and levels of challenge offered by some teachers do not help the pupils to make as much progress as they could in some lessons.
- There are no agreed assessment arrangements.

Commentary

77. By Years 2 and 6, the standards attained are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as they were at the time of the last inspection. From the two lessons seen and from analysis of available work and talking to pupils and staff, evidence shows that the pupils' achievement is satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching.
78. In the lessons seen in Years 1 and 6, teaching and learning were good. Both teachers skilfully selected material to appeal to their pupils and they presented it in a lively and exciting manner. For example, the Year 1 lesson on 'Belonging' stemmed from discussions about the pupils' families and about groups they belong to, such as Brownies and Cubs. The Year 6 lesson centred on a powerful Buddhist story which the pupils were challenged to re-write as a modern tale. In both lessons, pupils were inspired to work hard and to present their work neatly.
79. Evidence from their work shows that teaching and learning are satisfactory over time. The pupils across the school have good attitudes towards the subject and they take care to present their work well. However, pupils' books also show that teachers' marking is often confined to correcting the writing skills, rather than providing comments to help the pupils' learning in religious education. There is also evidence of pupils of all abilities being set similar tasks, which do not challenge the more able pupils at a high enough level. There is satisfactory teaching covering a wide range of world faiths. The local vicar enhances the teaching by his regular presence in school and by welcoming class groups into his church. However, pupils do not have the opportunity for visits to a wider range of places of worship from other major faiths. Elements from assemblies support pupils' learning in religious education. In one assembly seen, the teacher used her good rapport with the pupils to lead them to consider right and wrong. In response, the pupils replied thoughtfully to questions and they were very interested and behaved very well.
80. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader uses her wide experience to monitor the subject well. Consequently, she has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There are, however, no agreed procedures for assessment and this is a weakness that the subject leader has not remedied.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. **Design and technology** and **music** were not a focus for the inspection and it is not possible to judge overall provision in these subjects. No lessons were seen in design and technology, but examples of pupils' previous work were examined. Discussions took place with pupils and the subject leader, and teachers' planning was seen. In music, one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 and the subject leader was interviewed. Short observations were made with older pupils of the choir, of singing practice and of instrumental tuition.
82. In **design and technology**, pupils enjoy their work and find the activities interesting. They have the chance to work with the full range of materials specified in the National Curriculum. Pupils'

making skills consistently improve as they move through the school and most meet expected standards, but their designs show more limited signs of improvement. They are of an appropriate standard at the end of Year 2, but by the end of Year 6 they lack the necessary precision and careful annotation. Teachers often link work to ongoing activities in other subjects, for example in art, geography, science and music in Years 4 to 6. There is sound leadership and management of the subject. Assessment procedures do not tell pupils how well they are doing and how to improve.

83. In **music**, the lesson seen and the singing practice were taught well and pupils achieved the levels expected for their age. Pupils are offered a good range of extra activities in music in Years 3 to 6. The number who choose to learn to play an instrument is impressive and these pupils are taught very competently by members of the county's peripatetic tuition team. A choir for older pupils is led and accompanied competently by the deputy headteacher and this makes a good contribution to the school's provision for music. The choir and instrumentalists have opportunities to perform in school assemblies and concerts, and in larger venues, such as the county's concerts which are held at the Royal Albert Hall. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. Her monitoring has included some lesson observations and she checks the planning for all classes.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make good links between art and other subjects.
- Pupils' work is celebrated in attractive displays in all areas of the school.

Commentary

84. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they reach the levels expected nationally by Years 2 and 6. They work satisfactorily with a wide range of media that include paint, clay and textiles. Teachers' planning covers the main requirements of the National Curriculum adequately. Pupils' finished work shows satisfactory progression as they move through the school.
85. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lesson evidence, the work on display, collections of pupils' previous work and discussions with staff and pupils confirm this. A good lesson was seen with Year 6. It was well resourced with a wide range of books of famous paintings. These enabled the pupils to discuss how artists represent landscapes and to comment on the purpose, style and techniques involved. Discussions with this age group showed that they have experienced a sound range of art techniques for themselves, including those that involve the use of computers. Their knowledge and understanding of famous artists and craftspeople is fairly limited. However, the school's programme of visits contributes well to pupils' experiences, such as to museums and stately homes where they study original art and architecture.
86. Teachers value pupils' efforts and display their work in classrooms and communal areas of the school. Pupils are proud of this work and of the fact that their teachers have taken care to present it attractively. The displays add to the pleasant working environment that is created and encourage pupils to appreciate and learn from the work of others. Teachers make good links between work in art and work in other subjects. For example, pupils create striking pictures of the London Blitz as part of history work and Islamic patterns related to work in religious education. Such links add to pupils' enjoyment of subjects and to a wider understanding of how art has been used in the past and is expressed in other traditions, thus promoting their cultural development well.

87. The subject leader provides satisfactory leadership and management. She checks her colleagues' planning and ensures that sufficient resources are available. The school does not use any agreed systems for assessing pupils' progress in this subject. At the time of the last inspection, standards in art were judged higher than they are now. On this measure, the level of improvement has been unsatisfactory.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is an extensive range of extra-curricular sporting activities.
- High quality teaching in the infants leads to enthusiastic hard work from pupils.
- Pupils learn to swim well.
- Time is not used rigorously in some lessons.

Commentary

88. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, most pupils reach the standards expected for their ages. Pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory. Achievement and attainment are good in swimming and for the pupils who take advantage of the many extra activities on offer. By Year 2, pupils are developing a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the body. They have the agility to dodge and weave around each other with accuracy to avoid collision and they successfully roll a ball to a partner. Pupils build on these skills so that in Year 6 they dodge and weave at speed in rugby. They use their skills of attacking and defending well and they throw and catch a rugby ball with accuracy. The pupils co-operate well and they develop a good sense of teamwork. Swimming standards are high. At the end of last year, all but one of the pupils in Year 6 swam at least 25 metres and many exceeded this. Standards have improved in this subject since the last inspection.
89. Teaching is good and leads to effective learning. In the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was very good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. In a very good lesson, the teacher used every opportunity to ensure that as much of the teaching time as possible was spent with the pupils practising and consolidating their skills. She used her very good relationship with the pupils to control them very well and to give them a very brisk pace of teaching with most of the lesson spent in vigorous activity. As a result, the pupils were highly motivated to work very hard and to make rapid progress.
90. A few weaknesses were found in lessons that were otherwise satisfactory. Pupils spent too much time listening to the teacher's instructions and too little time on physical activity. Pupils excused from physical activity for medical reasons were not provided with alternative physical education work, as is good practice, but were set tasks in another subject.
91. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that includes football, netball, country dance, lacrosse, tag rugby, cricket, cross country running and athletics. There are further lunchtime clubs for Year 6 pupils covering table tennis, badminton and bowls. Some of these activities give pupils opportunities to participate competitively and develop the skills necessary to be a successful member of a team. These clubs are open to boys and girls in Years 4 to 6 who support them fully and with great enthusiasm. The activities make a significant contribution to physical education and they are a considerable achievement for a relatively small school. The school has recently received recognition from The Football Association for achieving The FA Charter Standard for Schools.
92. The new subject leader provides satisfactory co-ordination of the school's work. She checks teachers' planning regularly and makes sure that pupils are taught the full range of work in national guidelines. She has begun to observe teaching, but has not planned this to address the

development priorities for her subject. There are no agreed arrangements for assessment in the subject and this does not support the smooth progression of pupils' learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

93. Not enough evidence was available from the small number of class lessons seen in this subject to judge the quality of teaching and learning and, therefore, of overall provision. There is a good planned teaching programme based on guidance provided by the local education authority. This makes an effective contribution to the very good work that takes place in the school as a whole to encourage pupils' personal development. It integrates well, for example, with activities such as assemblies, playground routines and the school council. This year, the school has increased lesson provision to two taught sessions each week. One session is based on the programme of work. The other is used more informally to focus on topical issues. These may include discussing the items on the school council agenda or addressing difficulties experienced by pupils in the playground.
94. In the small sample of lessons seen, pupils achieved well for their age. They confidently express opinions and listen sensibly to those of others. They show good levels of responsibility for each other and the environment. Pupils enjoy good trusting relationships with teachers. Consequently they are confident to express their views. Teachers ensure that pupils listen well to each other and that everyone has the opportunity to have their opinions considered. The activities planned are relevant to the age group. Health education is mainly taught through the science curriculum. Pupils have the chance to discuss issues related to sex, alcohol, drugs and smoking, and to learn about the associated dangers. The school nurse makes an effective contribution to the teaching of some of these aspects.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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