

INSPECTION REPORT

**BARLEY CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED FIRST SCHOOL**

Royston

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117386

Headteacher: Mrs J Price

Lead inspector: John Messer

Dates of inspection: 13th – 14th September 2004

Inspection number: 266364

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	57
School address:	Church End Barley Royston Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG8 8JW
Telephone number:	01763 848281
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr G Stacey

Date of previous inspection: 30th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small village primary school has 45 pupils on roll who attend full time and 12 nursery and reception children who attend on a part-time basis. The school is much smaller than other primary schools. The school is a first school that has three classes and caters for children aged between three and nine. Most pupils come from the village and the surrounding area although a high proportion, nearly a half, comes from further afield through parental choice. All pupils are from white English speaking families. Four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly average but the range of ability is exceptionally wide. The school tends to attract pupils with learning difficulties at times other than entry to the nursery and reception classes and this means that in some year groups pupils' attainment on entry is often below average. The proportion of full-time pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, at 27 per cent, is above the national average. This is three times the percentage on the register at the time of the last inspection. The proportion who have statements of Special Educational Needs because they have serious learning difficulties is also above the national average. This represents a significant change in the characteristics of the school since the last inspection. There is a significant proportion of pupils who have autism and an even higher proportion who have dyslexia. A significant proportion of pupils enter and leave the school partway through this phase of their education. Historically a number of pupils leave the school at the end of Year 2

and transfer to private schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Lead inspector	English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, physical education.
9391	Norma Ball	Lay inspector	
10144	Mary Marriott	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, mathematics, history, geography, music, religious education, special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that provides an effective education for its pupils. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Teaching is mostly good and as a result pupils learn successfully. Pupils are very well behaved and have very good attitudes to learning. The leadership and management of the school are good and the governing body provides valuable support. The school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is good and by the end of Year 4 most attain standards that are above average.
- Across the school pupils achieve well in reading and attain standards that are above average.
- The ethos of the school is very good and strongly promotes pupils' happiness and well-being.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and helps them to achieve well; classroom assistants make a strong contribution to their effective learning.
- The most able pupils are not always sufficiently extended and therefore do not always achieve high enough standards in writing and mathematics.
- Across the school standards of swimming are high and by the time they leave the school most pupils are strong swimmers.
- Teaching is good but new teachers do not always receive enough guidance about the quality of work that pupils are expected to produce.
- Pupils' personal development is very good and their involvement in the life of the school is excellent; they participate closely in its development, show a deep loyalty and affection for the school, have very positive attitudes to learning, respect each other and enjoy excellent and supportive relationships.

The school has successfully tackled the issues raised in the last inspection report. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly. Provision for developing pupils' awareness of other cultures is now much stronger than it was. Governors are now much more closely involved with monitoring standards. Subject leaders monitor standards by sampling the work produced by pupils in different year groups. Overall standards are not as high as reported at the time of the last inspection. This is predominantly because the characteristics of the school have changed markedly since 1998; there is now a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and with severe learning difficulties. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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	B	A	B

writing	A	D	A	B
mathematics	A	A	C	D

*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' achievement is good overall. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and most attain the goals that children are expected to attain by the end of reception. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. The school's performance in national tests varies widely from year to year and reflects the wide variations in the characteristics of each year group. Great caution is needed when interpreting the comparative data because the very small number of pupils involved means that a single pupil can have a substantial effect on the school's overall grading. Also the proportion of pupils with special educational needs varies from year to year. The school's performance in the tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2003 was well above national averages in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The school's overall performance in the national tests declined sharply in 2004 because there was a high proportion of pupils in the year group who had significant learning difficulties. Pupils currently in Year 2 are likely to attain mostly average standards by the end of the year, although above average in reading. By the end of Year 4 pupils are likely to attain standards that are above average in speaking and listening, reading, science and ICT and average standards in writing and mathematics. Across the school pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory and most meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' personal qualities are very good; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They have very good attitudes to their work and have high levels of self-esteem. Behaviour is very good. Relationships are very good, and pupils work and play happily together. Attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching seen in lessons for children in the nursery and reception class was consistently good. It was always at least satisfactory and often good in Years 1 and 2. It was good and often very good in Years 3 and 4. Teachers work hard to provide a good quality of education and to promote effective learning. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that there are occasions when teachers do not always maintain high enough expectations of the quality of work that pupils, especially the more able, produce, especially in writing and mathematics. Pupils' very positive attitudes to work, and their very good behaviour, support learning well. Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and to the school's effectiveness. The good quality of care and guidance helps to foster self-esteem and confidence, which contribute to pupils' successful learning. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and the management of the school are good. The headteacher's effective leadership helps to ensure that the school runs efficiently. There is a strong sense of teamwork and a commitment to continuing improvement and raising standards. However, teachers are not always given sufficient guidance on how to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The governing body is effective and gives good support. Finances are managed well

and are directed towards the most important areas of priority. Responsibility for managing the curriculum has been delegated appropriately to subject leaders but several have been in post for a very short time and have not yet had time to have a major impact on raising standards, especially in science, design and technology and physical education. Governors ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The overwhelming majority of parents who returned questionnaires expressed satisfaction with the education that the school provides for their children. However, a small minority indicated that they were unhappy with provision and felt that standards in reading should be higher. Pupils are very pleased with their school and are proud to be members of the school community. They particularly like sporting activities but would like more free time and more visitors.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Provide greater challenge for the most able pupils so that they are extended and attain the higher standards, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Provide clear guidance to new teachers about the quality of work that pupils are expected to produce.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall pupils' achievement is good. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and most are likely to attain all the early learning goals by the end of reception. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and most achieve average standards by the end of Year 2, although standards in reading are likely to be above average. Pupils' achievement is good in Years 3 and 4 and pupils attain standards that are above average in most of the subjects inspected. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs has a significant impact on the standards that pupils attain and diminishes the school's overall performance in national tests.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in reading, develop an enthusiasm for children's literature and attain standards that are above average by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' achievement is good in Year 4 and by the end of the year most are likely to attain standards that are above average in speaking and listening, reading, science and ICT.
- In writing and mathematics, the more able pupils do not always produce work that matches their capabilities.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and their good achievement matches that of the other pupils.
- Across the school pupils achieve well in swimming and attain high standards.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery and reception class is broadly average but there is an exceptionally wide range of ability within each year group and in two of the three classes there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2, over a quarter of the pupils has learning difficulties and in the class for pupils in Years 3 and 4 over a third has learning problems. These high proportions constrain the standards that pupils attain, although nearly all make good progress in their learning in relation to their prior attainment.
2. The school's performance as measured by national tests for pupils in Year 2 declined in 2004 because a third of the pupils in the year group who took the tests had learning difficulties. The school's performance on average over the past 3 years shows that standards are above national averages in reading and broadly average in writing and mathematics. This matches inspection findings, which show that by the end of Year 2 standards are generally above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. The teacher assessments in science indicate that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and this also matches inspection findings. Pupils are particularly keen on reading and read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction. In

mathematics they enjoy counting in twos and recognise sequences, such as odd and even numbers. They know the names of common two and three-dimensional shapes and use computers to create block graphs of, for example, of favourite animals.

The table shown in this commentary gives average points scores for pupils. Each level in the National Curriculum is given 6 points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.2 (17.6)	* (15.7)
writing	14.2 (16.4)	* (14.6)
mathematics	15.8 (16.4)	* (16.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

** National results for 2004 have not yet been published.*

- Pupils' achievement is good in Years 3 and 4 because the teaching is good and sometimes very good. By the end of Year 4 pupils are likely to attain standards that are above average. The main exceptions are writing and mathematics, where standards are likely to be broadly average. This is primarily because the more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they should in these subjects. Most pupils are articulate and express themselves clearly and confidently. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. Most pupils attain standards in reading that are above average. They read fluently and have a good knowledge of children's literature. Although the more able pupils attain the appropriate end-of-year targets that are based on their prior attainment, the quality and quantity of the work that they produce in writing and mathematics does not always reflect their ability. This is because the teachers' expectations of what they should produce are not always high enough. Pupils achieve well in science and, by the end of Year 4, they attain standards that are above average. Pupils are good at conducting experiments and at drawing conclusions from their findings. They use computers and the Internet confidently and for a wide range of purposes, including word processing and research. Standards in ICT are above average by the end of Year 4. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory and most attain the standards that are described in the locally agreed syllabus. Too few lessons were seen and there was insufficient evidence available to make overall judgements about pupils' achievement and the standards they attain in the other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils in their class. This is predominantly due to the high quality of support they receive from teaching assistants. It is also due to the well-planned programmes of study that have been well designed to meet individual needs. Teachers are acutely aware of each pupil's particular learning requirements and match tasks to pupils' needs so that all experience success and make good progress.
- The whole school goes swimming on Monday afternoons each and every week throughout the school year. The teaching sessions are very well organised and classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the high standards that pupils attain. Most develop into strong swimmers by the end of Year 4 and several attain very high standards. One pupil in Year 1, for example, gained his certificate for swimming a mile in good style. The standards that pupils attain represent a particular strength of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Pupils like their school very much. They behave very well and show very positive attitudes to learning. The social, moral spiritual and cultural development of pupils is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel very enthusiastic about their school and really enjoy their work.
- Excellent relationships are evident and pupils respect each other and staff.
- Pupils feel a strong sense of responsibility for their school and join in the school council to help make important decisions.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good.
- Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is very good and their cultural development is good.

Commentary

- Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils arrive on time and parents are pleased that their children enjoy school and want to come. The school has worked hard to improve attendance levels but a number of children still miss some time in school to take holidays in term time. In the last academic year in one class almost one third of the pupils were absent for a family holiday. The education welfare office visits the school regularly and together with the headteacher monitors attendance and punctuality effectively.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

- From their very first days in school children are made to feel welcome. They settle rapidly in the nursery and reception class and quickly become used to school routines. They are encouraged to express their thoughts and opinions confidently. They are consulted about classroom procedures and encouraged to share responsibility for classroom management. Their personal, social and emotional development is very good and they are well on course to attain all the goals in this area of learning.
- Pupils show a deep loyalty to their school and enjoy being part of a happy school community. They are extremely enthusiastic about all they do in class and join in activities and events with equal pleasure. Pupils concentrate well and listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. Parents appreciate the way in which their children are expected to work hard and mature during their time at school. Pupils really want to do their best and show quiet dedication to the tasks that are set for them. For example, in a Year 3 /4 class pupils worked with real enjoyment on designing friezes similar to those used on Ancient Greek pottery, some following designs and others making their own designs. Pupils work well in groups and share ideas and support each other well. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and all pupils are treated fairly. Some pupils find concentration difficult and can be challenging at times. This behaviour is very

well managed by staff and teaching assistants, with the support of the headteacher. Pupils are gently encouraged to join in with their classmates again so they gain from their lessons, show enjoyment of their involvement in the class, and do not interrupt the learning of their classmates.

9. Pupils behave very well in lessons and also around the school. They treat each other with kindness and show courtesy and respect. Playtimes are happy, lively occasions when pupils mix well together and show awareness of the needs of others. For example, an energetic game of hockey was being played at lunch time by eight pupils but they quickly stopped if younger pupils were too close to the robust activity. Through the school council all pupils have contributed to the school rules. They show pride in what they have done and easily reach the high standards of behaviour they have set for themselves. Pupils understand that what they do also affects other people and this has a positive effect on their happy and relaxed relationships. They have a clear sense of responsibility, not just for their own behaviour but also for the part they each play in their school community. In recent years the school has not had to resort to excluding pupils for poor behaviour or for being unable to adjust to school. There are excellent relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils and this adds greatly to the family feeling that is part of the school's productive ethos.
10. All pupils feel that they are valued and that they have an important part to play in what happens in their school. Through the school council pupils know they can share their ideas about the school and its development and are confident that their views will be valued. The sense of worth and independence pupils have contributes greatly to their moral and social development. Within lessons, in assembly and also in discussions there are quiet and reflective moments in which even the youngest children can reflect and think quietly about their own ideas and explore them. This adds an important spiritual dimension to their work and to their development. Pupils participate with great enthusiasm in school events, village activities and in the wider community. Through lessons and visitors who come to the school, as well as through the extensive and rich variety of visits made out of school, pupils are given valuable opportunities to experience and explore new things and gain not only knowledge but special memories from these experiences. They are helped to develop a respect for other cultures and traditions and understand that all people and other ways of life have value. Visitors such as the Aborigine storyteller and Indian dancers have enriched the learning of pupils and in art, music, and religious education pupils are able to develop further their understanding of other cultures, faiths and ways of life. Their natural generosity of the pupils and their willingness to help others have been united in the support and interest shown in the support they give to Khandalight, a local charity, and a valuable partnership has been forged with a school in Khandal.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' effective learning. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. It is taught thoroughly and meets legal requirements. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the welfare and care of pupils. Very good links with other schools make a strong contribution to the school's effective provision.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 and 4. They are satisfactory and often good in Year 1 and 2. Assessment systems are well developed and are used well to identify individual learning needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is good and sometimes very good, and this helps pupils to achieve well.
- The teaching of swimming is good and this helps pupils to attain high standards.
- Teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils, especially the more able pupils, are expected to produce are sometimes too low, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are sensitive to the learning needs of each individual pupil.
- The school is good at meeting the needs of shy, anxious and reluctant learners.
- Pupils with special educational needs receive very good teaching and this helps them to achieve well.
- Classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning.

Commentary

11. As at the time of the last inspection the teaching seen in all lessons was always at least satisfactory but in 1998 teaching was judged to be predominantly very good; it is now predominantly good. There has been a succession of newly qualified teachers who, inevitably, often lack experience of taking classes with the exceptionally wide range of age and ability found in this school. In the lessons seen teaching and learning were good in the nursery and reception class, always at least satisfactory and often good in the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2. In the class for pupils in Years 3 and 4 the teaching was always at least good and there were examples of very good teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 20 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	14	4	0	0	0

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

12. In the Foundation Stage teaching in personal, social and emotional development is very good and it is good in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. It was not possible to see enough teaching in the creative area of learning to form a judgement about teaching and learning. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and it is good in Years 3 and 4. The teaching of English, science and ICT is good overall, and it is satisfactory overall in mathematics. Too few lessons were seen to make judgements about the quality of teaching in the other subjects. Particularly good teaching for children in reception and for pupils in Years 1 to 4 was seen in swimming.
13. The teaching in Years 3 and 4 is often lively, energetic and thought provoking. It is not always so effective for pupils in Years 1 and 2 because time is not always used well and

lessons are not always sufficiently stimulating. Across the school teachers plan lessons thoroughly but in Years 1 and 2 in particular insufficient attention is paid to the quality of the work that pupils are expected to produce by the end of the lesson. In all classes teachers' expectations of the quantity and quality of work that the more able pupils should produce are sometimes too low. Consequently these pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. Although most pupils attain the challenging National Curriculum targets that the school sets annually, their good achievement is not always reflected in the quality of the work that they produce.

14. There is a relatively large number of adults in each class. The classroom assistants and the nursery nurse are highly skilled and support pupils exceptionally well. One particular strength of the teaching is the detailed knowledge of each individual pupil that each teacher has developed. The teaching groups are small and this helps teachers to tailor tasks to the needs of individuals. In a good mathematics lesson for the seventeen pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, one classroom assistant supported the younger and lower attaining group, one supported those with special educational needs whilst the teacher taught the higher attaining older pupils and even provided a special activity for one pupil who has been identified as a more able mathematician. Consequently all were appropriately challenged and all were making good progress. They all came together towards the end of the lesson to explain what they had learned. In this way the whole class felt involved and united in their learning.
15. The relatively small classes and the small teaching groups within classes allow adults to form particularly close and productive relationships with the pupils. The school has been highly successful in encouraging reluctant learners and those who were unwilling to attend their previous schools to integrate fully and to flourish. Consequently the school has developed a reputation in the area for being good at nurturing pupils with learning difficulties or who have difficulty in adjusting to attending school. The school reports and records confirm that shy, retiring pupils do well in the caring environment that the school offers. The teaching does much to encourage good personal development.
16. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from their teaching assistants and teachers. They benefit from the methodical approach to teaching basic skills. Individual education plans are well constructed and are used as a basis for classroom planning. There is very good use of a multi-sensory approach to learning and this, together with excellent relationships, helps pupils to become confident learners. In the classroom for pupils in Years 1 and 2 the teacher has created a sensory room, with lights, sounds and different textures. This creates a stimulating atmosphere that pupils respond to well.
17. The lessons seen at the local swimming pool were exceptionally well organised so that pool time was used efficiently. Classroom assistants and volunteer mothers made a strong contribution to pupils' successful learning. The teachers organised teaching groups well and skills were taught systematically. Teachers demonstrated that they had a good understanding of how to teach swimming effectively. Pupils achieved well and this benefited their confidence and all round feeling of well-being. Sports generally have a high profile in the school and after-school sports activities are well taught and well attended. This does much to compensate for the inadequate school hall, which is too small to allow gymnastics and dance to be taught effectively.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils and there are good opportunities for enrichment beyond the school day. The school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of visits, visitors and clubs brings the curriculum to life.
- Provision for sport, especially swimming, is very good.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good and teaching assistants are deployed very well to support pupils' learning.
- Planning for pupils' personal, social and health education is exceptionally good and pupils' achievement is very good in this area of their development.
- Children receive a good start to their school life in the nursery and reception class, where a rich and varied curriculum provides a good range of learning experiences.

Commentary

18. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. All the required subjects are securely represented, with literacy and numeracy given good attention. There is a clear framework for developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school that has been well supported by the school's leadership and management. Developing links between subjects are helping to make learning more relevant for pupils. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations, which not only keeps them interested and involved but also facilitates effective learning. Pupils use ICT to support their learning in other subjects well and develop competency through good opportunities to use computers.
19. Very many 'first hand' experiences bring the curriculum to life, making learning relevant and often exciting for pupils. Visitors, such as theatre and music groups, and the use of the community enrich pupils' experiences; for example, the local Fire Brigade work with the first schools to develop an awareness of fire safety in the home by organising a morning of emergency situations for the children to work through. Well led and popular clubs in gardening, art, needlework, ocarina, drama, sports and ICT help to develop important skills.
20. The school develops pupils' skills in sport very well. Swimming is very well promoted and all pupils in the school swim once a week throughout the school year. This leads to very good achievement with many pupils able to swim long distance awards up to one mile.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, enabling them to achieve well. This is because their work is usually carefully matched to their abilities in English and mathematics, and teaching assistants are effective in helping to meet their diverse needs. As a result most make good progress toward the targets set for them.
22. Personal, social, and health education has a high profile and is embedded in the school's work. It is incorporated into and monitored through the schools' planning to ensure that multicultural education takes place. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The actions of pupils provide evidence that they know that it is important to make 'the right choices' in their work and play. Pupils learn about the beneficial and harmful use of drugs, and the importance of a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle.

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good and take account of the early learning goals. Teachers ensure that children in the reception class carefully build on work undertaken in the nursery. Children take part in a wide range of planned and carefully structured activities and experiences, which gives them a good start to their education.
24. Even though the school has recently acquired new buildings, which greatly enhance the facilities, there are still shortcomings in the accommodation. The hall used for indoor physical education is not actually owned by the school but is rented. Although restored and renovated, it is inadequate to teach the full physical education curriculum. The outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage is very small. The school is aware of this and the friends of the school have a three phase development plan to improve outdoor facilities for all pupils. Although the school has enough resources to teach the curriculum, these need to be developed further, particularly in science. The school has good links with the middle and upper schools to which most pupils transfer, which ensures that pupils make a smooth transition.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for in a safe and healthy environment. Pupils are provided with good support and guidance based on the good knowledge and understanding of individual needs that is shared by all staff. Excellent opportunities exist to canvass pupils' views and involve them fully in the development of their school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good attention is given to matters of health and safety and the welfare of pupils.
- All adults know pupils well and are very caring.
- Monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good.
- Induction arrangements for new pupils are well organised.
- Pupils are fully involved in their school and excellent arrangements exist to seek their views.

Commentary

25. All staff regard the care and welfare of the pupils in the school as a high priority. Child protection matters are managed well and health and safety procedures, including first aid care, are well organised. There are careful and well-ordered induction arrangements for new pupils, with opportunities in the term before the children start in the nursery for parents and pupils to come in to the class. Transfer to middle schools is also carefully planned so that pupils are confident and relaxed about their move to the next stage of their education.
26. Staff know the pupils in their care very well. Personal development is sensibly monitored by teachers and the information is used effectively to promote their development. In some classes there is a more structured and formal recording of information about personal development than in others. However, the overall very good knowledge staff have of the pupils in their care and the sharing of important information between staff ensure pupils are guided well and supported fully. All staff happily spend time with pupils, and help and

encourage them. In turn pupils feel very confident in the staff and share concerns and problems in an easy manner because they are sure they will be listened to and helped. The support and expertise of a number of support services and agencies are very well used by the school to supplement the care and guidance given by staff and further support the needs of pupils. The education welfare officer, educational psychologist and other agencies all play an important part in the very good level of care provided for pupils.

27. Pupils are consulted regularly through surveys, class discussion and the regular weekly school council assembly. Their ideas are valued and their suggestions are taken on board. For example, pupils contributed ideas for the new building programme and chose colour schemes and styles. They can talk about this with real enthusiasm and show visitors what they have achieved. Pupils played a full part in the development of the school behaviour policy. As a result pupils feel a real sense of ownership of their school. They want their school to be a happy and friendly place and they understand that what they each do and say has an effect on the whole school community. Within classes pupils undertake small tasks willingly and show pride in what they do well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and very good links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good partnership with parents is well supported by a good range of information about the school and pupils' progress.
- The Friends of Barley School provide very good moral and practical support for the school.
- Links with the village and wider community are very well developed and used effectively to extend the learning experiences of pupils.
- Links with other schools are very good, valued by both parties, and very supportive for pupils.

Commentary

28. The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with all aspects of the school and like the very special happy and supportive community in which everyone is valued and respected. A few parents were concerned that homework in the form of reading and spellings was not adequate but the inspection found no evidence for this. Concerns were expressed about the leadership of the school, especially in terms of ensuring that pupils were attaining high enough standards. The inspection found that the headteacher provided good leadership and that pupils achieved well during their time in the school. However, the inspection also noted that not all pupils, particularly the most able pupils, were always fully stretched. Some parents also felt that the annual reports they received outlining their children's progress were impersonal. The inspection found that reports were full, helpful and clearly personalised for each child. They provide a very secure picture for parents of how their child has worked and achieved during the year as well as highlighting some areas in which they can improve their work. Parents were glad that their children were encouraged to work hard and helped to mature and were pleased that

behaviour in the school was very good. They respect that all pupils are treated fairly and helped to settle well into the school so that they can achieve and make progress.

29. Regular parents' meetings each term inform parents generally and individually about the work to be done in class and the progress their child is making. Frequent newsletters provide additional important information. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are helpful documents that give a clear picture of the school. Curriculum events for literacy and numeracy have been organised to guide parents in these important initiatives and to help them to support their children at home, and this is a good feature of the school. Parents' views are sought and valued and complaints are dealt with efficiently. A number of parents and members of the village help in school on a regular basis, especially with hearing pupils read and with practical work in class and around the school. This help is greatly valued and used effectively by the school to support pupils. The Friends of Barley School provide very considerable support to the school on a regular basis through their social and fundraising activities. Recent additions have included the outdoor play equipment and there are plans to extend the wooden play units further.
30. The school is very much part of village life and pupils join in many village activities including the village fair. Sponsorship from local firms for school events and the football team, help and support from local artists and strong links with the local church all contribute significantly to the school and the education of the pupils. From the wider community there has been an especially valuable education initiative linked to the recent building project. A range of visits in the local area also bring an important outside dimension to their learning and help to promote their personal and social development.
31. The school works well with other schools in the area, sharing information and support for the good of each individual partner. Links with local middle schools, joint staff training and the involvement in the Royston Pyramid of schools are valuable to staff and also supportive of pupils in their transfer to next stage of their education. Pupils from secondary schools are provided with work experience places in the school and their letters of thanks reveal how valuable they find this experience. Overall the links with local schools is of great importance to the school and well used for the benefit of both staff and pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads a team that constantly reflects on its work and seeks to improve its performance. It endeavours to improve pupils' achievement but improvements in standards are constrained by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 to 4. The work of the governing body is good and governors provide effective support.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides effective leadership and clear direction with a strong emphasis on meeting the widely varying learning needs of each individual pupil.
- Governors are closely associated with the school and visit regularly.
- The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- New teachers are not always provided with enough guidance and support to ensure that the quality of their teaching always matches the good teaching that established teachers provide.

- There are good assessment systems that effectively promote the quest for higher standards.
- Financial management is good.

Commentary

32. The leadership and management of the school are good. The characteristics of the school are very different when compared with those at the time of the last inspection. Nearly all the staff have been appointed since the last inspection and the school has recruited a succession of newly qualified teachers. The headteacher has worked hard since her appointment, four years ago, to broaden the school's provision so that it is able to cater for the needs of an increasingly wide range of pupils with learning difficulties. She has been successful in this initiative and she has managed provision for pupils with special educational needs very well. The headteacher has taken a strong lead in promoting inclusion. The school's ethos is based on a warm, welcoming approach to all. The headteacher has taken a lead in formulating a document that describes the learning ethos that the school seeks to achieve. The twelve key elements of the document describe the school's aims and refer to both staff and pupils. One, for example, stresses the need for a good balance between physical and mental growth, with a particular emphasis on well-being. The school has been especially successful in promoting high levels of care and personal development. As part of the school's strong belief in involving the pupils themselves in school developments, the learning ethos has been discussed with the pupils, who have expanded each key element by adding their views on what each means for them. These have been celebrated in a display in the assembly and dining hall as a constant reminder of what each member of the school community is striving to achieve. In this way the headteacher has taken a strong lead in giving the school clear direction. Staff work hard and as a team committed to providing all pupils with a productive learning environment.
33. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs. The management of provision is very good but this does occupy a significant proportion of the headteacher's time as there is a relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The targets in pupils' individual education plans are clear and manageable. Records about pupils with special educational needs are detailed and provide a clear and thorough record of individual progress and support. Careful monitoring of pupils' development, to which classroom assistants make a valuable contribution, informs the focus of the formal review of provision for each pupil. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs liaises closely with the school and gives good support.
34. Governors are closely associated with the school and several regularly work voluntarily to support pupils' learning. Governors also visit the school according to a carefully devised timetable. They each have a particular area of the curriculum in which they take a special interest and which they are responsible for monitoring. They ask searching questions and are keen to develop a deeper understanding of how the school functions and how standards might be improved. They have been particularly supportive in overseeing the new building works and in ensuring that pupils work and play in a safe environment. The school's accommodation has improved greatly since the last inspection.

35. Although standards are not as high as reported at the time of the last inspection, there is a constant drive for improvement. The school has good systems for measuring pupils' performance as they progress through each successive level of the National Curriculum. The headteacher takes a lead in setting targets for each individual pupil in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These are challenging targets and if met would demonstrate good achievement. The targets are tailored to individuals' particular learning patterns. Most pupils meet their targets and this confirms that most achieve well. It also demonstrates the school's commitment to ensuring that pupils attain standards that are as high as might reasonably be expected. However this good achievement is not always reflected in the quality of work that pupils produce in lessons. This is because staff do not always have high enough expectations of the quality of work that pupils produce. However, the school improvement plan describes clearly how the school intends to raise standards, especially in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
36. Due to lack of funding for classroom release time, subject leaders have had limited opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects across the school. They have not, therefore, had sufficient influence on ensuring that teaching in their subjects is consistently good. Also new teachers do not always receive enough guidance on how to provide teaching of the highest quality. The school is in the process of introducing a teaching and learning policy that it is designed to provide the necessary guidance.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	240 144	Balance from previous year	37 746
Total expenditure	241 157	Balance carried forward to the next	36 733
Expenditure per pupil	4 728		

37. Financial planning is good. Appropriate priorities are clearly identified and described in the school's detailed school improvement plan. This is closely linked to the school's spending plans so that funding is available to support improvements. The school has a substantial amount of money left over at the end of the last financial year but this is needed to pay for the new building work that has recently been completed. The expenditure per pupil is much higher than usual for a school of this size. This is because the school receives substantial extra income to provide support for the pupils with significant learning difficulties. Taking into account the good quality of teaching, pupils' good achievement and that the standards the school achieves often compare well with those of similar schools, the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is good for children in the Foundation Stage and provision for their personal, social and emotional development is a particular strength. The ratio of adults to children is very good in the nursery and reception class. In the mornings there are six part-time children of nursery school age, six part-time reception children and seven full timers. In the afternoons the class is very small with only seven children. The teacher, the nursery nurse and the classroom assistant work well as a team and the teaching is good. When they start in the nursery, children have a very wide range of early learning skills but overall attainment is generally about average. Children achieve well but standards are not as high as reported at the time of the last inspection because the intake has in recent years included more children who are less advanced in their early learning skills than in the past. The Foundation Stage is well managed so that the appropriate areas for development are identified and worked upon. Teaching and learning are good, with a good emphasis on speaking and listening as well as personal development. It was not possible to make judgements on overall provision in creative development as insufficient teaching could be seen in this area of learning. The classroom is bright and welcoming for children and this promotes their interest in learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Independence is fostered well through well-established routines.
- Children 's achievement is particularly good; they learn to share and work happily together and are encouraged to express ideas confidently.

Commentary

38. Children achieve very well in this area of learning and most are likely to attain all the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. Teaching is very good and helps children to form very good relationships and enjoy learning. The staff know the children's needs very well and give support at just the right level to build children's confidence as well as promoting independence. An understanding of other cultures is fostered well. Children celebrated the Chinese Moon Festival by making Moon Cakes to eat together as part of their celebrations. They made Moon Festival Cards to give to each other and to take home. Because the Foundation Stage class is small, with just 18 children in the group, the teacher knows each individual extremely well and is sensitive to their individual needs. Consequently children flourish in the stimulating learning environment.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching extends children's language well.
- There is a good balance between learning the sounds that letters make and developing an enthusiasm for listening to stories.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well in this area of learning. Most will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. Good teaching ensures that children learn at a good rate. Children enjoy books and have access to these as well as plenty of opportunities to listen to stories. Adults read these in a lively manner, often with additional resources that capture children's imagination. In one session in the nursery and reception class, for example, the teacher used a range of vegetables to grip the children's attention and children listened very carefully to the story of 'Oliver's Vegetables'. Children who are in the reception year enjoyed the story of 'Lady in the Moon'. They talked about what happened in the story and listened carefully so that they understood why the Chinese celebrate the 'Lady in the Moon' with a special festival. The teacher and her team of support staff ensure that the sounds of letters are learned thoroughly and this helps children as they develop their early reading skills and begin to write. Play activities are set up so that children can write for different purposes and this encourages their writing skills well. During a 'show and tell' session, children developed their speaking and listening skills well. Children were encouraged to talk about their chosen toy to each other and then, using their observational skills, to draw and label it. For example, a Triceratops was written as 'Tristops', which clearly showed the developing phonic skills using the letter of the week 't'.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good emphasis on developing mathematical language.
- Children learn from first hand experiences that are carefully planned.

Commentary

40. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well in this area of learning. They are confident learners. Most children will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception class. The good emphasis in the Foundation Stage class on developing mathematical language means that children talk about what they are doing in accurate terms such as 'more than' or 'the same as' as they work. The good use of resources by all adults means that children learn through practical activities. When measuring spoonfuls of ingredients to make dough for the Moon Cakes children used language well. They begin to understand different shapes and use the correct vocabulary, such as 'a round beetroot', to describe them, and begin to understand how to organise, sort and place objects in order according to size. They made a simple grid to illustrate the class's favourite cereal for snack. Many opportunities for play are provided, for example threading beads, numbering from 1-10 and 1-20 and printing sets of repeating patterns.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Computers are used very well to support children's learning.
- Children's curiosity about the natural world is fostered well.

Commentary

41. Children have a wonderful time as they explore and experiment with natural materials. This helps them to develop a deeper knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They take care of living things, taking great care of the class gerbils. Children used their developing skills well as they made Moon Cakes for the Chinese Festival and made 'Happy Moon Day' cards to take home with them. Children carefully and confidently planted cress seeds, using glue to fix cotton wool onto card, and used the watering can to wet the cotton wool before sprinkling seeds onto it. They are intending to use the cress as grass for the beginning of a small model garden. Teaching and learning are good. Children are encouraged to think for themselves and try out ideas. This can be seen in the nursery and reception classroom, as children persevere to build with wood and other construction materials and find different ways to join materials together. Staff, make sure that children learn from first-hand experiences and talk to them about why they think things happen, such as the conditions needed for seeds to grow. Children enjoy computers and know how to load a CD, click on different icons to make things happen and how to explore programs. Children used one particularly favourite program, about a caterpillar, with great excitement, showing high levels of skill. Most children will have attained the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class and they achieve well in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outdoor areas, although limited in scope, are used well to promote imaginative play.
- Provision for swimming is very good.

Commentary

42. In their physical development, children's achievement is satisfactory and most will attain the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. Children have plenty of opportunities to cut materials, using different tools, and to join these in different ways. Teaching and learning are good but the lack of an adequate hall and a well developed outdoor play area limit achievement. Staff teach children how to master their control of paintbrushes and pencils. In the hall, children learn to follow instructions, control their physical movements and develop their sense of balance as they travel over different equipment. The outdoor area is very small but staff make the best use of the available space. Children have some small climbing equipment that they can clamber over and use for imaginative play but there is limited space to ride wheeled vehicles. Children go with the whole school to visit the local swimming pool once every week during the school year. This very good provision helps children to develop swimming skills particularly well.

Children's creative development was sampled.

43. Too little teaching was seen in the **creative area of development** to make judgements about overall provision. Children are encouraged to express ideas individually through a good range of media. They learn to paint using different colours of their choice, as they explore texture, colour shape and form. Children work imaginatively with clay as they make ingenious models. There are good resources for role play that are used very well by the children. They enjoy making menus and cooking in the café. The staff set up activities with great care so that they are equally appealing to boys and girls, and this painstaking preparation is successful in attracting children to play imaginatively and develop their ability to co-operate with others and extend their language. The well organised learning environment extends children's language well through good opportunities for imaginative play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop an enthusiasm for reading, achieve well and attain standards that are above average.
- Pupils enjoy writing and are enthusiastic learners.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to detail about accurate spelling the neat presentation of work.
- Pupils speak confidently and most are able to express their thoughts and opinions well.
- Teachers do always expect enough of pupils, especially the most able.

Commentary

44. The good foundations for reading and writing that are laid in the nursery and reception class are consolidated in Years 1 and 2, where pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most pupils are likely to attain standards in most aspects of the subject that are broadly average by the end of Year 2 although in reading standards are likely to be above average. Pupils' achievement in speaking, listening and reading is good in Years 3 and 4 so that most attain standards that are above average. Pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory and most pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 4. Nearly all pupils make at least satisfactory progress and overall most make good progress, but the most able are sometimes capable of achieving more and attaining higher standards. Standards are not as high as reported at the time of the last inspection, primarily because there is now a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils have an enthusiasm for reading and writing. Most read with confidence, describe the main characters in stories clearly and describe the plots accurately. Most demonstrate a wide knowledge of children's authors and illustrators. Many read with lively expression and one explained, 'I like acting out the story with my voice'.
45. Although pupils write confidently and often express themselves vividly, the quality of their writing is sometimes spoiled by careless spelling and poorly presented work. Several of the more able pupils have a good understanding of the grammar and some of the techniques that can be used to enliven their writing. Most pupils have a good understanding of punctuation and the more able use inverted commas accurately to denote speech. They create their own inventive similes such as, 'As happy as a hyena' and 'As stunned as a stick insect'. However, pupils' spelling, including the spelling of the more able pupils, is often carelessly inaccurate.
46. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and it is good in Years 3 and 4. One particular strength of the teaching across the school is the excellent relationships that have been established between teachers and pupils. Pupils feel comfortable about asking questions and expressing their viewpoint. Generally lessons progress at a brisk pace but there are occasions in Years 1 and 2 when the teacher's expectations of the quantity and quality of work that will be completed

in a given time are too low. Consequently pupils, especially the more able, do not always achieve as well as they could.

47. The school has recognised that pupils' handwriting is an area for improvement. Consequently this has been an area of focus and good teaching was seen in the classes for pupils in Years 1 to 4. Handwriting is now taught regularly according to a new system that has recently been introduced. In Years 1 and 2 imaginative teaching enlivened one handwriting lesson where the teacher wove a story around the letter shapes that the pupils practised. In this lesson pupils' concentration was intense as they carefully copied the letter patterns. In a good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 the teacher carefully modelled the diagonal joins and again pupils concentrated hard as they learned to create joined writing.
48. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a good knowledge and understanding of national initiatives and curricular developments. She maintains a sound overview of provision by sampling the work that pupils produce. She correctly identified handwriting as an area for improvement and took action to improve standards. However, she has not had the opportunity to observe teaching and learning in lessons across the school in order to identify areas for improvement. Several parents consider that teachers do not hear pupils read often enough. The school's emphasis has shifted from hearing individuals read for brief periods to spending time more effectively by reading and analysing books together in groups for an extended period of time. Also pupils are often expected to read information on computer screens. In one lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils were required to read long passages and to replace all the adjectives from a list of possible alternatives. There are many such opportunities during the school day for pupils to practise and extend their reading skills. Partly to allay parents' concerns and partly to promote a partnership with parents in pupils' learning, the staff hold an annual literacy meeting for parents where they explain the school's approach to the teaching of literacy and how the school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Most parents play a full part in this partnership by sharing books with pupils at home and by encouraging their children to develop an interest in a wide range of good quality fiction. This makes a major contribution to pupils' effective learning. Special book weeks are organised each year to further develop pupils' interest in books and reading for pleasure.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Pupils have many useful opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects. In religious education, for example, they retell Bible stories and in geography they write about conditions in the countries they have studied. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their reading skills when following instructions in computer programs or reading problems in mathematics. Good opportunities are provided to extend speaking skills during assemblies and school council meetings. In one school council meeting pupils suggested how a section of the school behaviour policy might be re-drafted, for example.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good assessment systems have been introduced and these are used well to check on pupils' progress.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently extended and do not always do as well as they could.
- There is a lack of attention to detail which detracts from the quality of the work that pupils produce.

Commentary

50. Pupils enter the school with standards that are average. Standards of work by the end of Years 2 and 4 are likely to be broadly average. This suggests a decline in standards since the last inspection, when they were well above average. However the reason for standards being lower than they were is that there is now a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils attain standards that are as high as might reasonably be expected. Pupils currently in Years 3 and 4 achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. More able pupils gain a good understanding of number and are on course to attain standards that are above average but they are not always sufficiently challenged and do not always produce work of a high quality.
51. The school has introduced good assessment procedures. Results from regular tests are thoroughly analysed so that areas of weakness can be identified and corrected. Regular tests also help teachers to monitor pupils' progress, and help a smooth passage from class to class. Most teachers are aware of how pupils are learning on a day-to-day basis and individual and group targets help them to monitor pupils' progress. However, the quality and effectiveness of marking are inconsistent and marking does not always help pupils to know what they should do to improve their work.
52. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils work with good concentration. Support for pupils with special educational needs is very good and teaching assistants ensure that pupils take a full part in lessons. Because of this all groups of pupils enjoy their lessons, have positive attitudes to their learning, and work hard together.
53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. The scrutiny of the work that pupils produced over the last year indicates that teaching is mostly satisfactory. In the best lessons teachers demonstrated that they had a good understanding of the subject. They explained new ideas clearly and used good questioning strategies to check on pupils' understanding. They use national guidelines effectively to ensure that new material is introduced systematically. As a result most pupils achieve what is expected for their age, enjoy their lessons and have positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers set sensible, achievable targets that motivate pupils to do well. Teachers' planning is good and includes precise details of what pupils are to learn. Pupils develop a good facility with number because of the precise teaching of basic skills. Teachers make learning lively and fun in mental mathematics, where pupils are kept on their toes during quick-fire question and answer sessions.

54. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator works hard to manage and organise the subject. However she has not had many opportunities to observe classroom lessons and consequently does not have a complete knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. In order to promote a partnership with parents in pupils' learning, the staff hold an annual numeracy meeting for parents where they explain the school's approach to the teaching of numeracy and how the school is implementing the National Numeracy Strategy.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. The use of mathematics in other subjects of the curriculum is beginning to be developed. Pupils make use of mathematics in other subjects such as science when they record the data they collect from experiments in tables and graphs. There are developing links with ICT and there are good displays showing surveys that pupils have carried out, such as a traffic survey. They are good at entering the results into tables on the computer and deciding whether to use a pie chart or graph to represent the data they have collected. The school organises special 'skills days', where a theme is chosen, such as 'Boxes'. Pupils explore the area of the nets needed to make boxes of different shapes and sizes as well as volume and capacity. Good links are made with art and design and design and technology as pupils make their boxes and decorate them.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 4, pupils attain standards that are above average.
- There are examples of exceptionally good teaching.
- The more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not always expected to produce enough work in lessons.

Commentary

56. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and most are likely to attain average standards by the end of the year. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4 and most are likely to attain standards that are above average. Standards are not as high as those reported at the time of the last inspection because there are now more pupils with special educational needs in each class. Pupils have a good understanding of how to conduct experiments. The older pupils make sensible predictions about what will happen when they add more bulbs to an electrical circuit, for example. They observe what happens when they immerse objects in water and devise ways of measuring the results. They record their results carefully and the more able analyse the data they have gathered to draw conclusions.
57. The quality of teaching is good overall but it is uneven; it ranges from satisfactory to very good. In one lesson on the five senses for pupils in Years 1 and 2, pupils gained a sound understanding of the function of their five senses and they made satisfactory progress in their understanding. However the lesson was not inspirational and the more able pupils

did not produce enough work of quality in the time available. There are also examples of lively imaginative teaching. In one very good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 about displacement, pupils' achievement was remarkably good. After introducing the class to Archimedes, the teacher encouraged the pupils to investigate what happened when objects of different sizes and weights were placed into transparent tanks of water. They noted that the level of the water rose. At first they thought that the level rose more if the objects were heavier. After further investigation one group cried, 'Eureka!' and explained that it was not the weight but the size of the object that was the key factor and that a capped empty lemonade bottle would, if fully immersed, displace just as much water as a full one. Good use of humour helped to make this lesson exciting. Good links were made with the class's study of Ancient Greece. Computers were used well to illustrate on a line graph what happened as water levels rose and fell. The learning needs of all groups were fully addressed; classroom assistants supported the slower learners exceptionally well and the teacher provided appropriately challenging questions to extend the thinking skills of the more able pupils. The teacher also explained how this group would be using spreadsheets too organise the data they had collected. This demonstrated high expectations of these pupils.

58. The subject leader has only just taken on responsibility for developing this subject. He has not yet had opportunities to monitor provision and formulate plans for developing the subject. Resources are adequate but not always easily accessible and teachers sometimes have to spend significant amounts of time hunting for equipment or sorting through batteries to see which are charged and which are flat or which bulbs have blown.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

59. Insufficient teaching was taking place during the inspection to make a judgement about overall provision in this subject. However, pupils' work indicates that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 4. At the time of the last inspection the standards that pupils attained were average. Provision has improved significantly since then. There is now a much greater degree of expertise among staff, both teaching and support staff, and the equipment available has been enhanced. Standards have improved and the school is poised to make further advances. The school has just received a grant towards the purchase of computerised whiteboards.
60. All pupils have their own files and several of the older pupils demonstrated good skills as they opened their files and discussed their work with inspectors. Word processing skills are generally above average and pupils produce neat, well presented pieces of writing. Pupils use spell checkers well to ensure that any inaccurate spelling is corrected. Digital cameras are used well to record school events and samples of pupils' work. Pupils are good at using the Internet for research purposes.
61. Leadership and management are good. The subject leader has good technical expertise and has formulated good plans for improving provision further. A good assessment system has been introduced that is used well to record pupils' developing expertise and to assess their progress. These assessments, together with teachers' planning, demonstrate clearly that the requirements of the National Curriculum are covered in full. The co-ordinator runs a popular computer club for six weeks each term where pupils learn how to use the digital camera, use programmable robots and explore the Internet.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. Good use is made of computers to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Pupils learn how to enter data from science experiments onto spreadsheets and then how to illustrate the data in graphs and diagrams. The Internet is used well for research, as when finding out about foreign countries in geography. Digital cameras are used well to record work completed. One classroom assistant, for example, regularly captures a clear record of the work she has completed with her pupils and adds notes that form an excellent record of pupils' achievements.

HUMANITIES

Religious education, history and geography were sampled.

63. Insufficient teaching could be seen to make an overall judgement about provision in **religious education**. The subject is taught according to the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. A study of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that standards across the school are at least in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The evidence available indicates that pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory.
64. Planning shows that pupils are introduced to the major world religions. They learn about the significance of religious, cultural and family traditions with a focus on different religions. Pupils study Islam, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity and Buddhism. They are given many opportunities to learn about Christian and Muslim beliefs and practices, religious symbols and their meaning, rules and how they influence actions and special places such as a mosque and a church.
65. A very good range of visitors enhances the provision for religious education. For example, the school works very closely with the local church and the vicar visits regularly to take assembly. Children visit the local church for the Harvest Festival and as part of their learning about the Christian religion. The school gives support to Khandalight, a local charity which has forged a valuable partnership with a school in Khadal, in India. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of other faiths and cultures of the world and prepares them well to live in multi-cultural society. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject is soundly led and managed and the co-ordinator has provided teachers with a detailed scheme of work which supports their teaching. There are adequate resources to support the subject.
66. No lessons were seen in **history and geography** during the inspection, but pupils' past work, displays around the school and teachers planning were studied. These show that the curricula for history and geography are adequately covered and that links with other subjects are developing well. The limited evidence available indicates that standards are at least average.
67. Planning shows that pupils in Year 1 learn about the Victorians and Ancient Greece. They investigate the local area in geography. In Year 2 pupils focus on weather around the world and improving the environment in geography. In history they focus on The Vikings. In Years 3 and 4 the focus for this half term is history, and pupils are studying Ancient Greece. Discussions with pupils show that they are developing a good understanding of the Greek alphabet and good knowledge of everyday life in Ancient Greece. In geography, pupils in Years 3 and 4 study their local environment, Kenya and the effects of environmental change.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, music and physical education were sampled. Design and technology was not inspected.

68. Too few lessons were seen in **art and design** to make judgements about provision across the school but pupils' work was sampled and one good lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 was seen. Here a good link was made with pupils' work in history as they studied the patterns on Ancient Greek vases and used these as inspiration for their own designs. One particularly good initiative in Years 3 and 4 is to have regular, short, sharp sketching sessions throughout each week. In one of these sessions good teaching was seen where pupils were required to sketch an object in just ten minutes. The teacher urged pupils to look and draw, look and draw rapidly. This exercise, linked to a handwriting session, helped pupils to use pencils skilfully and encouraged them to work rapidly. The pupils' concentration during this exercise was intense. Good links are made with ICT. The digital camera has been used well to photograph one half of pupils' faces and pupils have been set the challenging task of matching the colours carefully as they fill in the other half with pencil crayons. Pupils also experiment with sepia tones when they take photographic portraits and the more able are adept at adjusting the size of photographs, selecting parts of an image or cropping photographs to achieve different effects.
69. No lessons in **music** were seen during the inspection. Some unaccompanied singing was heard in assemblies where pupils sang well together in time and in tune. There is a two year plan for music which covers the recommended curriculum. A music teacher visits the school once weekly and works with each class separately.
70. Although too few lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about provision, particularly good work was seen in **physical education**. The lessons seen at the local swimming pool were well organised to make best use of the time available and the teaching was good. Records show that pupils make good progress and attain high standards. Discussions with pupils showed that they are proud of their prowess in swimming. Their good levels of expertise help to develop their confidence. Several of the pupils with serious learning difficulties have made particularly good progress. Their classroom assistants report that their success helps to develop their communication skills and is therefore helpful in promoting their achievement in other areas of the curriculum. No lessons were seen in gymnastics or dance but it is clear that the small size of the hall limits the work that can be produced. Teachers report that groups have to take it in turns to use apparatus and this slows the pace of lessons. A well-organised after-school football club was seen and this extends provision well. After-school sports clubs are well attended by boys and girls.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

71. As very little direct teaching was seen it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision but the evidence available indicates that this is a particularly strong feature of the school. In Years 1 to 4 pupils build very successfully on the very good personal, social and emotional provision in the Foundation Stage. The school has worked hard to develop

a meaningful and extensive curriculum in these areas. Good links are made with science, where pupils study the importance of a healthy diet and regular exercise. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to promote a climate across the school where pupils' independence and sense of responsibility are fostered exceptionally well. This has resulted in high levels of achievement in a wide range of areas and aspects. Pupils have a very good understanding of how the school works. As the school is so small all the pupils can get together to discuss school issues in council meetings. Through their school council they express their opinions, which are taken seriously. During one such session the headteacher led pupils through a review of the school behaviour policy. They reflected thoughtfully on the wording of each section of the policy and made sensible suggestions about their responsibilities. They then drafted a recommendation to be submitted to the school governors proposing an additional phrase. They know the importance of working together in a friendly and supportive way. They have very good opportunities to share their ideas and feelings with adults and each other.

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	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
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	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
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	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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

