

INSPECTION REPORT

BARNSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Heswall

LEA area: Wirral

Unique reference number: 105030

Headteacher: Mrs J Furrie

Lead inspector: Ruth J Schaffer

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd September 2004

Inspection number: 266371

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	309
School address:	Sandham Grove Heswall Wirral Merseyside
Postcode:	CH60 1XW
Telephone number:	0151 3425229
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Anne Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	16 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Barnston Primary School is bigger than other primary schools. Except for the Reception Year all classes contain two year groups in relatively equal numbers, to accommodate the uneven in-take on admission to Year 1. Pupils remain for two years with one teacher. At the end of two years the class groups are rearranged as a means of improving pupils' social development. Currently there are just under three per cent of pupils who are in receipt of free school meals. This is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is well below the national average and the proportion of those with a statement of special need is below average. The nature of these pupils' needs is mainly moderate learning difficulties but those with more marked needs have conditions such as autism or dyspraxia. Most pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage. There is a small percentage of pupils from mixed heritages and less than one per cent who speak English in addition to their home language. All are fluent English speakers. The socio-economic circumstances of the school is favourable. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is above average. The school has received an award as a Health Promoting School in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23698	Ruth J Schaffer	Lead inspector	English Geography History Religious education Special educational needs English as an additional language
8922	Brenda McIntosh	Lay inspector	
11807	Keith Bardon	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology
17877	Christine Ingham	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a sound education. Pupils attain standards that are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is sound. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and children's achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. The headteacher and governors provide satisfactory leadership and management and the value for money is sound.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 is well above average.
- In the Foundation Stage teaching is very good and children make a very good start to their education.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is taught well so that pupils attain above average standards and their achievement is good.
- Pupils enjoy the interesting range of extra activities that is provided both in and out of school time.
- Lessons are not always planned well enough in Years 3 to 6 to ensure that work is closely matched to pupils' level of attainment and interests, and in these lessons pupils do not achieve well enough.
- The school is not fully effective in evaluating its work and taking action to secure improvement.
- Not all staff implement the school's behaviour policy effectively in their work.

There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. High standards have been maintained. The issues identified in ICT, in religious education, and special educational needs have been remedied. However, there has not been enough improvement in the use of assessment in all three areas. The headteacher has led the governors well in a drive to improve the accommodation.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B*	A	A*	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	C
Science	A	B	A	A

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

Overall pupils achieve satisfactorily. In the 2004 national tests for pupils at the end of Year 6, the school did particularly well in English and science with all pupils attaining the expected level in English and almost all in science. In English the school's results were in the top 5 per cent nationally. In mathematics standards are well above the national average but the school did not reach its expected target for mathematics although it exceeded it for English. In Year 6, pupils' current work is well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The difference in standards seen in the current year group does not mean that this group of pupils is going to attain below the level of previous years in national tests: the school has effective procedures for boosting pupils' attainment prior to tests and these are likely to raise standards to a similar level to those in 2004. Results in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2004 for reading, writing and mathematics were very high. Current standards in Year 2 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is good. Standards in ICT are above average in all year groups. Children start school with above average attainment. In their current work, children in the Foundation Stage are likely to exceed the level

expected of them by the end of the Reception Year. In Years 3 to 6, a close match of work to pupils' prior learning is sometimes missing and achievement in mathematical problem solving and investigative work in science is restricted. These factors make achievement in these year groups satisfactory rather than good as might be expected from their performance in tests. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils' attitude to school and to their learning is good. Although most pupils generally behave very well, there are occasions when pupils' are discourteous to teachers or to their peers and overall behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils' relationships with each other are good and pupils report almost no bullying or harassment in all age ranges. Attendance and punctuality are very good. There is good provision for social and cultural development and satisfactory provision for moral and spiritual development and **overall this aspect is satisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

There is a sound quality of education.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good and on occasions excellent. Activities are stimulating, lively and very well planned. As a result, children learn quickly, building on their good skills and knowledge from home. In Years 1 to 6 teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils apply themselves very well to tasks and take pride in the presentation of their work because teachers expect this of them. In most classes, teachers establish warm relationships. However, on occasions when pupils become inattentive, inappropriate strategies are used which undermine adult and pupil relationships. In Years 1 and 2, some innovative teaching methods enliven lessons, but in Years 3 to 6, methods are sometimes pedestrian and do little to spark the imagination. In a few lessons in Years 3 to 6, work is not well matched to pupils' level of attainment – an outcome arising from the difficulty of planning for two age ranges in the same class. ICT is often used well to motivate pupils and develop learning across subjects, increasing the relevance to pupils' interests. Pupils with special educational needs are given good help in the short sessions when they are withdrawn from class but targets in their individual education plans are not always well chosen so as motivate them to try their hardest. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum overall. The extra opportunities the school provides, including lessons for modern foreign languages, extend the curriculum very well. Parental support makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning and the standards attained. Links with the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and governors are sound. The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, has begun to introduce a process of school self-evaluation. This has identified areas in need of improvement and in some instances has resulted in good improvements. However, the process of monitoring the effectiveness of all school policies and aspects of school life is not accompanied by a sufficiently rigorous process of evaluation. The governors ensure all statutory obligations are met and support the school well but are not well enough informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very high expectations of the school. They have mixed views about the openness but the majority feel able to approach staff if they have any concerns about their children. Some believe, correctly, that the school could improve the arrangements for seeking their views and providing them with more information about how their children are progressing. The school is already tackling this weakness in reporting to parents. Pupils appreciate all the school offers them. They enjoy learning, especially when teachers make lessons interesting and fun.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that lessons are planned so that work is closely matched to all pupils' level of attainment.

- Improve the processes of monitoring, evaluating and taking action in all aspects of school life.
- Ensure that all staff reflect the school's policy on behaviour in their work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall standards achieved are satisfactory. Standards in English are well above average and above average in mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6. Children's achievement in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good. In Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' performance in Years 2 and 6 in national tests for 2004 is high in English and well above average in mathematics and science.
- Children's achievements are good in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 to 6 achieve well in small catch-up groups; however, their learning slows in class and their achievement is satisfactory overall.
- The school does not identify or provide extra for pupils who are gifted and in Years 3 to 6 these pupils do not always move on fast enough.
- Pupils are attaining above average standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and their achievement is good.

Commentary

1. Standards have improved since the time of the previous inspection. The school is successful in helping pupils perform above expectations in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In 2004 the pupils attained well above average in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Their results also compared well against similar schools. The school's results for English are in the top 5 per cent at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school exceeded its target for the number of pupils attaining the expected level by the end of Year 6, in English, by 2 per cent but missed its target in mathematics by 6 per cent. Standards in the current Years 2 and 6 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The school has a rigorous process of boosting attainment in the spring term and this is likely to produce similar results in the national tests in 2005 for both year groups. In the current Year 6, there are more pupils with special educational needs than in 2004 and it would be reasonable to expect the school's results to be slightly lower in 2005.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	19.1 (17.6)	16.0 (15.7)
Writing	17.6 (16.1)	14.8 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.6 (17.7)	16.4 (16.3)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	30.7 (28.7)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.8 (29.1)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	30.9(30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Children start in the Foundation Stage with attainment above that typically seen for children of this age. Their diction and speech are good; they express themselves confidently using well-formed sentences. Children settle quickly into school and are ready to learn because teachers establish very good trusting relationships with them. By the end of the Reception Year, they are likely to exceed the goals set for them in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development they are likely to exceed the goals by a wide margin. This is because the very good teaching in the Foundation Stage extends and develops children's interest, curiosity and creativity, providing them with a wide range of experiences beyond the narrow confines of learning basic skills. Overall children's achievement is good.
3. In Years 1 and 2, teachers build on the good start from the Foundation Stage so that pupils' achievement overall is good. Working closely with parents, teachers encourage interest in reading and writing. Very good parental support, both in school and at home, makes a significant contribution to pupils' quick gains in reading. Written work develops well as pupils become confident spellers and enjoy the many opportunities teachers provide for them to write for different purposes. They are given good opportunities to use their writing and reading skills to very good advantage in their learning in other subjects. Pupils who learn more slowly than others are generally given good support. Almost all pupils have very good computational skills and respond well to the challenges set them in lessons.
4. In Years 5 to 6 pupils generally achieve well in English because of secure teaching that promotes enjoyment in language and literacy coupled with secure teaching of basic skills. However, in Years 3 and 4 progress slows in some classes because there is too great an emphasis on using exercises to practice aspects of grammar unrelated to a written composition. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. They use vocabulary well to express complex meanings and have the confidence to experiment with language in their written and spoken communications. Pupils use their skills in writing and reading confidently in other subjects. In mathematics they calculate speedily and they are knowledgeable about strategies and methods of calculation. However, in both science and mathematics pupils in Year 6 do not achieve well enough in decision making so that problem solving in mathematics and planning investigations are less well developed than other skills. Overall pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory.
5. The school has not yet identified pupils whose attainment is such that they can be described as gifted. There are pupils who would benefit from work set at a year or more beyond that of their chronological age and these pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Talented pupils are often given extra support through the school's many clubs and extra activities; for example, the pupils who do well in languages enter a national on-line competition and do well against other schools thus giving a spurt to their achievement. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and in the small groups when they are withdrawn for extra work in Years 3 and 6. However, the targets in their individual education plans are often very broad and on occasions in Years 3 to 6 work is not planned at a level to meet their needs and their progress slows. Overall their achievement is satisfactory.
6. The standard of pupils' work in ICT is above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is good. Teachers encourage pupils to practise their skills at home and in the school's own computer club and as a result pupils make good progress. They have good skills and knowledge across the whole programme of study and good understanding of the application of technology in its various forms. Standards in Year 6 in subjects such as history, religious education, art and design and music are as expected for pupils of this age, although some aspects are better than this. The school has not yet looked at ways in which standards in some of these subjects can be raised without losing the very high standards achieved in English, mathematics and science. This has, however, been identified as an area for school improvement over the coming year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)

Pupils' attitudes to school are good and their behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory overall. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes to learning help them attain high standards.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence and independence
- Pupils' social awareness is developed well and this helps to establish positive relationships throughout school.
- Not all staff reflect the school's behaviour policy in their work.
- The school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment.
- Pupils have a good awareness of their own and other cultures and faiths.

Commentary

7. Pupils like coming to school, are keen to learn and find lessons interesting. They feel that teachers make learning fun and they enjoy the variety of experiences that the school offers. They quickly apply themselves to their tasks, concentrate well and work at a good pace. This helps them reinforce their learning well and contributes to the high standards attained. Pupils with special educational needs have equally good attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons. The positive attitude to work is encouraged from the moment the children start school. In the Reception Year, children make very good progress towards the goals set for them in personal, social and emotional development. The teachers set high expectations and successfully promote confidence and independence through praise and encouragement. After only a short time back in school the children are very well behaved and settled in their routines and clearly enjoy learning. The curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is too rigid and does not help them to develop their independent skills sufficiently. This means they do not always use their own initiative to work things out for themselves but often seek reassurance from an adult.
8. Although behaviour for many is very good and most pupils are polite and respectful, in a small number of incidences, the behaviour of a few pupils is inappropriate. Parents voiced concerns about the way behaviour is managed by some teachers and in some respects these concerns were justified. On occasions, in lessons when the pupils' behaviour was not managed well, relationship between pupils and adults were undermined. A few pupils in whole-school assemblies did not behave with the proper respect for the occasion and needed a personal request from teachers before listening attentively.
9. The school gives good attention to pupils' social development. There are a number of good strategies to develop an understanding of care for others and personal self-esteem such as the 'Magic Monday' assemblies that celebrate good citizenship. Relationships are, in most instances, good because pupils have a good understanding of their responsibilities within the school community. The pupils enthusiastically take on extra responsibilities such as being playground leaders, mentors, buddies or school councillors. The many clubs at playtime and after school promote good friendly relationships between pupils. Pupils get on well together and collaborate well in play and work. They are friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. Occasionally when pupils are not closely supervised at lunchtimes it can lead to incidents of inappropriate behaviour with children running around school or choosing to play in corridors. Bullying is not perceived to be a problem by pupils or parents but they feel that if any form of harassment does occur, it is taken most seriously and dealt with very effectively by staff. The school has never had cause to exclude a pupil.

10. Individual teachers take the opportunity to promote pupils' spiritual development through the curriculum or assemblies. This helps pupils to reflect upon their personal feelings, values and beliefs. The deputy headteacher uses music well to create a special atmosphere that is the key to the success of a religious education lesson. Spirituality was highlighted in a very good class assembly when the teacher created a lovely warm atmosphere through teaching the traditional method of greeting from Thailand involving all pupils in a simple role-play and concluding with chosen pupils telling others about the things that make them smile.
11. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. Racism is not tolerated and pupils of different ethnic heritages mix freely and easily at all times. The school raises awareness of the richness of cultures that make up British society well. They learn about other world faiths and traditions through art, history, geography and religious education. Parents feel that their children have good opportunities to gain an understanding about world issues.

Attendance

During the last year the school has maintained its high level of attendance. Parents are quick to inform the school when their child is absent and any unexplained absences are followed up rigorously. Unauthorised absence is rare. The very good attendance and punctuality have a positive effect on the standards attained.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/04 (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and very good in the Foundation Stage. It is satisfactory overall. Curriculum planning, care and guidance for pupils are sound. The school's relationship with parents is good and contributes very well to pupils' learning.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is very good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. .

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Foundation Stage there is a vibrant, exciting atmosphere and children learn quickly because of the high quality teaching.
- English is generally taught well because teachers use good methods to develop pupils' skills and enjoyment in reading and writing.
- Teachers make good use of ICT to develop knowledge and understanding in other subjects.
- In some classes, relationships are good and pupils respond with respectful behaviour, but in some inappropriate methods are used to manage pupils' behaviour.
- In Years 1 and 2, some lessons are enlivened by innovative teaching strategies but in Years 3 to 6, often-used methods fail to spark attention.
- In Years 1 and 2, work is generally well matched to pupils' level of attainment but this is not always the case in Years 3 to 6.

Commentary

12. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is never less than satisfactory but because of the introduction of new methods, some of which need further development, teaching is satisfactory rather than good, as might be expected when pupils achieve well. In Years 3 to 6, although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, there are some areas of development constant to both teaching teams in these age ranges. In Years 3 to 6, some unsatisfactory teaching was the result of weaknesses in planning, methods used and the manner in which behaviour was managed. The school has not kept pace with national improvements in teaching; the percentage of very good or better teaching is similar to that at the last inspection but nationally this percentage has increased significantly.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (5%)	8 (22%)	11 (29%)	14 (39%)	2 (5%)	0	0

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

13. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are very good, with examples of excellent teaching. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. Consistently very high expectations, energy and enthusiasm, excellent warm relationships and good-humoured intervention lead to the children's enthusiasm for school even though some have only been in school for two weeks. Teamwork is of a high quality; all adults assess children's learning and plan together very well as a team. The reception classrooms are vibrant and industrious places for young children to enjoy learning. There is a very good balance between child-initiated activities and those directed by adults, which was an area for development at the previous inspection.
14. In Years 1 to 6, the headteacher and other staff expect pupils to work hard and to do their best. Presentation of work is given a high priority and pupils respond very well to this. Headteacher awards are valued, especially the 'Terrific Tiger'. In most lessons, relationships are good with a business-like approach tempered with good humour. In Years 1 and 2, and in all age ranges when classroom assistants support small groups withdrawn from lessons, pupils are given extra encouragement by a warm and friendly manner that raises confidence and self-esteem. However, on occasions, ineffective or inappropriate methods are used to manage the pupils' behaviour when lessons lose pace and interest for the pupils.
15. The deputy headteacher has led the team to look at new methods of teaching. A good example was the strategy to use a game involving physical activity to encourage quick mental calculation which pupils enjoyed greatly. Good methods are used to teach letter sounds, spelling, drafting and editing written work and to encourage a love of books and writing. As a result, pupils have very good skills in reading and writing and confidently use them in their work in other subjects. In all classes, but especially in Years 5 and 6, ICT is used well to develop, demonstrate and explain teaching points in other subjects. In these lessons, pupils' interest is high and learning speeds up accordingly. However, in Years 3 to 6 lessons are often organised in a similar manner, starting with an oral explanation from the teacher followed by questions posed to the whole class, without any strategies for ensuring answers come from all groups of pupils. In some lessons, teachers explained tasks or methods of working rather than teaching skills or deepening understanding. Many pupils sit back during the question and answer sessions, content to let others respond. These didactic methods have been instrumental in teaching being over-prescriptive in science and mathematics so that pupils have not learnt to become independent in making decisions.

16. In a few lessons, work was not well matched to pupils' learning needs. Strategies for ensuring a good match of work were missing. For instance, some teachers did not check, as the lesson proceeded or at its end, the extent of pupils' learning in relation to the objective for the lesson. The consequence of this is that teachers do not have the necessary information on pupils' achievements when planning the next lesson. In some lessons in Years 3 to 6, work is planned by age group and this means two sets of planning for one lesson which is an overwhelming amount of work. Not surprisingly, different levels of work for at least six groups of pupils in one lesson resulted in incorrect challenge on occasions. The benefits of mixed age classes are lost in these instances.
17. The school sets pupils targets in English and mathematics and in some classes these are helpful reminders to pupils as to how well they are achieving. Some pupils have targets that relate to a wide area of learning and this means that the targets take too long to achieve so lose their effectiveness as a source of motivation. Marking also often fails to provide information for pupils on their achievements. Few teachers comment on how well a pupil met a lesson objective or what they need to do to improve, although there are good exceptions to this. Teachers and classroom assistants keep a close watch on the progress of the small number of pupils with special education needs, especially with regard to any particular deficit in skills or a specific physical or emotional difficulty for the pupil. In English, spelling and handwriting skills are well supported and in mathematics computational skills are taught well in small groups. However, in lessons, work is often planned at the same level as the year group to which the pupil belongs even when this is too difficult for a successful outcome without considerable adult help. This sometimes gives rise to copying an adult-scribed sentence which is limiting to the pupils' skill in sentence construction in the long run.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that is enriched by a very good range of additional activities. There is sound provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school has significantly improved its accommodation since the previous inspection. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage receive an exciting and stimulating range of learning experiences.
- Although, overall, the curriculum provides a productive balance of skills and knowledge, there are some shortcomings in mathematics and science.
- Planning in Years 3 to 6 does not take sufficient account of pupils' differing attainment
- ICT is used well to enhance pupils' learning in different subjects.
- Modern foreign languages have been introduced well into the school day in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range and very good variety of extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

18. The Foundation Stage curriculum is of a high quality, securely based on national guidelines and includes all the areas of learning. The staff are innovative in planning learning experiences which are imaginative and exciting and which captivate the children's interest and enthusiasm for learning. The curriculum is based on practical activities linked together through themes. A strength of the curriculum is the very good links made across the areas of learning. There is a high level of commitment to ensuring the curriculum for these young children makes learning a challenging but joyful experience.
19. There have been some good changes to curricular planning since the previous inspection and improvement has been sound. Planning includes the full range of National Curriculum subjects, religious education, personal, social, health and citizenship education and, in Years

3 to 6, a modern foreign language. In this way the school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Teachers often make good links between subjects and there is good provision for the practising of skills in literacy across the curriculum. However, there has not yet been a whole-school focus on the ways in which links between subjects can make learning more relevant and reduce the time spent on subjects such as English without a reduction in the high standards attained in national tests. There are also some weaknesses in planning for mathematics and science which reduce its effectiveness and adversely affect pupils' learning.

20. The school has made full use of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and the National Curriculum guidance on other subjects. It has not, however, moved very far beyond these in developing a curriculum that is specifically tailored to the need of the pupils. In particular, in Years 3 to 6, not enough thought is given to the planning of activities which reflect the attainment of the pupils rather than simply their age. In Years 1 and 2, planning is generally based on secure assessments of pupils' attainment and this properly results in a greater mix between the two age ranges. Recent changes to curriculum planning have been made with the introduction of an activity and role-play area for pupils in Year 1 in order to ensure that provision is matched to pupils' level of maturity. However, there is a lack of challenge in some activities in this area, and opportunities to build on experiences from the Foundation Stage are missed.
21. The use of ICT across the curriculum as a whole has developed well since the last inspection. Teachers often link ICT lessons logically and constructively to those in other subjects. This provides pupils with a meaningful context for their work and helps them to acquire a clear understanding of the advantages the computer and other technology can have for learning.
22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The special needs co-ordinator has created a well-motivated team of classroom assistants and special needs support staff who develop very good relationships with pupils in well-organised sessions aimed at improving carefully identified skills. They keep good records of pupils' progress and motivate them to try their best by good reward systems that are effective in small group sessions and when the pupil is working in class. However, the targets for pupils in their individual education plans are very wide and do not always link to the targets the pupil has been given as a class group. Because of this the individual education plans are not a useful tool in reviewing individual pupils' progress. The outcome of termly reviews often states that the target is ongoing because it has not been met, sometimes for as long as a year. Without small measurable targets to show how well a pupil is doing, parents, outside agencies and most importantly the pupils themselves have difficulty judging the effectiveness of support.
23. The school has successfully introduced the teaching of modern foreign languages into the school day in Years 3 to 6. Good liaison with secondary schools ensures that pupils are making a good start to the language curriculum they will experience in their secondary education. The pupils' awareness of issues in connection with their own health and personal development has been raised by the school's participation in the Health Promoting Schools initiative. Many pupils take full advantage of the comprehensive opportunities for curriculum enrichment the school provides. The school's extra-curricular activities are well attended both at lunchtime and after school. A wide range of common and less common sports plus clubs covering the arts, foreign languages, ICT, chess and debating provide pupils with extension to their learning that is productive and highly enjoyable. The thinking skills of Year 6 pupils, for instance, were effectively challenged as they tackled a lively logic game during the lunchtime ICT club which had the computer suite full to the brim.
24. The school has worked hard to improve the accommodation since the previous inspection when there were classes housed in mobiles separated from the main building. The school is now under one roof and a new computer suite has been added. During the inspection, building work was under way for a playgroup and wraparound care. The school's library is very limited and, as it is situated on the main corridor, is not useful for quiet research. There is also a shortfall in accommodation for the Foundation Stage as there is no permanently

designated secure outdoor area which places limitations on the equipment that is used outdoors.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The school provides pupils with satisfactory support, advice and guidance. The way the school seeks and acts upon pupils' views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements to help children settle into the reception classes are good.
- The school promotes positive and trusting relationships.
- Pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning is insufficient.
- Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon. They contribute very well to the development of the school.

Commentary

25. The staff in the Foundation Stage establish early links with parents through pre-school meetings and gather useful information about the children in order to maximise support and guidance. Parents appreciate the genuine open door policy and the information provided which helps them to be involved in their child's learning right from the start. They were full of praise for the efforts made by the staff to ensure that children were welcomed which helped them to settle quickly and happily into school. The 'Buddy System' ensures that the children are very well looked after at playtimes and lunchtimes.
26. Relationships throughout the school are good so pupils feel secure and know there is always someone to whom they can turn for help. They feel the school looks after them well. Child protection procedures are effective. Good attention has been given to the training so that all staff are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about the children in their care. The school provides a base to ensure pupils are supported beyond the school day through the breakfast and after-school clubs. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory. The policy has been updated since the last inspection and now includes all appropriate information.
27. Information about pupils' academic achievements is used satisfactorily to guide future learning. Staff do not involve pupils sufficiently in assessing their own learning or seeking ways to improve their own work. Work is marked but teachers' comments do not always guide pupils on what to do to improve further. Pupils with special educational needs are given good help in the short sessions when they are withdrawn from class but targets in their individual education plans are often too broad and this limits their learning. In class they are usually provided with appropriate adult support so they can take a full and active part in lessons.
28. Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute towards improving the school. They have been involved in the school's initiative towards the Healthy Schools award. The eating of healthy snacks at playtime has had a good impact and pupils are aware of what constitutes a healthy diet. They know that their views matter and the school will try to act upon what they say. The school council helps pupils to learn about democratic decision and enables them to voice their opinions and raise awareness of issues that affect them. For example, the work of the council has focused on themes such as encouraging others to walk or cycle to school instead being transported by car.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is good. Links with the community and other schools are good and have a positive effect on pupils' learning and their personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a high level of interest in their children's learning which makes a significant contribution to pupils' attainment and good attitudes to work.
- The reception staff play an important part in establishing the partnership with parents.
- There are no regular arrangements for seeking parents' views which has resulted in some dissatisfaction among a small group of parents.
- Good links with the community and other schools enhance curricular opportunities for pupils.

Commentary

29. Parental involvement in their children's learning and in the life of the school is very good. The parents' association is very successful in organising social and fund-raising events and raises substantial amounts of money for school funds. This enables resources to be purchased to the benefit of children in and out of classes. A very good number of parents and volunteers are involved in the successful 'Quality Reading' initiative that provides extra adult support for pupils to help develop their reading skills. This makes a significant contribution to the high standards attained in reading. Many parents support their children by attending events and performances. Some make an invaluable commitment by running the daily 'walking bus', preparing food for 'Fruity Friday' or assisting with extra-curricular activities. At the start of the day the staff in the reception classes are readily available to talk to parents and many do so. A warm and welcoming atmosphere for both parents and children ensures a pleasant start to the school day. Parents support their children's learning very well by ensuring they attend regularly and punctually.
30. The school seeks parents' views about specific things as they arise, such as the School Travel Plan. However, there are no established formal arrangements for parents to contribute to school improvement by giving their comments on the quality of education provided and other aspects of its provision. As a result the school has not realised fully some of the issues raised by parents. For example, a significant minority of parents, who expressed an opinion prior to the inspection, believed that at times the school is not as open as it might be. They believe, correctly, that the school could provide them with more information about their children's learning and how well they are progressing. The school is aware that the annual reports though satisfactory have their limitations and is already putting systems into place to improve the reporting of pupils' achievements and progress to parents. During the inspection, discussions with many other parents revealed that most are very positive about the school and find that staff are approachable and readily available if they have any concerns about their children.
31. The school makes full use of local resources in terms of working with people and visiting places to bring learning alive for the pupils. There is a good programme of visitors to the school and pupils visit many interesting local places to enrich the curriculum. The school provides a base for extended childcare provision which is a good facility for parents and the community. The school works closely with a range of other schools. There are regular opportunities for the sharing of curricular issues and staff expertise which contribute to pupils' learning. Transition arrangements to secondary schools are good and include curriculum links between Years 6 and 7.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher and senior managers is sound. The effectiveness of the management systems is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body meets its statutory duties fully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed a good professional partnership and work well together.
- The school does not fully evaluate its work to pinpoint precisely the areas in need of improvement.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good.
- Financial management is good.

Commentary

32. Pupils fully appreciate what the school offers them and enjoy learning. Parents have very high expectations of the school and for their children to do well. The headteacher, governors and senior staff work hard to meet their expectations and maintain high standards in pupils' attainment. The headteacher has created a sound senior management team but it is not yet fully effective in evaluating what it is they do well and not so well and how they can bring about improvements to their work. As a result the leadership is currently providing a satisfactory sense of vision and direction for future improvement. The framework for development is sound but the school is not making strategic decisions based on secure evaluations. The costs of planned developments are specified to enable spending patterns to be monitored but the success criteria on the individual action plans are not sharply focused on raising achievement. The phase-team leaders work hard and much formal and informal discussion takes place within the teams about standards and areas for development.
33. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have tried hard to develop a culture within the school in which staff are encouraged to improve their own performance through observations of teaching and learning. This is a slow process but the lower primary school team led by the deputy headteacher is now willing to model lessons as a technique for sharing good practice. There have been some examples of effective monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and deputy headteacher that have highlighted areas in need of improvement. Weaknesses such as behaviour management have been identified but action taken to ensure consistency across school is not yet fully effective.
34. The headteacher takes the lead in monitoring the curriculum and its development and is now looking to increase the creativity element within it. Training days with other school have already been organised with a focus on excellence and enjoyment. Certain aspects are innovative such as the introduction of modern foreign languages and the opportunities given to pupils to experience a range of activities through, for example, drama and the Aesthetic Week. Following the national initiative for better transition between Foundation Stage and Year 1, the school has introduced a role-play activity area for Year 1. This is a good step but it is at an early stage of development and not yet fully effective.
35. The senior managers are involved in monitoring teaching as part of performance management but the schedule does not relate closely enough to pupils' learning, attainment and achievement. As a result, inconsistencies in provision and teaching between classes do not receive the full attention needed. For example, some teachers share with pupils what they expect them to learn at the onset of each lesson and then check at the end how well those expectations have been met while others do not, thus failing to support pupils' understanding of their own achievements. Targets are set in all classes but they are used in different ways and sometimes without good effect; this has not been remedied by precise monitoring and rigorous evaluation. Staff have analysed recent test results and highlighted problem solving in mathematics as an area for development but not identified the teaching skills that are needed to bring about a successful outcome.
36. The co-ordinator structure has evolved rather than being strategically managed because in some instances staff have volunteered to take on the additional responsibilities. The

effectiveness of subject leadership in improving the quality of learning and pupils' achievements is satisfactory overall because of teachers' individual interests and enthusiasm for their subject. Roles and responsibilities, however, are not clearly demarcated. Most co-ordinators are not yet evaluating and supporting the development of teaching and learning. Although the art and design co-ordinator and the design and technology co-ordinator have both modeled good practice in Years 5 and 6 there has been few other examples of teachers demonstrating skills while working in each others' classrooms. As a result, they have insufficient knowledge of teaching and learning across the school in the subjects which they are responsible for. With the exception of the deputy headteacher who is responsible for English in Years 1 and 2 and the co-ordinators for mathematics and science, there is very little knowledge about standards and achievement across the school.

37. The Foundation Stage team is very out-going and confident. There is extensive knowledge of the early years curriculum and principles of best practice. As a result the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Pupils attain high standards and their achievement is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs provides good leadership in this area and management is satisfactory. She has built an effective team of support staff and guides teachers well on the individual needs of pupils. Outside agencies and specialist help are contacted for support as much as possible and relationships with parents are good. However, the quality of individual education plans which do not provide a good overview of the progress pupils are making undermines the effectiveness of monitoring. The school has only recently focused on the need for training for the new co-ordinator for pupils with special gifts and talents. As yet the school has not been pro-active in this aspect which is tardy considering there are possibly more pupils in these categories than in most schools.
38. The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and school. Meetings are held regularly and governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher about all aspects of the school and as a result they have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. However, they were surprised by the dissatisfaction among the group of parents at the meeting prior to the inspection. Governors are prepared to challenge decisions by asking questions to seek further information if they are unclear about a subject.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	646636	Balance from previous year	-10100
Total expenditure	649818	Balance carried forward to the next	-13282
Expenditure per pupil	£2130		

39. The school budget is managed well to support the school's priorities for improvement and is monitored regularly, with the assistance of the bursar, to ensure that spending levels are within the agreed targets. The deficit budget has arisen due to unforeseen cuts in the way some funding is allocated. This deficit was agreed by the local education authority with a planned return to a balanced budget. This has been achieved by the reduction in the number of hours for learning support assistants but it has meant the cancellation of some of the intervention programmes for lower attaining pupils. The school sees this as a possible barrier to learning and is monitoring the impact of this on standards of attainment. The headteacher and governors have worked hard to improve the school's accommodation since the last inspection and have used surplus budget well to ensure the new build took place. Pupils and staff now enjoy much better facilities.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when provision was deemed to be good. The children enter the reception classes in September following their fourth birthday. Initial assessments indicate that on admission the children's attainment is above that expected in all the areas of learning. By the end of the Reception Year, standards are likely to be above those expected in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and well above in all the other areas of learning. This is a significant achievement and reflects the very good teaching and high level of support the children receive.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well and their attainment is well above the standards expected.
- The children's behaviour and relationships with staff and each other are exemplary.
- High levels of confidence, concentration and independence promote learning well.

Commentary

40. The children achieve very well and attainment is well above the levels expected. There is a high expectation of trying hard, sharing and concentration. The children respond well and make rapid progress because of the very good organisation and exciting learning situations. The children are keen and responsive in all activities provided for them and enter into tasks with great enthusiasm. Teaching is very good. The involvement of staff in all activities ensures the children are managed well and constantly supported to make decisions and choices. Adults provide very good role models so behaviour and relationships are very good and this plays a significant part in children's learning. The children's enjoyment of activities was very evident from their laughter and eager participation. They work together harmoniously and willingly support friends who experience a difficulty, for example, helping to sequence story pictures correctly and joining difficult construction pieces together. There are many good opportunities for the children to work independently and socialise. The children have quickly developed independence because the staff have established routines and systems with which the children are familiar, classrooms are extremely well organised and all resources are easily accessible.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and attainment is above that expected.
- The development of language and literacy is integral to all activities.
- Reading and writing are successfully developed through purposeful tasks.

Commentary

41. Most children are likely to exceed the expected levels by the end of the Reception Year and achievement is good. Teaching and learning are very good. Preparation for lessons is thorough and very good use is made of resources to bring learning to life. A good example involved children exploring natural and manmade materials and describing their observations,

prompted by very effective support from the nursery nurse. The range of activities provided is so very interesting that the children want to talk about them to others and this has a significant impact on learning. The children quickly learnt the letter 'c' when they eagerly sorted a wonderful range of interesting objects into sets. The children make very good progress in their confidence to speak when they describe experiences in detail and participate enthusiastically in conversations. The ability of the staff to make stories come alive through excellent story telling has children spellbound and develops an enthusiasm for reading. The children delight in looking at pictures in books and very confidently tell the story in their own words. They benefit from access to a good range of books and regular opportunities to share stories individually with adults. By the end of the Reception Year the children are likely to achieve well in the development of their early writing skills because learning to write is introduced through purposeful tasks, for example recording their findings as they explore and observe materials.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and this results in the children's good achievement.
- Lively, practical activities are well planned and successfully promote learning.
- Practice activities are varied and successfully support the development of early number skills.

Commentary

42. The children achieve well because of the good organisation of mathematics sessions and the effective use of time to ensure children's interest and concentration are sustained. Attainment in mathematical development is likely to improve on the average results last year. Present indications are that children will exceed the expected levels. Teaching is very good, so that children learn at a good rate. Activities are carefully structured and resources are prepared very well to stimulate the children's interest and extend their understanding. In a very good lesson, the children developed their skills in number recognition as they made sandcastles, decorated them with shells and made flags to represent the number of shells on each castle. The children's understanding of calculation is well taught through the effective use of structural apparatus in practical situations. In mathematics sessions the children show high levels of confidence as they work independently in small groups and work hard to complete their activities. The results clearly identify the level of their understanding, for example when the children made sets of play dough objects from given numbers. Early counting skills are well developed through regular lively practice sessions. There is much pleasure as they practise counting and number recognition

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is excellent.
- Stimulating activities generate a lively enthusiasm for the world around them.
- Excellent resources promote very good learning.

Commentary

43. The children's attainment in this area of learning is well above average and children achieve very well because teaching is excellent, and stimulating resources ensure that the children's natural curiosity and enthusiasm flourish.

Examples of outstanding practice

An outstanding example of developing skills through an imaginative activity to totally captivate interest and enthusiasm

every child was caught up in the excitement of secretly preparing for Bertie Bear's Birthday. Infectious enjoyment and exuberance were evident. Children making birthday cards were encouraged to make choices of materials and design resulting in some very good efforts and a great sense of achievement. Children's understanding of pattern was developed very well as they designed wrapping paper for Bertie's presents. (To keep Bertie happy, one child made him a cup of tea whilst another made sure he couldn't see what they were planning.) A highly industrious group carefully prepared the party food, reflecting their skills in manipulating malleable materials. Food was carefully arranged on plates looking very tempting. There was great joy and excitement in this lesson when every child achieved well because they wanted to make sure Bertie had a great party. Bertie was delighted and so were the children.

Exploring materials and textures through picture making

In this excellent lesson, the children very successfully developed their knowledge and understanding of texture through opportunities to explore an amazing range of materials to capture children's interest. Exploring peacocks feathers was a wonderful experience and the huge cabbage leaf caused much discussion. The teacher, with great skill, engaged the children's attention at the start of the lesson as she explained the Feely Bag game, linked this to the story *Lucy's Picture* and motivated the children to make their own textured collage. The children were totally enthralled as they chose gold, silver, glittery materials or brightly coloured feathers and with great care created a textured picture. Excellent behaviour was demonstrated as the children responded to the rules to ensure exploring shaving foam was used sensibly as some made patterns, others snow peaks, and used different parts of their hands to make unusual textures and patterns and see how textures could be changed. Children's faces and talk reflected their absolute joy in learning as they explored materials. As a result they made significant gains in their learning. Staff involvement added greatly to the teaching and learning process.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and attainment is likely to be well above that expected by the end of the Reception Year.
- Outdoor provision is a daily feature of the programme.
- Children use equipment and tools with high levels of dexterity.

Commentary

44. The children achieve well because they are very energetic and full of energy and staff ensure there are daily opportunities to develop physical skills. Outdoor provision has improved since the last inspection. The staff have worked hard to develop outdoor activity and improved resources such as large wheeled toys have impacted on children's achievement. Learning is taken forward because of the very good planning for lively outdoor activity. The children want to go outside because they know there are exciting things to do. The presence of staff and their intervention demonstrations increase children's involvement and willingness to improve what they do. The children's manipulative skills develop well because they are provided with a wide range of practical opportunities to use equipment in daily activities. They make good progress because they are taught to use equipment and tools safely and properly. The staff have high expectations of the children, and because the children are encouraged to do things for themselves they learn to use equipment with care and confidence. Their dexterity using drawing instruments is evident in the very high quality of their drawings, for example in pictures sequencing the Humpty Dumpty rhyme. Many children have already developed very good control when using scissors as they cut different types of materials.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and attainment is well above average.
- Children's learning is enhanced through access to a very good range of creative experiences.

Commentary

45. The staff plan stimulating experiences to ensure the children's creative skills are well developed. As well as sessions focusing on creative activities the children have access to creative work through choice activities. Very good teaching is characterised by working alongside children whilst allowing them to make their own decisions. This is a strength of artwork seen in the individuality of the many examples of children's work on display. The children's drawings and paintings reflect the attention they give to observation, detail, materials and colours. Inviting role-play areas encourage the children to use their skills and experiences in their own way and they do so for sustained periods of time. The staff ensure role-play is challenging by regularly introducing a new focus or different resources. As a result, by the end of the Reception Year the children are likely to attain standards well above those expected.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's results in the national tests at the end of 2004 were very high.
- Pupils' standards are well above average.
- Teachers develop the pupils' love of language through poetry, drama and story, but in some classes in Years 3 to 6 exercises to practise grammar predominate.
- The school organises and trains parent volunteers very effectively, who contribute a great deal to children's progress in reading.
- Pupils use their literacy skills well across the curriculum but the school has not yet identified ways in which English can be taught successfully without taking up a significant amount of curricular time.

Commentary

46. Improvement since the last inspections has been good. In 2004 the pupils' performance, at the end of both Years 2 and 6 in the national tests, was very high and in the top 5 per cent in the country. At the end of Year 6, in 2004 all pupils attained the expected level. Current standards are well above average in Years 2 and 6, which is not quite as high but this is likely to be improved by the procedures for boosting pupils' attainment in the spring term which brings many pupils up a level. In the current Year 6, there are more pupils with special educational needs than in 2004, and these pupils are not at present on track to attain the expected level. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievement is good. In Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory as there is a dip in Years 3 and 4 where there is a heavy concentration on teaching grammar through exercises.
47. Teachers promote enjoyment in language, literature and books very well. Year 6 pupils described how they were prompted to acquire a book, an extract of which had been read in class. Through poetry, fiction and plays, pupils' vocabulary is extended and their interest in literature and language developed effectively. Visits to the theatre, and their own drama club are very much enjoyed and successfully promote cultural development. In lessons in Years 1 and 2, pupils read their class story and spoke the lines in their improvised play with intonation and expression well beyond expectations for their age.
48. On inspection, teaching was satisfactory overall, with one lesson that was unsatisfactory. However, this is not, in the main, a true reflection of the teachers' work in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' written work, including examples of word-processed writing, and their keen attitude to the subject indicate that teaching is generally good. Good strategies for teaching drafting and editing are well embedded and a good lesson on writing a poem in Years 3 and 4 was an example of this. However, the high standards of recent years have been at the cost of a relatively narrow curriculum both in English and in the limited time for other subjects. The school has recognised this and the co-ordinator in Years 1 and 2 has identified ways forward such as the development of a role-play area and more use of a range of teaching styles. In addition some innovative methods such as the use of mind-mapping have been introduced without sufficient evaluation of their appropriateness for age and level of attainment. The co-ordinator in Years 3 to 6 has a grasp of the need to teach grammar through the writing process, as described in national guidance, but as yet this has not influenced colleagues some of whom teach grammar through exercises divorced from the process of personal writing. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have fallen behind with skills are taught well by classroom assistants in catch-up sessions. However, in lessons when pupils

struggle, teachers tend to write out sentences for them to copy so that they end up practising handwriting rather than composing their own sentences.

49. The school has developed very good relationships with a large group of parent volunteers some of whom are in school every day to hear pupils read. This is very fruitful and effectively supports pupils' reading development. When pupils have not finished their work in class, it is taken home to finish and this provides parents with a good opportunity to support their child's learning. However, some pupils feel that this happens too often and parents of higher attaining pupils feel that their child misses out on homework because they have always finished their work. Currently, the system works well but the school has not fully evaluated its effectiveness, or any issues with regard to inclusion.
50. Subject management is satisfactory. Co-ordinators have identified appropriate areas for development and they have action plans to bring this about, but the process of checking the effectiveness of different elements of English teaching through a tight system of monitoring and evaluation is not in place. Inconsistencies in practice are numerous. Most notably, target setting has been introduced but is dealt with in different ways and the quality of marking is very variable from class to class.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Teachers make good use of pupils' English skills in other subjects. Reading both on the screen and in non-fiction books supports learning in ICT, science and history. Good writing skills enable pupils to develop their projects in history and to present research findings to a high standard. However, in some subjects and areas of school life, such as religious education, design and technology and art and design, opportunities to write are missed. There are few challenges beyond the usual to these pupils who are brimful of ideas.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages calculate quickly and accurately but many in Years 3 to 6 have difficulty solving mathematical problems.
- The National Strategy for Numeracy is securely in place but is not used thoughtfully enough in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils are taught effective mental strategies and to decide for themselves how best to use them.
- Pupils learn a good range of number facts and work hard but are often reluctant to innovate at the risk being wrong.
- Teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient understanding of their own learning.

Commentary

52. In the 2004 national tests for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils performed at a level well above the national average, although results are not as high as they are in English. Standards are currently above the national average in Years 2 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' achievements are good and in Years 3 to 6 they are satisfactory. This is a slightly lower evaluation than the national test results would indicate because it takes into account the full range of skills and abilities the National Curriculum requires pupils to learn.
53. Pupils of all ages acquire good computational skills which enable them to add, subtract, multiply and divide progressively larger and more complex numbers with accuracy and dexterity. The speed at which they make standard calculations is extremely high, aided in no

small part by pupils' ability to retain and recall a wide range of number facts and to manipulate numbers mentally. Most pupils retain what they are taught very well and from an early age are able to apply alternative strategies when making calculations. As they grow older pupils become selective in the methods they employ, picking those that work best for them. It is the effective utilisation of these computation skills and the knowledge they have built up that enables pupils to attain well in test situations.

54. Pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems is much weaker. When a question is framed in such a way that pupils have to apply what they have learned and to answer it in context, many quickly lose confidence and seek help rather than utilising what they know to find a solution for themselves. Pupils are not taught problem-solving strategies and techniques well enough. Although most pupils are competent mathematicians the school has a small number of lower attaining pupils who find fact retention and number relationships difficult to grasp. These pupils receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress.
55. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The National Strategy for Numeracy has been used constructively to guide development in the subject. However, the school has yet to consider in detail how the strategy can and should be adapted to ensure that the curriculum fully matches the learning needs of all the pupils. In some lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6, the work given to pupils is determined by their age rather than their attainment, with, in effect, each year group within the class having its own lesson. When this happens opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils and to consolidate and support the learning of lower attainers are too often missed.
56. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, with the better organisation in Year 1 and 2 producing a higher proportion of good lessons. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and pupils respond by applying themselves well to the tasks they are set. The amount of work produced is impressive but generally contains too little of pupils' own ideas and decisions. Many pupils are extremely reluctant to experiment and are only happy when they arrive at the 'right answer'. At the outset of most lessons, teachers make pupils aware of what they expect them to learn. Too often they fail to revisit these objectives either during or at the end of a lesson, and it is not made clear to pupils whether they have succeeded in their learning.
57. Subject management is satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation procedures provide the lead co-ordinator with a broad picture of the subject's strengths and enable areas for whole-school development to be correctly identified. They do not, however, provide sufficient detail of the quality of teaching and learning in each classroom. This makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to act proactively in support of colleagues.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Teachers make satisfactory use of the opportunities other subjects present to extend pupils' learning in mathematics. In science, for example, pupils regularly collect, present and evaluate numerical data as an integral part of an investigation. There is some use of ICT to aid pupils' learning, particularly of data handling, but the links are limited and not as well developed as in some of the other subjects.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding are very good but their enquiry skills are under-developed.

- Year 6 pupils perform very well in the national tests .
- The teaching of enquiry skills is inconsistent and the curriculum does not provide sufficient continuity of learning in this aspect of science.
- The monitoring by subject managers does not provide a sufficiently clear picture of what is needed to improve.
- Pupils have well-developed thinking skills and apply them well when evaluating scientific information.

Commentary

59. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection. Although test results dipped in the early part of this period they have risen significantly in the last two years and many of the positive aspects reported at the time have been maintained. In national tests for 2004 for Year 6, pupils performed well above the national average. Two thirds of pupils attained results that were above national expectations for their age and almost all others attained the expected level.
60. Although test results are high, when all aspects of pupils' attainment are taken into account standards are above the national average rather than well above in both Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas are very good. Many have a grasp of cause and effect that is well above average for their age and from as early as Years 1 and 2 they are beginning to make links between what happens and why. By Year 6 pupils are able to evaluate and rationalise quite complex data and draw well-informed conclusions from it. It is this knowledge and understanding which enable pupils to perform well in the national tests.
61. It is quite surprising then to find a significant area of weakness which detracts from pupils' overall achievement. This lies in the area of investigation planning. Most Year 6 pupils understand the principles of scientific experimentation and are able to carry out an investigation correctly. Few, however, can plan the investigation for themselves and are heavily reliant on the teacher for the method they should use and the decisions they need to make.
62. The school has recognised that there is a problem and teachers are trying to make up for the shortcomings of the past. However, there is an inconsistency in the quality of the teaching of this element of the science curriculum, with some teachers showing good understanding of how to promote pupils' planning skills but others struggling to involve pupils fully and to spark their interest in getting involved. Overall the teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good promotion of scientific knowledge but unsatisfactory delivery of enquiry skills. Currently pupils are taught individual skills which they apply well in limited contexts but they are not being provided with sufficient well-planned opportunities to become truly independent investigators and to attain standards in science enquiry that they attain in other aspects of the subject.
63. Subject management is satisfactory. Responsibility is shared by two members of staff. While this provides regular information from all age groups and enables a current overview to be maintained, it also means that no one person has a complete and detailed picture of what is happening in the subject throughout the school. This makes the taking of focused decisions to bring about improvement more difficult to make. The school is aware that there is a weakness in the teaching and learning of investigation planning skills but is not totally clear about exactly what needs to be done to raise standards of achievement in this aspect.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages are highly motivated and achieve well.
- Many pupils make very good use of the opportunities they have at home to extend their learning.
- Key skills are taught effectively but assessment does not provide a clear enough picture of the skills pupils are developing.
- The curriculum is broad and linked well to other subjects.

Commentary

64. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. Pupils receive a much better range of opportunities to learn and as a result develop a wider range of knowledge and skills. Key skills are taught systematically and this element of the key issue from the last report has been thoroughly addressed. Assessment procedures have also improved but are generally too broad and do not provide the detailed information teachers require. Pupils' attainment is evaluated at the end of each unit of work. This presents an overall picture of the gains pupils have made over the period but does not provide for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' skills development. Consequently teachers have difficulty evaluating the progress individuals are making lesson by lesson, leaving them short of information when planning activities to meet the needs of pupils of differing levels of attainment.
65. Standards are currently above national expectations in both Year 2 and Year 6, and across the school as a whole pupils' achievements are good. The teaching is satisfactory overall and where teachers' knowledge is particularly strong the teaching is good. Key skills are taught competently and pupils learn at a fast pace. They show a high level of enthusiasm for the subject and are keen to learn. Many pupils have grown up with a wide range of modern technology and are confident in its use. While being taught the use a digital video camera Year 1/2 pupils demonstrate clear understanding of what is needed to make a visual record. A high proportion of pupils readily and voluntarily continue what they have learned in lessons on the equipment they have at home. They arrive at subsequent lessons having secured their understanding and ready and eager for more. This makes a significant contribution to their achievement and to the continuity of learning.
66. Subject management is satisfactory. The most experienced of the three co-ordinators has successfully led the development of ICT over a number of years and provides effective support and guidance for colleagues. Exactly who is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the subject across the whole school is unclear and therefore no one has a detailed understanding of the progress pupils are making year on year or of the quality of teaching and learning in all of the classes. Co-ordinators have sufficient overview to make broad-based decisions for the subject's development but not the detailed information to intervene strategically at points of weakness.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. The use of ICT in other subjects is good. Teachers give careful consideration to the use of ICT so that its use in subjects such as history enhances the learning in both subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils' understanding of the moral and social implications of the Jarrow March was much enhanced as they constructed a multi-media presentation about the event. Pupils are encouraged to draft and redraft their written work on the computer and to access a wide range of information via the Internet and library programs. Older pupils are taught the use of monitoring equipment to aid their data collection in science. There is some use of ICT in combination with mathematics but these links are not as well developed as in some other subjects.

HUMANITIES

68. In religious education, two lessons were observed, one in Years 1 and 2 and one in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' work was examined and discussions held with pupils and the subject co-ordinator. No lessons were seen in history or geography but work was examined and discussions were held with pupils on history. It is not possible to make secure judgements about overall provision in these two subjects.
69. There is every indication, from pupils' work and discussion with pupils, that standards in history in Year 6 are as expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' work from Years 3 to 6 indicates that they have gained key knowledge about life in the different historical periods that they have studied during their topics. Some of the work is at a standard above expectations but this was not fully backed up by discussions with pupils. Although they are very aware of the ease of access to information through the Internet, and to a lesser extent through non-fiction books, they needed prompting to identify other key sources of information about the past and they found it difficult to comment about the reliability of those sources. Each class has a well-presented time line and pupils know how to use this, which has helped the development of their understanding of the time frame for different historical periods. Throughout the school high quality displays promote and develop interest in history. However, the limited time for the subject means that knowledge and skills are sometimes forgotten between topics. Teachers make good use of historical events to develop pupils' skills in writing. Some of the pupils' written work shows empathy and understanding of the lives of others and indicates standards well above average in writing. No judgement was made on standards in Year 2 because it was not chosen as a focus for the inspection.
70. Planning in both history and **geography** follows national guidance but it would appear that geography is not given an equal emphasis as topics occur only twice in a year. Although there are some good displays celebrating art and life in different parts of the world, few displays focus on geographical knowledge. There is a good emphasis on using the local environment for study when fieldwork skills are developed through the use of such things as Ordnance Survey maps. A very good piece of work in Year 6 estimating the area of shade around a tree canopy combined careful measurement using mathematical skills and good recording of results. There was, however, insufficient work to make a judgement about standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching develops pupils' awareness of moral and spiritual issues.
- Visits to places of worship and visitors into school are used effectively to develop learning.
- In Years 5 and 6, pupils' written work is not of the same standard as their work in other subjects.
- The school has no means of assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Commentary

71. Overall improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The school was asked to improve standards in religious education by providing more opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding. This has been remedied to a satisfactory level, although it is not reflected in written work in Years 5 and 6.
72. In a very good lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher skillfully led the pupils to identify what characterises good friendship, using an example of Jesus and his disciples from a New Testament story. Pupils were encouraged to put forward their ideas and their opinions were

valued. The session laid a good foundation for understanding the importance of respecting others' views and beliefs and deepened their understanding of the word 'friendship'.

73. In a satisfactory lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher planned to develop the pupils' understanding of the difficulties faced by early Christians in Britain through a focus on the life of St Augustine. This lesson was not fully successful because the objective was not clearly pursued through the teacher's explanations, questioning and tasks. Nevertheless, the level of pupils' interest and discussion for part of the time was good. They tried hard to imagine the different world the teacher was describing and to empathise with the saint. The task, however, did not extend or draw upon the pupils' emerging ideas. Much of the work in Year 5 and 6 folders indicated a similar mismatch. Pupils in this year group said they liked religious education lessons because they gave them an opportunity to discuss important issues and to understand other people more fully. This was a very encouraging response and was further amplified when the pupils highlighted some of the similarities and differences between world religions. However, their written work was not of the same calibre, relying on explanations and lists of such things as historical beginnings, religious customs, festivals and buildings.
74. There is satisfactory subject management. The co-ordinator has promoted the use of visits and visitors well and these are recalled by pupils as very positive experiences and ones which have helped them to a greater understanding of, for instance, the life of a monk. The co-ordinator has an overview of the curriculum based on the locally agreed syllabus. However, without even a simple system of assessment in place, the subject co-ordinator has no means of checking the standards throughout the school and has not effectively reviewed the quality of pupils' work.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. Only two lessons were seen in each of art and design and music and three lessons in physical education. No lessons were seen in design and technology. It is not therefore possible to make a judgement about provision. In addition to lesson observations, discussions were held with co-ordinators and pupils about their work and some previous recorded work was looked at.
76. In the **art and design** lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6, pupils' attainment was as expected for their age. In a good lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils were encouraged by staff to concentrate and look carefully for details, which resulted in improvement in their work. They were given a good insight into the way a well-known artist used colour in his work which they then interpreted well in their own pictures. Year 5 and 6 pupils produced some good Art Deco plate designs because they utilised the information on the style which was discussed in previous lessons. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject and have confidence in their own ability and willingly respond to new challenges. They make good progress in lessons but because time for the subject is short, they do not build on skills year on year sufficiently to attain a standard above that expected. The curriculum is enriched by a visiting artist during Aesthetic Week who introduced art activities through the theme of 'Journeys', inspired by a visit to Tibet. The work on display is of an above average standard.
77. Two lessons in **music** were seen in Years 3 to 6. Although standards in these lessons were as expected for pupils of this age, the quality of singing led by the co-ordinator was above average. The skill and enthusiasm of the teaching were passed on to the pupils. Pupils sang well, and were able to vary tempo and volume to change the mood of the music as they sang 'Protest Songs'. In a satisfactory lesson, some pupils showed less interest and some negative attitudes and immature behaviour slowed the pace of the lesson. Pupils' ability to play instruments was inhibited by their lack of skill in using beaters. The school places a high emphasis on performance, and parents consider the school's productions to be of a high standard.

78. No lessons were seen in **design technology** as the subject was not timetabled for this half term. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' design books and photographs indicate that pupils experience a range of materials and techniques and understand the reasons for design. Their work is of an average standard. Pupils in Year 6 could recall some previous work but it was evident they had a limited understanding of the subject, particularly the design aspect. When they explained how they had designed a new drink the system they used was trial and error rather than design. Standards are likely to be below those expected. The subject has not had a high focus and there is some lack of confidence in teaching the subject. However, the co-ordinator is now well prepared to lead improvements.
79. In the three **physical education** lessons seen, standards were as expected for pupils of this age in games skills. In a good outdoor games lesson, direct teaching and a well-prepared lesson led to pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieving well in their skills of passing balls. In two lessons with pupils from Years 3 and 4 and 1 and 2, pupils worked hard to control passing balls and their skills improved through practice. However, on both occasions the pace of learning slowed down by over exuberant-behaviour because the teachers had to stop the lesson several times to calm the pupils down. The curriculum for physical education benefits from a very good range of extra-curricular activities, which are well attended. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 further develop their physical skills when they attend an adventure week at Manor Hall. Sports activities include canoeing, climbing, abseiling and orienteering. Leadership and management of the subjects are satisfactory. In all these subjects, the co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Their ability to judge standards and teaching is inhibited by the lack of opportunity for systematic monitoring and evaluation.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. No full lessons were seen on inspection so no judgement can be made on the quality of provision. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good plans for developing this subject, some of which are already effective. One lesson on science was seen in Years 1 and 2 where personal development was included with pupils gaining in their understanding of how to work together as a group. Teachers' planning indicates that the subject is fully addressed. The requirements regarding the teaching of the misuse of drugs, and sex and relationship education, are taught within science lessons. Half-hour discussion sessions each week provide times for a focus on personal, social and moral issues. Other aspects of the subject are included in other curriculum areas; for instance, there is a good focus in physical education on the need for exercise and a healthy diet. The organisation and work of the school council are understood by pupils and it has been an effective means for pupils to make their views known. The co-ordinator for this area has raised awareness of health through participating in the national Healthy Schools project. The school has been successful in the first phase of this project and is planning to continue further. Other initiatives such as the 'Magic Monday' assemblies and whole-school displays that celebrate personal achievements, especially promoting caring for others, have good potential.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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