

INSPECTION REPORT

BEACONSIDE PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Rubery, Birmingham

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116768

Acting Headteacher: Miss J P Blackwood

Lead inspector: Mrs L Murphy

Dates of inspection: 1st – 3rd November 2004

Inspection number: 266382

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:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	228
School address:	Hazel Road Rubery Rednal Birmingham West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Bull
Date of previous inspection:	7 th December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is about the same size as other primary schools and smaller than at the last inspection when it was designated a first and middle school. The school mostly serves the local economically advantaged area of Rubery near Birmingham. A minority of the pupils travel from other parts of the local education authority to attend the specialist facilities which the school provides for able autistic pupils and pupils with hearing impairment. Overall, 28 per cent of the pupils have special educational needs which is above average and higher than at the last inspection. These pupils receive support for social, emotional and moderate; severe; and physical learning needs. Sixteen pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need which is well above average nationally. The majority of the pupils are White-British with a very small proportion of pupils of mixed heritage. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The pupils' attainment when they start school is average. An acting headteacher has been in post for one year and a substantive headteacher has been appointed for January 2005. The school received a school achievement award in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16173	Mrs L Murphy	Lead inspector	Art and design, design and technology and physical education.
8810	Mr H Allen	Lay inspector	
32747	Mrs K Faulkner	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, personal, social and health education and special educational needs.
10269	Mr D Figures	Team inspector	English, geography and music
25376	Mrs L Alvy	Team inspector	Foundation Stage and religious education.
2607	Mr B Griffiths	Team inspector	Science and history

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school is **ineffective** and is failing to provide an acceptable level of education for its pupils. Even though the pupils start school with average levels of attainment they leave with below average standards at Year 6. Though the ethos of the school is very supportive of its pupils socially there is significant underachievement of the pupils in Year 3 to Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is variable and unsatisfactory overall. The quality of leadership and management including governance is unsatisfactory because insufficient action has been taken to address the underachievement that has been evident over a number of years. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils achievement in Year 3 to Year 6 is unsatisfactory;
- standards in English, science and art and design are below average at Year 6;
- the provision in the nursery and reception classes is good and the children achieve well;
- standards are above average at Year 2 in reading, speaking, mathematics and art and design; they are above those expected of pupils the same age at Year 6 in physical education;
- the pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because they are fully included in the school and their needs are met effectively;
- unsatisfactory leadership and management means that monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are weak and as a result unsatisfactory teaching has not been addressed;
- arrangements for assessing the pupils' work are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6;
- the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour shine through because of very good provision for their moral and social development and good provision for their personal development;
- the care and welfare given to the pupils is good and the school has good links with parents and the community.

Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Standards have declined in English, mathematics, science and religious education. The pupils' achievement has also declined from good to unsatisfactory. There has been deterioration in the quality of teaching and in leadership and management. The key issues from the last inspection have not been tackled sufficiently well so that assessment of pupils' learning is still a weakness and the school does not always provide a daily act of worship for all the pupils. The full range of information and communication technology is now taught in Year 1 and Year 2 and the national system for performance management is implemented. Other issues have been dealt with so that standards have risen in Year 2 in design and technology, the pupils' behaviour has improved well and information for parents meets requirements.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	D	E	E
mathematics	C	E	E	E
science	B	D	B	A

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

The pupils' achievement is **unsatisfactory** because a decline in standards at Year 6 has gone unchecked. The performance of the current Year 6 is overall below average. This shows a significant decline from when these pupils were in Year 2 and their performance was at an average level. A decline in the pupils' relative performance also occurred in 2002 and 2003. As a result the pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in Year 3 to Year 6. The children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily in Year 1 to Year 2. The pupils who have special educational needs, including those based in the able autistic unit, achieve well and regularly meet the targets set for them in their individual educational plans.

By the end of the reception year the children are likely to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. At Year 2 standards are above average in reading, speaking and mathematics. At this stage standards are also above expectation in art and design. In other subjects and in writing standards are at an average level. Standards at Year 6 are below average in English and science. They are below the nationally expected level in art and design and above this level in physical education. In other subjects, including mathematics the pupils reach the level expected for their ages. The school's targets in English and mathematics have not been met for the last two years.

The pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. Of particular note is the very good provision for the pupils' moral and social development. As a result of this the pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and behave very well. The rate of the pupils' attendance is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **unsatisfactory**. The quality of teaching and learning is **unsatisfactory** overall but it varies much between subjects and classes. It is good in the nursery and reception classes and good for those pupils who have special educational needs. It is satisfactory in Year 1 to Year 2. It is mostly in Year 3 to Year 6 where significant fluctuations in the quality of teaching and learning are very evident. They range from very good teaching through to a significant proportion that is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory and well enriched through visits and visitors. The care and welfare the school provides for the pupils is good and there are effective partnerships with parents, other schools and the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are **unsatisfactory**. The leadership is committed to including all pupils in the life of the school well and in establishing good role models for other staff and pupils. However, the school lacks clear educational direction in terms of leading the teaching and the curriculum. The self-evaluation and the monitoring of the school's performance are unsatisfactory though financial planning is good. The governing body have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but have not challenged senior managers well enough to tackle the underachievement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are generally positive in their support for the ethos of the school and for most other aspects of school life. Parents judged there to be insufficient communication between parents and staff though the inspection found communication to be effective. Parents at the meeting held prior to the inspection rightly had some concerns over the progress that children make. The pupils find the school supportive of their personal development and say that the teachers treat them with fairness and listen to their ideas. Two thirds of the pupils say that lessons are interesting and fun.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- improve the achievement of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 so that standards are raised;

- address the variable quality of teaching to bring it up to the level of the best and improve assessment and its use;
- improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- provide a daily act of worship for all pupils; and
- implement the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Standards achieved by the pupils are unsatisfactory. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good, in Years 1 and 2 it is satisfactory, but for the pupils in Years 3 to 6 it is unsatisfactory. Standards are below average overall at Year 6 despite being above average at Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 are underachieving;
- standards are below average in English and science and average in mathematics at Year 6;
- achievement is good for the children in the nursery and reception classes and for those pupils who have special educational needs;
- the school does not build well enough on the pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour to promote their learning.

Commentary

1. The school has been aware for some time of the unsatisfactory achievement in Year 3 to Year 6 but has been slow to tackle it. The main reasons for the underachievement are:

- a lack of clear direction from the leadership of the school;
- unsatisfactory systems for assessment;
- a lack of clarity in the systems for tracking the pupils' attainment and for identifying gender differences in attainment;
- lesson planning that does not always take sufficient account of the pupils' levels of attainment or their different needs; and
- unsatisfactory provision for the pupils who are gifted and talented.

2. In marked contrast, the pupils who have special educational needs, whether based in the able autistic unit or in the mainstream, achieve well because of the expertise in the specialist teaching. Staff are skilled at working alongside other adults to share their skills of teaching pupils who have hearing impairment or who are able autistic so that team work plays a strong part in these pupils' good achievement. This is based on clear planning and effective individual educational plans for the pupils.

3. Children in the Foundation Stage also achieve well and most are on course to exceed the national goals for early learning by the time they enter Year 1. Effective planning in the Foundation Stage supports consistently good quality teaching that develops effective links between each of the areas of learning and consequently the children achieve well because their learning is seamless. These carefully planned opportunities effectively support future work in the subjects of the National Curriculum.

4. In terms of the school's results in the national tests in 2004 for the pupils in Year 2 the picture shows that the above average levels on entry to Year 1 were built upon well so that the pupils attained well above average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. The present Year 2 pupils are working at an above average level in speaking, reading, and mathematics and an average level in writing even though the age group has a larger proportion than usual of pupils who have special educational needs. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory because the standards on entry to Year 1 are being built on soundly.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.9 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.5 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.8 (16.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. A weaker picture is evident at Year 6. In 2004 the school's results in the national tests were well below average nationally in English and mathematics which showed a significant decline from 2002 when they were above average overall. In 2004 very few pupils attained at a level higher than expected for their age in English and mathematics and at the other end of the scale a significant proportion did not reach the level expected. In science standards were above average nationally but this level has not been maintained. The school has not taken sufficient action to tackle differences in the pupils' attainment by gender. Records show that the girls are regularly out performing boys in English at Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.6 (26.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.3 (25.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (27.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 32 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. Standards as judged by the inspection are below average in English and science and broadly average in mathematics at Year 6. Intensive support for numeracy has been provided by the local education authority. This has included extra training for staff and a review of how calculation is taught and is beginning to improve the pupils' attainment in this respect. Even so, standards in mathematics in other year groups are not so strong. Insufficient use is made of additional strategies in literacy and numeracy to support the pupils who need an extra boost to their learning. As a result, the pupils' particular needs are not addressed early enough to enable them to achieve full success. Because of a lack of monitoring by senior staff and lack of robust systems to track pupils' progress and assess their learning needs, standards can rise and fall without the school knowing the cause. The school has not got a clear picture of the pupils who have special gifts or talents and so their needs are insufficiently met.

7. The pupils are very keen to learn and they behave very well even when the teaching lacks challenge. This was the case, for example, in a lesson in art and design where, though expectations were low for the pupils in Year 6, they made the most of what was on offer. The strong ethos is not used to underpin the pupils' achievement sufficiently well. In part, as a result, in art and design standards are below those expected nationally at Year 6. An example of where pupils' attitudes and behaviour are built on well is in physical education and in this subject standards are above the national expectation at Year 6.

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

Pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall; it is very good for moral and social development and satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work;
- the school sets high standards for pupils' conduct and the pupils behave very well;
- there are very good relationships between pupils;
- the pupils' understanding of our multi-cultural society is underdeveloped.

Commentary

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.4
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.

8. The school has good procedures in place to monitor pupils' attendance and follows up the few incidents of poor attendance or unauthorised absence mostly caused by a very small number of families. Because parents and carers support the school well by ensuring their children attend regularly the rate of authorised absence has fallen which represents an improvement from the previous year. The rate of the pupils' attendance has been maintained since the last inspection.

9. The school has done well to improve on the good standards of pupils' behaviour reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils are considerate of others at all times and their very good behaviour ensures there are few accidents when they have to negotiate the many steps and doorways when moving from the different site levels. The school has very good procedures in place that ensure that pupils' positive behaviour is encouraged, acknowledged and rewarded. There have been no exclusions.

10. Well-established rules and routines are used effectively from when the children start in the nursery so that the children understand what is expected of them. Very good relationships between parents and staff ensure that they work together effectively to encourage a positive start to school life. Consequently, the children have very good attitudes to learning in the nursery and reception classes.

11. In Year 1 to Year 6 the pupils' attitudes to work have improved from the good standards seen during the last inspection and are now very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and respond very well when good teaching challenges them. They are always eager to answer questions and clearly enjoy learning new things. Teachers and teaching assistants help improve the pupils' confidence by ensuring their efforts are acknowledged and successes celebrated. Even when pupils do not find lessons interesting they try their best not to distract others.

12. Pupils are very eager to take on responsibilities. Even the youngest children collect and return class registers to the office and pupils willingly take on more and more duties as they get older. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 run the library. This responsible attitude and insistence of most class teachers that pupils do as much for themselves as possible ensures pupils are able to contribute appropriately to group work in lessons. They have the confidence to address groups of other pupils though when speaking to a larger audience they are less confident.

13. The good standard of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been maintained since the last inspection. Assemblies mostly successfully give pupils time for reflection and set the tone for the day. Pupils are continually challenged to consider and reflect on moral issues including drugs misuse, healthy eating, recycling and people who are less advantaged. As a

result, the pupils have a very good understanding of right from wrong and are able to form opinions for themselves on many social issues. Pupils are aware there are many who are less fortunate than themselves and often take part in fundraising for good causes.

14. Pupils understand well the responsibilities of living in their school community and are proud to belong to Beaconside School. The successful inclusion of pupils who have special educational needs including many able autistic and hearing impaired children is something everyone at the school has high on their agenda. This means that pupils are integrated into the mainstream classes well.

15. Pupils have an understanding of the local community, its history and culture. Through lessons they gain an understanding of the cultures and beliefs of others. However, pupils' understanding of the wider world is not as well developed and they do not have sufficient opportunities to experience or discuss the multi-cultural diversity that exists in society today.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. The teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. The curriculum is sound with a good level of enrichment. There are good links with parents and the community that contribute well to the pupils' learning. The school cares well for the pupils and provides satisfactory support and guidance.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and the pupils do not learn at a satisfactory rate. The arrangements for assessing the pupils' work are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good in the nursery and reception classes and assessment is very good;
- pupils who have special educational needs are well taught and learn at a good rate, although they sometimes miss relevant learning opportunities when they are withdrawn from class;
- in Years 1 to 6 planning does not take enough account of pupils' different learning needs or define learning objectives clearly enough resulting in some lack of challenge and inconsistency in the quality of learning;
- in Years 1 to 6, the assessment of pupils' work is insufficiently systematic and lacks rigour

Commentary

16. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory because, although pupils in the nursery and reception classes are well taught and achieve well as a result, there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6. Overall, it is satisfactory in Year 1 and Year 2 though unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and results in pupils not achieving as well as they should. In addition, the overall level of teaching quality compares unfavourably with that of primary schools nationally. Thirteen per cent of the teaching was judged unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6 compared to three per cent nationally. The lack of exacting monitoring and evaluation has allowed a large variation in the quality of teaching between classes to go unchecked.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	3 (7%)	23 (52%)	14 (32%)	4 (9%)	0 (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.

17. Teaching is successful in the nursery and reception classes because the good planning skilfully brings together both the requirements of the nationally agreed early learning goals and the teachers' detailed knowledge of the children and how they learn. Clear instructions ensure children know what is expected of them and why. Well-considered questions, directed appropriately at children of different levels of ability, both focus the children's attention and give the teacher insight into what is being learned. As a result, the children are eager to work hard and give of their best. Relationships are warm, activities are well planned and so behaviour is very good. For example, well-established rules and routines in the nursery give pupils the sense of security in which they enjoy learning. In the nursery and reception classes, the skills of the adults, both parent helpers and school staff, are usually well deployed. What pupils learn is very thoroughly assessed so that teachers can plan activities which build securely on what has gone before.

18. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because they are well taught. A variety of teaching styles are used to ensure the pupils are fully involved in their learning. For example, in a lesson in personal development the pupils in the able autistic base re-enacted a story about feelings using mime and gesture to show their understanding of being happy and feeling sad. Pupils in the able autistic base are taught in small groups each morning. Adults take a sensitive and skilful approach to improve and develop the pupils' skills in communication, literacy and numeracy. This is linked to high expectations in terms of response from the pupils and their involvement in their learning. As a result, the pupils learn at a good rate. With support they are confident to take part in lessons in the mainstream. Most lessons prepared specially for pupils who have special educational needs are planned to match the individual needs of the pupils and this helps to ensure their concentration. However, when pupils are withdrawn from a class for extra support too little account is taken of matching the subject to that which their classmates are studying. The pupils have clear weekly targets which are checked daily to ensure progress is maintained. The pupils who have a hearing impairment are fully included in the classes and are well supported in lessons by competent assistants guided by weekly support from the specialist teacher.

19. Some lessons in Years 1 to 6 are well planned. For example, the thorough planning of a Year 6 history lesson was directed not only at learning about Victorian children and practising historical skills but also at extending speaking and listening and negotiating skills as well. The clear explanation of what the lesson was about put the responsibility for learning firmly in the hands of the pupils. Resources were plentiful and adult support was well organised. In other lessons, the otherwise appropriate planning stops short of identifying the differences in learning needs of different groups in the class. This tends to be the result of a lack of clarity on the part of the teacher about what is to be learned in the lesson and leads to a corresponding lack of clarity in the pupils about what is expected of them.

20. A number of consequences for learning follow which adversely affect the progress pupils can make during the lessons. For instance, in a significant number of lesson plans, tasks are not sufficiently adapted to the needs of different groups, so that pupils are reliant on adult support to make the task meaningful. This is reflected in the results of the pupils' questionnaire which shows that only two-thirds of the pupils say that lessons are interesting and fun. In some planning there is no reference to the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs, though the skills of the teaching assistants usually ensure that the lesson is suitably interpreted for them and the one-to-one attention sees to it that they make good progress. The less than satisfactory teaching occurred when planning took insufficient account of the different groups, so that neither the higher attaining pupils nor the lower attaining pupils benefited from the lessons as much as they should and could have done. Questions were not planned to match closely enough the different levels of ability in a class, to stimulate and extend the more able and support the lower attainers. A lack of pace and subject knowledge contributed to the unsatisfactory teaching.

21. Teachers in Years 1 to 6 know their pupils well and have a sound informal understanding of the standards they achieve. Nevertheless, arrangements for assessing pupils' work are unsatisfactory for a number of reasons. At one level, teachers tend not to make the best use of the opportunities available to them in lessons to check what has been learned. For example, the time

spent at the end of a lesson when the class is all together is sometimes hurried and superficial. This can mean that work is not reviewed, or pupils' understanding checked through directed questions. Pupils often do not evaluate their own or each other's work and so miss the opportunity to develop their own understanding of how well they have done. Targets are sometimes too general so that success in reaching them is not easily measured. This is in marked contrast to arrangements in the able autistic unit where precise individual targets are reviewed daily.

22. At another level, because in a significant number of subjects there are no systematic or rigorous arrangements for assessing work against the criteria in the National Curriculum, neither teacher nor pupil is in a position to know how well they are doing. This means that, for example in science and information and communication technology, there is not enough information to plan new work or to ensure learning is based securely on what pupils already know. Assessment was a key issue from the last inspection and it has not been dealt with adequately. The quality of teaching and learning has declined since the last inspection when it was judged to be good overall. This is at least in part because of the unsatisfactory assessment and the fact that the leadership and management of the school do not rigorously monitor the progress pupils are making.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. Enrichment through additional learning opportunities is good. The quality of the accommodation and resources is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good;
- pupils who have special educational needs are able to participate fully in lessons;
- there are good opportunities for the enrichment of pupils' learning;
- the accommodation and resources support pupils' learning very well;
- learning time is not always used effectively;
- there is insufficient provision for gifted and talented pupils.

Commentary

23. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Religious education is planned soundly in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is a similar picture to the time of the last inspection. An effective policy underpins the good provision for the pupils who have special educational needs.

24. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection relating to the unsatisfactory provision in information and communication technology and design and technology for pupils in Years 1 and 2 have been tackled satisfactorily. Improvements include regular learning time in the computer suite and more detailed planning ensuring all aspects of the subjects are taught.

25. In the Foundation Stage, strong teamwork between the teachers and classroom assistants ensures good organisation of high quality activities in each area of learning. Rich and stimulating experiences such as involvement in the forest school, art projects, visits and visitors enhance children's learning very effectively. This good practice is now being extended through effective arrangements for transition from the reception class to Year 1. As a result, the curriculum in Year 1 more closely matches and builds on the pupils' previous learning.

26. Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is good and skilled adult support ensures they are effectively included and consequently also achieve well. Individual education plans are mainly well-targeted to the pupils' needs. Because they are used well they also ensure consistency of provision and support from teaching assistants. The pupils' achievement in literacy and numeracy is beginning to be measured through a national system of small steps enabling more rigorous monitoring of the pupils' progress to take place. There are carefully prepared learning links

between the able autistic unit and the main school curriculum which ensure continuous learning for the able autistic and hearing impaired pupils.

27. The school has established a forest school in its woodland copse and this provides additional opportunities for the pupils to learn through first hand experiences. The outcomes of this learning are now permeating through the curriculum and positively help pupils to improve in subjects such as art and design and science. Careful planning by staff in the nursery through to Year 2 enables good use of this unique facility. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit through a cycle of weekly activities which includes learning in the woodland. Older pupils participate in residential visits and these learning experiences contribute well to their personal and social education. Extra-curricular clubs help pupils to acquire new skills in singing, dance, drama and cookery. Parents agree that the curriculum is enriched well but also rightly note that provision for pupils to participate in sport outside the school day, particularly in competitive sports with other schools, is limited.

28. The school has spacious accommodation, very good resources and some specialist facilities such as the art room, which contribute very well to the quality of provision. The extensive school grounds provide good opportunities for the pupils to extend learning in environmental studies, art, science and physical education.

29. Because the use of time is not rigorously checked by senior staff, sometimes lessons are rushed or too long preventing pupils achieving as much as they are able to. Pupils miss learning time because of lengthy registrations and over-long assemblies and because there is no sense of urgency at the beginning of some lessons. An afternoon each week is set aside for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to work together on a range of creative activities. This has some benefits but the arrangements puts pressure on the time available for other subjects. Furthermore, insufficient care is taken to ensure the work matches the capability of the pupils. A weakness is that curricular planning does not ensure sufficient challenge for the pupils in Years 5 and 6 to develop skills in particular subjects. For example, in activities in art and design the pupils in Year 6 in this session attained at a lower level than pupils in Year 2.

30. There are no arrangements to identify and provide additional support for the gifted and talented pupils. This is limiting the potential and achievement of this group of pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupils' care welfare, health and safety is good. Support, advice and guidance for pupils are satisfactory. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well cared for and their welfare is a priority of the school;
- pupils have very good and trusting relationships with adults in the school;
- the induction arrangement for pupils new to the school are very good;
- the setting of targets for pupils to improve their achievement is underdeveloped.

Commentary

31. The school has maintained the good level of provision reported at the last inspection. This is a school whose ethos promotes a happy and caring environment. Pupils are pleased to come to school to be with adults they trust and know they can turn to if they have any concerns. Child protection procedures are very secure and the school has good relationships with external agencies such as social services and the education welfare service. From the time children start at the school, teachers and teaching assistants have a very good knowledge of the many and varied needs of the pupils in their care. A very effective induction programme starting with home visits gives parents plenty of information about the nursery and the reception classes. Parents have valuable opportunities to discuss children's individual circumstances and needs at this time as well

as attending meetings for new parents. This effectively supports the process of settling into school life. At the meeting for parents prior to the inspection some parents expressed some concerns over transition from Reception to Year 1 but there are some good transition arrangements now in place in response to recent research by the school.

32. The school very effectively ensures that the pupils are very aware of a wide range of safety issues. As well as the rules to ensure they are safe in school, pupils are taught about such topics as drug awareness, the green cross code and about the dangers of fireworks.

33. Regular safety audits and detailed assessment of risk help ensure potential hazards around the school and on educational visits are minimised. However, some health and safety issues were identified by the inspection team and reported to the governors. The school is fortunate to have a well-equipped medical room and there are many trained first aiders who can be called upon in the case of injury or illness. Any accidents are appropriately recorded and parents are informed when they need to be made aware of any health issues.

34. Most target setting is not based on any rigorous assessment procedures and most pupils do not have a clear understanding of how well they are doing. However, because teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils so well, pupils' progress in their personal development is not adversely affected largely because there are robust procedures in place to support improvements in pupils' behaviour and there is an effective curriculum for the pupils' personal and social development. Pupils who have special educational needs have a better understanding of the academic progress they are making because the review process of the individual educational plans is effective.

35. In the classroom pupils' opinions are always valued and as a result they are always eager to contribute to lessons and answer any questions. Major development projects such as an outside activity trail are used well as an opportunity to seek pupils' views and enable them to influence what is eventually put into place. Pupils are also able to contribute to the running of the school by their involvement in the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parental support for the school is good;
- the desire of parents to be involved in their children's education is strong;
- there are very good links with pre-school providers;
- the transfer of pupils from the able autistic unit to secondary school is effective.

Commentary

36. The good links with parents and carers have been maintained since last inspection. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school and enjoy being fully involved in their children's education. The nursery and reception classes are well supported by parents who help out in the classroom and visit whenever they have the opportunity. For example, good support is given for visits to the forest school. The parents of children in the Foundation Stage are welcome to discuss their children's progress as they arrive and depart each school day. As well as this parents receive information about the work that the children are involved in and often help with activities. Parents also enjoy the opportunity to attend family assemblies in Year 1 and Year 2 and spend some time with their child in the classroom afterwards.

37. A small number of parents have attended a full length Family Learning course in literacy and numeracy in order to better enable them to help their children at home. Data shows their children's

achievements in literacy and numeracy have improved. Parents have also been involved in the Better Reading scheme and this helps them support their children's reading at home.

38. Most parents are confident they can discuss any problems with teachers and value the feedback they receive either when taking or collecting their child to school or exchanging information in the home-school book or homework diaries. Parents are kept informed of what goes on in school by way of an easy-to-read newsletter. They are also informed of what their children are to study in class and receive good quality reports about their children's progress at the end of the school year.

39. The school has a very supportive and active parent teacher association that has raised considerable funds over a long period. This has enabled pupils to benefit from such facilities as an activity trail, good playground equipment as well as resources such as library books all of which support the teaching and learning.

40. The school consults with parents and this has included a parental questionnaire seeking their views of the school's performance. This goes some way to enabling parents to become involved in the development of the school.

41. Parents value the school's reputation as a true community school. The school is outward looking and makes good use of the local community as a resource. Visitors such as representatives from local churches and the police are encouraged to visit the school to enrich the pupils' learning. The school arranges visits to the local area to enhance pupils' understanding of the community they live in. For example, many classes visit Rubery while older pupils visit theatres, cinemas and museums further afield. The school has also recently arranged trips to visit the Houses of Parliament and the Outdoor Learning centre at Malvern.

42. The school has good links with a range of other education providers. 'Wrap around care' is provided in the afternoons by a pre-school group using the nursery accommodation. There is good liaison with local schools that includes transition projects between Years 6 and 7 in information and communication technology and literacy. The high quality transition programme for pupils in Year 6 to transfer to the secondary sector includes a full induction day as well as pastoral liaison meetings between members of staff. There is a special transition programme to cater for the special needs of the able autistic pupils. Extra visits include opportunities for their friends to accompany them.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are unsatisfactory. The statutory requirement for a daily act of worship for all pupils is not met; nor is the requirement to have a disability access plan.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A climate has been fostered in which pupils enjoy school and develop a good range of personal qualities;
- academic standards have not been high enough in recent years. Although this is now recognised, very few effective strategies are yet in use to improve them;
- the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage and those who have special educational needs is well managed, so that these pupils benefit;
- the standards of teaching, learning and pupils' work are not assessed well enough to allow energy to be focused on making improvements;
- finances have been managed well during a time of many changes.

Commentary

43. There have been many changes since the last inspection: the school was initially a first and middle school and then it became a primary and nursery school; the building has undergone many

repairs, renovations and alterations. Governors and senior staff have managed their income well under these difficult circumstances; the use of 'best value' principles is well understood and finances are healthy. Governors are good ambassadors for the school and their support is valued by staff; they have not, however, sufficiently challenged senior managers about standards which have been too low for some time.

44. The school's work with pupils who have special educational needs, including those who are able autistic and those who are hearing impaired, has been managed well and to the benefit of all pupils in the school. Similarly, the effective management of the nursery and reception classes means that the children get off to a good start. There is a strong commitment to the provision of an effectively organised and continually developing curriculum and the resultant good achievement of the children.

45. Other initiatives, such as the forest school, have benefited from a firm leadership steer and have helped to create a climate in which pupils, rightly, feel valued and cared for. The pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and their good personal development owe a good deal to the positive climate set by staff and governors. The school ethos is that 'each individual matters'.

46. The school's work in the National Curriculum is less successful. This is largely due to the absence of a continuing and systematic focus on recognising where teachers and pupils are succeeding, to consolidate and spread good practice, and identifying areas of weakness so that they can be remedied. Over time the leadership, including subject leadership has not had a clear enough focus on the pupils' achievements.

47. There are written policies describing methods of evaluating the school's work, for example the regular monitoring of teaching but the implementation of these lack regularity and rigour. The result is that, for example, the assessment of pupils' work to support the planning of subsequent lessons was a weakness when the school was last inspected; it is also identified in some of the few available records of monitoring of teaching and learning that have been undertaken by senior staff; and it remains a weakness still. The leadership of assessment arrangements is unsatisfactory.

48. In recent years, the school has used several systems to track the progress of pupils with the intention of matching work to their individual and group needs. This has not had the effect that was intended because systems have been complicated and have not worked well. The result has been that weaknesses have not been dealt with and standards, especially those reflected in the school's national test scores at Year 6, have fluctuated a good deal and have, overall, been low. The school improvement plan addresses an appropriate range of issues, but the few targets set for improvements to standards are too imprecise to be useful. This weakness is reflected in some of the subject action plans.

49. A series of assemblies includes some class assemblies but during the inspection not all pupils participated in a daily act of worship. This was a weakness at the last inspection that has not been tackled and statutory obligations are not met. The school has difficulties, due to its design on several levels, in meeting some of the requirements for catering for people with limited mobility. Though it is aware of the issues it has not yet adopted a written disability access plan.

50. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money because even though the cost per pupil is slightly below the national figure the school is not fully effective. The quality of leadership and management has declined from the good level identified at the last inspection and subject leadership is insufficiently strong to bring about improvement.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	643,555
Total expenditure	614,445
Expenditure per pupil	2,660

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	29,110
Balance carried forward to the next	58,220

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is good resulting in the pupils making good gains in their learning. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and there have been good improvements due to the addition of a part-time nursery and the excellent use of the premises by local pre-school groups. This initiative, effectively led and managed by the Foundation Stage leader has ensured good, continuing provision from pre-school to the Foundation Stage. Children's attainment on entry is as typically expected for their age although early assessment has identified an increased number of children with speech and language problems.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- relationships are very good;
- planning is very thorough;
- adults provide very good role models for children and they make learning fun;
- the nursery nurse is effectively deployed during activities but is under-deployed during whole class discussion.

Commentary

51. Children achieve well and most are likely to attain the goals expected for their age by the time they leave the reception class with a significant proportion exceeding this level. A highly organised induction programme, carefully considered and shared with parents, precedes starting in the nursery. A calm and welcoming nursery, with well-organised and interesting activities, greets parents and children. Parents confidently settle children and share activities with them before leaving. Some parents help in lessons and support the staff by praising and encouraging the children's achievements. This strong partnership with parents gives children a secure and happy start to school life and so children learn to give of their best.

52. Consistently good teaching based on a very good understanding of how young children learn results in very well planned activities that motivate children and produce good gains in learning. Settled groups of children in the nursery with sensitive and skilled support are confident to try new tasks whilst reception children listen carefully to instructions in a large group. Expectations of concentration are high and well supported by effective teaching methods. Children have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well as a result. A good professional partnership exists between the teaching staff and other adults employed by the school resulting in the pupils' good achievement. On occasion, nursery nurses are under-deployed when the class teacher takes the lead in discussion. This means that opportunities are missed to encourage even more pupils to contribute orally.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective systems to develop early reading skills are shared with and supported by parents;

- consistently good teaching helps children develop enthusiasm and confidence in speaking, listening, reading and writing;
- the higher attainers are, on occasion, not challenged enough by the work.

Commentary

53. Children achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and the reception class is consistently good and most achieve the expected standard by the end of the reception year with many achieving more highly. Planning for speaking, listening, reading and writing is effective in ensuring progression of learning from the nursery to the reception class. For instance, nursery children were eager and confident to talk about their early attempts at writing because of the enthusiastic and sensitive teaching. This is built on well in the reception class. The promotion of early communication skills is given a high priority and during practical activities, well focused questions help children to develop their language for thinking.

54. From entry into the nursery and continuing into the reception class, parents are encouraged to be equal partners in developing enthusiasm for reading. Children choose a storybook to share with parents at home and this is extended in the reception class to more formal reading and other homework such as using a book of letter sounds to aid the children's understanding of how words are formed. Parents are positive about supporting reading and contribute to a 'Writing Together Book' in the nursery and to regular home reading records in the reception class. Currently, half the reception class are reading and a quarter are beginning to learn to spell commonly used words such as, 'look' and 'said'. In a good literacy lesson, the reception teacher read the story of *Goldilocks* effectively. As a result, in a well-planned small group supporting activity, the children enjoyed retelling the story using good expression and clear speech. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities at the beginning and end of lessons to develop children's contributions further and to provide more challenging questions for higher attaining children.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Purposeful, practical tasks focus on developing and extending the children's mathematical skills;
- teaching and learning are of a good quality and planning for continuous provision supports learning effectively;
- insufficient use is made of labelling to encourage higher attainers to read simple mathematical problems for themselves.

Commentary

55. Good planning, interesting resources and effective teamwork ensure children are effectively introduced to early mathematical development and achieve well. As a result the children are on course to reach levels higher than typically expected for their age. In the nursery and the reception class, assessment of mathematical development has a high priority and so activities are well matched to the children's needs. Learning experiences are well structured to maximise the development of mathematical skills in all the areas of learning. Counting games and well-focused questions help children to develop mathematical language in indoor and outdoor play. Mathematical development is supported well by the use of computer software programs. In the reception class, skilled adult support for using a laptop computer gave children confidence to concentrate and persevere in matching and naming two-dimensional shapes. In a good reception numeracy lesson, very good adult support led children to understand the comparison of weights and to attempt simple estimation. Very good introductions to practical tasks reinforced and extended this work. Good use of additional adult support and effective questioning to help children to develop their language for thinking. Key vocabulary is reinforced throughout lessons although there are

sometimes missed opportunities, particularly for higher attaining children, to read prompt labels of key mathematical words. Assessments of the children's progress are used rigorously to target the next steps in learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Outdoor accommodation is used very well to support learning;
- planning is effective in ensuring adults interact with and support children in trying out new ideas;
- the nursery nurse is not always deployed to the best advantage.

Commentary

56. The quality of teaching is good and the children achieve well. Most children attain the goals set for them by the end of the reception year and a significant number are on course to exceed them. The very good use of the natural environment provided by the forest school enriches children's experiences very effectively. Children respond with curiosity to what they hear, see, smell, touch and feel allowing them to have real experiences on a large scale. In one such very well planned visit, the children behaved in a mature manner as they made good attempts to create three-dimensional structures from twigs and leaves. In the nursery outdoor area, the teacher's timely interventions helped children to investigate the speed cars travelled down ramps made by using different sized drainpipes. Imaginatively planned and wide-ranging resources such as these help children to investigate why things happen and how they work. Other adults are not always used well enough to intervene when the children are busy with their tasks. As a result opportunities are lost for promoting the children's skills at speaking and thinking. Through carefully planned themes children in the nursery and the reception class learn about other cultures and beliefs and about the lives of older people when grandparents visit school, for instance. Parents, grandparents and other adults work effectively in partnership with the school and this helps to extend children's experiences of the world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical development is fostered effectively in physical activity;
- purposeful tasks ensure children make good gains in their learning;
- pupils have not yet taken responsibility for setting out and returning equipment for physical education.

Commentary

57. Purposeful activities and good use of time are strengths of the effective teaching and learning and ensure ample opportunities for enjoyable, productive physical development. Children achieve well and the majority exceed the expected level for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In the nursery, thorough planning and teaching links activities both indoors and outdoors effectively. In addition, the provision of good resources tests children's ability to explore and experiment as well as co-operate successfully in completing physical challenges.

58. In the reception class, children develop their physical skills and good planning effectively links other areas of learning such as literacy and numeracy. Using large soft play equipment, the teacher cleverly built on the rhyme of the week '*Humpty Dumpty*' to focus on jumping. Children

thoroughly enjoyed the well-planned tasks and good links with mathematical development encouraged children to find colours and shapes around the apparatus. Learning was made fun, ensuring children's co-operation and very good behaviour and attitudes. Effective demonstration by the teacher and open questioning resulted in good gains in learning. Subsequently, higher attaining children made pertinent comments about their work and repeated and linked movements together gracefully. A relative weakness was that the pupils were not expected to position the equipment themselves or to tidy it away after use though they were capable of doing so. In this way opportunities for independence and further collaborative work were lost.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to express their ideas through stimulating tasks;
- resources are imaginatively planned to teach precise skills progressively;
- written prompts were unavailable to aid the independence of higher attainers.

Commentary

59. Planning for this area of development is carefully considered. It is taught well enabling pupils to be successful in the learning. Consequently children achieve well and most attain the expected level by the time they leave the reception class and many are on course to go beyond this. Very good relationships between adults, and adults and children are key features of lessons and so children feel confident to try new experiences and ways of doing things. A relative weakness is that there were few written instructions to encourage the independence of the higher attainers in particular in their creative learning. As a result, they needed to turn to an adult to know exactly what to do. In the nursery, children confidently join in with singing because the teacher provides a good role model; staff praise children's efforts to build, draw and paint; and, through sensitive and skilled questions, give them time to talk about their work. Activities are well planned and encourage the children to express themselves creatively. In a very good lesson reception children faced a challenging task confidently because of the teacher's very encouraging introduction. They made very good gains in learning as they explored shape, colour and texture and practised cutting and sticking skills to make a collage. Good links, in these creative and imaginative tasks, to science, mathematics, literacy and early designing skills, for example, effectively underpin later work in the subjects of the National Curriculum.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision in English is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at Year 2 have improved and are above average in reading, speaking and listening;
- test results at Year 6 are too low.
- standards of writing at Year 6 are below average
- lesson planning is insufficiently focused on pupils' different learning needs.

Commentary

60. The school's results in national tests in English at Year 6 are below average and have been in decline since 2002. When they are compared with the results of schools where a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals they are in the bottom five per cent of the

country: this has been the case in three of the last five years. This is because, too few pupils achieve the higher levels although results are sometimes influenced by the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the age group. Girls generally do better than boys. Pupils' achievement generally is unsatisfactory, particularly so for higher-attaining boys.

61. The standard of work seen in the present Year 6 is lower than it was at the time of the last inspection and is consistent with below average standards because of weaknesses in writing. Higher-attaining pupils write to a standard which at least matches the expectation for their age. For example, a letter giving advice on how to put on a play was properly laid out, to the point and accurate. However, the writing of pupils in the middle and lower attainment groups contains mistakes in sentence structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation which should have been overcome by this stage. In one instance, the accompanying preparatory work accurately depicted the desired content but the resulting writing was brief, untidy and miss-spelt. This points to gaps in skills development in the past.

62. Standards of reading are satisfactory overall, but with a big range of attainment. The highest attainers are fluent readers and in the middle range, pupils read the words mostly accurately but need much coaxing to talk about what they read. The lower attaining pupils are laborious in their reading, having few effective strategies for tackling words they do not know, frequently misreading words by guessing them from the initial letter or the shape.

63. Standards of speaking and listening are broadly average. Most pupils are confident talkers in informal situations where they feel in control of the conversation. In formal settings, the highest attaining pupils speak well. Others, though they have ideas, lack confidence and are diffident about expressing them.

64. Standards at Year 2 have improved since the last inspection, when pupils' writing was below expectation. In the school's 2004 test results, pupils' scores were above average in reading and well above average in writing. They were higher than the previous two years, and compared favourably with the scores of similar schools. Building on the good standards of the nursery and reception, the pupils achieve satisfactorily overall to reach above average standards in speaking, listening and reading by the end of the year. In the present Year 2 there is a significant proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. The overall improvement follows a careful re-appraisal of teaching methods. For example, improved speaking and listening is the result of increased opportunities to discuss matters of importance to pupils. Time set aside for discussion, when pupils are expected to listen to each other and speak in turn, is one such timetabled lesson which has helped the pupils improve standards. Standards in writing are not as high as those shown in the 2004 tests and are average. The best writing employs different styles; other writers have interesting ideas which are masked by immature skills.

65. The quality of teaching is inconsistent though satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. However, the pupils' underachievement indicates that this has not always been the case. It is good for the pupils who have special educational needs and they achieve well as a result. In small groups, a warm supportive attitude on the part of the teacher and an open discussion of strategies for success gives pupils the confidence to try hard. Skilful questioning helps them to focus on the matter in hand. Where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory it is because, despite careful planning, underlying subject knowledge is not sufficiently strong to promote general and specific English skills well enough. In the best of the other lessons, the teachers' good subject knowledge results in clear explanations; good instructions ensure pupils know what they have to do. Lessons are well organised and classrooms well managed so that full use is made of the time available. Nevertheless, in some, planning does not always focus sufficiently on pupils' different needs and on identifying exactly what is to be learned to meet them. As a result the pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged and their learning slows down. Insufficient use is made of the final few minutes of a lesson when the class is all together to review what has been learned and prepare for the next lesson.

66. Recent changes have injected a new rigour into the leadership of the subject and a number of well-judged management strategies have followed alongside support from the local education authority. Test results are analysed and lessons drawn from them for future planning. The careful scrutiny of pupils' work, sometimes using outside help to achieve consistency with other schools, has identified gaps in what they have learned, and has guided a programme of curricular and staff development. Meetings with parents have explained the school's approach and given advice about how pupils can best be helped at home. It is too soon to see a significant improvement in overall standards, but the measures taken are appropriate. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. The links between English and other subjects are satisfactory. Non-fiction writing features well in science. History work on Victorian children offered good opportunities for reading different kinds of text and to evaluate information. Personal, social and health education lessons and drama lessons provide effective opportunities for speaking and listening though some opportunities are incidental rather than planned.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- pupils with special educational needs achieve well; the more able pupils underachieve;
- the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory;
- the assessment and checking of the pupils' progress are underdeveloped.

Commentary

68. From 2001 onwards standards in mathematics at Year 2 have been close to the national average. The school's 2004 test results show that standards rose to well above the national average and higher attainers did particularly well. The inspection judgement is that standards are above average at Year 2 which takes into account the higher than usual proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils are achieving at a satisfactory level in Year 1 and Year 2 because the subject leader works in close liaison with the Foundation Stage manager to ensure a smooth transition in the pupils' learning based upon a good exchange of assessment information. Outcomes from the Foundation Stage profile are shared and mostly used to adapt lessons for the different groups of pupils and this means that lessons are closely matched to the pupils' needs.

69. Standards at Year 6 show a different picture with results well below the national averages in 2003 and 2004. The school's 2004 national test results showed a huge decline in standards since the last inspection when pupils' attainment was above average. The inspection judgement is that standards are broadly average at Year 6 but this also represents a decline from the last inspection.

70. Support from the local education authority has helped to raise standards at Year 6. However, the pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory over time in Year 3 to Year 6. This is due to several factors. The subject leaders have not yet fully implemented a consistent system to monitor the pupils' progress throughout these year groups. As a result, potential underachievement is not identified early enough. The results of tests are analysed but the information is not always well used to adjust teaching plans. Though the pupils have targets they are not linked closely enough with daily learning and, consequently, are not referred to in lessons and are difficult for teachers to manage easily. Planning is inconsistent. Teachers use a variety of sources to plan lessons. This makes it hard to monitor progress from term to term. Because lesson planning does not always address the pupils' different levels of attainment, the more able do not achieve their potential. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work but little guidance is given to enable pupils to know how to improve.

71. The pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. This includes the able autistic pupils and those who have a hearing impairment because work is well matched to their needs.

72. The quality of teaching and the consequent learning ranges from unsatisfactory to good. It is satisfactory overall but gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills in Years 3 to 6 indicate that this has not generally been so. A lack of consistent systems to plan and assess pupils' work shows fragility in the school's management to sustain the standards already reached. In most lessons, the pupils work hard with enjoyment and have a positive attitude to mathematics. Good relationships and rapport between teachers and pupils mean that the lessons generate humour. This helps the pupils to grow in confidence and contribute to lessons knowing that their responses will be valued. Resources are usually attractive and well-prepared maintaining pupils' motivation and concentration. Effective use of whiteboards in some lessons demands all pupils to be fully involved and the pace of learning is brisk. Teaching assistants encourage pupils to listen when the teacher is speaking, quietly interpreting or explaining learning again to help the less able pupils or those with particular needs to achieve the lesson objective. Where lessons were less successful, weaknesses in lesson planning meant that tasks were insufficiently well matched to the attainment of different groups of pupils and, as a consequence, pupils lost interest and became noisy because they lacked challenge.

73. The school has rightly identified improving standards in mathematics at Year 6 as a priority in the current school improvement plan. Despite this, inconsistency in practice remains and overall the pupils' very good behaviour, enthusiasm and attitudes to learning are insufficiently harnessed to bring about secure improvement in standards. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory because external support is required to enable the roles to be properly discharged.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. The use of mathematics in other subjects is unsatisfactory. Pupils apply their mathematical skills such as using graphs and tables in science and designing layouts on computers. However, opportunities are incidental rather than part of a planned programme of learning to promote the use of mathematics in other subjects.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards fluctuate considerably from year to year and are below average in the current Year 6;
- in a number of lessons the needs of the highest and lowest attainers are not met;
- the monitoring of provision and standards is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

75. Standards are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. This is a decline since the last inspection. Pupils achieve at a satisfactory rate in Years 1 and 2 but achievement in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory.

76. In recent years, standards in science have fluctuated between above average and well below average nationally. The school's prediction is that standards of the current Year 6 are likely to be well below average by the end of the year. In spite of this prediction there has been no systematic identification of the necessary broad range of strategies needed to make urgent improvements although improvements are taking place to some aspects of the provision. These are beginning to raise standards, hence the inspection judgement that standards are below average.

77. The gradual improvement owes much to an effective use of an area of the school grounds - the forest school - that is well laid out for work in science and is used expertly, especially in Years 1 and 2 and increasingly in Years 3 to 6. Some good use is made of technological aids such as the interactive whiteboard on which teachers project information and pupils write their own contributions.

78. The quality of teaching is variable and unsatisfactory overall; as a result, the pupils' learning is also unsatisfactory. The best teaching is characterised by good explanations of work that stimulate pupils to use more scientific vocabulary when, for example, discussing what they have learned or are about to investigate. Because the school's monitoring of teaching and its analysis of the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not reliable and effective, teachers find it difficult to match the level of work accurately to pupils' learning needs. As a result, from time to time both higher and lower attainers suffer from mismatched work. Some lessons are timetabled to last for forty minutes and tend to start late. This makes it difficult to plan work that is substantial enough to be as productive as teachers aim for; such lessons can be rushed, so that there are insufficient opportunities for both consolidation and exploration of new ideas leading to unsatisfactory achievement.

79. The recently appointed specialist subject manager satisfactorily works alongside an experienced colleague so that both partners of the subject benefit from the arrangement. Already the use of some specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6, together with a growing use of links with other subjects, especially literacy, is resulting in more pupils expressing enthusiasm for the subject; this is helping to improve their learning. However, plans have yet to be implemented to improve the monitoring of standards, teaching and learning and to improve assessment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have good knowledge and skills and ensure that the pupils make good use of the computer suite;
- information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in other subjects;
- assessment is underdeveloped;
- technical difficulties are limiting pupils' learning and achievement.

Commentary

80. Standards in information and communication technology match national expectations at Year 2 and Year 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection for the pupils in Year 2 when standards were below the expected level. Pupils in Year 2 now confidently talk about how they use computers to help them with their work in other subjects.

81. This improvement has been achieved because of the action the school has taken to improve the subject knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, the teaching force is confident and has the skills to help the pupils to achieve satisfactorily. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Strengths are in the way in which teachers explain tasks well and give clear instructions. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support the pupils who have special educational needs. Teaching and learning are frequently linked to other subjects helping the pupils to use their growing computer skills purposefully. For example, in a lesson seen where the teaching and learning were good the pupils were required to develop graphic skills in order to write an article for a newspaper. Where teaching and learning, though satisfactory, are weaker it is because of a lack of precise match of task to the pupils' needs. There is little systematic assessment of pupils' progress and this is adversely affecting the planning of lessons because teachers are unclear

exactly what the pupils know, understand and can do. A portfolio of pupils' work is insufficiently helpful because it is not levelled against national standards.

82. The computer suite is a good resource and all classes have a regular access to it as well as to a bank of wireless laptop computers. This enables the pupils regularly to develop and apply their skills. Pupils are enthusiastic and they work well together sharing ideas. However, the technology is not free from technical difficulties. This causes loss of learning time and frustration in teaching and learning. Teachers try to make the best of the situation and resolve the problems but the inevitable outcome is that pupils do not achieve as much as they could. The monitoring of the subject is unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

83. Information and communication technology supports work in English, art and design and history satisfactorily. For example, pupils used their knowledge of the Victorians to create hyperlinks to link pages on a research document. Pupils in Year 2 were able to import pictures into their text to illustrate their writing.

HUMANITIES

84. No teaching was seen in geography or religious education because lessons were not timetabled for these subjects during the inspection. As a result no judgements are made on provision, teaching and learning in these subjects. In **geography** no judgement is made on standards because there was no work available to scrutinise.

85. In **religious education** standards at the last inspection were judged to be generally above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Examination of older pupils' work shows some inconsistencies in the amount, quality and quantity of work. It was apparent from discussions with pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 that few pupils had acquired a good depth of understanding about the subject. Recent emphasis on other subjects and reduced monitoring of religious education has led to a lower profile for the subject and a dip in standards to broadly meeting the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Improvement since the last inspection is therefore unsatisfactory. In discussion, Year 6 pupils show that they are introduced appropriately to the main aspects of major world faiths although they have difficulty in comparing them and in using technical terms. The curriculum and pupils' work shows that due emphasis has been placed on learning about the traditions and beliefs of other faiths and cultures although in discussions only higher attaining pupils spoke in an informed way about the Sikh and Hindu religions, for example. Overall, pupils' books show little evidence of reflection in their personal writing in response to what they had learned about religion. Insufficient emphasis is placed on monitoring curricular plans to ensure that knowledge, skills and understanding are being taught in a progressive way. Assessment procedures that would provide the school with a more consistent view of pupils' progress and attainment remain underdeveloped as at the last inspection. There is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support the subject.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard;
- teaching makes good use of technological aids;
- work is not often enough matched to the needs of the highest and lowest attainers.

Commentary

86. Pupils in all years achieve satisfactorily and standards are at nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory overall. This matches the situation when the school was last inspected.

87. In the best teaching, the pupils respond with enthusiasm to the teachers' clear explanations and their good use of internet web-sites and inter-active whiteboards; these allow teachers to present attractive and pertinent materials and the pupils to participate fully. For example, a Year 4 lesson linked information and communication technology with history. Because the teacher had prepared the lesson and the resources with care and skill, pupils were able to demonstrate well what they already knew. With some support they accessed an appropriate website, used their knowledge to invent new names for Viking settlements and entered these into the computer. The lesson was fun and learning moved at a good pace. In a Year 6 lesson it was the teacher's clear, accurate and stimulating explanations that captured pupils' imagination and took learning forward at a very good pace.

88. In other lessons teaching and learning are less effective. This is partly because the assessment of what pupils learn is not sufficiently systematic to be used to guide subsequent work. Senior managers do not have a sufficiently accurate view of overall standards; leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Lower attainers in Year 6 do not understand sufficiently well that different accounts of things in the past may be from a range of standpoints and they take information at face value rather than comparing it with other sources. Higher attainers in Year 2 know a good deal about, for example, Guy Fawkes and the Celts but teaching has not given them the capacity to make links between the different things that they know so that they confuse fact with legend and with semi-fictional films. Nonetheless, teaching has engendered such enthusiasm for the subject that with directed leadership the school is well placed to make improvements.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

89. In design and technology and art and design insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on provision or the quality of teaching and learning.

90. In **art and design**, standards are above expectation at the end of Year 2 with strengths in the way in which the environment is used to promote the subject. Standards are below the expected level at the end of Year 6 and lower than at the last inspection. Weaknesses are in the pupils' attainment in drawing and in their knowledge of other artists. The activity afternoon discussed earlier where groups of pupils from Years 3 to 6 work together produces variable quality in teaching and learning in art and design. In a lesson where the teaching and learning were good, strengths were in the way that the pupils' needs were identified and met through day-to-day assessment. Where teaching was unsatisfactory there was considerable lack of challenge for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. The planning did not make clear the difference in expectation between the pupils in the different age groups and, although the pupils enjoyed the task, expectations of the older pupils' achievement were low. All worked at a similar level which for pupils in Year 6 was below the expected level nationally.

91. In **design and technology**, standards have improved at the end of Year 2 since the last inspection. Across the school the pupils' attainment meets the levels expected nationally. A strength is in the pupils' understanding of food technology and a relative weakness is in control technology. The assessment of what the pupils have learned is unsatisfactory.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy music and are keen to make progress;
- the quality of teaching is good, supported by a new scheme of work;
- the leadership and management focus insufficiently on monitoring standards and achievement.

Commentary

92. Whether in music lessons during school or in the choir after school pupils clearly enjoy music and are eager to join in. Fourteen pupils, mainly from Year 3, stayed after school for choir. Year 6 pupils in discussion talked cogently about recent work. Pupils in a Year 4 lesson worked energetically to perfect a seven-in-a-bar ostinato and a high proportion succeeded in doing so and achieved well by the end of the lesson.

93. Standards in singing and playing are in line with those to be expected of pupils the same age and, generally, pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The singing in assembly was tuneful, with some boys singing particularly well. Singing by younger pupils, however, sometimes tends to sacrifice quality of tone to enthusiasm. Pupils play percussion instruments for the most part accurately, listening with care and steadily developing performance skills under the patient encouragement of the teacher. Some pupils in Year 2 find it difficult to name the instruments they are using or to keep them quiet when starting a new task or preparing a performance.

94. The quality of teaching is good, influenced by a newly introduced music scheme which teachers have appreciated. A sequence of well-planned tasks carries the lessons forward so that pupils learn new techniques appropriately. A strong relationship between pupils and teacher leads to good lesson management and encourages pupils to participate. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to evaluate each other's work, and thus consolidate what they have learned, and to practise using subject terminology. Pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and achieve well, sharing their enjoyment in music with the rest of the class.

95. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory, principally because in the absence of formal arrangements for assessment there is no systematic way for pupils' standards and achievement to be recorded or monitored with the result that neither teachers nor pupils know whether pupils are making as much progress as they could. There are no judgements on overall standards in music at the last inspection so improvement since then cannot be judged.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils' enjoy keeping fit and have very good attitudes to the subject;
- the use of demonstration helps to improve the pupils' skills;
- assessment is unsatisfactory;
- extra-curricular competitive sport is very limited.

Commentary

96. Standards are above those typically expected by the end of Year 6 in games and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils' attainment is at the expected level in dance. By the time they leave the school the majority of pupils meet the standards expected in swimming. For example, the majority of pupils in Year 3 can already swim and are confident in water. At the end of Year 2, standards are broadly typical for the pupils' ages in games and dance. Equality of opportunity is provided for all pupils, and those who have special educational needs have the necessary support such as extra instructions for the able autistic and the hearing impaired pupils or

the help of an adult to help them achieve well. The pupils' achievement is good overall. There was no judgement on overall standards at the end of Year 6 at the last inspection so improvement since then cannot be judged.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is good and effective use is made of demonstration by the adults so that the pupils know exactly what is expected of them and make good gains in developing skills at games and dance. Questioning drawn from the teachers' good subject knowledge elicits a good response from pupils and helps to develop their use of subject terminology so that discussion is reasonably precise and focused. This also helps the pupils at the end of a lesson when they have to make a pictorial record of their completed work. Very good relationships mean that pupils co-operate very well and give of their best. As a result team work is strong by Year 6. Pupils have very good attitudes to keeping fit and are self-motivated to practise and improve their skills. Once the lessons start, good use is made of time and the pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise new skills and apply them. The majority of pupils have two hours allocated for physical education which on paper meets the government's expectations. At the beginning of some lessons there is a lack of urgency, however, and pupils are allowed too much time to change into their kit which erodes the time for physical development. In lessons seen in Year 5 and Year 6, a minority of pupils had no kit and had to observe the lesson rather than join in with the games and dance. The teaching response to this lacked urgency.

98. The very good outside accommodation is used well in lessons but under-used after school because there are few opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive games against other schools. This is a concern of parents. The subject is satisfactorily led but management is unsatisfactory because of a lack of systems for rigorous self-evaluation. As a result, aspects such as assessment have not been developed sufficiently; it is left to the class teachers and is inconsistently applied. Because of this, higher attainers do not always reach the standards of which they are capable. For example, in a Year 6 dance lesson, pupils were not expected to complete their routines by paying good attention to how foot and hand movement could contribute to the dance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education is well supported by the strong school ethos and its success in including all pupils whatever their needs;
- the co-ordinator has had limited opportunities to monitor and improve the provision.

Commentary

99. Personal, social and health education is taught effectively as a separate subject as well as having a positive contribution to the learning experiences in the whole curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well. Planned lessons feature in every class over the school year. It is also embedded into the every day work of the school such as assembly where the hearing impaired children participate as the teachers sign in hymn singing. The good teaching and learning gives time for pupils to consider issues that are relevant to their personal development such as healthy eating, exploration of personal feelings and awareness of the misuse of drugs. Further learning occurs when issues from pupils' work and play are shared in class discussions. These are carefully listened to and difficulties resolved. A sensitive range of ways has been developed to enable pupils to raise issues. These include 'sharing boxes' placed discretely in the corridor and classrooms where pupils can post notes of their worries. This results in pupils' knowing that any individual problems can be dealt with in confidence.

100. Innovations such as the zone board and reward tokens positively improve the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in and out of the classroom. Parents at the meeting held prior to the inspection had concerns over this but the system is serving its purpose well. The regular experiences of learning in the forest school further support the pupils' personal development. The pupils are able to appreciate and respond to the natural environment through well-planned activities that help them to observe the seasonal changes and take practical steps to protect the birds. Pupils make and locate feeders that will sustain the birds through the winter giving the learning a real sense of purpose. The pupils, including those who have special educational needs, respond to such learning by sharing, taking turns and helping each other. This gives them the skills to develop good relationships with each other.

101. The satisfactory subject leadership, though newly appointed, is already bringing coherence to the teaching of the subject. Much has already been achieved. A new policy has been developed and a clear action plan has identified areas for further improvement. There are few opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and there is no formal assessment of the pupils' learning. This means there is limited information to help the subject leader identify and deal with weaknesses in provision.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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