

INSPECTION REPORT

ALEXANDRA INFANT SCHOOL

Kingston-upon-Thames

LEA area: Kingston-upon-Thames

Unique reference number: 102578

Headteacher: Miss Jenny Titterton

Lead inspector: David G Collard

Dates of inspection: 13th - 15th September 2004

Inspection number: 266286

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	231 (183.5 full time equivalent)
School address:	Alexandra Road Kingston-upon-Thames Surrey
Postcode:	KT2 6SE
Telephone number:	(020) 8546 7176
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Nick Pratelli
Date of previous inspection:	11 th January 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Alexandra Nursery and Infants school is situated on the outskirts of Kingston-upon-Thames in Surrey. There are 231 pupils on roll of whom 122 are girls. Children are able to start in the nursery on a part-time basis and progress to full time education during the reception year. The families of the pupils generally work in a professional capacity and the local housing is predominantly owner-occupied. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals (4.1 per cent) is below the national average. The number whose mother tongue is not English (7.5 per cent) is higher than the national average, as are the number from ethnic minority groups, although the overwhelming majority of these children are confident English speakers when they enter the school. There are also three asylum seeker children in the school. There is some mobility of pupils in each year. The number of pupils with special educational needs (11.6 per cent) is below the national average, as is the number with statements (0.4 per cent). Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly above that expected nationally for their age.

The school has gained Beacon status and shares its expertise with a number of other local schools, some of whom have been categorised as needing high levels of extra support. It has also achieved the Artsmark Gold Award, the Healthy Schools Award and has a Basic Skills Quality Mark. It is well regarded by the local community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11122	David Collard	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology
9327	Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector	
34431	Mary Usher-Clark	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Foundation Stage Special educational needs
21171	Sally Handford	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school that gives very good value for money. Standards have been maintained at high levels for a number of years and achievement throughout the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. The leadership and management of the school are very good, providing a strong strategic direction. At the core of all work is the outstanding commitment to the inclusion of all pupils.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards have been maintained at high levels for a number of years; this is reflected in the performance of pupils in national tests.
- The achievement of pupils is good throughout the school; for those with special educational needs, it is very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good in the Foundation Stage.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent; management and governance are very good.
- The very wide curriculum is exciting, challenging and fun, and pupils respond very well to the opportunities they are offered.

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards in all subjects have been maintained or improved at high levels, and the quality of teaching, judged to be good then, has continued to be consolidated. The leadership has made every effort to increase the learning opportunities for all pupils. The previous key issue about raising standards in writing has been rigorously analysed and the effectiveness of implementing new initiatives can be seen in the improved test results. By taking on Beacon status, the school has been able to provide support for other schools and to gauge its own performance within a national perspective. Hence, the school improvement plan is formulated with very realistic and well informed targets.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
Reading	A*	A	A	A
Writing	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A

Key: A – well above average (A represents schools with results in the top five per cent nationally); 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 throughout the school achieve well. On entry to the school in the nursery, children's standards are above those expected nationally for their age. The very good teaching through the Foundation Stage is ensuring that all levels of ability achieve well and children are very well prepared for their work within the National Curriculum. In all six areas of the Early Learning Goals¹, children make good progress. There is particularly effective progress in social and personal development and in language and mathematical development. By the end of the reception year, standards are above those expected nationally. Through years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science and art and design are all well above those expected for their age. Results in national tests have been consistently high for a number of years

¹ The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) are the nationally recognised six areas of learning under the headings: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy development; mathematical development; creative development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical development.

and are on line to continue. In 2003, whilst the overall ability of the cohort was slightly lower than usual, the scores in tests showed standards were well above those nationally in reading and writing and were in the top five per cent nationally in mathematics. This was because the school has been very effective in raising the overall achievement of those with special educational needs, many of whom achieved the national average standard (Level 2). In addition, nearly half the pupils achieved the higher Level 3. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar levels of progress as their English-speaking peers. The success of the very well balanced curricular opportunities can be seen in the good achievement also made in other subjects. Standards in religious education are above the expected levels, and in art and design, they are very high. Standards in information and communication technology, whilst at those expected nationally, are now improving rapidly with the introduction of a new computer suite.

The personal, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is very good.

Attitudes to work and other activities are very good. Pupils enjoy school and learn in an exciting environment. They work hard, concentrate well and are inquisitive. They are beginning to understand the relevance of different cultures, traditions and beliefs, know right from wrong and about how to be tolerant of others. Attendance is above that nationally.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is very good. There are no significant weaknesses in any aspect of teaching, which is consistently **good** and often very good. Particular strengths include the comprehensive and progressive challenges provided in the planning of subjects and lessons, the use of interesting resources, including visits and visitors, and in the very good use of assessment techniques to monitor the effectiveness of learning. All these combine to ensure that all pupils achieve well. The curriculum is very good with an outstanding commitment to equality of opportunity and innovative curriculum development. In addition to the provision for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, the opportunities for artistic development are excellent. There is a very good match of staff to the needs of pupils, in particular for those with special educational needs. The care, health and safety of pupils is carefully considered to provide a secure but welcoming environment. Parents are encouraged to take a full and active part in the life of the school and are given many opportunities to be kept informed about how best to help their children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management is very good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is outstanding. At the core is a firm belief in improving the learning opportunities of all. She is ably supported by a management team that has a wide range of expertise. The governors manage the school very well and are able to challenge decisions because they are well informed. The strategic planning provides a model of best practice because it provides a shared perspective. It is outward looking, concise and has been formulated by combining the views of all those involved in its implementation. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The overwhelming majority of parents fully support the aims and values of the school and very few have any concerns about how their children are progressing. Pupils enjoy school and an analysis of the questionnaire returns ratifies the views of their parents.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

There are no significant areas of weakness. All improvements have been fully identified in the most recent school improvement plan.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The standards that pupils reach by the end of Year 2 are well above average. They achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high in reading, writing, mathematics, science and art and design.
- The above average standards on entry to the school are effectively improved; achievement through the school is good.
- There are no significant weaknesses in any subject.
- Pupils make good progress because their individual needs are carefully monitored to ensure any underachievement is dealt with quickly.

Commentary

1. Children enter the school with standards that are generally above average, particularly in their social and language skills. Children make good progress through both the nursery and reception years in all the six nationally agreed areas of learning so that by the time they enter Year 1 they are achieving well and are confidently exceeding standards above those expected for their age. This is confirmed by the assessment data that the school has collected. Particularly good are the basic skills of communication, language, numeracy and general knowledge of the world.
2. Through Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well because of the highly organised and consistently appropriate teaching. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, pupils are achieving standards well above the national average. This is confirmed by the results in national tests, shown in the table below, that have been maintained at high levels for a number of years. The very slight fluctuations in performance year on year are pre-empted by the school when the stringent assessments are made at the end of units or themes of work. Consequently, the results never cause any unexpected anxieties. The use of this data also quickly helps to target those pupils who are either underachieving, have special educational needs or who have higher levels of ability. The performance of boys and girls shows only little fluctuation from the national picture but again, the school has monitored this closely. Initiatives, such as obtaining relevant books for boys to read, are being trialled to help raise their performance. The success of these systems can be seen in the very small number of pupils who do not reach the national average level for their age (Level 2) and the high number who achieve the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. Analysis of the 2004 national tests shows that there has been a further increase in performance although at the time of the inspection there was no comparative national data.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.9 (18.5)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	16.8 (16.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	18.3 (19.0)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 59 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The very high standards in reading and writing have been maintained since the last inspection. A well-established reading programme links the skills of speaking, listening and reading as well

as comprehension, spelling and understanding. This enables pupils to talk about the types of books they enjoy and have some understanding about authors' styles. They confidently explain their own preferences and why they choose books of different sorts.

4. The high focus on writing has proved beneficial in raising achievement, which is now good. Teachers have analysed different teaching methods and adapted these to the abilities of pupils. As a result, by the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to use different types of writing in the correct circumstances. They are able to write up how they have conducted experiments in science and can compose an e-mail or letter. Handwriting develops well. In a scrutiny of work from last year, there is a clear improvement between the earlier and later work. Spelling becomes more accurate and grammar conventions are used with more confidence.
5. Standards in mathematics are also well above the national average by the end of Year 2. Achievement is good through Years 1 and 2. Pupils are confident users of the four rules of number, different measures such as for length and weight, and are beginning to understand the significance of fractions and decimals. Teaching follows the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) closely but is adapted in light of the generally better than expected achievement, thus making lessons suitably challenging for all levels of ability.
6. In science, standards are also well above average and much of the work in Year 2 is that which would be expected in Year 3. Overall achievement is good. For instance, teachers provide an initial introduction to permeability, friction and the skills of fair testing. As in other subjects, the teachers have adapted the content of lessons to reflect the overall higher levels of ability. There has been improvement in the use of investigation and experimentation, an area less secure at the time of the last inspection.
7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are at those expected for pupils' age, although there has been an improvement over the last few years. Teachers are now better trained, the computer suite has been brought into use, which has allowed more focused teaching of both skills and the use of technology in other subjects. These initiatives are taking time to impact in the longer term achievement of pupils, which is sound at present but has the potential to improve as other subjects have.
8. In all other subjects, the limited evidence from the inspection suggests that achievement is good across all subjects in both Years 1 and 2. In art and design, standards are very high. The school works very hard to provide a balanced and highly focused curriculum that will extend the learning of each individual. Because of this, all subjects have a high priority. In religious education, pupils' understanding of factual knowledge is good, although this is not always used to allow pupils to express their thoughts and discuss more significant issues. It was difficult to make judgements about the standards in some subjects because few lesson observations were seen. However, in music, there are strong links to singing, playing instruments and to starting to think about notation and recording techniques. In physical education, pupils are confident and well co-ordinated. They are offered a wide range of opportunities and there are particularly good links to healthy lifestyles. In addition to the work of teachers, local clubs help within the school to provide team games. Work in design and technology is well balanced between design, practical work and evaluation. Useful connections have been made with designers and other specialists which have enhanced the work of the school. Pupils are, therefore, offered a good range of curricular activities.
9. Provision for special educational needs is very good overall. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well. Their progress is closely monitored and very good support is given to ensure their needs are met. There are very good links with outside agencies. Pupils who have little spoken English are supported equally well. They quickly gain confidence with their language and are able to communicate effectively with their friends. The school monitors their progress carefully so that any connected special educational needs can be identified. Those from minority ethnic groups are well integrated within school.

life. There are no issues relating to the achievement of these pupils, who perform equally as well as each other.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Personal development is very good. Attendance is now above the national average. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in all the activities of the school are very good.
- There are good induction procedures to ensure the youngest pupils settle quickly and pupils in other years are supported very well.
- The school uses the innovative 'Jump Ahead' sessions to help improve the learning of those with special educational needs.
- The school has actively encouraged better attendance and this has improved the percentage rates.

Commentary

10. All children enjoy coming to school because the opportunities they are offered are exciting and stimulating. They have very good attitudes to work and want to do their best. Behaviour is very good, both in lessons and in other activities. The school promotes personal development very well. Although this was a strong area at the time of the last inspection, new initiatives have ensured that it has continued to develop, and improvement has been good. The very positive responses in questionnaires from parents and pupils confirm the findings of the inspection. Staff make very positive efforts to ensure that the youngest children in the nursery settle in quickly. Induction days, as well as a wide range of information, ensure that the transition between home and school is as smooth as possible. As a result, personal progress in social skills advances quickly. This good start continues through the rest of the school. The very wide range of learning opportunities excites and motivates pupils and, in lessons, they concentrate well and work hard. A new development is the introduction of the school council, which has allowed pupils to take some responsibility for their own environment. Each class devises its own rules for behaviour. There is an expectation that the school community will work together as a team, sharing both the highs and lows.
11. Pupils say there is very little bullying, harassment and no racism. Most parents confirmed this, although there are a few minor instances, mostly associated with children falling out with each other. The school deals with these quickly and effectively by confronting the issues with all those concerned. All these firm procedures ensure that pupils have high levels of confidence and self-esteem. The school monitors this carefully. Although the procedures are mostly informal, it is highly effective because there are very good relationships between adults and pupils. There is a sense of satisfaction and fun within the school that fulfils the school's major aim of ensuring all pupils learn to their full potential.
12. Pupils with special educational needs have a very good attitude to learning. They receive very good support and are secure with the adults who work with them. Those pupils who attend the very good "Jump Ahead" sessions first thing in the morning benefit greatly from this time, leaving the session settled and well motivated at the start of the school day.
13. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good. Through assemblies, religious education lessons, celebratory days and by the use of parents, the pupils are introduced to a very wide range of cultures, traditions and beliefs. Their social and moral understanding is fostered through discussions, known as 'Circle Time', by different themes through the week and more informally by the role models provided by the teachers and support staff. Cultural understanding is developed well through curriculum lessons, visits and visitors. Pupils are gaining a very good understanding about their own, and others', cultural heritage, in a practical and non-judgmental way.

14. Attendance, which has been a problem in the past, has been addressed well. The percentage rates are now well above the national average and there are few instances of absence. Notably, there were no unauthorised absences in the last reporting year.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.6
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

Only one pupil was excluded during the last year. This was associated with a wider issue regarding particular special educational needs.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	92	2	0
White – any other White background	9	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are both good and are at the backbone of the consistently appropriate opportunities offered to pupils. The curriculum is very good. The care, welfare and safety of pupils are paramount and parents appreciate the very good procedures to support them. There are very effective links with other schools and the local community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning are good and assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan very well and use appropriate methods during lessons.

- Teachers are committed to providing the widest range of different opportunities.
- Classroom assistants are trained and briefed well and provide very valuable extra support.
- Assessment procedures are very thorough and provide useful information about the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- All pupils make at least good progress in lessons.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	10	12	5	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- Teaching is consistently good. A high percentage of very good lessons were seen and all teachers were judged at least good on one or more occasions. At this early stage of the academic year, this is a particularly noteworthy strength which is the major contributory reason why pupils learn well and have been doing so for some considerable time. The consistent and good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. At that time, there were very few significant weaknesses but the high levels of monitoring, support and training that have taken place during the interim have continued to improve the expertise of all staff. This is reflected in the high standards achieved by all pupils.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. An example of the work that has been done by the school to improve this is in the development of writing. The Beacon funding has focused the school on implementing innovative and exemplary practice. This has been shared with other local schools as well as on a national basis. It has improved both overall English achievement and test results by all pupils.
- Planning is very good and generally conducted in year groups. The school recognises that this could mean that there could be some differences in the expertise levels and so the senior management team and co-ordinators keep stringent checks to ensure that there is a balance, progression and continuity between each class. The implementation of these plans provides high levels of challenge for all abilities. The methods used engender an excitement about learning. The use of visits and visitors, very good resources and practical experimentation and investigation are all ways in which pupils see how subjects interlink. By this, they are discovering that they need both levels of knowledge but also the ability to use what they know in unfamiliar situations. Consequently, they build up their learning skills and are inquisitive about the world around them.
- Lessons generally move at a good pace, providing a balance between an initial introduction by the teacher, independent work and a final discussion to ensure pupils have completed what was expected. In the very best lessons, teachers also recap with the pupils about whether the original objective for the lesson is understood, using their own informal methods. In one case, this meant the pupils had to put a 'thumbs up or down' to decide whether they were now confident about the concept. This allowed the teacher to refine her planning for the following day in light of the findings.
- Pupils are highly motivated by the experiences they are offered and, as a result, there are very few instances of poor behaviour. Classroom assistants are used very well to support the work of the teacher. They are briefed well before the start of the lesson and generally work with small groups or individuals, depending on the needs of those in the class. Their level of expertise is high. For instance, a teacher has recently worked with one classroom assistant to learn about how to support a specific language need in Year 2. Following this training, the

classroom assistant successfully worked with a group of pupils and helped improve their understanding of how to make some inferences from a text. In contrast and more generally, the high level of adult support throughout the whole of each lesson does inhibit pupils from working on their own and thus being able to make their own decisions or to discover other ways of sorting out any difficulties.

20. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Teachers and their classroom assistants know their learning difficulties and plan well-matched work accordingly. Within the class, these pupils are supported very well. The special educational needs co-ordinator withdraws small groups for extra support at appropriate times. Regular checks are made on their progress towards their individual targets. School staff have received a wide range of training for particular needs and, as a Beacon school, they have provided training for other schools. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are equally well supported, although there are only a very few spoken language issues.
21. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously. This is sometimes with the pupil and on other occasions, more comprehensively through written comments and praise. The systems used to collate the data from marking and the regular assessments are extremely thorough, both at class and whole school level. This enables appropriate support to be provided at an early stage. In addition, the school is able to analyse in close detail its own strengths and weaknesses and help them securely place their own position within the context of other schools.
22. All these strong teaching procedures are ensuring that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are increasing, achievement is good and the progress made year on year is reflected in the high standards being gained by the time pupils leave the school.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good curriculum for all its pupils and it has strengthened since the last inspection. It is broad and balanced, meets all statutory requirements and is enriching and innovative. The good accommodation and very good resources are used very well to support pupils learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An innovative and imaginative curriculum enhances pupils' learning.
- Provision and participation in the arts are excellent.
- Equality of opportunity for all pupils is an outstanding strength of the school.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good.
- Very good use of visitors enriches the curriculum.
- The outdoor environment is imaginatively planned and used.

Commentary

23. The school provides a rich curriculum and places emphasis on learning being fun. Appropriate time is devoted to each curriculum area and there are good curricular links, as seen in a drama lesson about the Tudors. There are focus curriculum weeks, which include a science week, school grounds week, arts fortnight and technology days, which take place with other schools. The school is used as an exemplar and many other schools benefit from the training and support given by this Beacon school.
24. Regular visits are made to Hampton Court, the theatre, a local farm, the church and the local Pizza Express business to support the pupils' learning. The school makes excellent use of the expertise of very many talented parents and other visitors to enhance the curriculum. The diversity of talent ranges from a Royal Ballet dancer, Greek and Gujarati dancers, a harpist,

recyclers and a beekeeper, to an architect, a World Cup rugby player, a local football club, a storyteller, and fire and police officers. During the inspection, two parents, who are professional designers, assisted pupils during an art and design and design and technology lesson. A variety of extra-curricular clubs extends experiences for all pupils.

25. The whole school is committed to equality of opportunity and provides a model of good practice. Statements regarding equal opportunities appear in every school policy. Places in school clubs are rotated and arrangements are made to subsidise costs, if needed. Because of the school's outstanding commitment to inclusion, if any pupils with particular needs require any extra support, then the school funds them.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons and in regular short withdrawal sessions. Well-established procedures identify pupils' needs early and the special needs co-ordinator and teachers work closely to plan accordingly to meet their individual needs. The school is committed to the "Jump Ahead" programme and the frequent use of "brain, eye and finger gym" as a means of improving concentration levels and co-ordination skills.
27. There is a very good match of teachers and assistants to the number of pupils. Staff expertise is used particularly in the teaching of music and the arts. The headteacher places emphasis on the importance of good ongoing training and seeks out expertise and inspirational trainers.
28. The already good accommodation and very good resources are particularly well used. The large computer suite is complete with interactive whiteboard. Plans to build additional small group rooms will provide more teaching space and give opportunities to provide for pupils' needs as well as easing the number of children in each of the reception classes.
29. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. A wide range of lessons focuses on social and health development. Regular timetabled Circle Time for all pupils gives them the opportunity to take turns to express their feelings about various issues. The school has received a Healthy Schools Award. Parents attend evening workshops on sex and drugs education, parenting skills and developing self-esteem in children. The school council helps to devise playground rules and games. The "playground friends" initiative encourages good behaviour and relationships. As well as general rules, each class have written their own class rules.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and safety of pupils have a high profile in the school and the provision is very effective. The support and guidance, based on thorough monitoring, particularly for promoting academic success, is very good. Even though the pupils are young, their views are actively sought and acted upon.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very strong child protection and health and safety procedures.
- A very wide range of involvement in local and national projects.
- Good links with outside agencies.
- Thorough monitoring processes to enhance academic and personal success.
- Very good induction procedures.
- A successful school council that has helped suggest improvements.

Commentary

30. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' care and safety continues to be of prime importance and has been enhanced through better systems and procedures identified in the school improvement plan. Not only are all statutory requirements fully met but the school has

tried to provide pupils with a more active involvement through the development of a school council and class responsibilities. This includes participation with the Healthy Schools project, road safety and a walking bus. The buildings and grounds are regularly checked to ensure they are safe. Extra fences, pathways and soft landing areas are all in place following the recent refurbishment outside.

31. The arrangements for child protection are organised by the headteacher, and all staff, including learning assistants, have been trained to identify children at risk. More widely, those with special physical or emotional difficulties are monitored week by week to ensure both their personal and academic needs are provided for. This ensures that all pupils are able to form very good relationships with a number of adults. Regular support is given by the Educational Welfare Officer, who helps monitor absence and lateness, and, when necessary, the use of social workers and other agencies is obtained.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well cared for. All pupils use a system called “cued articulation”, which involves using the sign for a letter, from the beginnings of early reading. This helps them overcome problems with remembering letters and sounds in written form. When a statement of special educational need is awarded, the statutory requirements are met and provision is fully implemented. The “Jump Ahead” programme significantly strengthens the level of care and pupils are given extra support in small withdrawal groups.
33. Academic monitoring has improved since the last inspection. It now includes various measures to enable teachers to compare the performance of their class against national benchmarks. An innovative use of comparisons between the outcomes of the Foundation Stage profile and end of key stage tests has been trialled and is already providing information about the achievement of pupils through each year. The effect of this has been that the school has been able to respond quickly to any trends in the performance of different groups, such as those with special educational needs, higher attainers or those from different ethnic backgrounds. Personal development is more informally monitored, although, because the staff know the pupils so well, these procedures are also very effective. There are some good examples of the effectiveness of such strong systems. The overwhelming majority of pupils are able to achieve at least academic levels expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and high numbers do much better.
34. There are very good induction procedures in place when children enter the nursery or at other times. Prior to the start of the school year, parents are invited into the school on a number of occasions to ensure they understand the day-to-day management. Teachers take full account of the information provided by parents and ensure that concerns are dealt with swiftly. The school works very hard to fulfil its aim of making sure that each child reaches his or her potential. An example of this was the way that the school helped a family who had little spoken English. Books and advice were obtained as well as personal support regarding housing. In addition, the school provides extra information for families who are new to the English educational system. Parents’ evenings include a chance to discover the English teaching style and adapting this for pupils unused to it.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are very good links with parents and other schools, and good links with community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The information provided to parents is of a high standard.
- The very good support and advice for parents are considerate and effective.
- The parents’ association provides outstanding fund-raising that has enhanced the school’s overall provision substantially.
- The Beacon status funding has enabled the school to share its own expertise as well as providing a very good opportunity for staff to reflect on their own practice.

Commentary

35. Parents are provided with very good information about their children's progress. This includes a well-formulated annual report about the work that has been undertaken. Evaluative comments indicate the academic and personal strengths as well as those areas that need improvement. Parents and pupils have the opportunity to comment on these in writing as well as being able to talk through the findings with teachers. Staff are always available should other concerns or emergencies arise during the year. The governors provide statutory reports, a prospectus and other written information to a high standard. Pupils treasure the yearbook given out at the end of Year 2 as it has a pen-portrait and picture of all their classmates and is something they can keep to remind them of their time at the school.
36. The senior team's aim is to deal with any situations quickly and from the comments of parents it is clear that in the majority of cases parents find the school approachable, helpful and highly professional. They feel their children enjoy school, develop well, are treated fairly and work hard. This is also backed up by the comments of pupils in their questionnaires where there is a very high rate of approval in the responses. Particularly strong are the systems to deal with those pupils who have special educational needs and those who are from ethnic minorities where very high levels of support are provided for parents. The small number of bilingual parents can ask for assistance with translators. Those from ethnic minority groups are actively encouraged to be involved in the work of the school, both in lessons and through social events.
37. The fund-raising committee has raised significant amounts that have been used wisely to provide extra-curricular opportunities. They were at the heart of the matched funding for improving the computer suite as well as providing other resources in different curriculum areas. Their support is outstanding. There are also opportunities for social events and curriculum advice such as a parents' workshop on reading. A considerable number of parents help in school during the day, including weekly cookery sessions as part of the food technology programme.
38. Parents have high expectations for their children. The school works hard to try and provide a balance between these academic aspirations and providing a rounded education that will prepare all children for their next stage of education. The positive views of the overwhelming number of parents indicate that this balance is being maintained well. A very small number of parents wrongly think that the school is not open enough and that their concerns are ignored. For these parents, there are opportunities to come into school and see for themselves what is being achieved with their children.
39. The links with other schools have been substantially increased with the funding provided from its Beacon status. At its inception, the governors, senior management team and staff implemented systems to ensure that classes would not be unduly disrupted. As a result, many other schools are able to see the best practice at this school, whilst many seminars, courses and discussions have been provided. This has enabled all staff to reflect on their own practice and at the same time help others. The many letters of recommendation fully reflect the successes, including some from schools in difficulty who believe that the help has raised their own level of academic achievement. The school is also part of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) programme and regularly supports students from local universities. Links with the community are good and provide enhancement to the curriculum. These include trips out to local shops, businesses and other institutions for practical study as well as a high number of visitors, such as theatre groups and emergency service personnel.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership, management and governance of the school are **very good**. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is fully supported by an experienced senior management team and committed governing body. All statutory requirements are fully met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding; she has a clear vision for the school, is committed to excellence and motivates her staff very effectively so that they give of their best.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the school and fulfil their roles and responsibilities very well.
- An outstanding commitment to ensuring the school is fully inclusive for all pupils pervades the ethos of the school.
- Subject co-ordinators and key staff are committed to raising standards and are unafraid to innovate, so that their contribution to the school improvement plan provides a powerful agenda for continued development.

Commentary

40. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is the driving force that has enabled the school to maintain good standards and to retain a rich, broad and balanced curriculum. She has established a strong team so that there is a shared vision for the school based on enabling all pupils to succeed and developing their talents to the full. There is a real commitment to ensuring that the needs of special educational needs pupils and those with English as an additional language receive appropriate support. She has created a highly motivated staff so that teachers are clearly willing to work very hard for their pupils, try out innovative practice and share their knowledge with other schools in the area. The provision for special needs is very well led and managed. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator is proactive in seeking advice from outside agencies. Although only working part-time, she works closely with all staff and liaises on a regular basis with the governor responsible for special educational needs. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has a very good level of expertise and manages the provision very well.
41. The headteacher and governing body have successfully recruited and retained effective good quality teaching staff. Teachers have been supported very well, initially through good induction procedures, and have risen to the challenge to improve their own performance. Support staff are skilled and experienced and valued members of the school community. Subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable and are highly skilled at analysing the school's standards, identifying patterns in performance and taking appropriate action. This information informs the school improvement plan so that the aims are directly related to improving pupils' achievements and the quality of their learning. For example, a close analysis of weaknesses in the quality of pupils' writing enabled the school to focus on aspects for improvement and the so standards achieved in this year's tests are significantly better than in previous years.
42. The overall management of the school is very good. The school runs smoothly on a day to day basis. Those with financial and administrative roles are knowledgeable and efficient. There are excellent systems in place for monitoring, evaluating and assessing how well the school is doing in order to set priorities. The headteacher is strongly committed to ensuring that all staff have access to professional development and welcomed the Beacon School status as a forum for sharing expertise with other schools. Trainee teachers and other students are welcomed into the school.
43. Members of the governing body are fully committed to the aims of the school, and especially to the aim of providing an education that is fully inclusive of all pupils. They are perceptive, very supportive and clearly support the school's commitment to producing well-rounded individuals. They are not afraid to challenge and insist on reliable information so that they can judge the school's performance and help shape its direction.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	738,451
Total expenditure	701,866
Expenditure per pupil	3,423

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	(22,515)
Balance carried forward to the next year	37,462

44. The management of the school's finances is very good. The headteacher and bursar meet regularly to ensure that spending is properly planned and that the principles of best value are carried out. Governors are fully involved in the decision-making operations and have a clear view about what they need to do to fulfil their responsibilities. They are very good at sourcing grants and other funding and in making effective use of their finances. This is reflected in the strong balance being carried forward this year.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage in the nursery and two reception classes is very good overall and this represents very good improvement since the last inspection. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment above those expected nationally in children of their age. They achieve well and by the end of the Foundation Stage most children have met the Early Learning Goals, with many exceeding and attaining levels well above those expected for their age. Teaching and learning are very good and the very good support from classroom assistants impacts positively on the children's learning. There is a good mix of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Very thorough assessments inform planning. Children with special educational needs are identified early and very good provision is made to support them. Equally, very good support is given to children for whom English is an additional language. There is a very good induction process in place and good links with parents and other agencies. Leadership and management are very good and the enthusiastic co-ordinator has a high level of expertise. The very good accommodation and resources are very well used particularly the attractive outside areas which are in constant use as outdoor classrooms.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above average by the end of reception.
- There are very good relationships between adults and children and with each other.
- There is a very good induction programme in place.
- Children play confidently alone and in small groups with a wide range of suitable activities.
- Children are polite and very well behaved.

Commentary

45. Children arrive in the nursery with well-developed skills. After only a few days, the children are already settled into the routines of the nursery and reception classes. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The effective induction procedure ensures children are confident to readily join activities. Classrooms are bright, well-organised and rich learning environments. Adults provide very good role models and, as a result, relationships are very good. Children are interested in their learning and already feel secure in their new surroundings. Good use was seen of role-play activities encouraging social interaction, for example, some children shared a meal and washed up whilst others played happily in the small world area named "Richmond Park" and shared the horses and deer. Achievement is good because of the strong and well-directed teaching.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of speaking and listening on entry are very good.
- Teaching is very good and every opportunity is taken to promote speaking and listening.
- The love of books is promoted very well.

Commentary

46. Children enter the nursery with well-developed communication skills. Teaching is very good and children achieve well in this area of learning. A significant number will achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year. Many opportunities are created to develop speaking and listening, writing skills and the use of books. Very good emphasis is placed on children listening carefully to instructions and they are encouraged to express their feelings because of the good questioning of the children by adults. Foundation staff are particularly sensitive and offer good support to those learning English as an additional language.
47. A good range of books is available and the children in the nursery request adults to read stories to them throughout the session. They carefully look at books by themselves and in reception can retell stories. Reception children helped their teacher to retell Goldilocks using a big book without words. Children expressed how Goldilocks felt “disappointed” and baby bear’s porridge was “perfect”.
48. Daily opportunities are provided for children to write. In the nursery, children enjoy making marks on paper; one child requested “a rectangle” to write on. In the reception class, children are able to write an invitation to Goldilocks or the Three Bears to have porridge with them. They manage to write some initial sounds and some write their names unaided. Children use various signs as they sound their letters. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children know their letter sounds and many children are able to write sentences using capital letters and full stops.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve well.
- Well-planned activities give good opportunities for children to practise their number skills.

Commentary

49. Many children enter nursery with well-developed number skills. One child counted accurately the 12 children present and was able to take a message for the appropriate number of drinks required. Another child could say there was a “large” rock in the sand and compared it with the “smaller” one. A focus on practical activities using a wide range of attractive resources encourages early recognition and counting. Some reception children were observed able to count and order to ten and able to add one more on, using a “skating rink” and wooden figures. Children achieve well and are on course to reach, and many exceed, the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year.
50. Foundation Stage staff use every opportunity to extend mathematical knowledge through counting games and familiar rhymes, and this is a major factor in the very good teaching. Children using a singing game drove cars and passengers round the reception classroom counting in twos. Mathematical language was used as children made bread shapes from salt dough. Reception children were able to conduct a survey on what types of transport were used to go on holiday. Sand and water are readily available.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above those expected by the end of the reception year.
- The use of the attractive outdoors facilities as a classroom is excellent.
- There is a wide range of suitable activities and good opportunities are provided to enhance children's learning.

Commentary

51. In the Foundation Stage, there is separate planning for the use of the outside areas and the activities cover all the six areas of learning. This is designed well to provide the maximum opportunity. During the inspection, reception children enjoyed collecting the correct number of natural objects in numbered buckets and then discussed their findings with an adult. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve well. An attractive autumn collection was discussed and children were observed making leaf and bark rubbings using the trees in the grounds. Some children in nursery used the computer and could control the mouse. In the reception, children used a computer program and mouse proficiently to recognise letters and sounds. The goldfish in the nursery were being carefully observed and the opportunity to feed them was readily taken. Photographic evidence shows children looking at patterns and change through the seasons, cooking cakes and bread, gardening and observing ducks.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A stimulating outdoor area provides for good learning experiences.

Commentary

52. In the nursery, children play confidently with play dough. They mould and roll it using rolling pins and cutting tools. Outside, they rode tricycles competently and used the climbing frame and slide in the attractive garden. Reception children used balls, hoops and stilts, and balanced proficiently. Teaching is very good and activities are well planned and monitored to ensure there is a rotation so that individual children do not spend all their time on one activity. Most children are on line to exceed the Early Learning Goal for this area and achievement is good.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for singing and working with paint.
- Good role-play opportunities are provided.

Commentary

53. During the inspection, nursery children enjoyed painting at an easel and reception children printed coloured shape patterns. Teaching is good and the achievement of children is good.

Most are on line to highly exceed the standards expected by the end of the reception year. Children use different types of paint; reception children had painted apples using thick paint and spatulas in the style of Cézanne. Very attractive mosaics of minibeasts decorate the outside walls. Children helped to design and construct these from recycled pottery pieces set in glue. This was a project working with The Save The World Club. Children sing nursery rhymes tunefully. Classroom role-play areas are frequently changed according to the topic. Computers are used to provide a further stimulus in artwork.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are high.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- The subject co-ordinator provides strong leadership and guidance to teachers, which contributes to the high standards.
- Close attention to monitoring pupils' progress ensures that individuals receive the right kind of support to help them achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes.

Commentary

54. The very high standards seen on the previous inspection have been maintained and in some areas have been improved. There is good evidence to indicate that achievement in writing in the national tests for 2004 has demonstrated a positive outcome by providing greater challenge to higher attaining pupils. This is because the subject leader has scrupulously identified aspects of the subject to focus on to help these pupils improve their writing skills. Her passion and commitment to the subject inspires teachers to work hard to ensure that pupils learn well and enjoy their lessons.
55. Standards in all areas of the subject are well above average at Year 2. Pupils achieve well. It is clear that pupils in Year 1 are well settled and understand how their literacy lessons are organised, and can work together well. This helps them achieve well. The other very significant factor is the very clear commitment the school makes to providing an education appropriate to all pupils. The close attention to monitoring pupils' progress ensures that any special educational needs are quickly identified and good and appropriate steps are put in place. There is close attention to meeting individual learning needs, for example, with the "Jump Ahead" programme. Teachers plan to ensure that there is good visual stimulus and time for speaking and reflecting. Pupils with English as an additional language have their needs regularly assessed and their progress in acquiring English is monitored, and teachers have received training in the different strategies they can use to ensure pupils have full access to the curriculum.
56. The school has focused in the last year on raising standards in writing. Pupils respond well to the teachers' careful questioning and are confident to respond, extending what they say to give reasons. For example, pupils in Year 1 come up with some imaginative and interesting words to describe the fruit that Handa has in her basket (Handa's Surprise), which they then use effectively in writing "fruit" poems. There is a rigour and depth to teaching so that higher attaining pupils in Year 2 respond very well to the challenge of scanning a text to identify when capitals are used; the use of capitals having been identified as a priority for improvement. This helps them when they move on to answering questions on the text, so that their responses are accurate and they are able to record the key facts.

57. An important contribution to pupils' good achievement in writing is the level and quality of adult support in the class. This ensures that higher attaining pupils are challenged to think and reflect on their work and talk through their responses. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are helped to understand what they have to do and to maintain their concentration. This helps them achieve well, so that the majority of pupils with special educational needs achieve national average standards in writing by the end of Year 2. In some lessons, the level of challenge for these pupils means that they are very dependent on adult support and they occasionally lose the opportunity to develop their independence and to take charge of their own learning.
58. Standards in reading, speaking and listening are very high. Pupils read confidently and express a real enjoyment in reading. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors and know how books are organised. There is a good range of reading material for pupils to read at home and at school. In addition, parents run a small lending library of fiction and non-fiction books for pupils to borrow. Books are carefully selected to ensure they provide stories from a wide cultural perspective and meet the interests of all pupils.
59. Pupils develop their speaking skills because teachers have good questioning skills and ask probing questions. This is true in English lessons and in other subjects. They are confident and keen to share what they know, especially where lessons are based on their personal experiences, such as a geography lesson where children talked about where they had been on their summer holidays. Although pupils were eager to respond, they also listened carefully to each other.
60. The overall quality of teaching is good and in some lessons it is very good, which is better than seen in the previous inspection. Teachers are not afraid to innovate and have benefited from the exchange of ideas that the school's Beacon status provided for them. The content of lessons is carefully considered so that they will appeal to both girls and boys and pupils from different backgrounds. There is good awareness of the needs of different individual pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve well in relation to their own capabilities.
61. The school has high ambitions for its pupils and is not satisfied with second best. As a result, there is a close analysis of individual pupils' achievements so that they can be given appropriate help. This attention to detail in analysing test and teacher assessments to identify patterns and implement appropriate action is a strength in English. It is a key factor in raising standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

The good standards of literacy pupils achieve enables them to participate fully in lessons in other subjects. The themes that run across the curriculum mean that the knowledge they learn in one subject can be used to develop another. For example, the Year 2 literacy lesson quoted above linked to the history topic of the Tudors, and the search for facts in the text was supported by attractive displays of key figures of Tudor history. A scrutiny of classroom displays shows that pupils use computers to word-process their writing, for example, to write about themselves so as to provide captions to their digitally-produced photographs.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been maintained at high levels for a number of years and achievement is good.
- Teaching is consistently good with a number of very good elements.

- There is strong co-ordination of the subject and good training systems to improve teachers' skills.

Commentary

62. The provision in mathematics has continued to improve since the last inspection, despite the good standards that were evident then. In the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds nearly all pupils reached the level expected (Level 2) for their age. A substantial number achieved the higher Level 3. In comparison to all schools, standards were in the top five per cent nationally and against similar schools, standards were well above average. Those pupils in the 2004 cohort achieved similarly high levels, with over half (54 per cent) achieving above the expected level for their age. Those in the present Year 2 are on line to achieve similarly high levels, with nearly half achieving above the expected level for their age. At the start of Year 1, standards are above those expected for their age but, by maintaining academic rigour in the teaching, pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs make very good progress against their own capability and this is a major contributory factor in the school's success in national tests. Those with higher ability are also challenged well through the work they are given and are able to continue to make good progress through the school. A small number of pupils start with limited spoken language but, as with other groups, they also make good progress against their English speaking peers. This is evident from the thorough assessment procedures which are used to check that nobody underachieves.
63. The quality of teaching is good with a number of very good elements. All teachers have very good subject knowledge. From the in-service training, they are able to identify the best methods to interest, motivate and challenge different abilities. This is seen in the thorough planning systems in each class, which link closely to the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). The discussion sessions at the start of each lesson are conducted briskly. Little time is wasted and pupils are challenged to ask and answer pertinent questions. For instance, in Year 1, the teacher linked her introduction about number bonds to 20 with some previous work. She tried hard to move the learning on quickly when she realised that the pupils had fully grasped the concept of a number sequence. One boy showed how well he had taken this on board by answering *"I know 10 goes between 9 and 12 but it is next to the 9 because another number is missing."* A scrutiny of work from Year 2 shows that by the end of the year pupils are beginning to use some concepts expected in Year 3, such as in fractions and decimals, including whole number conversions.
64. Teachers use interesting methods such as practical and real-life problems to help pupils use the skills they have already learnt. This is an area that has moved forward well since the last inspection when it was inhibiting even better progress. Classes are organised into appropriate ability groups on some occasions and, when teachers think that it will provide a benefit, they work in mixed ability groups. This enables all pupils to build up their own knowledge through discussion and working together. The use of teaching assistants is extensive. They generally help those with special educational needs and are also able to work with small groups. Their interventions are very good, although on some occasions this limits the independence of pupils, as they are not used to working alone. The effect of this is to slow the pace of work as pupils chat or lose focus on what they are doing.
65. The school has a very wide range of different resources, which are used well to enhance the good learning. These are arranged on desks so that no time is lost when switching between tasks. In addition, teachers keep a watchful eye on the pace of lessons and ensure that there are different allied tasks to keep motivation levels high.
66. Much of the marking is conducted with the pupils in their groups. However, regular assessment tasks take place at the end of a unit to check whether pupils have understood the theme being studied. The information retrieved is used very well by the teacher to direct future work. It also provides the school with more strategic information, such as where there are gaps in the teaching, the progress through a year and whether through the two years pupils

make the necessary progress that is expected. This allows specialist support to be provided through intervention at an early stage.

67. The co-ordinator is experienced and conscientious. She has collated a wealth of information that directs the subject development plan. This is linked well to the whole school improvement plan and helps focus priorities and funding. The subject is managed very well. Regular training and the monitoring of teaching are all fully established on a rolling programme. Teachers and support staff know that they can ask for help and advice to support any weaknesses they have identified and this is freely given because the school has all the available information readily to hand.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. There is a good range of mathematical work in other subjects such as geography and design and technology. When cooking, for instance, pupils are encouraged to visualise how much their ingredients weigh and to make comparisons between different weights. Computers are becoming increasingly used as teachers become more familiar with different software programs. All this is helping pupils develop confidence in using and applying their knowledge in new situations.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high and have been maintained at this level for a number of years.
- Improvement has continued and has ensured that the achievement of pupils is consistently good.
- Teaching is consistently good with elements of very good practice.
- The strong co-ordination of the subject is directing where support is needed best.

Commentary

69. The standards in science have been maintained since the last inspection. In the 2003 national tests, teacher assessments show that standards were well above average compared to all schools and to similar schools. This is also reflected in the performance seen during the inspection. Achievement is good in all aspects of the subject. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the way that pupils use independent investigation and experimentation that has had a particular effect on those with higher ability as they are able to use the knowledge they have to find out other information. This has been because the school has identified where relative weaknesses have existed and has provided training and support for teachers that has improved the quality of learning.
70. By the end of Year 2, pupils know about the permeability of materials, electrical circuits, healthy living and the structure of forests. In the present Year 2, pupils are studying the properties of materials using specific vocabulary such as *“bendy, hard, soft and sharp.”* The quality of discussion is at least in line with that expected for their age with a substantial number working at levels above this. Through Year 1, pupils use more practical study to start them thinking in a scientific way, such as by making vegetable stew, looking at waterproof materials and by trying to run model cars down ramps. Again, standards are above those expected for their age and the written work shows that pupils are beginning to understand the importance of recording their findings.
71. Teaching is good and there are some examples of very good practice. As a result, pupils’ learning is also good. The planning used is based around a strong long-term structure that teachers translate well into their own weekly plans. There is a suitable balance between

practical and theoretical study. Discussion is used widely as well as instruction. This allows pupils to gain new knowledge and to then use it themselves. This is an area that has improved greatly since the last inspection when teachers directed too much work. Pupils are keen, interested and motivated by the work they are set and get excited when asked to do practical tasks. They enjoy chatting with each other about what they have found out and in this way share their skills. The high standards reflect the level of challenge provided by the teachers. This, combined with the use of science weeks and visitors, ensures that the curriculum is exciting and fun.

72. Good resources are available in the school and learning assistants are briefed well before a session begins to ensure that they can provide the same challenge as the class teacher. The introductory part of lessons seen during the inspection was longer than would normally be the case. This was because it was the start of a new academic year and teachers were confirming the levels of ability that had been indicated by the previous good procedures, which include regular assessment testing at the end of each unit of work. Analysis of these results helps direct the work of those with special educational needs and those who need more challenge because of their higher ability. Any issues with pupils with English as additional language are also carefully monitored to make sure that their scientific understanding is not inhibited by their lack of spoken language. As a result, the achievement of all pupils, whatever their ability, gender or background, is good.
73. The leadership of the subject is very strong. The co-ordinator has made a thorough analysis, review and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses and has provided the necessary training. Her own development plan links well to that of the whole school and the realistic budget is negotiable in light of any new priorities that arise.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement has improved over the last year with the introduction of work within the computer suite.
- Pupils' skills are adequate but more limited in the use of keyboards.
- More opportunities are needed for work in classrooms other than the good skills development in the computer suite.
- Training has had a positive impact on the confidence and competence of teachers.

Commentary

74. The standards of pupils at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected for their age. This is a similar finding to that of the last inspection. In the interim, various initiatives have been put in place. These include the development of a computer suite, better software and resources and further training of teachers to improve their competence and confidence. These are now starting to have an impact and considerably improve the achievement of pupils, which is now satisfactory overall.
75. Through Year 1, pupils are starting to learn the rudiments of computers, the use of electronics in our world and how these can be used effectively. They are given opportunities to use these to control moving vehicles and to draw and record their work. In Year 2, these early skills are being built upon. For instance, pupils are presently starting to use the Internet to research for information on their topic of the Tudors. They can see the relevance of this and understand how this differs from using books or other secondary sources. Their computer skills are more limited, however. The majority of pupils can use a mouse but not with confidence and this makes them slower than might be expected at retrieval. Similarly, their keyboard skills are limited. Whilst their work is not inhibited by their language skills, they often have to search

around for the right letter before keying it in. In other ways, their skills are more advanced. Some interesting pictures have been manipulated from digital photographs taken of their friends.

76. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and are able to pitch work at the correct level. Working alongside a specialist teacher is boosting some teachers' confidence, although a number of them already have good competence. Teachers understand the need to pursue topics started in the computer suite through their work in the classroom. However, this is less well developed. During the inspection, opportunities for using computers as part of another subject, such as during English writing, were limited. This was partly due to the time of year as teachers had only had their groups for a few days. Despite this, it is only recently that all classes have been networked and the processes are still being trialled to see how this can be developed efficiently. Children are managed well. Potential problems are diverted quickly with sensitive interventions from support staff. Their valuable assistance in classes, along with the high expectations of teachers, ensures that the pace of lessons is good. Pupils with different levels of ability are given work appropriate to their need and this ensures that pupils, both higher attainers and those with special educational needs, are able to make suitable progress. The small number of pupils with English as an additional language are watched carefully to make sure that they are able to progress in line with others.
77. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that an ICT curriculum training programme has been implemented following the non-completion of the national programme funded by the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). After its inception, it was found that the course was not suitable for the needs of the staff and so alternatives were sought. The local education authority provide good technical support and a classroom assistant is being used well to sort out problems and to support the work in the classroom. There has only been a recent introduction of Internet use and so an Internet Safety Policy is not yet fully in place. The school has already recognised this weakness and is resolving it rapidly.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. Computers and other forms of ICT are used well across a range of subjects, including science, geography and history. Many of the connections being made between subjects are still at early stage of development as teachers evaluate the effectiveness of the newly-acquired resources such as the interactive whiteboard. However, in the scrutiny of work from last year, there is good evidence of interrelated exercises, such as those in art and word processing.

HUMANITIES

No lessons were seen in history and only one lesson in geography. Evidence was taken from a sample of pupils' work from the previous year and discussions with the subject co-ordinators. No overall judgements can be made about standards, provision or teaching. Co-ordination of history and geography is satisfactory and ensures that resources to support the subjects are of good quality.

79. Sampling of work in history and geography and teachers' planning indicates that teaching covers the required elements of the subject well and follows the school policies and schemes of work. There are good links between subjects, for example, between design and technology and history, with pupils constructing castles at home with the help of their parents. Visits enhance their understanding of the different topics.
80. A good and lively lesson was seen in geography in Year 2 in which pupils were learning to name and locate the places where they had been on holiday. Because the lesson was based on pupils' personal experience and they had brought postcards and photographs of their holidays from home, they were very keen to share their knowledge with their classmates. A large map of the world enabled them to show that they had a very good idea where they had

been. Pupils could locate Florida, Australia and France, for example. They knew, as one pupil explained very clearly and confidently, that the United Kingdom *"Is where you live – Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, England"*.

81. In history, pupils learn about what history is and about significant historical figures, such as Guy Fawkes and Florence Nightingale. The current Tudor topic is enhanced by a visit to Hampton Court Palace, where they experience Tudor life. Photographs from the previous year show that pupils present their findings to the whole school and that their learning is assisted by role-play, such as dressing-up in Tudor costumes or those of knights and ladies.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
- Achievement is good; pupils have the opportunity to discuss their ideas and to record what they have found out.
- A good curriculum balance between learning about Christianity and other world religions.
- Good use of parents and visitors from different cultures to support the learning of pupils.

Commentary

82. The curriculum for religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils learn about Christianity and other main religions. Parents of pupils who represent other belief systems are often invited to contribute to lessons, for example, on Islam or Hinduism.
83. Teaching and learning are good. Planning is monitored to ensure that the agreed syllabus is followed and a suitable time is given to balance the necessary elements and themes. In the one satisfactory lesson which was observed, pupils in Year 2 were given a good grounding in the main principles of Islam, and the rituals involved in prayer and attendance at a mosque. This was because the book and follow-up video gave good visual information. They enjoyed the opportunity they had to carefully draw the good range of artefacts the teacher provided. Suitable support was given to all levels of ability and the planning showed that appropriately challenging work was given to each pupil.
84. Achievement is good. A scrutiny of work shows that pupils use their literacy skills well to record what they have learnt and acquire a good basic knowledge of the major religions. Those from different ethnic minorities are monitored carefully to ensure that the views and facts given to them reflect their own heritage. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and she emphasises the importance of celebrating the different faiths in the school. Termly plans link well with overall curriculum themes. Opportunities are made to ensure that other subjects, such as history and information and communication technology, are linked to the work within religious education, thus giving pupils the chance to see how spirituality has real links to our own lives.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very high standard of work is evident from all pupils.
- A wealth of art work covers all available space throughout the school.
- The arts are celebrated using a wide range of expertise.

Commentary

85. The achievement by all pupils is of a very high quality and exceeds the expectations of pupils of a similar age. There is a breadth of experience using a wide selection of different materials and media, a variety of different processes and an array of tools and techniques. There is evidence of large-scale collaborative work as well as two and three-dimensional projects. Pupils' work after the style of various famous artists of differing styles and cultures is displayed. Year 1 pupils made beautiful collographs and Year 2 pupils worked with a local artist and painted portraits of themselves using acrylics on board. Work is of an exceptionally high standard. In the school hall, there are more portraits produced in a Japanese style, 3D minibeasts made with salt dough and wall hangings, made with the help of a local artist during 'arts fortnight.' These were dyed and printed by the nursery children. Work linked to English, mathematics, humanities and ICT is evident. Year 2 pupils took pictures of themselves, in the playground, using a digital camera, and then used the same colours of paint and pastel to reproduce their work in the style of Bruegal. In the ICT suite, pupils' work in the style of Mondrian, Pollack and Picasso demonstrate good computer skills and knowledge of famous painters. During the inspection, the art club, which is over-subscribed, made tall giraffe measuring charts to a good standard.
86. Teaching is of a very good standard. During the inspection, Year 1 pupils painted various types of fruit from observation, after discussing a painting by Henri Rousseau. Other pupils designed relief prints after the techniques to be used had been carefully explained. Older pupils designed and made high quality clay relief tiles from observational drawings of the playground.
87. A very enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator sees art and design as an important integral part of school life. Many visitors and parents offer a wealth of expertise. Artists-in-residence are booked in for a series of sessions. There are high expectations and enthusiasm for the subject throughout the school. The Artsmark Gold has justly been awarded to the school.
88. No formal **music** lessons were observed during the inspection, but evidence shows that music features strongly in the curriculum. In assemblies, pupils sing in tune and with gusto. In discussion with the arts co-ordinator, very good use is made of the various instrumentalists amongst the staff. There are good links with Kingston music and arts service, who run a school recorder club. A visiting music teacher works with reception children for blocks of lessons covering music and movement and notation based on Kodaly.
89. No lessons were observed in **design and technology** during the inspection and therefore it is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in the subject. The scrutiny of displays and information from the co-ordinator shows that pupils gain experience using a wide range of materials and techniques. There are good examples of pupils' work displayed around the school. Many visits and visitors enhance the subject. Pupils learnt to join materials to make large structures in an architectural workshop. Pupils visit Pizza Express and make their own pizzas and a car designer and engineer evaluated the vehicles that pupils had made.

90. During the inspection, older pupils designed and made Tudor puppets and Tudor houses, and the results were of a high quality.
91. Only one **physical education** lesson was observed during the inspection. Year 1 pupils moved confidently around the hall and they demonstrated many different ways of moving their bodies. The good teaching challenged the pupils and they responded well. The new co-ordinator liaises well with the previous co-ordinator. The school is very well resourced and duplicate sets of small apparatus are available for outdoors use. Sport includes mini rugby and lessons from a nearby professional football club. A skipping club promotes health and wellbeing.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

92. No specific lessons were seen in this area and the evidence is based on the more informal procedures typical within an infant school. The use of Circle Time, discussions and work linked to social history and environmental geography all suggest that there are many opportunities offered. The school places a very high priority on the personal development of pupils and this is reflected in the range of photographic evidence from science weeks, environmental studies and the work of theatre groups to promote health issues. Provision is very good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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