

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARGARET'S INFANT SCHOOL

Rainham

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 118464

Headteacher: Mrs N Hanman

Lead inspector: Mr R Edwardson

Dates of inspection: 5th – 7th July 2004

Inspection number: 264918

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant School and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

Number on roll: 333

School address: Orchard Street
Rainham
Gillingham
Kent

Postcode: ME8 9HE

Telephone number: 01634 231327

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. R Fowler

Date of previous inspection: September 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Margaret's Infant School and Nursery are situated close to the centre of Rainham near the Medway town of Gillingham. It is housed on the same site as the junior school. There are 332 pupils on roll aged from 3 to 7 years, including 52 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis. When children start school, their attainment varies from one year to another. Generally it is average for their age. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to the average. Currently, 16.5 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, mainly for specific learning difficulties. There is a very small number of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Although the number of pupils who join and leave the school is, overall, broadly similar to the national average, this varies from year to year. Virtually all pupils are of white British origin and three pupils have English as an additional language.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1546	Mr Roger Edwardson	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology SEN EAL
9837	Mr. Roy Walsh	Lay inspector	
8655	Mrs Eileen Leech	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education Art and design Design and technology
30243	Mrs Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Foundation stage English History Geography Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that provides a good quality of education. It is well led by the headteacher and key staff. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Teaching is very good in the nursery and it is good throughout the rest of the school.
- The ethos of the school is very good and pupils are very well cared for.
- The headteacher has high aspirations and a clear vision for the school.
- The school effectively promotes and develops pupils' personal and social skills.
- Teachers manage pupils well in lessons so they behave very well.
- Teachers do not consistently plan opportunities to challenge pupils of different abilities.
- The use of day-to-day assessment of pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and marking is inconsistent.
- The management and monitoring role of subject leaders is underdeveloped.

School improvement has been satisfactory since the last inspection. The school has responded constructively to the issues raised in the last report and standards in design and technology and art have significantly improved. The good teaching seen at the last inspection has been maintained. Teaching is very good in nursery and is good in Reception, Years 1 and 2. The curriculum for science has been improved by introducing a whole school scheme and by providing support for teachers. Standards have not risen significantly in national tests, but they have improved. More pupils now achieve the higher levels in mathematics. The school has invested heavily in ICT and standards are improving. However, planning for the use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is at an early stage.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
reading	B	B	C	C
writing	C	C	C	D
mathematics	C	B	C	C

Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

Pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the school. In nursery children achieve very well. They arrive in nursery at a low starting point and a significant number of children achieve the standards expected by the end of reception in most areas of learning. They achieve very well in their personal and social development to attain the levels higher than expected for their age. Children's communication, language and literacy skills and mathematical development are in line with the standard expected at the end of reception; effective teaching develops children's basic skills in reading well. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is in line with the expected level for their age by the end of the reception year. In their creative development, children achieve well to attain the expected levels for their age. They make good progress in their physical development. Results in the 2003 national tests at the end of Year 2 were not significantly different from the previous year and standards are satisfactory overall. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are generally achieving satisfactorily in all subjects except in writing where they achieve less well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. Standards in ICT, science and religious education are in line with expectations in Years 1 and 2. Standards in art are above expectations and in design and technology are well above expectations. Children enjoy their physical education lessons and achieve well. Insufficient evidence was available to make judgments on standards in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral social and cultural development are good. This is a direct consequence of the good provision made by the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well. Attendance is satisfactory. Too many parents take holidays within term times and therefore too many pupils are absent from school at important times. Relationships between pupils are very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is very good in the nursery and is good overall in the rest of the school. There are consistent strengths in all classes and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. In nursery and reception, teachers plan a very good range of activities that develop children's ability to work very effectively on their own and with others. Teaching is very good in nursery and good in reception where the teacher focuses on developing children's basic personal, literacy and numeracy skills so children make good progress and achieve well. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good overall. In all classes, teachers expect pupils to behave well and to do their best. As a result pupils try very hard, are fully involved in their work and want to succeed. Support staff are used very effectively by teachers and make a very significant contribution to the progress pupils make, particularly those with special educational needs. Teachers teach basic skills well in English and mathematics.

In some lessons, more able pupils are not fully challenged by individual tasks or by teachers questioning and ICT is not used sufficiently. Assessment methods are good in Foundation Stage and in English and pupil performance data are used well to set pupils' targets in Year 2. However the overall use of day-to-day assessment of pupils' achievements is unsatisfactory and the marking of pupils' work is not consistently developed across the school.

The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and is now good. It is very good in nursery. The school has made good provision for the enrichment of the curriculum. The school has very good procedures for pupils' care and welfare and has established good links with the parents and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is a good role model for staff and pupils. Her clear vision for the school is based on effective evaluation of its performance. The headteacher is well supported by the new deputy head and senior managers and together they have created a positive ethos based on strong teamwork. Governance of the school is good. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school clearly; they are beginning to develop effective systems to monitor the impact of developments. All statutory requirements are met. The school improvement plan includes a rolling programme for all subject leaders to evaluate standards, teaching and learning in their subjects. This is at an early stage and subject leaders do not yet have a clear view of standards, achievement or the strengths and weaknesses in their areas.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very high opinion of the school and its work. They hold the headteacher and deputy headteacher in very high regard, consider the teaching to be good and value the support it provides for their children. Pupils feel very positively about their school and enjoy taking part in lessons and activities.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

In order to improve further the school should:

- Use the outcomes of day-to-day assessment to inform lesson planning and to set appropriately challenging targets for all pupils.
- Develop greater consistency in the marking of pupils' work so that pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Continue to develop the monitoring role of subject leaders and use the outcomes of self-evaluation to inform subject planning and delivery.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. Children make good progress through nursery and reception from a low starting point when they begin in nursery. Pupils continue to make the progress expected in Year 1 and 2. Standards are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the nursery and the reception classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Standards in design and technology are well above average and standards in art are above average.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills.
- The proportion of pupils who attain the expected standards in reading, mathematics and English is in line with the national average by the end of Year 2.
- Standards in writing are below national expectations.
- Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are improving and most pupils are reaching the levels expected for their age.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School Results	National Results
Reading	15.7 (16.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	14.5 (14.8)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.4 (17.1)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 90 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In recent years, the school's results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been improving at a similar rate to the national trend. Standards have been consistently in line with the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing when compared to all schools and to similar schools. In 2003 this pattern continued. The current year group is achieving well in English and standards are above those expected. However, overall those pupils who have the capability, attain levels that are in line with their ability and achieve satisfactorily. The school does have to contend with two very significant factors that can affect the pace of pupils' learning.

2. Firstly, children start in the nursery with skills and knowledge below that which is typical in the key areas of personal and social development, communication, language, literacy and mathematics. The second factor is that the proportion of pupils with special educational needs does vary from year to year and was high in 2003. These factors combine to create more

challenging circumstances for the school. Despite this, the school's results in National Curriculum tests were in line with the national average in 2003.

3. In the nursery and reception classes, children achieve very well due to skilled teaching that focuses on developing their basic skills. In the nursery, this is particularly the case with their spoken language development and with their personal and social skills, in which they achieve very well. This solid base is built on effectively in reception by the staff who provide a very broad range of activities that encourage some independence, imaginative language development and social skills. Children with special educational needs and those of average ability benefit particularly from this approach and make rapid progress. The more able children who are more capable make good progress. As a result, by the end of the reception year, children attain above the levels expected in their personal and social development. The good start children get in the nursery in language development is built on effectively in the reception class. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of reception, effective teaching of early reading skills develops children's basic literacy skills well. A similar emphasis is placed on developing children's basic number skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. In these areas, children achieve well, and the standards by the end of the reception year are in line with the expected levels for their age. In their creative development, children achieve well to attain the expected levels for their age. Children make good progress in their physical development.

4. Most pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through Years 1 and 2 although more able pupils are not always challenged effectively in some subjects. Pupils with special needs achieve well. They are given good support from their teachers and teaching assistants, and work is planned well to meet their learning needs.

5. The standard of work seen in the present Year 2 is consistent with average results in the national tests. Standards in Year 2 are in line with national averages in speaking, reading, and mathematics but are below in writing. Standards in speaking are above those expected, and pupils make good progress in developing their listening skills. They are happy to talk following good modeling by adults. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and they self-correct when they make a mistake. In mathematics most pupils attain satisfactory standards in number and measurement.

6. Standards in design and technology and art and design have improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils are offered a wide range of activities and they achieve well. The work displayed around the school is of a high standard and demonstrates the high priority the school has placed on developing these subjects.

7. In most other subjects standards are generally in line with those expected. In science, pupils develop secure knowledge of the topics they study, but many do not clearly understand how to use their knowledge to plan and conduct investigations. In ICT, the school has recently had a new computer suite installed, but pupils have not had the chance to really improve their ICT capability. Although they know how to use a range of programs and skills, too few pupils are confident enough to use their knowledge to present their work or to process information on their own. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory. In physical education, pupils achieve well and enjoy their lessons; they generally attain standards broadly in line with expectations.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are **very good** and they display **very good** behaviour both in and outside lessons. Pupils' spiritual development is very good and their moral, social, and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy being at school.
- The behaviour of pupils is very good.
- Pupils' spiritual values are very well developed.
- Relationships across the school are very good.
- Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are underdeveloped.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.2
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.3
National data	0.4

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

8. The rate of pupils' attendance was below the national average in the school year 2002/2003, as shown in the table above, which was mainly caused by parents taking their children on holidays during term time. The figures for the current year show an improvement and are now close to the national average. The latest figures, together with the information available about punctuality are evidence of the success of the school's effectiveness to improve attendance. There have been no exclusions over the past few years as the school has been determined to manage any problems and ensure the continuity of learning for all its pupils.

9. All pupils display very positive attitudes to school and learning. The majority of pupils say they enjoy school and find the work they are set interesting. Pupils take an active part in classroom discussions and co-operate well when working in small groups, they share help and resources and pupils of all abilities are fully integrated into the school community. From the earliest age pupils learn to listen and join in discussions about their learning targets. Break times are positive social occasions, where friendships and confidence are developed, with older children frequently looking after younger ones.

10. Behaviour throughout the school is very good because staff use well thought out and consistent strategies to reward good work and conduct. Shield assemblies take place every week when certificates and shields are presented to pupils who have achieved well both in academic and personal terms. Their photographs are taken for the 'Good News' board and the Chair of Governors finds time to talk with them as a group. These awards are greatly valued by the pupils who understand that hard work and good behaviour are fundamental to good learning. Some bullying has occurred in the school but pupils and parents reported that staff had dealt with any incidents quickly and effectively.

11. Pupils have developed very good and trusting relationships with staff and this allows them to feel safe and well cared for. Relationships between pupils are also very good. Pupils get on well with each other and there is a true community spirit about the school. Older pupils are given some responsibilities as duty monitors but not enough opportunities are provided to develop responsibility and independence.

12. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils including those children in the nursery are taught the difference between right and wrong, and to take responsibility for their own actions. An effective system of rewards and sanctions is consistently applied in the school and this supports pupils as they learn to make decisions that are socially and morally acceptable to all. The spiritual dimension is promoted through assemblies, religious education lessons, and particularly well in displays and artefacts around the school. It is also promoted in the wider curriculum for instance in the excitement displayed by pupils when investigating the life cycle of the butterfly. There are planned moments for pupils to reflect on their work at the end of lessons and this enhances and celebrates achievement. Pupils develop a good appreciation of their own and other cultures through visitors, musical events, art activities and visits to places of cultural interest. They can describe their experiences in detail, reflecting most appropriately on the outcomes. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' cultural development was identified as an area for improvement.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good and the curriculum is inclusive and enriched through very good partnerships with parents, other schools and the community

Teaching and learning

The good teaching seen at the time of the last inspection has been maintained and this enables pupils to learn effectively. The procedures for day-to-day assessment and the marking of pupils' work are not consistently developed across the school and are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the nursery is never less than good and is often very good.
- Teachers plan literacy and numeracy lessons well.
- The identification of challenging targets for improvement is not secure across all subjects.
- The additional support provided by teaching assistants is very effective in enhancing the learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs
- Day to day assessment and marking of pupils' work are not consistently used to inform planning, particularly in science, mathematics and the foundation subjects.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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[0](0%)	7 (18%)	21 (54%)	11 (28%)	0	0	0
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The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. The proportion of very good and good teaching has increased. At the last inspection 94% of teaching was satisfactory or better. At this inspection 72% of the lessons were good or very good and no lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. In the Foundation Stage all lessons observed were either good or very good.

14. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is at least good. Activities are well planned so pupils achieve well in all the areas of learning. Lessons are well organised and appropriately paced. In the nursery, the opening parts of lessons are very good and the main activities link well to the start. In reception classes, teaching is consistently good. Children are encouraged to contribute their ideas in discussions and this promotes their enthusiasm for learning well. Activities are well matched to initial discussions and generally provide opportunities for children of different abilities to extend their understanding. The teachers use targets well to identify what children will learn and how they are getting on.

15. In Year 1 and Year 2 the aims of literacy and numeracy lessons are shared effectively with pupils at the start of lessons and pupils know what they are going to learn. The clear structure ensures that these lessons are well organised and well paced. Questions are used well to draw pupils into the lessons and teachers motivate and engage pupils well. Lessons are very orderly and teachers and support staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. In all classes, teachers are very consistent in their insistence on pupils listening to each other and conforming to the classroom rules. As a result, pupils behave very well in lessons.

16. In English and mathematics targets for improvement are discussed with pupils each term and recorded in their exercise books. This practice is not fully established across the school. The targets are not regularly reviewed in lessons and therefore do not always challenge all pupils sufficiently, in particular those pupils who are more able.

17. Teaching assistants play an important part in lessons and teachers use their skills effectively to work with individuals and groups. Relationships between all staff and pupils are very good so pupils respond very well to encouragement and prompting. When they are working with groups staff achieve a good balance between helping pupils and prompting them whilst encouraging them to come up with an answer for themselves. This has a particularly positive impact on the progress that pupils with special educational needs make.

18. Assessment procedures in the Foundation Stage and in English are good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the subject leaders use this information to identify whole school areas for improvement. In other subjects the school uses the procedures recommended in the national subject guidance to evaluate how pupils are progressing but the day-to-day assessment of pupils' work does not sufficiently impact on lesson planning. Teachers place too much reliance on pupils producing work at their own level with support rather than varying the tasks provided for them. Marking does not always explain to pupils how they can improve their work.

The curriculum

How well does the curriculum meet the needs of the pupils?

The curriculum is good, meets statutory requirements and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to extend aspects of their learning in activities outside the school day. The quality and range resources are good. The quality of the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is good.
- The provision for design and technology is very good.
- Pupils' personal and social development is supported effectively although there are too few opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility and to show initiative.
- There is good provision for curriculum enrichment.
- There is no direct access to an outside play area for pupils in the reception class.

Commentary

19. The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of all of the pupils. The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very well organised and the children receive a good introduction to literacy and numeracy skills in the nursery and in the reception classes. There are good links between the reception classes and Year 1 and this ensures a continuity of the good quality of learning experiences for the children. In Years 1 and 2 the national literacy and numeracy strategies have introduced a structure to English and mathematics' lessons that supports pupils' learning. Provision in art and design and design and technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. All subject leaders work hard to co-ordinate and resource their subject. Their role in monitoring and evaluating the overall effectiveness of subject provision is however not yet well developed.

20. The school is committed to inclusion and to ensuring that all pupils have access to the full curriculum. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and the range of support has been carefully considered. Pupils are supported very well by their teaching assistants who work hard to help them access the tasks planned by the class teachers. Pupils therefore achieve the targets they have been set and they make good progress.

21. The school has a good programme for pupils' personal and social development. The planned topics relate well to their needs and there are good links developing with other subjects. Aspects of health education are introduced in science, design and technology and physical education and pupils know the value of healthy food and exercise. There are opportunities in all subjects for pupils to work together and they discuss and evaluate their work sensibly with a talking partner. Pupils have some opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school although these are limited.

22. The school has made good provision for the enrichment of the curriculum and this includes a residential experience for the Year 2. They visit a venture park and enjoy the experiences of abseiling and climbing. Outside visitors are used well to support both the art and the music curriculum. These visits contribute to the good quality experiences pupils have during the school day and provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning. Links with the junior school ensure a smooth and effective transition for pupils when they leave St Margaret's.

23. The school has a good range of resources to support learning and pupils achieve well in all subjects. Staff are appropriately qualified to teach the national curriculum and religious education to pupils of this age. The quality of the accommodation overall is unsatisfactory because there are insufficient opportunities for the five-year-old pupils to play outside although staff do their best with the facilities available. Some of the classrooms are too small to bring the pupils together effectively as a class group and this restricts their learning.

Care, guidance and support

The standard of pastoral care provided by the school is very good. Provision for support and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. The views of pupils are valued and the levels of trust and respect between pupils and staff are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a high level of care within a secure environment, which encourages pupils to do their best.
- Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils.
- Effective arrangements are in place for the induction of pupils.
- Pupils' personal development is supported well.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is not well developed

Commentary

24. There is a very good awareness of the needs of vulnerable pupils and the arrangements for child protection and health and safety are good. Child protection is co-ordinated by experienced and well-trained personnel and recent staff update training has been completed. Health and safety practice is rigorous and risk assessments, incidents and consequent actions are recorded. Pupils have been provided with fire, road and rail safety awareness training by outside agencies. Teachers stress safe ways of working in subjects such as physical education and food technology. There is good provision for first aid and all staff have undergone some training in this area. The school is cleaned and maintained to a high standard. Parents value and appreciate the very good care their children receive at St Margaret's Infants school.

25. Pupils report they have very good relationships with their class teachers and teaching assistants. They find it easy to discuss any problems with them. From the nursery onwards, pupils are keen to get involved with the life of the school. They gladly offer assistance and are very willing helpers in carrying out tasks for the benefit of the school, although more opportunities could be provided to older children. Pupils are consulted on their views of the school by questionnaires and informal interviews with teachers and governors and pupils realise their views are valued by the school. The monitoring of personal development is based on the very good personal knowledge the teachers and teaching assistants have on individual pupils. Pupils' progress is effectively reported in annual reports to parents. The monitoring of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is underdeveloped. This does not always inform teacher planning with the result that some pupils' work lacks challenge.

26. Induction arrangements for new pupils are comprehensive. Young children enter the school undertaking 'taster' and part time sessions. This introduces them gradually to other pupils and a school routine, which allows them time to assimilate all the changes to their life at

this important stage. A weekend residential adventure activity further extends the learning horizons of Year 2 pupils and assists in building confidence and independence.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's has a **very good** partnership with parents and the community, and this enhances pupils' learning. Links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents strongly support all aspects of the school's work.
- Parents receive good information about their children's progress and achievements.
- Positive action has been taken to develop close links with the local community.
- There are well-developed links with other schools.

Commentary

27. The school effectively uses questionnaires, formal evenings and informal discussions, to canvass parents' views. The headteacher analyses the results of these consultations and responds to any concerns. Parents have very positive views of the school, although a very small number of questionnaires raised concerns about bullying. This was not reflected by inspection evidence, which indicated that when bullying occurred staff dealt with it quickly and effectively. Parents of pupils with special educational need have very positive views regarding the way the school has helped their children's learning. They are consulted on their children's individual education plan; they would welcome more opportunities to talk to SEN staff at parents' evenings.

28. The quality of information for parents is very good and encourages them to support their children's learning. Parents particularly liked the recent addition to the termly curriculum newsletters of hints and tips on helping their children learn at home. Home-school contact books further encourage parents to participate in the teaching and learning process. Annual reports on pupils' progress have improved since the last inspection. They clearly show what progress has been made against each curriculum topic, contain specific targets for future improvement and provide parents with a good summary of their children's achievements. The recently developed school website is both easy to use and contains extremely informative sections on general school information.

29. A significant number of parents help in school listening to readers, helping in lessons, and helping to supervise outside visits. This assistance is very much appreciated by the school and contributes to the achievement that the children make. Following a successful pilot last year the school is organising a second 'Take your dad to school day' for the nursery children. This activity encourages dads to become more involved with their children's education. The Home School Association provides very good support for the school by organising social and fund raising events, which are used to provide extra funds for each year group including the nursery.

30. There are very good links with the local community. The vicar of the parish church and other church and community leaders frequently attend and lead assemblies. There are productive social and curricular links with the co-located junior school, which ensures that the transition to junior education is smooth. The school actively promotes the use of its facilities in out of school hours to community groups, like the Brownies. The school also benefits from

community help from volunteers who regularly work in school. The local Territorial Army section, with the help of parents and staff, built an adventure playground for the school, which is greatly appreciated by the children. Overall, the partnership with parents as well as the wider community and other schools has improved since the previous inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is well led and managed. Governance of the school is good. The headteacher's leadership of the school is good and she is well supported by senior managers.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school and has a clear vision for its future based on good self-evaluation procedures.
- The deputy headteacher has made a significant impact in the school in a very short time.
- The leadership now makes good use of assessment data to raise standards across the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics. This approach is not so well established in other subjects.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development.
- Governors are supportive of the school and are developing effective procedures for holding the school to account

Commentary

31. The headteacher is a good role model for the whole school. She has good relationships with the staff and pupils. She gives strong leadership focused on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. The school has recently appointed a deputy headteacher to support the headteacher and this has impacted effectively on the quality of education provided and standards are improving. The headteacher has recently established a senior management team consisting of the deputy headteacher, the Foundation Stage leader, the two year group leaders and the SENCO. These staff have an increasingly high profile and together, give a clear direction for the school. They are good role models for the staff. As a management team they meet regularly to review whole school initiatives; as individuals they meet regularly with staff in their areas to discuss planning and the progress of specific pupils. As a result, standards are being maintained and the strong leadership and teamwork between staff continues to have an impact on teaching and learning.

32. Effective use of performance data and other indicators are at the heart of the school's self evaluation. The school is constantly seeking to improve all aspects of its provision. As a result, the headteacher, senior management team and governors have a very clear understanding of the current position of the school and a clear vision for the future. The school improvement plan accurately focuses on the priority areas the school needs to work on. It clearly identifies responsibilities, as well as the criteria by which success can be judged within specific timescales. Performance management strategies are in place and these are closely linked to school priorities.

33. Quite rightly, the school has focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. The headteacher has worked closely with the subject leaders for these subjects to identify specific areas for development and to set targets for improvement. Data analysis is used well to evaluate and identify priorities. Monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of implementation and other subject leaders have not had many opportunities to

evaluate their own subjects so they do not have a clear view of standards, achievement or the strengths and weaknesses in their areas. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for ICT and manages it well. Although this creates a heavy workload and is very demanding of her time, she has quite rightly recognised that this is a very important aspect of the school's work and is developing a clear overview of the provision and the progress that pupils are making.

34. Governors fulfill their statutory duties well. They share the headteacher's ambition for the school and have been fully involved in determining its priorities for development. These aspirations are at the heart of the school improvement plan. This plan clearly identifies the priorities and who is responsible for different aspects, including the evidence the school will use to judge the impact on standards or provision. Governors are beginning to challenge the senior management team on issues related to all aspects of the school improvement plan. Good links have been established with subject leaders. Governors play an important role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the work of the school, particularly by using progress data. Financial management by the headteacher and governors is good. They have a strong awareness of the importance of obtaining best value from any spending. Priorities for school improvement are costed and governors have a programme to monitor the impact on teaching and learning of improvements. This has included an evaluation of the effectiveness of the investment in the new ICT suite on raising standards in ICT and the quality of teaching.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	778939
Total expenditure	787308
Expenditure per pupil	2650.87

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	59137
Balance carried forward to the next	50762

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the nursery is consistently very good and results in very good achievement for nursery children.
- Very good attitudes from nursery and reception children result in enthusiastic learning and good achievement.
- Accommodation is unsatisfactory restricting the opportunities for physical activities for reception aged children.
- Ongoing assessment of children's responses ensures staff know children very well and are able to respond to their individual needs.
- The curriculum is well managed, providing a wealth of learning experiences.

Commentary

35. There has been improvement since the last inspection. All teaching in the nursery is now very good and the good teaching sustained in the reception classes. Planning has improved and now fully reflects an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers use assessment information effectively to plan their teaching so each child learns at their own pace and benefits from a wide range of learning experiences. Teaching assistants contribute well to this process. As a result all children, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve well. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to support their children. Very good induction arrangements and continuing high quality care and guidance are hallmarks of the provision, resulting in happy children who relish the varied learning opportunities provided for them. Attainment of children on entry to the school is average and almost all will achieve the expected levels in most areas of the curriculum by the time they begin Year 1. A particular strength of the provision is the high emphasis placed by all adults on developing children's personal skills and their confidence in speaking and listening. The quality of the accommodation remains unsatisfactory. The lack of outdoor play areas restricts learning opportunities though staff do their best with the facilities available. The nursery and reception classes are in different buildings at the moment and this makes joint planning and activities difficult to manage. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good, based on good understanding of the learning needs of young children and good observations of their reactions and responses.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very high priority is given to this area of learning.
- The very good care and guidance and very good relationships make a considerable contribution to this area of learning

Commentary

36. The children achieve a very good level of personal, social and emotional development by the end of the reception class. This is because teaching and learning are very good. Provision for this area of learning underpins the approach to all learning. Adults model good relationships and teach children to consider the feelings of others and to value each other. In all Foundation Stage classrooms, teachers have made the best of the present accommodation by arranging interesting resources, accessible toys and very good opportunities for investigation in all the classrooms. Children's natural curiosity is stimulated and they are motivated to explore and try out new activities. Children in nursery and reception are confident, happily interacting with each other and the adults around them. Adults have high expectations of behaviour and the children respond very well, they understand and keep the class rules. Children take responsibility for clearing up after messy activities and returning items to the correct place. They gain an understanding of cultural differences when they participate in a dragon dance to celebrate the Chinese New Year and paint Mendhi patterns on their hands in Hindu tradition.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching and learning result in good achievement
- The promotion of speaking and listening skills is very good.
- Information technology is not used consistently to raise literacy standards

Commentary

37. Teaching is good and learning reflects this. Standards in all aspects of communication and literacy are average when children start school. They achieve well and by the time they reach Year 1 almost all have achieved the Early Learning Goals in reading and the majority have exceeded them in speaking and listening. In writing though some children achieve the Early Learning goals a significant proportion do not. Analysis of children's work and records show these children are still well on course to achieve the expected standards in the near future.

38. Teachers have high expectations and for very good relationships with the children. As a result children achieve well. In the nursery they quickly learn to enjoy stories and handle books. They continue to enjoy nursery rhymes and storybooks and by the time they are in reception they participate in the more formal sessions with the Big Books. The use of computers to

consolidate children's knowledge and understanding of letters and words is inconsistent in the reception classes. Computers are set up but classes are not managed to ensure that children use the computers as part of their normal learning process. Good use is made of listening stations in all classes so children increase their enjoyment of listening to stories and consolidate their own reading skills. Parents provide good support to the school in hearing their children read and completing the home-school reading records. Reception aged children are confident, happy to read their books using picture clues and letter sounds to help their reading. Through regular opportunities to share books with adults they have become aware of the role of author and illustrator.

39. Nursery children are given a wealth of opportunities to learn that writing conveys meaning. Through role-play they have the opportunities to write lists and letters and write orders for food in their 'three bears café'. In lessons higher attaining reception children can, with adult support write clearly defined, simple sentences using a capital letter and full stop appropriately. Throughout all classes very good opportunities are given for children to talk with adults and with each other through role-play in the seaside coves set up in reception classrooms and in a wide range of social interactions. Adults make appropriate interventions to promote imaginative play, encouraging the development of verbal skills. Gentle reminders encourage children to listen and take turns leading to the high standards of speaking and listening observed during the inspection.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good leading to good achievement
- A good range of accessible resources supports children's learning

Commentary

40. By the time children reach Year 1 almost all have achieved the expected levels. Children's positive attitudes contribute greatly to their good achievement. Registration is used effectively in nursery for children to practise their counting skills when they work out how many children are present. Very good consistent use is made of computer programs to encourage nursery children to investigate patterns, shape and colour. As a result they are confident, willing to count small numbers of objects and developing number vocabulary such as 'big' and 'little'. Older children in the reception classes increase their knowledge of pattern and number well, counting confidently to a hundred and recognising the number patterns on a hundred square. Teachers use construction activities well; children make models from junk materials and at the same time recognise and discuss features of the cylinders, cubes and cones and explain why they have chosen particular shapes. Teachers and assistants work well together, frequently questioning children to check their understanding and encouraging independence in practical activities. Teachers make sure that a wide range of mathematical toys and puzzles are easily accessible at all times so children can practise relevant skills such as counting, sorting and measuring. As a result children are confident in trying activities out for themselves.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a good range of interesting and accessible resources for children to investigate
- Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well

Commentary

41. Children enter school with a keen interest in the world around them, and achieve well in the elements of knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching is good and children respond well to the good quality, first-hand experiences and learn well about and from the world around them. A particular strength of the teaching in nursery is the very good use of ongoing assessment information including notes of children's reactions and comments. This results in all adults being fully informed about children's individual needs and able to encourage further learning. All the classrooms are stimulating, plants are very much in evidence and the seed growing activities fascinate the children. Very good use is made of the school environment to support learning, the outdoor play area for nursery children is a safe and exciting place for young children to explore and investigate. Reception children are restricted, as they do not have an easily accessible outdoor area but teachers work very hard to make the classrooms vibrant and interesting. Appropriate emphasis is placed on construction activities, nursery

children working very well in 'joining' a range of fabrics with glue. Classrooms are well equipped with computers, listening stations, digital cameras and robotic toys, nursery and reception children competently use the mouse and print their own work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

42. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about teaching and learning. By the time children enter Year 1 they attain the Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding them. Planning and records show children are given good opportunities to use malleable materials, tools and construction toys. They show good ability in moving the cursor on the computer screen and using crayons and pencils to draw and write. Reception children happily took advantage of the good weather and enjoyed rolling hoops, throwing and catching balls and learning to skip in a well managed outdoor lesson. They move with confidence and control and co-ordinate their movements well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well
- The emphasis on developing children's imagination is effective

Commentary

43. Standards of attainment are average when children start school. By the end of the Foundation Stage almost all children have attained and many exceed the Early Learning Goals. Teaching and learning are good. Children explore pattern and learn to manipulate modelling and construction materials and to apply paint with increasing attention to detail. Reception children sketch items such as daffodils from still life. They use paint and collage materials to create a night-time picture and to portray their visit to a farm. Classrooms reflect the wide range of creative activities provided for children, their work is on display and children are proud of their efforts. Teachers are imaginative in organising their classrooms so all children get valuable opportunities for role-play in for example the 'Tourist Office' or on the 'beach' There is a well planned music programme and regular opportunities during assemblies and lessons encourage children to sing and enjoy music.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in writing are below the expected levels
- Teaching and learning are consistently good leading to overall good achievement
- There is very good promotion of speaking and listening, which is well used to share ideas and increase the rate of learning for pupils
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent restricting pupils' achievements
- Teaching assistants provide good quality support for teaching and learning
- The subject manager's role in monitoring is not fully developed

Commentary

44. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are above expectation in reading, speaking and listening and they achieve well. Standards in writing are below national standards and below standards achieved in similar schools. Since the last inspection the school has successfully introduced the national strategy and maintained the good levels of teaching observed at that time. The school has been effective in its efforts to improve literacy across other subjects, and to improve standards of speaking and listening. Despite the decrease in standards of writing the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

45. Reading is well promoted and pupils enjoy sharing books and talking about what they read. They achieve well. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils read their books fluently; they self-correct when they make a mistake and are able to predict possible outcomes of stories. Children of all abilities are aware of the difference between fiction and information books and know how to use an index. Pupils read with expression and have very positive attitudes. The school is supported well by parents who hear their children read regularly and contribute to the home-school reading diaries.

46. Teachers create a wide range of opportunities for pupils to write and achievement is satisfactory. The school has adopted 'Jolly Phonics', the impact is positive in encouraging pupils to write and develop spelling strategies. Year 1 pupils write recounts of stories such as Cinderella, label diagrams showing the growth of beans, create sound poems and gain an understanding of past and present tense when they write about events on a previous day. As they move into Year 2 their spelling, sentence construction and handwriting improve, becoming

legible and more sophisticated. Pupils in Year 2 concentrate on writing 'super' sentences, with more complex punctuation and descriptive words. They learn to write book reports, making comments about their favourite parts. In a good link with their history topic pupils wrote their factual account of the Great Fire of London and then changed their style to write a letter to a friend during the events of the fire.

47. The school promotes speaking and listening very well and standards are high and pupils achieve well. This is due partly to the very good relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils feel confident and secure, they are happy to talk and following the good modelling from adults they learn to listen to each other and appreciate other pupils' ideas. They are happy to read out their 'super' sentences and accept comments from the rest of the class. Year 2 pupils are given opportunities to discuss their written work with partners leading to improved standards of writing. As a result of very good teaching pupils in Year 1 discussed the features of root vegetables and considered the merits of cooking broad beans; individual pupils happily showing items from their home vegetable patches and describing the problems of overcrowding in the carrot plot. In the same lesson pupils worked very well collaboratively discussing verb tenses and moving around the room to match their allocated verb endings with those of a partner. Pupils were very sensible responding to their teacher's high expectations of behaviour.

48. Teaching is good. The best features of teaching are the whole school approach to planning and the very effective support given by classroom assistants. Lessons are planned in year groups so pupils in all three classes in each year group receive the same menu of activities. This was evident during the inspection when teachers in the Year 1 classes used the digital cameras to take photographs of a visiting mother and baby; pupils in all the classes were then involved in sequencing the photos and consolidating their sequential vocabulary, first, then, later and finally. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, explaining tasks, prompting and encouraging less confident pupils. The assistants are well informed and clear about their role within the classrooms.

49. Teachers know their pupils well and gather good assessment information about their progress. There is a marking policy understood by teachers and pupils. However the quality of marking is inconsistent, though pupils know they have achieved a target it is not made clear exactly what they have achieved and what will be the next step in learning. There is insufficient link between gathering assessment information and using it to plan the curriculum to match pupils' learning needs, resulting in lost opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy skills.

50. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader is well informed and a good practitioner. Issues from the last inspection have been acted on impacting positively on the school provision. The introduction of 'Jolly Phonics' has been a positive move and the promotion of literacy in other subjects has successfully raised standards in the school. The school had identified speaking and listening as an area for improvement and successfully introduced a rolling programme for Year 1 pupils to work on design and technology activities and improve their standards of speaking and listening. There is still room for further development of the subject manager's role in monitoring the delivery of the subject to ensure consistency in teaching.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. This is good. The school has focussed successfully on improving standards of literacy across other subjects. Teachers make sure key mathematical vocabulary is on display in the

classrooms, and pupils learn to write and solve mathematical problems and write rules for number games. In design and technology pupils label plans and evaluate their work, they write accounts of scientific experiments and label diagrams and sketches. They recount parables, compare geographical features and record the results of their historical investigations. In all subjects pupils are encouraged to discuss and give verbal explanations of their thoughts and ideas.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects.
- In the best lessons plenary sessions are used well for pupils to share their difficulties and to evaluate their work.
- The day-to-day assessment of individual pupil progress and the marking of pupils' work are not well enough developed.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in mathematics lessons is insufficient.

Commentary

52. By the end of Year 2 pupils are reaching the expected standards in mathematics and are achieving satisfactorily for their age. In the national curriculum tests in 2003 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in mathematics was lower than it had been the previous year. This reflected the high number of pupils who had special educational needs in the year group tested. Pupils of higher ability achieved well and the standards attained by these pupils were above the standards attained in other schools. Boys significantly out-performed the girls.

53. In the lessons observed during the inspection the majority of seven year old pupils were attaining average standards in number and measurement. They are able to recognise and order the numbers to 100 and understand the place value of 2 digit numbers. Most pupils confidently add numbers to 20 although they find subtracting numbers more difficult. Pupils of higher ability understand multiples of 5 and 10. In one lesson, two very able pupils could recall the multiples of 6 after plotting these on a 100 square on a computer. Pupils in Year 1 handle data appropriately and are beginning to record this using pictures and diagrams. Their understanding of the capacity of a range of containers is developing well through some very good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants and they achieve as well as other pupils in their class. The work in pupils' maths books indicates that pupils are making satisfactory progress from the end of the reception year to the end of year 2. The standard of presentation of pupils' work is unsatisfactory.

54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons generally begin well and pupils are given good opportunities to participate in a range of number games. They use whiteboards to record their answers to the problems set by their teachers and they respond very well. Teachers introduce new work satisfactorily and they use mathematical language appropriately. They plan some interesting activities for the pupils although these do not always challenge pupils of all abilities. Where tasks and activities are well matched to the needs of

pupils, they achieve well. However, some opportunities are missed to extend the work for higher ability pupils particularly in data handling and in using information and communication technology to support their mathematical learning. The work in the three classes in Year 2 to write rules for number games had not been appropriately adjusted to meet the needs of lower ability pupils. As a result some pupils achieved little and were not engaged in their learning. In the best practice teachers use the end of lessons well to enable pupils to identify the next steps in their learning. They are asked to evaluate their progress and to share the problems they have encountered.

55. The subject leader has ensured that there is a good range of resources to support the teaching and learning of mathematics. Data is analysed well and the outcomes are used to determine overall priorities for the school. The use of the day to day assessment of pupils' achievements in lessons is however unsatisfactory and there is only limited evidence of teachers using lesson outcomes to plan work or set targets either for individuals or groups of pupils. The marking of pupils' work is ineffective and pupils are not told how they can improve their work. A good start has been made in monitoring the effectiveness of provision. The evaluation of the outcomes of lesson observation and work scrutiny is however not well enough developed. Overall the school has made satisfactory improvement in provision since the last inspection although this has yet to impact significantly on the standards attained which remain as satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Pupils regularly use mathematics well in other subjects and consequently develop a good appreciation of the practical uses of these skills. They measure accurately as they plan, design and build three-dimensional models in design and technology. In their artwork, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding of tessellation and symmetry to create attractive patterns. In history lessons pupils have constructed timelines to show, for example, the life and work of Florence Nightingale and they discuss these confidently with their teachers and each other.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are beginning to use scientific vocabulary confidently
- Management of classroom behaviour is very good.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in the subject.
- The day-to-day assessment of pupils' work and the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- More able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to work independently.

Commentary

57. The pupils are reaching the standards expected for their age. The standards of the current Year 2 pupils when they entered the school were below what would be expected and this is still having a negative impact on their attainment. This is particularly noticeable when tasks require reading, writing or mathematical skills. Pupils' achievement, including those special educational needs is, however, satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. The work that Year 2 pupils have done so far shows that most write simple descriptions of experiments and record the results, for example when looking at how water freezes and heats. They also understand the differences and similarities of a range of materials such as wood, metal, fabric and plastic. A significant minority of pupils, mainly those with special educational needs do not understand scientific ideas such as the need to conduct a fair test. Pupils' books show that this focus is having a positive effect on their ability to record experiments and results in a methodical way, but a significant minority needs help in doing so.

58. Most pupils show an appropriate understanding of materials. For example, that some materials, such as wood, are better at retaining their shape than other materials. However, pupils do not have the skills to use equipment and materials to carry out the original enquiries and observations independently. This particularly restricts the opportunities for more able pupils to achieve better. Whilst some evidence shows that pupils have gathered information from sources such as CD-Rom, there is insufficient use of ICT in their work. They do not monitor, measure or record observations and findings or use ICT to present their work.

59. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers manage behaviour in the classroom very well. Teachers have developed very effective strategies to manage behaviour and enable the majority of pupils to maintain a good pace of learning. They relate quietly to pupils individually in situations where behaviour is unacceptable and work hard to enhance pupils' social skills. Both teachers and support assistants know their pupils well and employ a consistently effective approach to maintaining a calm working atmosphere. However, there is currently little evidence in lessons that more able pupils extend their skills and knowledge through independent enquiry.

60. The day-to-day assessment of pupil achievement is unsatisfactory and the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Pupils are not given enough information to help them improve their work. The monitoring of the effectiveness of science provision is at an early stage and there are no clear processes for setting targets for improvement. The evaluation of the outcomes of lesson observation and work scrutiny is not well enough developed.

61. Overall, the subject is managed satisfactorily. The subject leader supports teachers well and has a clear view of the areas for improvement and is working hard in this direction. She monitors planning regularly but does not observe teaching and learning in other classrooms. Initiatives such as enhancing thinking skills are beginning to have a positive effect on the way pupils with special educational needs acquire scientific knowledge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A new computer suite and existing classroom computers provide a good level of resourcing.
- Management of classroom behaviour is good.
- There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils.
- ICT is not sufficiently used to support learning in other subjects.

Commentary

62. Standards in ICT are in line with expected levels in Year 2 and have improved since the previous inspection. Most pupils in Year 2 understand how to use an art and design program to create pictures on a computer and produce simple labels in a word processing program to label their pictures.

63. The achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 understand how to use font sizes and styles in a word processing program for a variety of purposes, for example, when producing short stories and poems for display. They make more complex images using tools such as the repeat function. However, they have not acquired a higher level of skill in other areas of the subject. Their understanding of controlling devices and problem solving is limited and standards in this aspect of ICT are therefore unsatisfactory.

64. In the direct teaching sessions seen in both Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. Teachers manage behaviour in the classroom well. They have developed very effective strategies to maintain the pace of learning while dealing quietly and firmly with individual pupils when their behaviour is unacceptable. Both teachers and support assistants know their pupils well so there is a consistently effective approach to maintaining a calm working atmosphere. Both in ICT and other subject lessons seen, there is currently little evidence that pupils are given opportunities to enhance their computer skills independently. This means that more able pupils, in particular, do not extend their knowledge and understanding to realise their potential.

65. Resources are good, but too recently installed to have had an influence on standards. Each classroom has two or more computers and there is a newly installed computer suite. The school is now well placed to plan for the use of ICT across the curriculum and to raise standards.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Currently this is unsatisfactory. A few displays of pupils' work showed that they use word processing to present work, for example, to label pictures or write short stories and poems. Some pupils were seen using computers to consolidate mathematical and literacy skills. However, the use of computers outside the direct teaching sessions is not a regular or consistent feature across different subjects.

HUMANITIES

67. Only one lesson was seen in history and in geography and there was therefore insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on standards and teaching. However sufficient evidence was available in religious education for judgements to be fairly based.

Geography and History

68. Work seen in pupils' books, around the school and in the two lessons suggests that the subjects are taught regularly with topics that reflect the national guidance. In geography the lack of consistency between year groups noted at the time of the last inspection has been rectified. Joint planning between teachers ensures that all pupils have equal access to the taught curriculum. The lack of a scheme of work for history noted in the last two inspections has been tackled and is being formalised. Though teachers maintain records of pupils' achievements based on their responses to lessons; these assessment systems do not reflect the national standards. Teachers across the school promote literacy skills well through history and geography: pupils write about famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole, compare the physical features of a Mexican village with their own town of Rainham, and produce interesting timelines to show their understanding of time past. Teaching in both the lessons seen was satisfactory and pupils have positive attitudes to the subjects.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with literacy enhance pupils' learning
- The lack of visitors to share first hand experiences of non Christian faiths restricts pupils' experiences

Commentary

69. Standards of attainment remain in line with expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, as at the time of the last inspection and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Analysis of pupils' work clearly shows that they learn about faiths other than Christianity; this is an improvement since the last inspection when this aspect of the subject was considered to be underdeveloped. The subject manager is newly appointed and has had insufficient time to monitor the provision.

70. In the lessons seen teaching was satisfactory in Year 2 with pupils gaining a sound understanding of why Jesus told parables. Despite the cramped seating arrangements in the carpet area pupils were co-operative, making sensible observations about *The Sower* and *The Lost Sheep*. The teacher made good use of the opportunity to support pupils' personal development with a discussion about what to do if they get lost and cannot find their parents. Pupils in Year 1 responded well to the symbolic reference to Jesus as the *Light of the World*. This is a difficult concept but due to their teacher's very good explanation of light and dark, feeling good and feeling sad, pupils were able to empathise and understand the religious metaphor. Work in exercise books shows pupils make good progress learning about events from the Old and New Testaments and gaining an understanding of celebrations important to Christians, Hindus and Jewish people. Though all the pupils visit the local church, there have been no visits to other places of worship or visits from representatives of those faiths. Overall achievement is satisfactory and teachers encourage the development of speaking and listening skills in Religious Education lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

During the inspection no **music** lessons were seen. Consequently, there was insufficient evidence available to make an overall judgement about the provision and standards. The many photographs displayed in the school do show pupils enjoying music. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to compose using a range of instruments and the lunchtime ocarina groups perform to a high standard.

Two games lessons were seen during the inspection. No gymnastics or dance was taught. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about the overall provision for **physical education**. Pupils were attaining the expected standards in games and had good control throwing, catching and kicking a ball. They co-operated appropriately when working in small teams and responded well to their teachers.

Two lessons were observed in **art and design**, and in **design and technology**. Additional evidence was gathered from teachers' plans, the pupils' work, displays around the school and from talking to pupils and teachers.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills and techniques are taught carefully and well and pupils achieve a good standard of work.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their work.
- The schemes of work are being developed to include assessment opportunities.
- The use of sketchbooks is not consistent throughout the school.

Commentary

71. In art and design pupils are attaining standards above those expected and they achieve well. Provision for the subject has improved significantly since the last inspection and pupils are now offered a wide range of activities. Techniques and skills are developed in a systematic way, building on the experiences of children in the nursery and reception classes. Pupils use paint well, mixing colour appropriately to produce work of a good quality. The collages displayed in the school are detailed and pupils have thought carefully about colour and texture. The leaf mobiles and hand puppets show increasing skills at working with a range of fabric and pupils are rightly proud of their achievements. Drawing skills are developing well and pupils in year 2 have produced story boards, sequencing pictures and adding detail with pencil and crayon.

72. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to look at the work of artists and to use this as a stimulus for their own work. They then apply similar styles well producing interesting patterns and pictures. A visiting local artist has worked with each year group and photographs in the school indicate that pupils were both engaged and motivated by his work. Year 2 pupils designed and painted ceramic tiles. Year 1 pupils enjoyed a sculpture day. Work in art and design is displayed well and provides a stimulating learning environment for pupils throughout the school. The subject leader has succeeded in raising the profile of art and design in the school.

Design and Technology

Provision for design and technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good opportunities for pupils to plan, design and make a wide range of products.
- Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate and discuss how they can improve work.
- The portfolios of moderated work provide an excellent stimulus for both teachers and pupils with examples of a wide range of products.

Commentary

73. Pupils are attaining standards well above those expected and they achieve very well as a result of some good teaching. Provision for design and technology has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now a strength of the school. The work displayed around the school is of a high standard and demonstrates the high priority the school has placed on developing the subject. The subject co-ordinator has provided good leadership and staff are enthusiastic in their approach, teaching pupils the skills of planning and designing well.

74. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were designing and making toys with winding mechanisms. They worked well together in groups selecting appropriately from the range of materials available for the task. Their plans gave good detail of the model they were to make and they followed these meticulously. The finished products were of a high quality. Pupils' explanations of how "the mouse ran up the clock" and how "the stars twinkled" using their winding mechanisms indicated a good understanding of the task they had been set. They were also quick to evaluate how they could improve their work.

75. The subject leader has meticulously collected and photographed examples of pupils' work from each year group. These have been collated as a record of achievement to stimulate both teachers and pupils. There are also many products and models displayed around the school that demonstrate that pupils are making very good progress in developing the skills of designing and making. Pupils measure accurately and work with a good range of materials. Year 1 pupils have designed and made models for a children's playground using plywood and card. They talk excitedly about their work. There are good examples of vehicles with both fixed and free axles, and pupils have made levers and sliding mechanisms using card and split pins.

76. Pupils use the skills they have been taught in design and technology well in other subject areas, for example in art and design. There are good links made with mathematics and pupils use their measurement skills and their understanding of shape when making their models. Year 1 pupils have the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills in the context of a design and technology activity and are stimulated to discuss the work they have achieved. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to generate design although this work is at an early stage of development. Pupils' relationships with adults are very good and this contributes to the very good classroom management of design and technology.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHE)

Provision for PSHE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good start made in the Foundation Stage is sustained well throughout the school.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to express their views.
- The very good relationships and ethos of the school supports pupils' personal development well.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils' to take on responsibility across the school.

Commentary

77. The school has a good programme for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils learn how to live together in a community and they are encouraged to respect and care for each other. They respond well. Older pupils take on responsibility for younger pupils at break times and they know which adults to approach with any concerns or anxieties. All pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own behaviour and the effect that their actions may have on others. Circle time has been introduced in some classes. Aspects of a healthy lifestyle are discussed in science and in physical education lessons. Pupils know which foods are healthy and they understand the benefits of exercise and good personal hygiene.

78. In PSHE lessons teachers initiate discussions on a range of issues relevant to the pupils' own lives. The pupils listen well to others and are willing to contribute their own experiences. In each class pupils are selected each day to take on some responsibility. This opportunity is limited and generally consists of taking the registers to the school office. The younger pupils particularly enjoy this experience and take it very seriously, looking most important as they undertake the task.

79. The school works hard to collect pupils' views of their school. Questionnaires are distributed and the pupils willingly complete these. Opportunity is made for teachers and pupils to discuss the outcomes and this contributes to pupils' understanding of how their school community functions.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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