

INSPECTION REPORT

BARROWFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barrowford, Nelson

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119166

Headteacher: Mr J A Hufferdine

Lead inspector: Mrs L Clark

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th December 2004

Inspection number: 266376

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:	5 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	284
School address:	Rushton Street Barrowford Nelson Lancashire
Postcode:	BB9 6EA
Telephone number:	01282 615644
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Robert Oliver
Date of previous inspection:	19 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Barrowford Primary School is larger than average. The school serves a wide geographical area which includes neighbourhood local authority housing estates as well as others farther afield and some owner occupied properties both in the village and nearby. Overall, 75 per cent of pupils come from areas of social and economic deprivation. Its eligibility for free school meals is broadly average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage; about four per cent come from ethnic minority heritages. Although no pupils are at an early stage of learning English, the proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is slightly higher than usual. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average; however, the proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs is a little above average. The range of needs includes moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech and communication problems, visual impairment, physical difficulties and autism. When children join the school, their attainment is below average. In 2001 and 2003, the school received Achievement Awards and in 2003 a Healthy Schools Award. The school has been recently been recognised as an Investor in People for the third time.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25431	Lesley Clark	Lead inspector	Mathematics, music, art and design, physical education and Foundation Stage.
8922	Brenda McIntosh	Lay inspector	
21243	Lynne Moore	Team inspector	English, geography, history, religious education and special educational needs.
19041	Roger Linstead	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology and English as an additional language.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school in which pupils learn very well with a high level of enjoyment. Pupils achieve very well; from a below average starting point the majority reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. This is because of very good teaching, with a high level of excellence, and very good leadership and management in all respects. The costs per pupil are low and the school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Strong leadership and very effective teamwork are the key to the school's success;
- Pupils benefit from lively, exciting teaching and as a result make very good progress in their learning and achieve very well academically as well as in their personal qualities;
- The strong level of care and attention to the needs of individuals provides a firm foundation for pupils' very good personal development;
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs enriches pupils' experience of education and promotes their learning in many different contexts;
- The school day is not organised sufficiently well to provide a greater variety in the mornings;
- Links with other schools are satisfactory but could be strengthened to broaden the school's outlook.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in April 1999. Standards have risen; schemes of work identify key skills in all subjects; the level of resources has improved; a new library has been created and the school provides a more effective quality of education than it did.

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	B	E	E
mathematics	B	C	E	E
science	B	C	E	E

*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.*

The achievement of all groups of pupils in relation to their starting points is very good. Pupils achieve consistently well at every stage of their education. Children in the reception class are on course to meet the expected national targets by the time they start in Year 1 in all their areas of learning from a below average starting point in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to achieve well and almost all, apart from those with significant learning difficulties, are likely to attain the standards expected of their age in reading, writing and mathematics (as confirmed in the 2004 national tests), and a good proportion to exceed them by the end of the year. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6. The group of pupils currently in Year 6 is performing at above the level expected of their age as are pupils in Years 4 and 5, confirming consistently good achievement. In 2004, results in the national tests for English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 fell well below the school's normally above average trend. This was because of a significantly higher than usual proportion (45 per cent) of pupils with special educational needs who nonetheless achieved well though the standards they attained were well below average. The underachievement by a small number in last year's tests is not evident in the present Year 6 and was related to a particular group of pupils. Standards are now above average in most subjects. The school is likely to meet its challenging targets in 2005.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance was below national norms last year because of holidays taken outside normal times. Pupils arrive punctually.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good and leads to pupils' very good achievement.

The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teaching is very effective and pupils learn very well because lessons are exciting, interesting and challenging for all ability groups. Teaching is never less than good in the reception class and is often very good and sometimes excellent, particularly in music, dance and creative activities. In Years 1 to 6, there is a high proportion of very good or excellent teaching in every class, leading to high levels of interest and enjoyment from the pupils as they learn. Teachers have extremely good subject knowledge, expect a great deal from their pupils, and make excellent use of time to engage pupils in purposeful learning. This generates high levels of enthusiasm from pupils in response to the teaching's varied, lively but nonetheless highly organised approaches. As a result, pupils get on with their work independently and sensibly and are very keen to do well. Assessment is very good and is used very well by teachers to plan what pupils need to learn next. Pupils too are aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

The good curriculum is enriched very well by extra-curricular activities and clubs. While there are some creative links between subjects, these should be strengthened so as to provide a more varied school day and to give pupils greater scope for working independently. The accommodation and resources are good overall, for despite the limited facilities outside, the school makes very good use of its extensive indoor accommodation to enhance learning. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The school provides pupils with very good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development. The partnership with parents is good as are the links with the community, and they contribute well to pupils' learning and very good achievement. The school could develop its satisfactory links with other schools to share its very good practice and broaden its outlook.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher, senior management team and all other teachers with subject responsibilities provide very effective and knowledgeable leadership of the school, setting very high standards in teaching and leading the curriculum. The governance of the school is very good and all statutory requirements are met. Management is also very good.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think this is a very good school and welcome the termly reports on their children's progress. Pupils think this is a really good school and they like the fact that their views are taken seriously.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

In the context of this being a very good school, the most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Reorganise the school day so as to strengthen creative links between subjects and give pupils greater scope to work independently;*
- Strengthen links with other schools so as to help staff appreciate and share the very good teaching and learning seen in this school and broaden their outlook.

* *The school has already identified this aspect in its school improvement plan.*

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of all groups of pupils is very good overall in relation to their starting points. Pupils achieve well in every class. Standards are above average in most subjects by the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception class achieve well;
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving well and a good proportion exceed nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics;
- In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement continues to be good and standards are above average as a result;
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented are given effective extra support which aids their very good achievement overall.

Commentary

1. The children in the reception class are on course to meet expected standards by the start of Year 1 in all their areas of learning and a good proportion to exceed the levels expected of them. They achieve well. This is because teaching is consistently good or better and the children have lots of varied and exciting activities to choose from which stimulate their desire to learn and discover things for themselves. They make particularly good progress in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development, both of which are below average on entry to school, and in their creative and physical development where the teaching is extremely good.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.9 (17.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.9 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.7 (17.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Standards by the end of Year 2 are close to those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. As in the 2004 national tests, the vast majority (90 per cent) are likely to meet the level expected of their age and a slightly higher than average proportion to exceed them. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and those who are gifted and talented have the opportunity to fulfil their potential because teaching is very good and expectations of what they can achieve are high. In 2004, the school's results were similar to those achieved in schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Previously, pupils' results were better than those in similar schools and above average nationally. This does not indicate a decline in standards, however, rather a change in the composition of year groups and a reflection of the declining socio-economic prosperity of the area. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2 and their progress is particularly marked in mathematics (with traditionally higher results in national tests in this school), where setting in ability groups clearly pushes their learning on, and also in writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.5 (27.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.6 (27.3)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.9 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

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

- Standards in the current Year 6 are much higher than those achieved in the 2004 national tests in English, mathematics and science, where standards were well below those expected both nationally and when compared to similar schools. This is clearly a blip for the school's results were above the national trend until then. In that particular year group, 45 per cent had special educational needs and in fact did very well to achieve the standards they did. In addition, there was a small group of pupils who were expected to exceed nationally expected levels who underperformed on the day for reasons outside the school's control. The underachievement by a small number in last year's tests is not evident in the present Year 6 and appears to be related to a particular group of pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are gifted and talented, achieve well. Standards as a result are above average in the current Year 6 and similarly high standards are seen in Years 4 and 5 where pupils are also on course to exceed the standards expected of their age. Pupils achieve consistently well in all classes because of the high quality teaching and their very good attitudes to learning. Pupils have many opportunities to write in different contexts; grouping by ability for mathematics means that work is exactly matched to individual needs; and the emphasis on practical work in science means that pupils gain a good understanding of scientific methods and processes.
- No differences were seen between the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well and the clear and appropriate targets on their individual education plans enable them to make consistently good progress, building on what they know and understand. Exceptional pupils are also given the extra help they need to make the best of their talents. Currently, a small group of pupils in Year 6 are being entered for world class tests in mathematics. Standards are above average in most other subjects too, which means that pupils are given opportunities to develop their practical and creative talents equally well. Standards are above the levels expected in information and communication technology (ICT), history, art and design and music and in some aspects of physical education. They are in line with those expected in religious education. Overall, standards are higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection.

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

- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are very good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also very good. Attendance was unsatisfactory last year. Punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their very good attitudes help them to learn effectively and achieve well;
- High expectations of behaviour are set and achieved; the school deals very effectively with all forms of harassment;
- The staff successfully develop the pupils' personal development and as a result pupils become responsible and caring individuals;
- Pupils' attendance last year was unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Pupils like coming to school and are very keen to learn and try hard in all that they do. They are inspired to do well and enjoy learning because the teachers make it fun and interesting. In lessons they listen very well to their teachers and do their best in their work. They respond with confidence to the challenges set for them and concentrate very well on their tasks. Pupils are keen to please their teachers and carry out their tasks diligently. They take part very enthusiastically in all aspects of school life, including extra-curricular activities. When contributing to discussions or answering questions they are not afraid to make mistakes because they know this is a school where it is best to try even if they get things wrong. Pupils with special educational needs have equally very positive attitudes to learning and take a full and active part in lessons and experiences that the school offers.
7. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, with much emphasis on the praising and rewarding of good behaviour. Pupils are quick to tell visitors that “working as a team helps everyone achieve more”. Children in the reception class quickly learn the routines and soon know what is expected of them. Throughout the school, teachers and other members of staff insist on high standards of conduct and successfully promote confidence and very good standards of behaviour through praise and encouragement. Pupils have a very high regard for their teachers and each other. The reward system is understood very well and appreciated by pupils who work hard to gain the certificates presented in assemblies. Pupils and parents do not perceive bullying to be an issue. Any incidents of bullying or racist language are rare and are dealt with swiftly when they do occur. Exclusion is used only as a final resort. The rate of exclusion last year was above the average of primary schools and was due to a very small number of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year 2003/04

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	252	15	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	16	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

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

8. The ethos of the school clearly gives pupils a sense of purpose and pride in their achievements. Pupils get on very well together and collaborate very well in play and work. They are pleasant, well mannered and polite to adults and to each other. Year on year, pupils are given increasing opportunities to take responsibility and older pupils respond very well to these. They have jobs to do, helping teachers, acting as monitors and looking after younger children.
9. Spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. It is an integral part of the curriculum and assemblies and is well planned around themes that are relevant to pupils. In one lesson, for example, reception children were truly amazed and exclaimed, “Oh that’s magic!” as the teacher used various dyes to turn clear water into the

colours of the rainbow. Class discussions give good opportunities for pupils to listen to varied opinions that may not match their own and they show respect for the differing views and feelings of others.

- Pupils gain a good understanding of their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures. They show a very good appreciation and respect of others' beliefs, ideas and culture. Pupils learn about other world faiths and traditions through music, art and design, history, geography, religious education and themed cultural weeks. A range of visitors provides pupils with first hand experiences of other cultures and this helps them to appreciate people for who they are. For example, the Building Bridges multi-faith group visits regularly and helps to develop links between Christians and Muslims. An American Blues musician talked about the origins of his music.

Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

- Parents are quick to inform the school when their child is absent but last year an increasing number took their children on holidays during the autumn term time and as a result the attendance level dropped significantly. The school has strongly discouraged parents from repeating this similar trend during the current year. So far it is having a positive effect. The Breakfast Club has improved the attendance and punctuality of a number of pupils. Most pupils arrive punctually with just a few persistent latecomers.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is very good. The curriculum is good. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The school provides pupils with very good support, advice and guidance. Partnership with parents and the community are well established.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Effective teaching leads to effective learning in the reception class. Teaching is very good in Years 1 to 6 and is reflected in pupils' very good learning. Assessment is used very well to check what pupils have learnt and what they need to be taught.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Two-thirds of teaching is very good or excellent;
- There is some innovative practice in teaching in the reception year which makes learning fun though sometimes children have to sit for too long in literacy and numeracy sessions;
- Teaching is very good in Years 1 to 6 and drama is used most effectively to help pupils to learn with enjoyment;
- Teachers' specialisms are used very well to benefit all pupils' learning.

Commentary

12. The following table shows the range of the teaching seen during the inspection. Very good teaching was seen in every class and excellent teaching was seen in each year group. In almost all lessons, teaching was consistently good and more usually, very good, and in the very small number of satisfactory lessons the strengths far outweighed the weaknesses. The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection due to the very effective leadership and management.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (13%)	20 (50%)	13 (32%)	2 (5%)	0	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. The quality of teaching was good in the reception class but with considerable strengths in teaching creative and physical development and in the shared teaching sessions by the two teachers in charge of reception children. The re-organisation of teaching and learning in the reception year since September 2004 is proving its effectiveness. There is a lively buzz about the place as children scurry off to do different activities with a high degree of enthusiasm. The teachers give very good support to each other when they share the teaching, ensuring that children with learning difficulties are helped to concentrate fully and that those who find learning easier do not become restless. There is a tendency, though, for these joint sessions to be slightly too long for the average concentration span of five year olds. The best teaching was seen in physical development, both indoors and outdoors, and in creative development. In both these aspects, excellent subject knowledge and high expectations ensured a very good rate of learning.
14. Teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 and 2 where pupils are taught in three mixed-age parallel classes. Teachers plan extremely well together so that pupils have similar experiences in each class. Their subject knowledge is excellent as is their use of time and insistence on high standards of behaviour. Assessment is used very well to decide what to teach next; a very good feature of the planning is the notes that teachers keep as to what went well and what adjustments they need to make the next day. Where teaching was satisfactory, the pace of learning slowed as the teachers' methodical approach to ensure that those with learning difficulties caught up was not counterbalanced by sufficiently challenging questions to keep higher attainers working hard. The quality of teaching and learning in the three parallel Year 3/4 classes and three Year 5/6 classes is also very good, with shared planning making a significant impact on pupils' levels of interest, enjoyment and achievement. Excellent teaching was seen across the age range and in each Year 5/6 class and very good teaching in each class across a wide range of subjects. Excellent subject knowledge, extremely good use of time, high expectations and a high degree of challenge ensure pupils' interest and high standards. Assessment is used very well to help pupils to learn and a very good feature across the school is the time spent at the end of lessons for pupils to reflect on what they have learnt and to decide whether they have fully understood all that they were supposed to.
15. The skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught throughout the school and ensure that pupils learn very well. There is a high degree of differentiation in the planning so that in mathematics, for example, where pupils are taught in ability groups, as many as ten different groupings, including those with special educational needs and gifted and talented pupils, are catered for across two age groups. In Year 6, after Christmas, additional classes are held to ensure that pupils in Year 6 get more specialist teaching in preparation for national tests. These are used effectively to boost the attainment of pupils who are on the borderline of

achieving nationally expected standards. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to give extra help to different groups in the class.

16. The school makes very good use of specialist teaching in subjects such as music and physical education where teachers swap classes to share expertise. There is scope for more of this, in art and design for example. Drama is used very well as a teaching and learning technique to promote speaking and listening skills across a range of subjects and to develop pupils' confidence.

The curriculum

The curriculum is of good quality. High quality planning informs interesting lessons, enabling pupils to achieve very well in most subjects. The many extra activities provided make important contributions to their personal development. The school has good accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is successful in meeting the needs of pupils of varied capabilities, natures and backgrounds;
- The curriculum provides very well for each pupil's personal development;
- Teachers give pupils very good opportunities to take part in many activities to enrich their learning;
- There are some good creative links between subjects but these should be strengthened so as to provide a more varied school day and to give pupils greater scope for working independently.

Commentary

17. The curriculum has developed well since the last inspection. The school has dealt effectively with weaknesses reported in science, music, the arts, and spiritual, creative and skills' development. The curriculum meets fully all legal requirements including those for the provision of sex and relationships education and awareness of the dangers of drugs. Teachers have worked hard and successfully to adapt and develop national strategies and plans. As a result, pupils are really interested in new learning and achieve very well. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and well balanced in terms of activities which are taught and those provided for children to learn through finding out for themselves.
18. Good planning matches learning well to pupils' different capabilities. Subject plans ensure step-by-step development of pupils' skills – a good improvement since the last inspection. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and support staff use the contents of pupils' individual educational plans when planning work, so that particular targets are catered for. The grouping of pupils by their level of attainment for numeracy is a good arrangement for matching the work to the needs of pupils, and helps them to achieve very well. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve very well because planning links work precisely to individual capabilities. Teachers plan most lessons skilfully so as to involve boys and girls and faster and slower learners well by matching questions, tasks and support to their varied needs. Pupils learn rapidly through presentations from visiting speakers, sports professionals, artists and musicians. The curriculum provides very well for their personal, social, health and citizenship development, through opportunities for responsibility, teamwork, and understanding healthy and safe lifestyles. Lessons in many subjects and daily life in the school community give pupils experiences of natural beauty, order, reflection, caring for others and being cared for, which enhance their spiritual development.
19. The school places great importance on creativity and plans some effective links between subjects that help pupils see the relevance to their learning. However, the school day is

organised so that most of the teaching and learning in English and mathematics takes place in the mornings and leaves little scope for including any other subjects. The headteacher and senior staff are already considering ways of re-organising the time-table so as to introduce a more varied school day and give even more opportunity for pupils to make choices about their own learning.

20. Teachers provide many extra activities to enrich the curriculum. The pupils' learning gains both breadth and depth in whole-school themed weeks and days set aside to explore particular subjects or topics, for example in science, music and health. Each class takes part in out-of-school visits in the course of a year to enliven their learning across the curriculum. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop cultural, sporting, practical and academic interests in out-of-school and lunchtime clubs. These include craft, country and modern dance, chess, computers and games coaching. A unique 'Hedgehogs' Club' nicely meets the needs of pupils who prefer indoor playtimes, or those who occasionally find them difficult at times. The range and quality of extra provision for music are a strength of the school. Over 100 pupils are involved in choir, orchestra, lessons on string and brass instruments and five recorder groups. Termly productions give them good opportunities for performing in public which help raise their confidence and boost self-esteem.
21. The school is very well staffed. The headteacher's appointments have brought together a very strong team of teachers with a wide range of enthusiasms, expertise and talents. Experienced and well-trained support staff make valuable contributions to pupils' progress in many lessons. Good resources – much improved since the last inspection – enhance the quality of the teaching and learning. The wide range of accommodation in the three buildings on the site partly makes up for the lack of a school field and limited playground areas. The lack of a separate outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage does not limit the children's opportunities for play. The curriculum is well planned to include exciting activities both outside and indoors, where teachers make very good use of the spacious accommodation, including a large hall, to support children's learning. The upgraded ICT suite is a powerhouse of learning and supports the use of new technologies in other subjects well.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It provides pupils with very good support and guidance and has good measures in place to involve them in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on the welfare and care of pupils and the school has a number of successful initiatives to support pupils' individual needs very well;
- Staff make sure that parents are very well informed and advised prior to their children starting nursery;
- Prompt and very well-targeted help and guidance make a significant contribution to pupils' very good achievement and very good personal development;
- The school council is effective in providing opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and make decisions.

Commentary

22. Pupils quickly develop very good and trusting relationships with staff and are confident to ask for help if they need it. Parents appreciate the care and concern shown by staff. Teachers and other members of staff know pupils very well and are aware of their personal circumstances. The very good relationships evident throughout the school, along with the high quality of adult support in school, ensure that pupils' needs are met very well. Pupils are safe at school and the good attention paid to their care, welfare and safety allows them to concentrate on

learning. There is a calm atmosphere in school and all staff work hard to make the school a very welcoming, happy place for the pupils. Arrangements for health and safety are good.

23. Daily routines are well planned and pupils are very carefully supervised when at work or at play. At lunchtimes clear systems are very well established and this ensures a continuity of pupils' welfare. Pupils find their teachers kind and helpful and feel they are looked after very well. As a result they are happy in their learning. The school quickly identifies pupils who may require additional support and has introduced several initiatives to address the needs of these pupils. Some of the school's most vulnerable pupils spend some of their time with the special educational needs co-ordinator in the weekly counselling sessions. This helps them to learn to cope with school routines and to overcome any difficulties they have, whether they are behavioural, social or personal. The school is very successful in helping those pupils who are under threat of exclusion.
24. There are very good arrangements to help the children settle quickly and happily into the routines of the reception class. The staff establish early links with parents through a series of well-planned home visits and meetings in school and gather very useful information about the children in order to maximise support and guidance. Parents feel that the staff go that extra mile in ensuring their children settle quickly and happily into school and are very appreciative of this.
25. The school acknowledges pupils' successes well by celebrating and rewarding those who have made good gains in their academic and personal progress. The information about pupils' achievements is used very well to set targets for academic and personal development. As a result pupils' achievement is very good. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in class so they take a full and active part in lessons and achieve well.
26. Pupils are actively encouraged to contribute towards improving the school. Their views and suggestions are canvassed and the school takes them seriously. School councillors organise and run fund-raising events and help in the day-to-day running of the school. Jobs include helping with the supervision of younger children in the playground at lunchtimes. The work of the council was instrumental in providing more play equipment in the playground which has helped to improve the quality of playtimes. This has a positive effect on pupils' personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents and the community is good and contributes well to pupils' learning and their personal development. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has established good relationships with parents which contribute to pupils' achievement and their very good attitudes to learning;
- Good communication keeps parents well informed about the school and their children's progress;
- The school's links with the community are a rich resource which strengthen and enliven pupils' learning;
- Links with other schools could be further developed to assist pupils' transition to secondary school and enable staff to share their expertise.

Commentary

27. Pupils, staff and parents work together in a close partnership. Parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning and to the life of the school and what it achieves. They accompany school visits, support concerts and other school events and are very supportive of

fund-raising activities. The friends of the school are successful in bringing parents and the school close together and organise a varied programme of social and fund-raising events. Parents support their children well when work is sent home. A number of parents and volunteers make a regular commitment to help in the classrooms. Many parents gain confidence through helping in school and as a result some go on to further their own education. The school seeks and values parents' views and regularly involves them in its development through consultation. For example, parents had a strong involvement in the decision to set up an after-school club.

28. The school communicates well with parents through a good range of information about the school and their children's progress. There is a regular sharing of information about the pupils' progress through the termly parents' meetings, written reports and reviews of progress for pupils with special educational needs. Since the last inspection the school has improved the quality of the annual reports about pupils' progress. They are now very good and give a clear detailed picture of how well the pupils are doing and include targets for future learning. Parents find that the school and staff are approachable and accessible at anytime for formal or informal discussions.
29. The good links with the community strengthen and enliven pupils' learning. Recent initiatives have included planting trees and bulbs within the area and working behind the scenes at a local supermarket. Visits to local places of interest bring a sense of relevance to work in subjects, such as history and geography when pupils learn about their local heritage. Pupils sing to a range of audiences, including Christmas carols in the village and in residential homes for the elderly.
30. Links with other schools provide interesting opportunities for pupils to participate in a range of musical and sporting activities and mix with pupils from other schools. However, there are very few opportunities for staff to share curricular issues and their very good expertise in teaching with other schools within the local area. The transition arrangements to the secondary school are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good and effective leadership that is firmly focused on high expectations and pupils' achievements. The leadership of the senior managers and other staff with subject responsibilities is very good. The governance of the school is also very good and all statutory requirements are met. Management is very good and efficient.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong leadership provides the school with a very clear sense of purpose; staff and governors are united in their desire to do their very best for the pupils;
- The school's very good ethos ensures the provision addresses everyone's needs;
- Very effective team work at all levels is the key to the success of the school;
- Arrangements for checking the performance of the school are very good and the effective action taken ensures the school is continually improving;
- Governors make a very good contribution to the leadership of the school and its successes;
- Financial planning is very good.

Commentary

31. The headteacher's very clear vision and high aspirations for the school are shared by everyone. The teaching staff, in a wide variety of ways, all bring their own expertise to the school and add to its overall strength. They give their full support to the headteacher and share fully his commitment to raising standards. Their contribution and belief in a broad and

stimulating curriculum, enriched by additional activities, mean that there are many opportunities where pupils can succeed both in school and outside the school day. The leadership has strengthened since the last inspection and brought about the good improvement that has resulted in this now being a very effective school.

32. The school has a very positive ethos based around a strong sense of care and a core of traditional values, which all staff successfully promote. It is a place that welcomes all groups of pupils and places a high commitment to providing high quality provision to meet their individual needs. This determination shows through the good provision for pupils with special educational needs which enables pupils to achieve very well. The special needs co-ordinator leads and manages this aspect very well and is very clear about the priorities for improving the provision further. The excellent quality of the headteacher's spiritual, social, moral and cultural teaching in assemblies is the foundation of the very good quality of education in the school.
33. The very effective delegation of responsibilities to staff at all levels ensures that everyone participates in the development of the school. The headteacher has built successfully a high performing team with a strong shared commitment to improvement. The leadership system is highly motivating and helps all staff share accountability in decision making. Subject leaders are very knowledgeable and evaluate the impact of current practice on standards and achievement. Teachers with leadership roles are not only strong in evaluating the provision for their subject but also have the confidence and expertise to offer strong support to their colleagues when new initiatives or direction are introduced. The deputy headteacher has been in post for one term. She has received very good support from the headteacher and staff enabling her to settle quickly into the school and take on the management responsibilities of her role effectively.
34. The drive to increase pupils' achievement in every area of learning is at the forefront of the school's work. Through the very thorough monitoring of achievement and the development of strategies to overcome identified areas of weakness, standards have risen overall and are now back on track following the unusual but foreseen fall in the test results in 2004. Self-evaluation processes are very good and are very well established in the school. Planning for further improvement of the school's provision and pupils' achievement is very effective and based on appropriate key priorities. The school analyses its performance data very well to identify areas for development. The performance management of staff has contributed strongly to the very good quality teaching and standards of work seen throughout the school and links very closely to the progress pupils make. Personal objectives relate very well to whole-school priorities for improvement and raising standards. The school has been an Investor in People for many years, with two successful reassessments, in recognition of the provision it makes for staff support and development. Arrangements for the induction of new staff are very good.
35. The school management plan is a cohesive and comprehensive document which guides and informs development extremely well. It sets out very clearly the identified priorities for the future and how each objective is to be achieved. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers with management responsibilities evaluate their subject and aspects regularly and contribute their findings. The cycle of evaluation, review and action planning provides a well-founded basis for school development. The school improvement plan is presented to the governing body for discussion and approval and receives regular reports on the different initiatives and the progress being made.
36. The governing body is very supportive of the school and ensures that statutory requirements are met fully. 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 very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The skills of individual governors are used effectively to support the work of the committees and specific projects in school. They are very knowledgeable about the school and hold it to account for the standards

it achieves. Through their commitment and involvement they are able to make a significant contribution to the success of the school.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	740,602	Balance from previous year	63,030
Total expenditure	766,447	Balance carried forward to the next	37,185
Expenditure per pupil	2680		

37. Financial management is very thorough and funds are managed efficiently. Spending decisions are taken carefully and due thought is given to the impact they will have on pupils' education. A large percentage of the balance carried forward included funding that was already earmarked for staffing and in addition, there was a significant claw back in the funding due to the adjustment of pupil numbers. The principles of best value are applied effectively ensuring all resources are used efficiently to meet the high expectations of the school and ensure very good value for money. The headteacher and key governors have clear grasp of the financial issues relating to pupil numbers and how this impacts on the school improvement process.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter the reception class at the start of the year in which they are five; the very young children initially attend part-time but after the September break all attend full-time schooling. The majority have had pre-school experience and so their personal, social and emotional development is about average for their age on entry to school. Their skills in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development are below average when they start; the majority cannot read or write their name, they have very limited knowledge of how letters link to sounds, many are not confident speakers and find listening hard and most are unsure how numbers work. The children achieve well. Almost all are likely to meet the goals expected in all areas of learning and a good proportion exceed them. They are well placed to start work on the National Curriculum in Year 1.

There is good provision for children with special educational needs and also for those who show aptitude in particular areas of learning. Assessment is very good, and as a result, the work is very well suited to children's needs, offering good levels of support in the form of resources for learning, adult assistance and challenges for higher attainers. Although there is no direct access to the outside play area designed for their specific use, the children do not miss out for the curriculum is well planned to include exciting activities both outside and indoors where there is very spacious accommodation, including a large hall, at their disposal. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. The re-structuring of the provision for this age group has led to good improvements since the last inspection. Of particular note are the team approach and the very good use of space to provide a whole host of exciting activities for children to choose from.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in a short time because they are well taught and the classroom routines give them confidence.

Commentary

38. Almost all children are likely to meet the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1 and a sizeable number to exceed them because the teaching is good. Activities are well planned to encourage children to gain in confidence and to work productively together. The high expectations of staff for purposeful work and very good behaviour result in children developing very good attitudes to learning. Activities stimulate their interest and involvement and they learn to listen to each other well. Teachers provide very good role models, phrasing questions politely in a format that the children readily imitate. At the start of each day, the children are encouraged to self-register and to consult the special noticeboard which reminds them which activity their group is involved in. They work well and with a fair degree of independence; for example, a small group of average attainers made birthday cakes out of malleable material and then sang 'happy birthday' together before blowing out imaginary candles, all without adult help. Members of staff take pains to engage children in conversations and this is particularly helpful to that minority of children who find listening and concentrating difficult because it helps them to focus on their tasks.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in a short time because they are well taught and the classroom routines give them confidence.

Commentary

39. The quality of teaching and learning is good and, as a result, the children are likely to meet the levels expected by the time they enter Year 1. From a below average knowledge of letters and their sounds, the majority of children quickly pick up the link and show a great deal of pleasure in the repeated rhymes that help them to remember different letters. They enjoy listening to stories and using cleverly made resources, to piece together what the words say. The majority know how books work and average attainers are beginning to recognise and read simple words unaided while higher attainers progress to sounding out words which are unfamiliar to them. Those who show a particular aptitude for literacy are given every encouragement to notice features of punctuation such as speech marks. Sometimes, teachers keep children sitting too long on the carpet and so they become restless and time is wasted. Teachers have very clear learning objectives for the different ability groups in their class and use role-play creatively to develop the skills of all attainment groups in speaking and listening. The 'post office' is particularly popular and children spent much time writing party invitations (with a fair degree of accuracy) and making cards. The spacious classrooms lend themselves to creative play and the children relish the space. Thus lower attainers could spread out their birthday party feast in the small hall and play traditional birthday games with the help of the teaching assistant who skilfully developed their communication skills throughout. Children achieve well in relation to the level at which they start.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are likely to meet the goals expected by the end of the reception year and a good proportion to exceed them; they achieve well.

Commentary

40. When they first start in reception, the children learn how number relates to quantity. They thoroughly enjoy the counting rhymes and songs and higher attainers quickly learn to count up to 20 accurately. There is an engaging excitement in the good teaching with a corresponding attentiveness by the children as they learn well. The rooms are very well set up with different activities to promote mathematical learning and the addition of colour to the water tray links well with the overall topic of the week – the rainbow – as well as enabling children to measure more accurately. In one lesson, large coins were used very successfully alongside smaller replicas of real coins up to 10p to help children with special educational needs to see the differences. Higher attainers quickly grasped that there was a link between size and amount. Later, in the 'post office' and in 'toy shops', higher and average attainers successfully 'purchased' articles of different value, matching their coins to the prices on the labels. The class rules ('quiet voices', 'be helpful, sensible and kind') are exemplified by the teachers and used very well to get lower attaining children to concentrate well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve well as a result.

Commentary

41. At the start of each day, the children select appropriate symbols to show what the weather is like though lower attainers do not know the words to explain, for example that it is foggy. Large-scale toys and role-play areas give children the chance to act out real-life situations. They begin to do this well, learning to play co-operatively with others. Teachers plan very imaginative activities to promote children's understanding. For example, in one classroom, a very effective polar region was set up, complete with a squidgy substance to represent snow and with toy polar bears and penguins. Children delightedly made footprints in the 'snow' and chattered excitedly, creatively using words such as 'soapy dopey' to explain their sensations. Children have many opportunities to find out for themselves. For instance a 'light box' which had different filters for them to change helped them to investigate colours and light. Higher attainers, in discussions skilfully led by adults, began to link what they saw with the colour mixing they had done earlier, while average attainers experimented with the changes in light and colour. Standards are on course to be at the level expected overall.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they have a very wide range of indoor and outdoor activities to choose from to stimulate their physical development.

Commentary

42. Children make good progress in their physical development and while standards are on course to be broadly average, a good proportion of children are likely to exceed the levels expected at the end of the year. This is because the teaching is very good and some excellent teaching of dance was seen when children recreated the movements of snowflakes in response to music and the dancing motion in a tiny glass snowstorm. An excellent feature was when the children used a digital camera to capture moments of their unselfconscious and graceful dances. This made a very good contribution to their spiritual development. Outdoor play is used very well to extend activities indoors. Thus as part of the continuing mathematical development, a group of children went on a treasure hunt for coins outside and then set up a new treasure hunt for the next group. This involved considerable manual dexterity in placing and prising coins out of cracks in the brick wall and going up and down the climbing equipment in search of coins. Teachers make good use of opportunities to reinforce language development as when children blew rainbow-coloured bubbles or tried to throw balls at circular targets. Good provision is made for children with physical and fine motor difficulties to have access to activities within the range of their capabilities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with those expected at the end of the reception year though a good proportion of children are likely to exceed them because of the very good teaching and learning.

Commentary

43. Some very good teaching of colour mixing was seen when the children learnt how colours could change when they were mixed. The children watched with increasing amazement as the teacher added drops of food colouring to change three pots of water to red, blue and yellow. Their excitement grew as they were asked to predict what each primary colour would change into as more colours were added to recreate the colours of the rainbow. Higher attainers guessed correctly that blue added to red would make purple. Specialist teaching of music clearly pushes children's learning on as they learn under expert tuition to distinguish between high and low sounds and to use high and low sounding instruments to represent Jack and the Giant to accompany the story. Their eyes widened with awe as the teacher growled 'Fee Fie Fo Fum' in a deep voice. Children with special educational needs concentrate very well in these sessions and strive to play accurately. Higher attainers show developing musical talent as they play rhythmically for their age.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 as a result of very good teaching;
- English is used very well in other subjects of the curriculum;
- The subject is very well led and managed.

Commentary

44. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of skills, but are below average overall in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Overall, they achieve very well during their time at the school to reach average standards by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. The results of national tests in summer 2004 were much lower than usual, due to the very high number of pupils with special educational needs in that particular group of pupils. However, standards in the current Year 6 have risen again and are above average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similarly to other pupils because they receive very effective adult support.
45. Standards in speaking and listening are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 6 because pupils are given many opportunities to discuss and to express their views. Teachers take particular care to spend ten minutes at the end of lessons to invite pupils to share with others what they have learnt and use questions very well to clarify and extend pupils' ideas. In a very good lesson in a Year 1/2 class, the use of a partner to talk over ideas helped to give pupils confidence to say what they thought and created an environment where pupils were not afraid to make mistakes and to learn from them. The result was a lively discussion with highly motivated pupils. By Year 6, pupils are well used to contributing and sharing their views and they listen very well to each other. A strong feature of the provision is the use of drama both in literacy lessons and in other subjects to develop pupils' skills in using language effectively. In an excellent lesson in Year 1/2, for example, pupils acted out their own versions of a story with new improved endings as a result of a discussion in which they had all felt the real ending to the story was a bit of a let down. In an excellent history lesson in a Year 5/6 class, the whole class acted in role as reporters from reputable newspapers and magazines using highly sophisticated questioning techniques. The class listened and responded avidly.
46. Standards in reading are above average and reflect the enormous efforts the school has made since the last inspection to improve the library provision so as to make it more useful to the pupils. Sessions where a group of pupils read the same book and talk about it with their teacher are very well planned and the books well chosen to interest and challenge different groups of pupils. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, a group of average attaining pupils read a poem together and then answered a series of questions very well, explaining what the poet had written about and giving very clear reasons as to what they liked or disliked about the poem. In addition, pupils choose books from the class, school or public libraries to read for their own enjoyment. All classrooms now have a reading area, containing a good selection of interesting and attractive books, although some book displays are not easily accessible and would benefit from repositioning. Good procedures to encourage reading at home have been established. The school is addressing the issue of underperformance of boys in reading by providing additional books in the library, raising the awareness of staff to the matter and monitoring boys' progress. This is proving effective and no differences were seen during the inspection between the performance of boys and that of girls.

47. The new co-ordinator is well aware that the school's stock of books is barely keeping pace with the needs of the pupils. ICT is used well to provide additional resource materials to supplement the school's non-fiction.
48. Standards in writing are above average and the school makes very good provision for pupils to write at length as they get older by timetabling additional lessons each week for extended writing. These are of particularly good quality and lead to high levels of achievement. Pupils learn to write in a range of genres for different purposes. In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to develop their ideas in writing and to use words for effect. Handwriting is good, clear and legible and higher attainers spell and punctuate accurately. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils use language extremely well. The quality of teaching is very good and teachers have the gift of capturing pupils' imaginations as in one lesson when pupils had to describe in a poem some of the objects they found in the dry, dusty old attic. Lower attainers suggested phrases such as 'chipped floorboards' whereas higher attainers came up with lines such as 'oxidised old fuel box', (the boy explained he had looked up the word in the thesaurus) or played around with alliteration to produce this evocative description: 'fishy, ancient, sea-front fishing rod'.
49. Teaching is very good overall. The quality ranges from good to excellent and as a result pupils' learning is consistently good or better. Where teaching is good, teachers have a clear knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and plan lessons skilfully to accommodate the needs of different groups of pupils. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and there is very good use of appropriate terminology. In very good lessons, teachers' questioning ensures that pupils of different abilities contribute at their ease and are not afraid of making mistakes. Lessons are very well planned and organised and the pace and level of challenge keep pupils very well motivated. Excellent teaching was seen in drama and flashes of excellence in teaching writing.
50. The issues identified in the previous inspection as hampering progress in English have all been addressed well because of very effective leadership. These improvements have helped to raise standards, and provide an attractive and literacy-focused learning environment. Classroom walls are bright and appealing and have various displays containing information, helpful hints to support writing, useful words and phrases and a small quantity of pupils' work. This environment is used well by teachers to support all aspects of literacy and is helping to raise standards. The subject is very well led by a knowledgeable and hard-working co-ordinator. Although only recently appointed, she has drawn up a pertinent action plan to develop a more creative approach to extend learning with enjoyment in literacy.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Pupils use their language and literacy skills very well in other subjects. The introduction of role-play techniques into history and religious education has helped to bring those subjects to life, making people and events more meaningful to the pupils and consequently helping them to understand them in more depth.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6, and in line with those expected at the end of Year 2, with a good proportion exceeding the standards expected at the end of each year;
- Very good leadership and management ensure that monitoring of teaching and learning leads to effective improvements in practice and that any shortcomings in learning are identified and addressed jointly through modifications in practice;
- Teaching is very good and pupils learn very well at all levels;

- There is scope for mathematics to be used more in other subjects.

Commentary

52. Standards of the present group of pupils in Year 6 are likely to be above average at the end of the year, a return to the school's customary above average standards as reported in the last inspection. Results in the 2004 national tests for this age group were an untypical well below average, reflecting the composition of that particular year group: underperformance by a small number of pupils and good achievement by the large proportion (45 per cent) who had learning difficulties. There has been good improvement in pupils' achievements since the last inspection for pupils' attainment is now below average overall on entry to school, reflecting a decline in the socio-economic prosperity of the area since the last inspection. Pupils are achieving very well overall because they are very well taught in all year groups and the subject is very well led and managed.
53. Across the school, pupils are taught in mixed age groups according to their ability. A feature of the very good provision for mathematics is the very good level of planning to ensure that the needs of individual and groups of pupils of different abilities are met. Thus as many as ten distinct ability groups are identified and catered for in each age group. This means that those who find learning difficult or those who need extra challenge are given every opportunity to fulfil their potential. In the top group in Year 5/6, for example, gifted and talented mathematicians were set the challenge of working out what time of what day and of what year would it be in 2000 seconds (minutes, hours and weeks) after the start of the year 2000. They worked at an extremely fast rate and are clearly being well prepared for the world class tests they are due to sit next term. A strong feature of the grouping in mathematics is the high level of organisation and planning by the year group teams, overseen by the subject leader to ensure that learning is productive and pupils are taught logically and systematically. Parents are given very good information to enable them to support their children's learning at home, as they are given clear indications of how pupils should tackle and set out written calculations for example.
54. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from good to excellent and so there is consistently good and often very good learning in lessons, supported very well by regular homework. When teaching is good, lessons are well prepared with punctilious attention to detail to ensure that all understand. There is a good mixture of practical and written work and pupils have the opportunity to explain what they have learnt and whether there is anything they do not understand. The objective of the lesson is clear and pupils know whether they have met the required targets or not. As a result, pupils by the end of Year 2 have a good grasp of basic skills. Where teaching quality is very good, the pace keeps pupils on their toes. Resources for learning often require pupils to think for themselves, as in a very good Year 1/2 lesson when they sorted out equipment according to what it would measure. The level of discussion among higher attainers was high as they debated how to measure liquids as opposed to time and learnt the technical term 'mass' in relation to weight. Much of the very good teaching contains flashes of excellence as in a Year 5/6 lesson when the teaching catered on the one hand for a gifted pupil who explained succinctly the units of time in a split second (to the startled wonderment of the rest) to those who struggled to explain how to multiply by 60. In an excellent lesson, with extremely well-defined learning objectives for different groups of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, all achieved very well because they were given the confidence and self-esteem to assess their own learning accurately and constructively.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. While mathematics is used satisfactorily in some subjects such as science and ICT, it is insufficiently planned in other subjects so as to give pupils further opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills.

SCIENCE

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is now very good despite a dip in standards last year;
- Very good leadership and management have led to improvements in the quality of teaching;
- Pupils use their thinking skills extremely well to raise scientific questions.

Commentary

56. Stimulating teaching motivates pupils to work hard and create a real enjoyment for learning. This is the reason for the above average standards in Year 6. Standards in Year 2 are as expected for pupils' ages. These are good achievements given the below average standards when children start in Reception. In the national tests up to 2003, Year 6 pupils achieved average standards, but standards were well below average in 2004. This was because of the much lower prior attainment of this group and underperformance by a small number of pupils. Inspection evidence shows pupils achieve very well in relation to the level at which they start and are on course to attain highly at the end of Year 6.
57. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with particularly strengths in the Year 5/6 classes. Very good leadership and management have led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection. Teachers' very good command of the topics and well-prepared resources strongly engage pupils of all capabilities in new learning. Rigorous questioning challenges them to think scientifically. The high priority given to investigations sustains interest and launches pupils well into scientific observation and enquiry. Faster learners, pupils for whom English is an additional language, slower learners and those with special educational needs therefore make good progress. The science curriculum, organised in two-year cycles to accommodate the needs of mixed age classes, works very well in terms of developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Within lessons, the differing needs of pupils of different abilities and ages are very well catered for because of the emphasis on developing pupils' spirit of enquiry through asking questions and also through the strong practical element on which their learning is based. When it comes to recording what they have done, the older pupils and higher attainers tend to do so more fully than the younger and less able pupils though this is not ultimately a barrier to their overall learning.
58. Science work considerably improves pupils' personal, thinking and observation skills. 'What if ...?' questions in lessons and displays develop the spirit of inquiry, imagination and prediction. A lesson in a Year 1/2 class started with an excellent link to literacy and 'listening ears' as pupils considered 'What if we had very big ears?' Pupils were fired up with suggestions as a lead in to a lesson on which materials would be the best blockers of sound. The strong focus on investigations sharpens pupils' use of the senses. It promotes teamwork, developing speaking and listening very well in the course of learning. In one lesson in a Year 3/4 class, for example, pupils delightedly examined their teeth marks in apples, questioned the size and shape and purpose of teeth, and then used their observations to make three-dimensional models out of clay, using mirrors to check the shape and accuracy of the teeth they chose.
59. The science curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles, exercise and diet. Careful artwork in science books shows pupils' appreciation of the beauty they observe, particularly in work on living things. Opportunities to write up findings in their own words improve writing skills. Assessment is thorough and information is used well to improve pupils' learning. Teachers set accurate targets and pupils know how to achieve them.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are much higher than at the time of the last inspection;
- High quality teaching and learning enable pupils to make very good progress.

Commentary

60. Upgraded equipment has accelerated progress since summer 2004. Standards are above expectation for the pupils' age in Year 6 and as expected for the pupils' age in Year 2, demonstrating the big improvement in ICT work since the last inspection. Very good leadership, management of training and development of resources have raised the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils of different capabilities, including faster learners, pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs, therefore achieve very well. Year 6 pupils described how much faster everything worked in the ICT suite this term.
61. Teachers' command of topics and secure ICT skills enable them to introduce and direct new learning in the computer suite at a brisk pace. Pupils are raring to go at the start of lessons and work enthusiastically and sensibly with considerable independence. Teachers vary groupings nicely to suit different types of work and troubleshoot promptly and effectively. In most lessons they are therefore free to give more support to the younger age group in the class, ensuring that all complete tasks set. As a result nearly all pupils tackle challenging extension work, for example creating their own databases when they have interrogated and modified others.
62. The effective use of a good quality textbook scheme addresses the wide range of skills and knowledge expected by the National Curriculum. The scheme also helps teachers and pupils to assess class and individual progress to good effect. Four ICT clubs and for many pupils the regular use of computers at home support further progress. The school also ensures that the 10 per cent of pupils without computers at home have opportunities to practise and do ICT homework at school. Year 6 pupils show above average keyboard and operational skills as a result. Many pupils evidently use the Internet effectively at home for individual research related to schoolwork.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. The use of ICT in other subjects is good overall. Many lessons benefit from teachers' increasing use of high quality educational websites. In art and design, ICT is used well to develop pupils' understanding of modern techniques and the pupils create some original designs using photocopiers and repeated patterns to produce effective collages. The school has rightly identified classroom use of computers as a key to raising standards in both ICT and other subjects. The laptops recently purchased for use in classrooms are currently being set up.

HUMANITIES

Only one lesson was seen in **geography**. Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement on provision. In the very good lesson observed, pupils in Year 2 learned how to draw a route around Edinburgh, identifying key features such as the castle, Princes Street and Arthur's Seat the extinct volcano. The class had previously watched a film about the city and most pupils were able to draw the route in the correct order, using identifiable representations of the different

features and clearly explaining their drawing to an adult. Year 1 pupils cut out pictures of the events shown in the film and correctly sequenced them. The teacher skilfully discussed each pupil's work with them as she moved around the class, targeting questions, support or challenge appropriately. This helped the pupils achieve very well, as they learned new skills and knowledge, whilst enjoying the activity. The teacher's high expectations were demonstrated again at the end of the lesson, when she asked the pupils to indicate by 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' whether or not they felt they had managed to produce an accurate route. The pupils' very enthusiastic and honest response was a reflection of their accurate understanding of how well they had done.

History

Provision is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average;
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good and pupils achieve very well;
- Good use is made of drama to bring the subject to life;
- High quality resource packs are used well in Years 3 and 4.

Commentary

64. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils make very good progress, because they learn by active participation. In Years 3 and 4, pupils use resource packs containing a good range of high quality materials to research an aspect of life in Roman Britain. They are supported and challenged by the teacher to form opinions about the time, in addition to gathering information. One pupil demonstrated a clear insight into the might of the Roman army by commenting that, "Boudica must have been crazy to think that she could have beaten them".
65. In Years 5 and 6, pupils researched the lives of four famous characters living in Britain since 1948 and used this information to ask questions of four pupils playing the roles of Queen Elizabeth II, Margaret Thatcher, Neil Armstrong and Bobby Moore. The questions and answers demonstrated a mature and sophisticated level of insight and perception, covering the characters' emotional responses as well as the facts. The pupils 'in character' coped very well with difficult situations where their own beliefs differed from those of their character, for example when one pupil playing the Queen was asked about her views on fox hunting. These lessons demonstrated a very high level of teacher knowledge and understanding of the subject and the pupils' capabilities, as they were very well prepared and the teachers used their skills to help the pupils produce high quality work.

Religious education

Provision is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Drama is used well in Years 5 and 6 to bring the subject to life;
- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject;
- Some lessons include undue emphasis upon written activities.

Commentary

66. Although only three lessons were seen, assemblies were observed, displays noted and pupils' written work scrutinised, providing sufficient evidence for supporting an overall judgement on provision. Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4; in

Years 5 and 6, where teachers use drama well to bring the subject to life, standards are above average and pupils achieve well.

67. Throughout the school, teachers demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and introduce such interesting activities as music and drama, to hold the pupils' attention. In a Year 5/6 lesson about Judaism, three pupils played the roles of children who have just been through their Bar Mitzvah. The whole class had researched the topic and pupils asked perceptive questions of the three, covering the emotional aspects as well as the facts. This situation enabled all the pupils to develop an insight into the religion which might not have been gained through more traditional approaches, such as the use of worksheets. However, in some lessons there is an undue emphasis upon written activities, leaving insufficient time for guided discussions in helping the pupils to understand points such as 'receiving good news' or how Christmas is celebrated in different parts of the world.
68. Assemblies are used well to introduce the pupils to moral themes such as giving and topical subjects such as Saint Nicholas. The curriculum provides satisfactory coverage of the currently required elements.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Insufficient evidence was available to make an overall judgement on provision in **design and technology**. No teaching was seen during the inspection; however, conversations with pupils and scrutiny of work indicated standards are as expected for pupils' ages. High quality planning reveals stimulating projects and good use of national guidance. A very good scheme of work maps out the development of skills and the use of tools and materials very well. Projects link effectively with other subjects, particularly science. Parts of two food technology lessons seen showed pupils' enthusiastic responses to the challenge of investigative approaches in practical work.

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards, teaching and the curriculum have improved considerably since the last inspection;
- Art and design is used creatively in other subjects to extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

69. Standards are above average because the subject is very well taught, with creative flair, stemming from the very good leadership and management by the subject leader. The organisation of learning resources and materials is extremely helpful and complements very well the detailed curriculum based on developing specific skills. The result is an imaginative scheme of work that is fun to teach. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn how to mix colours so as to form a convincing skin tone and use their sense of touch to explore facial features before representing them in two dimensions on paper. By the end of Year 6, pupils produce varied work of above average quality encompassing a wide range of techniques and different materials. Sketchbooks are used very well for pupils to try out new techniques, as in one lesson when pupils discussed the progress they had made using different means and materials to represent figures and forms in movement. Pupils work independently with high levels of concentration and independent creativity because of the thoroughness with which skills are developed (evident in the very good planning) and very effective questioning by teachers.
70. There are productive links between art and design and religious education to enhance pupils' awareness of other cultures. For example, Years 5 and 6's almost luminous representations of

the Christmas star using pastels or poster paints are placed in an Eastern landscape redolent of warm colours and reflected light achieved through a criss-cross texture. Opportunities to discuss what they are trying to achieve develops pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. In an excellent lesson, a spiritual dimension was added as pupils explained what they were attempting with clarity and honesty.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6, reflecting pupils' very good achievement.

Commentary

71. Pupils are very well taught through a good, well-structured curriculum that develops their skills effectively. Lessons are very well planned and give lots of opportunities for pupils to make music together and to explore different types of rhythm, pitch and notation. As a result, most pupils can read simple, conventional notation and about a fifth learn to read music with confidence. The expertise of the subject leader is used very well throughout much of the school. In a very good lesson, pupils entered the room to the accompaniment of Holst's *Planets Suite*, and warmed up by producing a wide range of different vocal sounds to create specific effects before going on to compose sound compositions to represent journeys. The challenge was intensified as pupils had to link each part of the composition with a specific group of thoughts. The resulting performances showed sensitive variations in sound quality and tone with impressive effect. Standards in singing are above average throughout the school because pupils are taught to breathe from their stomachs, to phrase their notes carefully and to sing with a wide dynamic range. Their skills in listening and appraising develop well throughout the school.
72. Learning resources are very good and are used very well both in lessons and in the extra-curricular clubs where pupils have the chance to learn string, brass and woodwind instruments. The talents of the regular supply teacher are put to very good use each week to develop pupils' skills as are those of visiting specialist teachers. In addition, pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn the recorder; currently, the school has four recorder groups, plus recorder and brass ensemble groups as well as a choir. The standard of playing is high with older pupils playing descant and treble recorders in four-part harmony.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average overall by the end of Year 6, reflecting pupils' good achievement;
- The curriculum is well planned to minimise the effects of the limited outdoor facilities.

Commentary

73. There has been good improvement since the last inspection: the curriculum is well thought out to develop pupils' skills in all aspects of physical education. Shrewd deployment of physical education specialists has significantly raised the achievement of pupils in those classes where they receive expert tuition. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, ranging from satisfactory to excellent. Where teaching is satisfactory, the strengths in the planning, careful timing of activities and insistence on high standards of behaviour outweigh the rather slow

pace brought about in an endeavour to explain rather too lengthily what pupils should be doing rather than giving them the maximum amount of time to engage in physical activity. A wide range of subjects and teaching skills was seen. In all lessons the planning is a significant strength, ensuring that pupils in parallel classes have equal learning opportunities. Where teaching was very good, pupils learnt to control a ball with their feet very well; apparatus was put up and used sensibly and there was ample time for pupils to demonstrate what they had learnt and so learn from each other. Excellent teaching and learning were seen in dance where the subject leader's lightness of touch induced an almost fairy-like quality as pupils moved in a very controlled and extraordinarily light way to music. Pupils' digital photographs successfully link ICT with physical education to capture their developing poise and skill.

74. The school takes great pains to give its pupils a wide range of experience to make up for the lack of a suitable outdoor area for games such as football. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 began to develop their decision-making skills to solve a physical problem as they set up an adventure course and then had to think and plan as they worked together to carry out the tasks. For example, one group of three had to give extremely precise instructions to enable one who was blindfolded to walk round, through and between obstacles safely and without touching them. When the weather is clement, the local field is used and the pupils have opportunities to play competitively against other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only two full lessons were seen in personal, social and health education so no judgement can be made on the quality of provision.

75. The school is strongly committed to high quality provision for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education and it is firmly embedded in the curriculum. This makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' very good behaviour and relationships throughout the school. Throughout the school pupils have very well planned opportunities to gain a very good understanding of right from wrong and discuss how other react to different situations. Year 5 and 6 pupils are developing a mature approach to managing their anger. Pupils are taught through effective cross-curricular links, assemblies and discrete lessons. Issues such as sex education and relationships and drugs awareness are included appropriately within the curriculum and taught throughout school. In a Year 3/4 lesson, pupils discussed healthy lifestyles and learned about the physical and mental effects of smoking. The subject is currently very well led and managed by the headteacher who ensures that teachers receive the guidance and support they need.
76. The school's very good ethos and the staff's success in supporting individuals provide a very good model for a successful community. Citizenship is actively promoted through the many opportunities for pupils to play an important part in helping the school to run smoothly and improve. The school is good at providing pupils with responsibilities to help them build their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils express their own views through the school council and develop their understanding of democratic decision making. Provision is enhanced very well through visiting outside support agencies and a range of visits.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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