

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHEND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Erith

LEA area: Bexley

Unique reference number: 101418

Headteacher: Mrs N Stockdale

Lead inspector: Mrs M Summers

Dates of inspection: 26-28 April 2004

Inspection number: 264637

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:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	275
School address:	Peareswood Road Erith Kent
Postcode:	DA8 3PR
Telephone number:	01322 332379
Fax number:	01322 330933
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Tullett
Date of previous inspection:	3 May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Northend Primary is of average size and caters for pupils between three and eleven years of age. Thirty children attend the nursery part-time. There are nine classes in addition to the nursery and some of these contain pupils from two different year groups. The school has faced many challenges since its last inspection. For almost three years, the school had no permanent headteacher and there was a great turnover of temporary staff. This turbulence affected most aspects of school life. A permanent headteacher began in September 2001 and, since then, the staffing situation has begun to stabilise. A very high proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than those of normal admission and transfer. For example, only about half the pupils currently in Year 6 have been at Northend since Year 2. Many of these pupils have had negative experiences at other schools and are at risk of permanent exclusion. Just under half the pupils in the school are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is much higher than in most schools. Most of the pupils come from White British backgrounds although most other ethnic backgrounds are represented. The largest ethnic minority group is of Black African pupils who make up six per cent of the school roll. There are very small numbers of pupils from refugee and Traveller families. No pupils are in the early stages of learning English. Nearly a third of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs and three per cent have statements of special educational need. Both these figures are much higher than in most schools. The majority of the pupils on the special needs register have emotional and behavioural problems but there is also a considerable number with moderate learning difficulties. Most pupils start school at levels which are well below those expected for their age.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25455	Mary Summers	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, music, physical education, special educational needs.
9865	Sue Howley	Lay inspector	
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19774	Maura Docherty	Team inspector	English, art and design, design and technology, Foundation Stage, English as an additional language.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Overall evaluation

Northend Primary is providing an acceptable quality of education but has **serious weaknesses** in the standards that pupils achieve, the quality of teaching and learning and the rates of attendance and punctuality. Standards have been very low for the past few years, reflecting the high turnover of staff and pupils. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to recruit and retain permanent teachers and to re-establish a positive ethos towards learning. This has now been achieved and there are clear signs of improvement. Despite a significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, good teaching in Years 5 and 6 has contributed towards a rise in standards this year. The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils are well supported. The school has worked hard to develop successful links with parents and relationships with them are satisfactory. Few parents, however, make an effective contribution to their children's education. Due to the low standards and the unsatisfactory teaching the school does not yet provide value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 do not reach high enough standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Many pupils miss important parts of their education through poor attendance and punctuality.
- The headteacher provides a real drive to improve the school. Her determination has already paid off in establishing a stable staff team and in improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. The school has now turned the corner and standards are beginning to rise.
- Teaching in Reception and Years 5 and 6 is good. Pupils achieve well in these classes. Teaching has some weaknesses in other classes which hinder pupils' achievement.
- Support assistants and Learning Mentors have a real impact on helping those pupils with emotional and behavioural needs.

The school has faced many challenges since the last inspection in May 1999 and these have hindered its improvement significantly. Taking the last five years together, improvement is unsatisfactory. Standards have fallen and the quality of teaching and learning has declined. This year, however, the effects of the headteacher's good leadership have begun to be seen in the rise in standards. Although there remains much to be done, the determination of the headteacher and governors and the establishment of a permanent staff team puts the school in a good position to improve standards further next year.

Standards achieved

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

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Overall, pupils' achievements are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 are not making fast enough progress. Those in Years 5 and 6 are doing better because of good teaching in these classes. Standards in national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2003 were in the bottom five per cent in the country. Inspection evidence shows that standards will be better this year but still well below those expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6. These pupils have faced significant barriers to their learning. They have experienced a high turnover of teachers which has hindered their achievement. They are unable to make up for what they have missed in previous years, even with the good

teaching they receive in Years 5 and 6. Many pupils have transferred to Northend having had negative experiences at other schools. Many have very significant emotional and behavioural needs.

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve appropriately considering their starting points which are well below the levels expected for children when they start school. They do well in the Reception class especially because the teaching is well suited to their needs. They reach the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development but not in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. The achievement of pupils in Year 2 is unsatisfactory. Standards are well below those expected nationally in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In Years 2 and 6, standards in religious education are average but they are below average in information and communication technology.

Pupils' personal development is **good** and is beginning to have an effect on their achievement. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most pupils like school and are keen to learn. The ethos for learning is good. Behaviour is good although there is a high number of exclusions, reflecting the school's firm stance on discipline. Some pupils are missing important parts of their education because of poor attendance and punctuality.

Quality of education

The school provides a **satisfactory** education for its pupils. Teaching is **unsatisfactory** overall but this masks a wide range of quality, from very good to poor. Teaching is good in Reception and Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils in these classes achieve well. Lessons are exciting and pupils work hard. Teaching is weaker in Years 1 to 4. Teachers do not always use the information from assessments to plan work at appropriate levels. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants but often the focus is too much on behaviour and not enough on their learning needs and this means they do not achieve well enough in lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language receive appropriate support outside class but suffer from the same weaknesses in the teaching as their classmates. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils and has provided some additional activities for them, but the challenge provided in lessons is often not enough to ensure they make the best possible progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils have access to all subjects and areas of learning. There has been an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy and this is beginning to show results. Standards are starting to rise. There is a good range of clubs and activities at lunchtimes and after school. These give pupils opportunities to extend their learning as well as improve their personal and social skills. Pupils are cared for well. As a result, they feel valued and ready to learn. Partnership with parents is satisfactory and continues to develop. However, despite a great amount of effort, few parents support their children's education effectively. Links with other schools and the community are satisfactory. Accommodation is unsatisfactory although improvements are to be made very soon.

Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She provides a clear and determined drive to the school's work and she is supported well by governors. Governance is good. Together, the headteacher and governors have worked hard to recruit permanent staff and to re-establish a good learning ethos in the school. They have done this successfully. There is now a strong focus on improving standards. Staff with important responsibilities carry out a reasonable job although the leadership of English is unsatisfactory. The Foundation Stage is well led and has led to good improvement in planning and assessment procedures. Management systems are satisfactory. Support staff play an important role in helping pupils with special educational needs. They support their behaviour well but in some cases do not focus on their learning needs well enough. Daily routines are well established and the school day runs smoothly.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

Parents and pupils are reasonably satisfied with the school's work. Pupils say they like school, particularly the clubs. A few parents were concerned about behaviour at lunchtime but inspection evidence shows that pupils are well supervised and that behaviour at lunchtime is good.

Improvements needed

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

- Improve pupils' achievement throughout the school in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Raise attendance levels and improve punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6. Even considering the many barriers to learning which the pupils face, their achievement is unsatisfactory. The achievement of children in the nursery is satisfactory but in Reception, it is good. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well over the year because of good teaching but do not reach nationally expected levels for their age because they have experienced a great deal of disruption to their education in recent years. Pupils from ethnic minority families often do better than their White British counterparts. They show commitment to their work and receive good levels of support from their parents.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in English, mathematics and science have fallen significantly since the last inspection. National test results in 2003 were in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country.
- Pupils in Reception achieve well because of good teaching.
- The achievement of pupils in Years 1 to 4 is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well over the year because of good teaching. However, pupils are unable to reach national standards because they have missed so much in previous years.
- Standards in information and communication technology are below average in Years 2 and 6.

Commentary

1. The national test results and assessments by teachers in 2003 showed very low standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6. Inspection evidence shows a slight rise this year but standards remain well below the national average. Standards in religious education are average but standards in information and communication technology are below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from good teaching and achieve well over the year but are unable to make up for what they have missed in previous years. Many have transferred into the school over the past two or three years and have had negative experiences at other schools.

2. Pupils at Northend face many barriers to their learning. They arrive at school at levels which are well below those expected for their age. A third of pupils have special educational needs and there are more pupils with statements of special educational need than in most schools of this size. Pupils have also experienced a high turnover of staff which means that their learning has been significantly disrupted.

3. Standards have fallen significantly since the last inspection. The school has been through a very disruptive period and pupils have had many different teachers, even over the space of a term. This has impacted significantly on the education they have received. The school has now turned the corner and standards are beginning to rise. Staff have worked together well to re-establish a positive ethos towards learning. Although there continues to be a high level of absence amongst younger pupils, most pupils now attend regularly and have positive attitudes to their work. The determination of the headteacher and governors and the establishment of a permanent staff team puts the school in a good position to improve standards further next year.

4. Pupils in the Foundation Stage achieve satisfactorily. They start nursery at levels which are well below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. Many children do not communicate at all when they first start school. In the nursery, achievement is satisfactory but when they move to Reception their achievement is good. This is because of the good quality of teaching and support they receive.

Activities are more closely suited to their needs. They achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development but do not meet the goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development.

5. Achievement in Years 1 to 4 is unsatisfactory and is related to weaknesses in the teaching. In English, pupils do not receive a firm enough grounding in phonics and this influences their subsequent work in many subjects. Work is not matched well enough to pupils' needs in most subjects. The weaker pupils and those with special educational needs, whilst being well supported in their personal and social development, often find the work too difficult. Brighter pupils often find it too easy and so make few gains in their learning.

6. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory as is that of pupils from Traveller backgrounds. Although they get good individual support from a Learning Mentor, in class they suffer from the same weaknesses in the teaching as the rest of the pupils.

7. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls but pupils from ethnic minority families often do better than their White British classmates. They are often more committed to their learning and want to succeed. They get good encouragement and support from their parents.

8. The school has identified gifted and talented pupils and provides some opportunities for those who are skilled in sport, music and art to take part in clubs and activities outside the school day. Provision for those who show particular skills in English, mathematics and science is unsatisfactory however, as most teachers do not provide sufficiently challenging activities in lessons.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	12.2 (13.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	10.2 (11.6)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.8 (13.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.2 (24.0)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	22.9 (23.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	24.5 (24.8)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes to school and learning are good. Behaviour is good although there are a high number of exclusions. Pupils' personal development is good with strengths in their social and moral development. Attendance is well below the national average and punctuality is unsatisfactory. This has a negative impact on learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils enjoy school and are encouraged to do their best.
- Good pastoral care and support lead to positive relationships.
- Good behaviour management, and a strong emphasis on social and moral development, results in an orderly community.
- A few pupils do not respond well to the behaviour system and the rate of exclusions is high.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly or punctually. They miss important parts of their education.

Commentary

9. Attitudes to school and learning are good. Most pupils want to do well and are keen to participate in what is available. They are friendly and open and enjoy talking about their work. The school welcomes new pupils and they settle in quickly. Relationships are good and there is no evidence of racial tension. Many pupils from ethnic minorities have very positive attitudes. They want to succeed and they work hard in class.

10. Behaviour is good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A clear code, "Golden Rules", regular praise and calm effective use of positive behaviour management strategies create a good learning environment in most classrooms.

11. Although the majority of pupils attend school regularly, too many miss important parts of their education through absence. This is particularly the case amongst pupils in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Parents do not establish good patterns of attendance by bringing their children to school regularly. As children become older and able to assume more responsibility, their attendance improves. The school is working hard to improve attendance but there is still a long way to go. Punctuality is unsatisfactory at the start of the school day. Too many pupils are late, missing the start of lessons and this disrupts their own learning and that of their classmates.

12. Relationships throughout the school are good. The school is orderly and harmonious. Adults provide very good role models and pupils respond well to these, learning politeness and good manners. Pupils collaborate well in lessons and play well together in structured lunchtime activities. Many attend lunchtime and after-school clubs where they can develop their skills within a more informal situation. They are keen to take on special responsibilities such as helping in the hall during the lunch hour or preparing for assembly. Pupils report that there are occasional incidents of bullying and name calling but that such incidents are dealt with quickly and appropriately.

13. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Daily assemblies encourage pupils to reflect and consider others. They set a positive note for the day and pupils take part enthusiastically. They enjoy listening to the music played at the beginning and end and sing assembly songs very sensitively, clearly thinking about the words. Circle time, small-group work and the well-planned personal, social and health education programme make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are adequately prepared for life in a multicultural society.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.2	School data	1.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	208	37	3
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	10	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	2	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	17	2	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	6	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	23	0	0

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

14. Attendance is well below the national median and punctuality is unsatisfactory. Good attendance and punctuality is effectively promoted, through, for example, the Breakfast Club and a range of awards. Effective monitoring and follow up in partnership with the Education Welfare Service, is beginning to have a positive impact.

15. A minority of pupils with identified problems do not respond well to the behaviour system. Many have significant emotional and behavioural needs and are on the school's register for special educational needs. Many have transferred from other schools where they have experienced considerable problems. The school takes a firm line with violent behaviour and fixed term exclusions are higher than normally found.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good opportunities for enrichment through clubs and other activities. Provision for pupils' care, welfare and safety is good. Teaching, learning and assessment are unsatisfactory overall. Accommodation is unsatisfactory at present but improvements are to take place very soon. Links with parents, other schools and the community are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Despite strengths in Reception and Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is unsatisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are not planned well enough to meet the different needs of the pupils.
- Teachers have low expectations of their pupils. This is particularly the case in pupils' written work in Years 1 to 4.
- Support staff are used well to help pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- Teachers maintain good levels of discipline in their lessons.
- Many teachers use computers well during their lessons to explain important points and illustrate explanations.
- Lessons do not always follow the plans; pupils often waste time completing activities which fill in time rather than help them learn.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	5 (12%)	10 (23%)	22 (51%)	4 (9%)	2 (5%)	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.

16. The quality of teaching and learning has declined significantly since the last inspection when it was good and said to be a strength of the school. Since then, there has been a complete change of teachers. Most classes have had a large number of teachers during their time at the school because of difficulties with recruitment in the past. The situation currently is better, with the majority of classes having had the same teacher all year. There are, however, weaknesses in the teaching which continue to have a negative impact on pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 1 to 4.

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 5 and 6. Despite this, pupils have so many gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding that they are unable to catch up and meet nationally expected standards in most subjects by the time they leave the school. Teachers in the top two classes know their pupils well. They know their strengths and weaknesses. They are able to plan lessons which interest the pupils and encourage them to do their best. They tell the pupils exactly what they expect them to learn. Pupils are therefore focused on the task in hand and are able to assess their own success at the end of the lesson. Good levels of challenge are apparent in the level of work set for the pupils. In a very effective Year 6 English lesson, for example, the teacher explained why it was useful to be able to read quickly through a text, picking out key information. Through careful questioning and use of well chosen examples, the pupils learned how to scan through advertisements to pick out important facts. They were enthusiastic and worked well in pairs to carry out the task.

18. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in the Foundation Stage. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory but teaching in the Reception class is good. Children in this class achieve well. This is because the teaching is well suited to their needs. Activities are challenging and help the children practise new skills so they are confident and secure. A handwriting activity, for instance, gave each child the chance to practise forming numbers using markers and whiteboards. Good support from the nursery nurse enabled the teacher to focus on those children who needed further practice and provide encouragement and advice. Routines are well established in this class and children feel safe and secure. They know what is expected of them and respond successfully.

Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery class but not as stimulating or challenging. There is a reasonable range of activities organised to ensure that the children are involved in a range of experiences. Many children in the nursery lack fluency and confidence in speaking. Children are not always engaged well enough in conversation by adults however to develop confidence and extend vocabulary.

19. Good support from teaching assistants makes a real difference to pupils' learning in many classes. Assistants have good levels of knowledge and expertise which they use well, mainly to support those pupils who have emotional or behavioural needs. They help the pupils focus on the lessons, listen to the teacher and form effective relationships with one another. In Reception and in Years 5 and 6 the support is very good and enables these pupils to take a full part in lessons. In other classes, assistants are not always directed well enough by teachers. Consequently, their support is sometimes ineffective in helping the pupils develop their skills and understanding, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

20. The school has worked successfully in recent years to re-establish a positive ethos geared towards learning and achievement. Many different strategies have been used but one of the most successful has been in encouraging staff to manage their pupils positively and sensitively. Most teachers do this well. It results in a warm environment where pupils' ideas and suggestions are valued and they are not afraid to make mistakes or ask for help if they need it. In nearly all lessons observed pupils' attitudes were positive and their behaviour was good. This helped them to achieve appropriately in some lessons even when the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory.

21. In many classes, teachers use their personal computers well to illustrate their teaching. Diagrams and text are projected on to a large screen and pupils focus on these images well. This helps them understand new concepts more easily.

22. In many lessons, even when the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, there is a lack of attention given to providing work at appropriate levels for pupils of different abilities. This limits the achievement of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and the brightest pupils in the class. Although assessment systems are in place for English and mathematics, the results of these assessments are not used to help teachers to plan appropriate work for their pupils. The school has been trying to establish target setting procedures so that pupils know what they have to do to reach the next level in English, mathematics and science. The oldest pupils know their targets but those in Years 1 to 4 are not so clear about them. The system is not yet having the desired effect of motivating and encouraging the pupils in all classes.

23. Pupils' work books, especially in Years 1 to 4 show only a very small amount of recorded work. This is not only the case in subjects like history, geography and religious education but also in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers often do not demand enough of their pupils. They are too easily satisfied with poorly presented brief notes or diagrams which are often inaccurate in punctuation and spelling. Weak marking limits pupils' achievements further. Only in a few cases do teachers mark pupils' work regularly, providing advice to the pupils on how to improve.

24. Lesson plans, while of good quality generally, are sometimes not used well enough by teachers. They sometimes ignore parts of the plans, preferring to set activities which will occupy the pupils and fill in time rather than moving them on in their learning. This was seen in a lesson in the computer suite, where pupils filled in time playing with a nursery rhyme program because they had finished their task quickly. The lesson plan which noted the next steps to be covered was ignored.

25. Teaching supports pupils with English as an additional language appropriately. Many teachers plan opportunities for speaking and listening at different points of the lesson. In good lessons, teachers use computers effectively to show pupils features of written language which have been projected and highlighted onto a wide screen. Additional support is provided by a Learning Mentor for pupils at an earlier stage of English language acquisition. These pupils are given focused English language support at an appropriate level.

The curriculum

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, with an appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and on personal, social and emotional development. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory at present but there are plans to improve this in the very near future. Resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad and balanced curriculum is planned for all stages, which complies with all statutory requirements.
- An appropriate two-year cycle of curriculum planning is in place to take account of the mixed-age classes and to avoid gaps or unplanned repetition in learning.
- The school offers a good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs, which pupils enjoy and which are well attended.
- The school has very good teaching assistants, including Learning Mentors, who give good support to pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- There are weaknesses in the accommodation which present considerable challenges for the school.

Commentary

26. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship. Good opportunities for personal, social and health education are provided, along with citizenship, drugs, and sex and relationship education. The curriculum is carefully planned on a two-year cycle to take account of mixed-age classes and to extend relevant links between subjects. For example Year 6 art work focused on drawing and painting the drama of the Blitz as part of their World War II studies in history.

27. Curriculum plans take account of a range of pupils' needs, through the effective deployment of teaching assistants and learning mentors. The school offers a good range of after-school clubs, many run by teachers and other members of staff. These are well attended and make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning and to their attitudes and commitment to school. The breakfast club is also well attended and provides good opportunities for social development. This year a school journey for Years 5 and 6 is planned for the first time to give pupils the experience of living and working together away from home and extend their positive attitudes to learning.

28. There are enough teaching staff to cover the needs of the curriculum. Some are not experienced enough, however, to take on key management roles. This has led to a lack of progress in for example, the development of English throughout the school. There is a strong team of teaching assistants and learning mentors who support pupil' learning well. They enable all pupils to take a full part in lessons. Support staff in the Foundation Stage do a good job but, in the nursery, adults do not engage the children in discussion often enough to extend their language skills.

29. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs are very well supported and take a full part in school life. Individual learning plans are in place for all the pupils on the special needs register. These vary in quality, ranging from some which provide very clear targets for pupils to reach to others where the targets are much too wide and very difficult to achieve.

30. The accommodation has several weaknesses which present considerable challenges for the school. The computer suite is very small and cannot accommodate a whole class successfully. Even when only half the class is in the suite, the shape makes it very difficult for teachers to present their lessons successfully. The library is unable to be used effectively because it is used throughout the day by Learning Mentors who work with small groups of pupils. The Reception class has no

dedicated outdoor play area. All these problems are in hand however, and a building programme during the forthcoming school holidays will improve the accommodation considerably.

31. Resources are satisfactory for most subjects. Although there are good computer facilities in classrooms, many of the computers in the suite are old and often break down. This impacts on the quality of teaching and learning and on pupils' achievement.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Pupils with significant emotional and behavioural needs are well supported and many are able to take a full part in school life. Support and advice for other pupils are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very well informed about pupils' circumstances and provide good individual support.
- Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils, including child protection, are good.
- Induction arrangements are good and help pupils settle in quickly.
- Thorough tracking of pupils highlights underachievement, however target setting and individual guidance is not sufficiently well established to help raise standards.

Commentary

32. The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. Staff are well informed about pupils' circumstances and very alert to risks to their well being. Pupils have very good access to adults in classrooms and at play. Learning support staff and learning mentors are calm, supportive and very effective at diffusing potential problems and minimising disruption to learning. Child protection procedures are good and staff are well briefed. Routines for dealing with first aid and accidents are well established and the school is safe, clean and well maintained with regular health and safety checks. Pupils feel supported and well cared for. Most want to do well at school.

33. Pupils are well supervised at breaks and lunchtimes. Parents expressed some concern about behaviour at lunchtimes, but during the inspection there was a high level of interaction between support staff and pupils and a variety of organised games and activities. As a result, pupils were well behaved and related to adults and one another well.

34. Pupils' views are listened to and valued. Individual pupils receive a good deal of one-to-one support from adults. The well planned personal, social and health education programme is effective in encouraging good relationships and care for one another.

35. The school provides a friendly and safe environment for the pupils. Incidents which may be of a racist nature are followed up carefully and are recorded when necessary. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is carefully monitored. The school is aware of higher numbers of these pupils starting in nursery and Reception classes and has plans to extend staff expertise in this area.

36. Induction arrangements are good. Nursery children are carefully supported with well established routines. Good individual arrangements are made for the significant number of older pupils who join during the year with appropriate emphasis on behaviour expectations and routines. Many of these pupils have had a negative experience in other schools and Northend goes out of its way to welcome them and make them feel at home. A high number are at risk of permanent exclusion and the school does well to support them and keep them at school.

37. Careful tracking of pupils' progress identifies those pupils who need additional targeted support. The oldest pupils know their targets and what they have to do to achieve them but younger pupils are not so aware. This hinders their motivation and achievement. Pupils have good access

to adults in classrooms. They can ask for advice or help if they need it. Good behaviour management and regular praise provides pupils with the confidence to succeed.

38. Good assessment systems in the Foundation Stage track children's learning carefully. Staff know the children very well and are able to provide the right sort of experiences to meet their needs.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. The school is working very hard to improve working relationships but few parents support their children's education effectively. Links with the community and other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have good daily access to staff which is helping to improve communication and relationships.
- The school provides a good range of information to parents to keep them informed about what is going on in school and how well their children are doing.
- Links with other schools and with the local community are developing and beginning to enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

39. Only a small number of parents returned the questionnaire or attended the meeting prior to the inspection. Those who did were happy with the school's work in virtually all areas. A few parents were concerned about supervision at lunchtime. Inspection evidence shows that levels of supervision are good and that pupils are well supported over the lunch hour.

40. Parents have good access to staff on a daily basis. An open door policy has been operating since the start of the school year and staff are welcoming and encouraging. Learning Mentors are available in the playground at the start of the school day, to encourage pupils to arrive punctually and to follow reasons for absence with parents. Although there is no parents' association, parents support the fundraising activities organised by the school, well. Parents also support their children by attending class assemblies. However, parental expectations regarding standards are low. Few parents actively support their children at home by helping them to practise their reading, for example. Those parents who do provide effective support are often from ethnic minority backgrounds. Their children often achieve more highly than their White British counterparts. Analysis of the high absence rate reveals that most absence is amongst children in younger classes, between nursery and Year 2. A significant number of parents are not encouraging regular attendance and a commitment to school.

41. The school provides a good range of information to parents about how well their children are learning, what is being covered each term and how to best support them. Information sessions encourage parents to support their children with literacy and numeracy. These sessions are not well attended however. Parents of children with special educational needs are invited to the annual progress reviews but again, these are not well attended. Annual reports are clearly written and mostly contain useful targets for improvement.

42. The school is working hard to engage parents in their children's learning. Relationships are positive and levels of communication good. There is still a long way to go, however, to encourage more parents to take an active role in their children's education. Their impact currently is unsatisfactory.

43. Links with the community are satisfactory and developing. Links with local churches, the community police liaison officer and other services are used well to support religious education and aspects of the personal development programme

44. There are effective links with other primary schools through regular sporting events. These help the pupils to develop sound social skills. Links with secondary schools are still developing and have limited impact on learning and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance is good. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clear vision for the future and shows a strong determination to raise standards. The leadership of other staff in key roles is mainly satisfactory. Management systems are sound and the school day runs smoothly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has been successful in re-establishing a positive ethos towards learning in the school. This follows a period of great disruption and turnover of staff.
- Governors carry out their responsibilities effectively and provide good support to the headteacher.
- There is a clear drive towards raising standards. This is seen in the school's improvement plan.
- Leadership and management of English are unsatisfactory.
- Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good.

Commentary

45. The school has faced many challenges over the past few years. Governors and parents confirm that following the last inspection, there was a period of great disruption during which there was a constant turnover of temporary staff for about three years. This affected every aspect of school life, from the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils to its relationships with parents.

46. Much has been achieved over the past two years. Despite the great difficulties in recruiting and retaining new staff, a stable team is now in place. Most classes have had the same teacher since last September. Only one teacher is on a temporary contract. The current position is due to the good leadership and management of the new headteacher who has worked hard to build a cohesive staff team. The unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection were confined to a small number of classes. The headteacher was aware of these problems, some of which were addressed by the end of the inspection. A clear improvement plan shows how other weaknesses are to be addressed. This provides a useful tool to direct the school's work in improving teaching and learning, and raising standards.

47. Standards have begun to rise this year. The headteacher and deputy are beginning to have an impact on provision in classes. The ethos for learning is now good. Again this is due to the effective leadership of the headteacher who has successfully encouraged pupils to respect adults and one another whilst taking a firm line with those who step out of line. The staff have worked together well to establish a supportive yet firm framework for behaviour and systems are now working well. Partnerships with parents are improving. Parents are happy with the school although very few take an active part in their children's education. Systems for the identification of pupils with special educational needs are better. Numbers on the register for special needs have fallen, enabling the school to target its resources more effectively. There are early signs of improvement, for example, in the way the school is supporting those pupils with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties.

48. Governance is good. Governors have a range of experience, some having previous educational backgrounds and some being very new to the governing body. These new governors are still developing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. A few individual governors are able to provide good support to the headteacher and the school. Forthcoming building work at the school has been planned and will be overseen by one governor who has first hand experience in this area. In this way, the school is able to ensure that it will get the best value for its money.

Governors have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They monitor its work successfully through committees and by regular school visits. Finances are monitored carefully by governors who receive regular information about spending. Financial systems are secure and ensure that the information governors receive is accurate. Prudent spending over the last few years means that the school can fund a major building improvement programme this summer.

49. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Effective work has been done to improve planning, assessment and the level of resources. The nursery and Reception teaching areas are situated well away from each other, which presents difficulties in sharing the limited outdoor facilities. There are clear plans in hand to extend outdoor facilities for children in the Reception class in the very near future.

50. The leadership and management of other aspects of the school's work are mostly satisfactory. Provision for the few pupils with English as an additional language is suitably managed. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed appropriately and some good work has been done in improving identification procedures. This is beginning to make a difference to pupils in Years 5 and 6, who are achieving well. Most subject leaders have a clear focus on improvement with the exception of English. The leadership and management of English are not effective because little is being done to address the weaknesses in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in Years 1 to 4. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 however, is good enough to overcome this lack of support. In these classes, teachers have developed their own strategies to help pupils improve their literacy skills.

51. Management systems are satisfactory. The school day runs smoothly as everyone understands their roles and responsibilities. This makes for a calm atmosphere in the school. The introduction of Learning Mentors last September is having a great impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, particularly those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and who find school difficult. Their work is beginning to influence many aspects of school life, including attendance and exclusion rates.

52. Performance management systems are in place so that the headteacher and governors have clear information about teachers' effectiveness. Informal appraisal systems are also in place for support staff which help them to develop their skills and understanding as well as providing opportunities to value their work. These systems are helping to make the staff team stronger and more committed to raising standards. Difficulties with supervision at lunchtimes have also been addressed successfully through the appointment of good quality support staff who work constructively with the pupils.

53. Some good work has begun in analysing the results of tests and assessments to see where pupils' knowledge and understanding can be improved. This has informed action plans for improvement. This is a fairly recent initiative however, which has not been in place long enough to really raise standards.

54. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly by the headteacher as well as by external agencies. Many of the weaknesses in teaching noted during the inspection had already been identified in recent months. The headteacher has taken action on these issues although the impact of this has yet to work through the school and address the weaknesses in particular classes.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	766,433
Total expenditure	765,838
Expenditure per pupil	2,596

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	41,245
Balance carried forward to the next	41,840

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is **satisfactory**.

55. The quality of provision is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Since then, the school has implemented better planning and assessment procedures and these are beginning to influence the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Reception. Resources for each area of learning are being gradually improved but the outdoor play area is still not adequate to offer appropriate physical challenge for children in either the nursery or Reception classes.

56. The Foundation Stage comprises two part-time nursery classes, a Reception class, and a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class. Children have at least two terms in Reception, with the oldest Reception children joining Year 1 in the mixed-age class. The curriculum in this class is carefully planned for each group of children and covers the recommended areas of learning for this stage of education appropriately. Staffing is adequate in the Reception classes but adults in the nursery do not do enough to stimulate children's curiosity and language skills by well-planned and purposeful intervention.

57. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for their age, particularly in language and personal and social aspects. Many do not communicate with adults or with their classmates often. By the time they enter Reception, children have gained in confidence but a large number still have poor language skills. In Reception, they make significant gains because of the good teaching they receive but many do not reach the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year because they start at such a low level.

58. Planning and assessment are good and are used well to provide a broad range of activities which meet the needs of children of different abilities. The planning system is based appropriately on the six areas of learning which make up the Foundation Stage curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is particularly good in Reception.
- Children form good relationships with adults.
- Children are given good opportunities to work in pairs and groups. They learn to make choices about what they want to do.
- Children learn good listening skills, along with courtesy and appropriate social skills in "circle time" and the daily snack time.
- There adults in the nursery do not give children enough support to maintain interest in some activities.

Commentary

59. Most children start school with very immature personal and social development. Provision in the nursery is satisfactory but it is good in Reception. Children develop their skills well while in Reception. Most children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year.

60. In the nursery, adults do not help children enough to maintain interest in the learning tasks or to initiate talk as they play alongside friends. This means that the children, some of whom are

only able to concentrate for short periods of time lose interest all together and do not develop ideas or follow activities to a natural conclusion. Interaction with the teacher is sometimes too formal and the children are not encouraged to speak at length to develop their confidence and vocabulary. Children learn to work together and to choose their own activities, such as writing or creating a story with models. They are expected to put away their toys, for example bicycles to numbered parking spots. Support staff work very hard to help children learn acceptable behaviour and to handle disagreements. For example, when children quarrelled about whose turn it was to ride a bicycle, the nursery nurse intervened sensitively, giving children a strategy to help them take turns through the sensible use of a sand-timer. The children were able to accept this arrangement and see that it was fair. At snack time, children are expected to take responsibility for giving out drinks and sharing fruit and show politeness and concern for others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of speaking and listening opportunities is planned in the Reception class.
- A good range of opportunities to practise reading and writing is planned from an early stage.

Commentary

61. Considering that many children start school with very limited communication skills, their achievement is satisfactory. Few reach the Early Learning Goals in this area of their learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall but is often good in Reception. Teachers plan a satisfactory range of opportunity for children to develop their speaking and listening skills, but their concentration is weak and they do not always persevere with tasks nor take the opportunity to talk with other children. There is not enough role play in the nursery to develop children's speaking and listening skills. When adults do talk with children, for example in art work, on a mini-beast hunt or around the water-tray, children are encouraged to evaluate their work, speculate on what might happen, or wonder at the marvels of the natural world around them. This helps their confidence as well as improving their vocabulary. Without this intervention children often remain silent or quickly lose interest and wander away from their tasks.

62. Children enjoy reading and are encouraged to browse through books and use pictures to retell stories. In Reception, children are learning the sounds that letters make and are encouraged to use them in their own writing. Some children in Reception write their names confidently and can supply simple captions for their pictures. A few children wrote a simple story to present to the rest of the school in assembly. The nursery and Reception teachers plan some good opportunities for children to practise writing independently, for example in designated writing areas or as they play in the Post Office. Such opportunities stimulate children to write from their imagination and help them come to understand that writing is an important way to communicate.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the Reception class.
- There are many practical activities to enable children to understand mathematical concepts.

Commentary

63. Children's achievement is satisfactory in the nursery and good in Reception. However, many will not reach the Early Learning Goals because they start at such a low level. Children in the Reception class develop a reasonable sense of number and shape because every opportunity is taken to develop learning in this aspect, including a good range of very practical and visual activities to help them understand mathematical concepts. For example, sorting different coloured teddy bears gives them good access to the mathematical idea of classification and number difference. They are able to state for example that "there are more red teddies than yellow". A good range of action songs and rhymes help them see how a total is affected by taking away one or two items from a group. This was well demonstrated in a Reception class assembly when children performed two such songs to their parents and the rest of the school.

64. Reception children are learning to recognise and draw numbers, and most can count up to ten and beyond with support. They are beginning to use mathematical vocabulary, for example to describe two-dimensional shapes, and a few can record addition and subtraction facts appropriately.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some good activities are planned to enable children to understand the phenomena of the natural world.

Commentary

65. Children make satisfactory achievement, but a significant number will not achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. This is because they begin school with very limited knowledge and experience. Activities are well planned to allow children to explore natural phenomena: how different materials sink and float, how a different breath changes the size of a bubble, how water cascades when poured from a height, how plants grow, and where mini-beasts live in their garden environment. Children show curiosity, particularly when an adult encourages them to discuss ideas and suggest reasons for particular actions. For example, children were surprised when a large di rolled over the surface of the water rather than sinking, as other objects had done. They pursued this by pressing the di to make it sink, and were very excited when it refused to do so. Only when prompted by an adult did they begin to pursue this unexpected occurrence by pushing it further into the water. They were very excited when the di refused to sink and talked about their findings with great excitement. Many opportunities are lost in the nursery however to encourage children to investigate and discuss their findings.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some good opportunities for children to work with small tools and equipment.
- The outside play area is not set up nor resourced well enough to offer activities which will provide enough physical challenge.

Commentary

66. Children begin school at very low levels and, despite satisfactory achievement, cannot make up enough ground to meet the early learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1. Fine movements, such as holding and using writing, painting and cutting equipment are well supported in the range of activities provided and the children develop sound skills in this aspect of physical

development. For example, in the nursery children worked with scissors and felt to produce the patchwork colours of Elmer the Elephant. In Reception, children produced the geometric design of a Mondrian painting with paper mosaics.

67. Children's control and co-ordination are hindered by the limitations of the equipment in the outdoor area. The nursery children enjoy daily outdoor sessions, but the opportunities provided to develop physical skills and control over their bodies are not good enough. For example, the thin circuit on which children ride bicycles results in some rather dangerous clashes and does not allow children to refine movement such as changing direction or avoiding obstacles. The climbing apparatus is very limited and does little to help children develop confidence in large movements like climbing, balancing, travelling along different circuits, or developing an awareness of space.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for using paint and other media to make pictures and designs.
- Teachers encourage children to enjoy songs and rhymes and music-making across all areas of learning.

Commentary

68. Teachers provide well for this area of learning and the children achieve well. However, starting from such a low base, many are still unlikely to reach the Early Learning Goals in creative development. Their art work in particular is immature.

69. Children have a good range of opportunities to draw and paint using a range of media. For example, in the nursery children created a collage for a colourful banner from different materials such as ribbons, sequins, glitter, and beads. They were inspired by the traditional fabrics and designs of clothes from countries like Pakistan, Kenya, and Mauritius and produced some attractive designs. In Reception, children looked at the geometric work of the artist Mondrian and produced similar work using paper mosaics, paint, and oil pastels. Children demonstrated careful observation and colour-matching. Children also have good opportunities to learn a wide range of songs and rhymes. Nursery children responded well to music as they used silk ribbons to circle, sway, and twist to the rhythm. In Reception, children prepared a class assembly to demonstrate what they had been learning in their topic about colour and the senses. They presented paintings, writing, songs and action rhymes, and while being a little overwhelmed by the size of the audience, were able to present different aspects of the work to the rest of the school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average in Years 2 and 6.
- Achievement in Years 5 and 6 is good considering the great disruption to pupils' previous education.
- The quality of teaching varies too much between classes and is unsatisfactory overall.
- Basic literacy skills are not taught well enough in Years 1 and 2.
- Leadership and management of the subject are ineffective.

Commentary

70. There has been a significant fall in standards since the last inspection. Standards in the 2003 tests in Year 2 were very low in reading and writing. Too few pupils achieved the nationally approved standard for seven-year-olds. Standards in Year 6 were similarly low in the 2003 tests. Inspection findings confirm that standards in Year 6 are slightly higher this year, although they remain well below average. The rise is due to better teaching in Years 5 and 6.

71. The school has placed a high emphasis on raising standards and has focused school development on this key task. Assessment data are meticulously collected to help the school check achievement and set targets for individuals and groups. This valuable information is not being used well enough, however, to help teachers plan work at appropriate levels to meet the different needs of children in their classes, especially in Years 1 to 4.

72. The school has recently allocated more time for speaking and listening activities to raise pupils' confidence and help them bring more clarity to their writing. Time has also been allocated to extended writing so that pupils can apply their newly acquired skills outside the literacy hour. Pupils do not always transfer these literacy skills to other subjects in the curriculum, however, and many teachers have low expectations for handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar in pupils' books.

73. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. While work in books and in lessons indicates that pupils are covering most of the National Curriculum satisfactorily, the level of work does not always match the abilities of different pupils. This is because they often work on the same tasks. Higher attaining pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently in writing. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs manage to complete their work only with a great deal of support from assistants in the class. The work is not designed closely enough to meet their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language are given extra time with a Learning Mentor to focus on English language work. When receiving that support, they achieve appropriately.

74. In Year 2, only about half the pupils can read fluently and accurately. In Year 6, less than two thirds of the pupils read at an appropriate level for their age. Many pupils do not have a secure enough knowledge of letter sounds to be able to read new words.

75. In writing, standards in Year 2 are well below average. Work in books is poorly presented, with weak spelling, punctuation, and handwriting. Higher attaining pupils are still not punctuating sentences appropriately or spelling even high frequency words with confidence. Current standards in writing in Year 6 are also well below average. Most pupils are unable to construct complex sentences with any confidence nor use well punctuated clauses to add interest to their writing.

76. Pupils' achievement in literacy is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4 because of the inconsistency in teaching and low expectations exhibited in pupils' books. In Years 5 and 6 pupils

are achieving well in reading and writing, though standards are still lower than expected for eleven-year-olds.

77. The quality of teaching varies considerably across the school but it is unsatisfactory overall. Work in books shows teachers' low expectation. This is not the case however in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is good and helps pupils achieve well in both year groups. Teachers' planning is based on the National Literacy Strategy's teaching framework, but approaches are not fully exploited to ensure good learning and particularly to boost the low attainment in each year group. Computers are used well in some classes to support learning. All teachers have laptop computers, and some use them to project data and scan texts onto a large screen. Such work allows pupils to look in detail at samples of writing to help them understand grammatical features, for example. Some teachers process pupils' ideas as they emerge from discussion, which allows them to see how well their ideas are valued but also use them to review the lesson's learning objectives. For example, in Year 6 pupils examined advertising material to see how companies persuade potential customers to buy their products. The teacher wrote up their ideas and pupils used these data to write up their own adverts in conventional and effective ways.

78. Teachers' marking is poor and does not give any real guidance on how pupils might improve nor acknowledge individual progress. A notable exception to this was found in Year 6, where the teacher achieves a good dialogue with her pupils through marking. For example, one pupil's misspelling was pointed out in one piece of work and its correct form was commended in a later exercise. Overall, however, teachers' expectations in spelling, punctuation, grammar and general appearance of pupils' work are far too low and, as a consequence, many pupils do not display pride in their work or care in its construction.

79. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The literacy action plan is not meeting its targets nor focusing precisely enough on what teachers must do to improve provision in classes. There are few strategies in place to address pupils' weaknesses in literacy.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

80. Apart from in Year 6, pupils' work in books shows very limited use of literacy in other subjects. Much work in religious education, science, history and geography is covered orally. This means that pupils in Years 1 to 5 do not have the chance to practise the skills they have learned during their literacy lessons.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' classroom management is good and as a result pupils behave well. They enjoy their mathematics lessons.
- Learning support assistants help pupils with special educational needs to take part in lessons.
- Teachers do not always give pupils work which is matched well enough to their abilities.
- Teachers do not use marking effectively to show pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Commentary

81. Standards in numeracy and all areas of mathematics are well below average for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in the national tests have fallen since the last inspection. This year, however, there is likely to be some improvement in standards gained in the tests because of better quality teaching in Years 5 and 6. Standards in Year 2 also look likely to improve this year.

82. Pupils' achievement, including that of pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs, is unsatisfactory. Pupils' learning has been disrupted considerably in the past few years and they have not gained a good enough grounding in basic mathematical skills. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls although pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds often do better because they work harder in lessons and receive good support and encouragement from their parents.

83. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 5 and 6 however, teaching and learning are good. Pupils in these classes achieve well but are unable to make up for weak teaching and provision in previous years.

84. Pupils generally try hard with their work. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils who are keen to learn. Learning support assistants are deployed well to support pupils with special educational needs. In particular they support the emotional development of such pupils and help them take part in lessons. Sometimes, however, the work set is too difficult for these pupils and not pitched at the right level to move them on in their understanding.

85. Some good teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6. Teachers are enthusiastic about mathematics and pass this on to their pupils. Lessons proceed at a good pace which keeps pupils interested and motivates them to work hard. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils are fully engaged through effective questioning and appropriate activities.

86. In Years 1 to 4, teachers often expect too little of their pupils in terms of the amount and the quality of their work. Pupils do only enough to get by. Some teachers do not mark pupils work regularly enough. They do not use marking to tell the pupils how well they are doing or to indicate what they need to learn next.

87. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. There is a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning and this is beginning to show in the better standards this year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

88. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematics in other subjects. Pupils learn how mathematics can help them take measurements in their science experiments and collect data in their geography work.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve well in science but achievement in other year groups is unsatisfactory.
- Learning support assistants help pupils with special educational needs take an active part in lessons.

Commentary

89. Standards in science are well below average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall. National test results in Year 6 and the results of teachers' assessments in Year 2 in 2003 were in the lowest five per cent of schools in the country. Standards have fallen considerably since the last inspection when they were average in Years 2 and 6. They have been low for the past few years. The school has focused on improving provision in literacy and numeracy, and science has been neglected until recently. This has resulted in considerable gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding.

90. During the inspection teaching was satisfactory and there was some good teaching in Years 5 and 6. However, work in pupils' books shows a limited amount of work being recorded in Years 1 to 4.

91. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are motivated and excited about their science lessons. This is because teachers plan their lessons well, thinking carefully about what they want pupils to learn. They design the activities to interest their pupils and this results in high levels of concentration. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers and assistants. Teachers ask questions which encourage the pupils to think carefully about what they are doing. They insist that they respond using the new vocabulary they have learned. For example in a good lesson in Year 6, the pupils dissected a flower. After a clear introduction by the teacher, they all set to work, some helped by teaching assistants, to cut the flower and stem so they could see and identify its different parts. They finished by drawing a carefully labelled diagram. This lesson was effective in consolidating pupils' knowledge but also in extending their vocabulary. Expectations were high. The teacher and assistants encouraged those who found the task difficult so they were able to play a full part in the lesson.

92. In some other classes teachers do not take account of the different needs of their pupils. The brightest pupils are not challenged because all pupils complete the same activities. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs sometimes find the work too difficult and therefore make few gains in their knowledge and understanding.

93. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Some good work has begun in analysing the results of tests and assessments to find out where pupils' knowledge and understanding is weak. Lessons in Years 5 and 6 have been adapted this year to take account of this information. This is contributing to the rise in standards this year.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are using computers well in class to help illustrate their lessons.
- Teachers have secure knowledge and are able to show pupils how to use information and communication technology to help their work in different subjects.
- The information and communication technology suite is cramped and makes teaching difficult.
- Many computers in the suite are old and often break down.

Commentary

94. Standards in information and communication technology are below average in Years 2 and 6. This represents a fall in standards since the last inspection when standards were average. Despite this, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, considering their low levels of knowledge and skill when they first start school, and the difficulties with staff turnover in recent years. Pupils receive at least two lessons a week in information and communication technology, the computers in the suite are old and in poor condition. They keep breaking down and this makes it difficult for teachers to organise and present good quality lessons.

95. The suite itself does not allow for well organised and focused teaching. There is not enough space for a full class and even when teachers only take half a class, they cannot depend on all the computers working effectively.

96. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers have a good grasp of the subject. Lesson plans make it clear what the pupils are expected to learn.

97. In most lessons, teachers maintain good levels of discipline. This is no mean feat, considering the limitations of the suite. They achieve this by making their lessons interesting and enjoyable for the pupils. Pupils look forward to their lessons, working well together and showing great satisfaction when they achieve their goal. In a good lesson in a Year 5/6 class, the pupils were delighted when they learned how to use a simple search engine to find out information about the history and science topics they had been studying in class.

98. Many teachers have good individual skills in using information and communication technology in their classrooms as an aid to teaching. They all have laptop computers which they use to prepare and present their lessons. Diagrams and examples are projected on to a large screen so that pupils can see them easily and can understand what the teacher is talking about. This practice provides pupils with good examples of how information and communication technology can help them in a range of subjects.

99. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Teachers are well supported and feel able to ask for advice if necessary. All aspects of the curriculum are covered and there are plans to introduce a form of simple assessment to help teachers provide more successfully for pupils at different levels of attainment. There are also plans for the accommodation to be extended during the forthcoming summer holidays to provide more extensive facilities for pupils. Despite the limitations of the suite and its resources, it provides a popular venue for pupils when they attend lunchtime clubs. These are led by teaching and support staff and enable those pupils who do not have access to a computer at home, to practise their skills and increase their knowledge.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

100. Information and communication technology is used appropriately in other subjects, both in class lessons in the suite and in lessons in other subjects in classrooms.

HUMANITIES

101. **History and geography** lessons were sampled and pupils' books examined. Due to the small number of lessons seen, it was not possible to make an overall judgement about provision. The two-year programme of topics ensures that pupils cover all the necessary elements of the subjects. Medium term planning outlines clearly how topics are developed appropriately over time. Pupils' history and geography work on display is satisfactory. However, there are limited examples of pupils' work in books. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills through history and geography.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Medium term planning clearly outlines how topics will be developed over each term and is a useful support for teachers.
- Although religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus some religions other than Christianity are not studied in sufficient depth to effectively develop pupils' knowledge and understanding

Commentary

102. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory. Pupils are currently covering the necessary elements of the locally agreed syllabus although there are some gaps in their knowledge, suggesting that coverage has been superficial in the past.

103. Teaching is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their lessons particularly when they are practical. They respond well in lessons and work hard. Teachers' planning is clear and outlines what pupils will be taught in each lesson. This is shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson so that pupils know exactly what they will learn.

104. Teachers do not always involve pupils fully by asking them to contribute their ideas and experiences. They sometimes expect too little from the pupils and this limits the quality of the work. Teachers use a range of strategies in the teaching of religious education including drama and discussion. This supports the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills but opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their writing skills through religious education.

105. There is a good range of teaching materials, including posters and artefacts to support work in religious education.

106. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. Some monitoring procedures are in place, such as the review of teachers' planning, but there is not yet a clear enough focus on raising standards.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

107. Due to the very small number of lessons observed in these subjects an overall judgement about provision was unable to be made. No lessons were seen in **art and design** or **design and technology**. Curriculum documentation and sketchbooks were scrutinised and indicate that these subjects are satisfactorily planned across the school. Art work on the walls however, shows immature development of skills, particularly in Years 3 to 6. There is little evidence of design and technology projects on display.

108. Only one lesson in **music** was seen. A scheme of work is in place which provides reasonable advice for teachers on how to present their lessons. Pupils sing well. They enjoy singing a range of songs in assembly. Most know the words off by heart and sing tunefully and with good expression. There are two choirs, one for younger and one for older pupils. These provide valuable experiences for pupils to see how working together can produce a successful result.

109. Only one lesson in Year 4/5 was seen in **physical education**. Pupils enjoyed this lesson and behaved well. They achieved well showing great satisfaction when they learned to hit a small ball with a bat. Scrutiny of plans show that all the aspects of physical education are covered throughout the year. Talented pupils are given appropriate opportunities through after-school clubs to develop their games skills. Swimming lessons are provided for Year 6 pupils but less than half achieve the required standard for their age by the time they leave the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

110. Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**. This has been a high priority for the school in recent years. Pupils receive a range of good opportunities to develop their understanding through science and religious education lessons. The strength in the provision is in the work that adults, including teachers, support assistants and learning mentors do with individuals and small groups of pupils. Many instances were seen during the inspection of careful and sensitive intervention and discussion with pupils to encourage them to reflect upon their actions and their effect upon others. This good support and the positive examples set by adults, results in a positive ethos in the school and good attitudes from the pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	5
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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	4
The governance of the school	3
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).