

INSPECTION REPORT

Brookside Infant School

Harold Hill, Romford, Essex

LEA area: London Borough of Havering

Unique reference number: 102289

Headteacher: Mrs J Puttick

Lead inspector: Kath Beck

Dates of inspection: 28th February – 2nd March 2005

Inspection number: 266512

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	237
School address:	Dagnam Park Drive Harold Hill Romford Essex
Postcode:	RM3 9DJ
Telephone number:	01708 343066
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jill Martin
Date of previous inspection:	19 th April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Brookside is about the same size as other primary schools. It has 237 children on roll and this includes 60 children who attend the nursery part-time. The school is situated on Harold Hill in the London Borough of Havering. This is deemed an area of social and economic deprivation and is part of the New Deal for Communities. The school is part of the Excellence in Cities initiative that is bringing funding to support a home school support worker and a learning mentor. All children attending the school come from the immediate locality where very few adults have higher education. The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is high and many live in overcrowded homes. The number of children from ethnic minority groups is low, although the number of children with English as an additional language in the school is higher than in most schools. This is an increase since the last inspection. Most children come from White UK backgrounds, but there are children from Black British-African, African Caribbean, Asian Indian and Mixed White Backgrounds. Four children come from asylum seeking families and have travelled from Kosovo. Four children are at the early stages of speaking English. Their mother tongue is Urdu. Attainment on entry into the nursery is low. The number of children joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is similar to most other schools. There are more children identified as having special educational needs than in most schools and this too is an increase since the last inspection. Children have moderate learning difficulties, speech and language problems, emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as physical impairment. No child has a statement of special educational need. At the time of the inspection, two teachers were in their second term of teaching and one was on maternity leave. The school plays a very active role within the Havering and Harold Hill Communities. It received the Activemark Award and the Investors in People Award for the third time in 2004. It also received the Healthy Schools Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2002.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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13481	Doug Binfield	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Brookside Infants is a **very good** school with some exceptional features. It is successful in enabling many children to overcome some significant barriers to learning. From a low beginning, overall standards are similar to those found in most schools, although they are not as good in English. Standards have risen significantly especially in relation to similar schools in recent years as a result of the excellent leadership of the headteacher in partnership with the deputy headteacher. Governors are really effective in their support and challenge to senior staff to raise standards. Very good teaching is enabling children to achieve as well as they can, especially in Year 1. The school has a strong and successful commitment to the inclusion of all children whatever their background or ability. It has the full confidence of the parents and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- excellent leadership and management by the headteacher have helped to establish a vibrant learning community. Innovation is encouraged and subject leaders take full responsibility for improving performance and raising standards. Strategic planning, self-evaluation and financial management are also high quality;
- governance is excellent so that links with community and business are fully exploited to benefit the children;
- excellent teaching in the infants exhilarates children to exceptional levels of performance;
- from a low start, by year 2 children are reaching standards expected of them in mathematics, science, art and design. Standards in design and technology are very good and in information and communication technology they are good. In religious education standards are in line with the locally agreed syllabus. English standards are below those normally found;
- high expectations of all staff result in excellent behaviour and relationships so that children can learn in a really calm and productive atmosphere;
- excellent links with the community enhance the very good curriculum, which includes many high quality opportunities to learn outside the school day. As a result, children develop a wide range of social as well as educational skills across the curriculum;
- the partnership with parents is also high quality and is helping the school to raise standards as many parents now understand how to support their child with work at home and in school. However, despite the improvements in attendance there is still a small group of children whose attendance and punctuality remains lower than in most schools and hinders the achievements of the children concerned.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection, especially in raising the standard of behaviour, provision for children with special educational needs and in its partnership with parents, the community, business and other schools and colleges. The quality of teaching is much better in most classes and standards have risen noticeably in mathematics and science. It has been harder to improve standards in literacy, but generally they have remained in line with those of similar schools over the past three years. Key issues from the last inspection have been tackled in a really determined, well considered manner. Many other aspects of the school's provision have been improved a great deal.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	D	D	E	C
writing	D	E	E	C
mathematics	E	D	C	A

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Overall, children's achievements are **very good**. Standards in national tests for children in Year 2 in 2004, compared to similar schools were good overall. They were very good in mathematics and science and average in reading and writing. Compared to all schools, standards were average in mathematics and science, but well below average in reading and writing. Inspection evidence shows that children reach average standards in mathematics, science and art and design. Standards in design and technology are very good and good in information and communication technology but in English they are below average. The overall trend in improvement in standards is broadly similar to that found nationally. Very good teaching in the nursery and good teaching in the Reception classes gives children a really clear understanding of the importance of learning so they enter Year 1 with good routines about how to learn. Many children exceed the early learning goals set for them in personal, social and emotional development and meet them in physical development. Brighter children are on course to meet the goals set for them in all the areas of learning and some are working within the early stages of the National Curriculum in reading, writing, mathematical and physical development. However, some will not meet the goals set for them in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. This is because of the low levels of attainment on entry and the special educational needs experienced by some children.

Achievement for most children is very good in Year 1 as the quality of teaching is consistently high in this year group. Children's very good attitudes and excellent behaviour throughout the school play a major part in their achievements. They listen very carefully, responding politely to their teachers' very high expectations and try to do their best in each lesson. Children with English as an additional language or special educational needs receive really good support that enables them achieve as well as their classmates. The learning mentor and home school support worker make valuable contributions to children's achievements.

Children's personal developments are **very good** overall. Attitudes to learning are very good and behaviour is excellent. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are also very good. In contrast, attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory as some parents do not do enough to ensure their children attend regularly enough or get to school on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. Teaching and learning are **very good** and assessment is good. The curriculum is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in the infants. Very good teaching was observed in all year groups, taking children's learning forward at a fast rate. Overall teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and children enter Year 1 with good grounding in basic skills in literacy and numeracy. High quality teaching in Year 1 stems from teachers' use of a very wide range of teaching methods to help all children to get the most from their lessons. Skilled support staff throughout the school teach small groups very effectively, for short periods of time to maintain children's interest and momentum in learning. Teachers' enthusiasm for learning is catching so that children give of their best. Excellent skills in behaviour management, including the use of humour and expectations of good manners, promote high levels of respect between staff and children.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides many practical and interesting things to do. In the infant stage, the particularly rich curriculum, enhanced by an excellent range of opportunities to learn outside the school day and the locality, promotes high standards and motivates children to want to learn. The accommodation is very good and resources are good. The very good match of teachers and support staff make sure the curriculum is taught in an imaginative way.

Children are cared for very well. The learning mentor and home-school support worker fulfil valuable roles supporting parents and children, making significant contributions to children's achievements. The partnership with parents, links with the community, other schools and colleges are excellent. Initiatives to involve as many parents as possible actively in the education of their children are proving very successful. Substantial links with business and the local community are really successful and contribute a great deal to children's learning and personal developments.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good** overall. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational so that there is a strong focus on enabling children to achieve as well as they can, but also to enjoy their learning and educational experiences. The school actively seeks and evaluates new initiatives, adapting them if necessary to make things better for the children. A very good development programme for all staff is promoting high quality teaching and learning. Subject leaders and key personnel play a major role in raising standards in their areas of responsibility. Self evaluation is used rigorously to identify strengths and bring about further improvements. Governance is excellent because governors reflect carefully on the school's performance and capitalise on links with the local community and business.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents hold the school in the highest regard. They have a very high level of confidence in the headteacher the quality of teaching and appreciate the many initiatives to help them become involved in their children's education. The children really enjoy being at the school. The breakfast club, that parents also attend and the healthy snack provision are highly valued.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in English and the achievements of boys, particularly in reading and writing ;
- make further improvements to the attendance and punctuality.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, standards compared to those found in similar schools in 2004 were good. From a low start in the nursery, children achieve very well to reach the standards expected of them by Year 2 in mathematics, science, religious education and art and design. They are below average in English, very good in design and technology and good in information and communication technology. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children exceed the national early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. They are on course to reach them in mathematical and physical development, but not all children will meet these goals in knowledge and understanding of the world, communication, language and literacy and creative development because of the amount they have to learn.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very high expectations mean children achieve very well as they are challenged to work within the appropriate levels of the National Curriculum.
- Standards have improved significantly in mathematics and science.
- In spite of the school's efforts, it has been harder to raise standards in reading and writing.
- Teachers' high expectations contribute significantly to achievement in the Foundation Stage.
- The school is innovative in its approach to raising standards.
- Children with English as an additional language or special educational needs achieve very well.

Commentary

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in [year]

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (14.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.3 (13.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.1 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

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

1. The school has very high expectations for every one of its children and does all it can to help them to achieve as well as they can for their capabilities. From the time they start in the nursery, children are challenged to work at levels appropriate for their age and develop very good attitudes to learning. Teachers plan imaginative and interesting lessons that capture children's interest and motivate them to want to learn because it is important. The abilities of the children are assessed effectively and work is planned to meet their needs and learning style. Children are also given the help they require to make sure they have the skills they need to succeed. As a result, standards have improved significantly in science and mathematics since the last inspection, because more children are reaching the higher than expected Level 3. The school's performance in the 2004 national tests for children in Year 2 compared to similar schools was very good in these subjects, although it was average when compared to all schools.

2. Standards in reading and writing have been slower to improve because children have so much to learn. The school has implemented a wide range of teaching methods to raise standards and strategies to develop speaking and listening skills. These include placing strong emphasis on developing children's experiences so that they have a lot to talk and write about. Interactions with adults enable children to gain the vocabulary they need to try to read and write confidently. The activities and discussions are proving really beneficial to their learning across the curriculum. Standards in national tests in 2004 were average when compared to similar schools, although they

were well below average compared to all schools. Over time, results have improved in line with other schools nationally, but have improved faster in mathematics and science.

3. In the Foundation Stage, children achieve very well in the nursery because of the very good teaching they receive. This is built on well in the Reception classes. One of the most significant factors in their achievement stems from teachers' high expectations that children can make decisions about their work, behave exceptionally well, play together happily and listen carefully. As a result, children exceed the goals set for them nationally in their personal, social and emotional development. The very good work habits established in the nursery are continued as children move through the school. Many opportunities to talk, learn through play, take part in whole class or group sessions and use computers contribute significantly to good achievements in all the other areas of learning¹ in the Foundation Stage. Brighter children are challenged well and are on course to exceed the early learning goals set nationally for children of this age. Many children are on course to exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development and a good number are likely to meet them in mathematical and physical development. They are not on course to meet them in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

4. The school's innovative approach to raising standards has proved really successful. It actively seeks initiatives thought to raise standards and evaluates and adapts them to meet the needs of children in their care. Eating healthily is a really important feature. Many children attend the breakfast club, purchase snacks that are good for them at morning break, eat a nutritious lunch and take part in the national fruit scheme. A substantial number of parents are very supportive in providing lunch boxes that are particularly nourishing. As children eat at regular intervals throughout the day they can concentrate on their learning as they are not hungry. Other innovations include:

- links with business so that children take part in local radio programmes and are heard reading often by visiting adults;
- making learning fun by linking subjects together very effectively. For example, in science and English children were able to ride wheeled toys and think about the forces they needed to use to move or stop. They then discussed and wrote about their findings;
- the integration of information and communication technology into many activities;
- the promotion of children's thinking skills, developed through effective questioning;
- the use of short, sharp activities throughout lessons. These allow children to learn key basic skills quickly;
- grouping children in Years 1 and 2 by ability for literacy and numeracy for three lessons each week so that teachers' skills are used really well to benefit many children;
- the use of exercises called 'brain gym' that are believed to help children learn better;
- the identification of groups of children who could do better using the new strategies;
- the involvement of parents and the community in enhancing children's educational experiences.

As a result, children really enjoy learning, understand its importance to their future life and do their best.

5. Children learning English as an additional language or with special educational needs achieve very well. The school has developed very good systems to identify children's needs quickly and track their progress. With more sharply defined learning targets, their achievements could be even better. The school generally provides good challenges for its gifted and talented children. Boys do not reach as high standards as girls, especially in writing so the school has implemented different activities that appeal to the way boys like to learn and encourage them to want to write.

6. Leadership and management have a really significant impact on achievement as leaders take responsibility for standards in their subjects. They track children's achievements very carefully and ensure that action is taken to improve standards and provision. A learning mentor and home

¹ Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage are: communication, language and literacy; mathematical, creative and physical developments, knowledge and understanding of the world; personal, social and emotional development.

school support worker are also involved in supporting particular children to help them to overcome their barriers to learning. Teaching assistants are skilled and know well how to help children learn effectively in small groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Excellent behaviour and very good attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to standards of achievement. Attendance and punctuality of some children is unsatisfactory and impedes the achievement of the children concerned. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of children's behaviour are exemplary throughout the school day.
- Children are keen to learn and they undertake their work with care and enthusiasm.
- Children's personal development benefits from the extensive range of activities provided.
- The attendance and punctuality of a small group of children are not good enough and impact their achievement.

Commentary

7. In the Foundation Stage, children's personal developments, attitudes and behaviour are very good. This is because all staff place strong emphasis on enabling children to work very well together.

8. During lessons, children in Years 1 and 2 listen attentively and co-operate fully with teachers and support staff. They respond well when answering questions and contributing to class discussions. Written tasks are undertaken in a conscientious manner and good collaboration takes place when children work in small groups. Children respond positively to teachers' high expectations so that lesson time is used really well. The commendable improvement in attitudes since the last inspection contributes well to children's achievements.

9. Excellent behaviour in classrooms, at assemblies and in the playground is an outstanding feature of the school. Children respect the school rules. Incidents of misbehaviour are extremely rare but are dealt with quickly and fairly. The school has never excluded a child. Racial harmony is promoted strongly and children from different cultural backgrounds get on well with others. The warm and friendly learning atmosphere that prevails reflects the excellent relationships throughout the school community.

10. Children with special educational needs have good attitudes to their work and are enthusiastic. Those from minority ethnic groups, or who are learning English as an additional language grow in confidence and self esteem and enjoy the harmonious climate of relationships the school provides.

11. Provision for moral and social development is very good. The personal, social and health education programme provides children with regular opportunities to discuss behaviour rules and relationships with others. Assemblies are used effectively to promote awareness of right from wrong and the importance of courtesy and helping others. Personal development is enhanced by the wide range of visiting speakers and well planned educational visits. The many school clubs are popular and well attended. Children are encouraged to take on responsibilities, such as class monitors and showing parents around the school.

12. Good provision is made for spiritual and cultural development. The local vicar regularly takes assemblies and children visit the church. A teacher has recently spoken about the importance of Moslem festivals. The beliefs and practices of other faiths are included in the religious education programme. Learning resources have been increased since the last inspection so that greater emphasis is now given to multicultural education. Children are actively involved in

fund raising for charities, for example most recently the Tsunami disaster. Year 2 children participate in the music festival for local schools which adds to social and cultural developments.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.8	School data	0.1
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.

13. Attendance levels have improved since the last inspection because the amount of unauthorised absence is much lower. This reflects the school's sustained efforts to raise attendance levels. However, there are still some children who do not attend for as much as 90% of the time. In the current school year, overall attendance has fallen largely because sickness levels have been much higher due to an outbreak of chicken pox. Whilst most children arrive on time, a minority do not and this interrupts some lessons at the start of the day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

A very good quality of education promotes high achievement for children many of whom have significant barriers to their learning. Very good teaching stems from extremely high expectations of behaviour and a wide range of exhilarating lessons that captivate children's desire to learn. Assessments are good so children are clear about how well they are learning. An innovative curriculum offers a very good level of intellectual challenge to all children. Very good accommodation and effective use of a good range of resources also enable the imaginative range of teaching methods.

Teaching and learning

Overall teaching is very good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Consistent high quality teaching, especially in Year 1, enables children to learn at a very fast rate.
- All adults create a really positive atmosphere in which children can learn.
- Teachers use a wide range of imaginative methods to promote children's thinking skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers and support staff work very well together to enable all children to achieve as well as they can.
- Teaching in the nursery is always very good. It is very good in mathematics in the Reception classes.
- Assessments track children's achievements and identify those children who are not doing as well as they might so that firm action can be taken.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 25 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	9	8	6	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.

14. The overall quality of teaching is very good and an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is almost always very good in the nursery and Year 1 and is occasionally excellent in Year 1 and 2. Children acquire many basic skills across the curriculum, but especially in literacy and numeracy, at a very good rate in the nursery, Reception and Year 1. In Year 2, the quality of teaching varies across the classes mainly due to inconsistency in expectation of what children know and can do. As a result, it ranges from mostly satisfactory to excellent because agreed lesson plans are not always implemented fully in both classes. For example, in mathematics, challenging tasks set were carried out successfully in one class, but in the other they were changed to an inappropriate one that did not do enough to take children's learning forward fast enough.

15. In all classes, adults have exceptionally high expectations of behaviour. The children respond extremely well to these so that there is a really positive atmosphere in which to learn, without interruption. Children also listen attentively because they know they will learn a great deal. Most teachers take very great care to keep the time that they talk directly to all the children short. Often they use questions, demonstrations or other methods to involve the children in brief, sharp activities that help them to learn key skills quickly. Children's capacity to work independently and cooperatively as a result of their teachers' very high expectations is impressive.

16. Teaching in all year groups often engages children through the use of imaginative and motivating activities that capture and hold their interest and concentration. The quality of teaching was excellent in Year 1 science and Year 2 design and technology lesson. Staff presented imaginative and demanding problems for the children to solve. It involved them in making choices about materials, taking decisions, working cooperatively and using complex language to explain their ideas. As a result, children made a wide range of high quality wheeled vehicles. They evaluated the finished products and identified why some moved more easily than others. These activities were also linked to work in science on forces and provoked a great deal of language development. In other high quality lessons in Year 1, teachers used a wide range of strategies and activities that appeal to children of this age, including the use of information and communication technology, to support learning.

17. In literacy and numeracy, children are taught in groups set according to their ability for part of the week. This means work is pitched very well to their individual needs. In these lessons, children are engaged in many short activities that involve new learning and immediate practice of newly acquired skills, with the support of additional adults. Sometimes, during these lessons, children work in small groups away from the classroom with support staff to extend their specific language and numeracy skills very effectively. The support staff are given high quality information about the activities they are to carry out with the children. Their frequent training means most have high quality skills to help children learn and achieve as well as they can. At all times, children receive clear verbal feedback about what they have learned at the end of the lesson and how it will be needed in lessons the following day.

18. Teaching in the nursery is very good. Staff work together very well to the benefit of the children. Each session is very well organised and includes many opportunities for children to work on their own, with others or in whole class groups. All staff are clear what each child is to gain from the activities and often play alongside them developing spoken English skills. This enables all children, but especially those who do not speak English as their first language, to communicate effectively with each other and nursery staff. A very strong feature is the way in which staff role model play activities. For example, when setting up a *hairdressers*, children were shown by an adult and child what it was like to visit a hairdressing salon. The correct dialogue between client and hairdresser was modelled so that children could play realistically and develop their social skills and good manners. In the Reception classes, teaching is consistently good. Staff build on what children have learned in the nursery and prepare them well for Year 1. Teachers' planning is thorough and, in literacy and numeracy, staff follow the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Numeracy is taught very well in Reception, through the use of puppets and practical tasks that take place inside and outside the classroom and promote the correct use of mathematical vocabulary.

19. The teaching of children with special educational needs is very good, particularly in focussed groups taught by teaching assistants. In these groups, tasks are well matched to individual needs and there are very high expectations in terms of behaviour and performance. As a result, children achieve very well. In class, children and adults have very good relationships. Careful observation ensures that children's progress is tracked and their needs are met. Targets in individual education plans could be sharper so that achievement becomes even better.

20. Children from ethnic minority groups, including those for whom English is not a first language, are taught very well. Teachers are careful to make sure they participate fully in lessons and extra help is on hand to assist them when needed. Staff try to ensure the children are befriended by others from the same community, provide books in community languages and make quick and effective links with parents. In a very small number of lessons observed in Year 2, some of the most able children did not move ahead as fast as they could because expectations of what they knew and could do were not high enough.

21. Good assessments enable teachers to track children's achievements over each half term. This identifies how well they are doing and action is taken to enhance the learning of those who are not achieving as well as they might. Staff mark children's work and note down the areas of strength or difficulty. The school is working on new assessment procedures that will help staff to identify more quickly and precisely the next steps in learning on a more frequent basis. It is anticipated that this will have a significant impact on raising standards in reading and writing.

The curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and in the infants it is very good, promoting high standards. Enrichment opportunities are excellent and really broaden children's experiences. The accommodation is very good and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum benefits from imaginative planning, very good cross-curricular links and a rich programme of visits, visitors and community involvement.
- The literacy and numeracy programmes are highly motivating.
- There is a very good programme of personal, social and health education.
- Arrangements for children learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are very good and enable them to achieve well.
- High quality staff who are well trained play an important role in children's achievements.
- There is an excellent programme of out-of-school activities that extend and enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

22. The curriculum is very good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. All required subjects are taught thoroughly and provision for information and communication technology has improved. There is also a very strong programme of teaching in personal, social and health education which contributes a great deal to children's personal developments. A notable strength of the school's curriculum is the way in which topics for study are selected and taught to link learning in different subjects. Current work on transport for instance includes language, mathematics, geography, design and technology, science, art and design. This and the basing of such work on real, first-hand experiences and trips into the local environment, brings learning to life for the children. Curriculum involvement with local community and business groups is another particular strength. Examples include the reading partnership promoted by the local Business Education Partnership and the involvement of the Construction Industry Training Board in a school project on bridges. Each summer the school hall is set up with many different activities on a theme such as, communications, the environment or the seaside, to promote children's speaking skills in a wide range of real life situations. This is very successful and is enjoyed, not only by the children, but also by the parents and members of the community.

23. In literacy and numeracy the school provides a really broad and highly motivating programme of activity. Staff interpret the national programmes in these subjects very imaginatively in order to motivate the children to work hard and do their best. Mathematics and literacy are taught largely to groups based on children's ability. This helps teachers take lessons forward at the right pace and the right level of difficulty for the children. Recent developments in promoting children's skills in reading, speaking and listening are having a good impact, as standards are rising, especially in the Foundation Stage and Year 1. In the past year, the school's determined efforts have raised the achievements of brighter children and those with special educational needs successfully. The school is now introducing new strategies to boost the performance of other groups it feels could also do better.

24. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. The children enjoy a rich broad range of experiences that include many practical activities, visits and visitors. This makes learning real and purposeful giving children greater understanding of the world around them. Teachers plan work very carefully so that children are taught essential skills in literacy and numeracy preparing them well for their work in Year 1. Staff in the nursery and Reception classes make good links between learning in the classroom and outside across all the areas of learning. In all activities staff interact well with the children giving them many opportunities to talk and extend their vocabulary. This is particularly important as many children enter the school with limited speech and language skills. Good resources and the accommodation enable teachers and support staff to work with flexibility, working with small groups of children, as well as with the whole class as appropriate. Children also have the space to work on a range of activities using their own initiative or with adults on teacher led tasks. Many of the activities reflect the high expectations staff have for what children can do and learn. They challenge and promote children's educational thinking, intellectual and physical skills so that they achieve well. Children with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language are supported well and enjoy the same curriculum as their classmates.

25. The school makes very good provision for children with special educational needs. This too is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. There are some very good features, particularly the use and deployment of the highly effective support staff. In lessons they carry out observations to track children's progress and often teach special programmes to small groups outside the classroom. Children with special educational needs are well integrated into the life of the school and have access to the full range of activities. There is a good range of resources that are used well to support children's needs.

26. The number of children from minority ethnic communities, while still quite small, is growing and the school provides for them very well. It is a racially tolerant and harmonious community. There is no evidence that children from any particular ethnic groups perform better, or less well than others. However, there is still room for improvement in the data the school uses as a basis for this view. Great care is taken to ensure the children are fully involved in all lessons and their progress is checked regularly. Those learning English as an additional language achieve very well. The school is introducing a new assessment scheme developed through the local education authority and designed specifically to pinpoint the learning needs of these children. When the scheme is in place, teachers will be able to define more precise short-term targets for the children and accelerate the pace of their learning even more. The small group of children from asylum seeking families also take a full part in school life.

27. The school has introduced a scheme to ensure gifted and talented children are fully challenged by their work. In addition to regular evaluations of their progress in lessons, the school goes to great lengths to ensure they have access to additional learning opportunities such as those provided through the local education authority. The majority of lessons provide good challenges for the more able, although there is inconsistency in expectation between the classes in Year 2.

28. Over recent years, the attainments of boys have fallen below those of girls by a greater margin than that usually found. This is especially the case in writing. In part, this is due to the higher number of boys than girls in the school. However, the school has introduced a number of new strategies that meet the learning styles of the boys that are expected to bring about improvements.

29. The school has a very good balance of experienced and less experienced teachers and teaching assistants. Learning mentors make an important contribution by helping children and their families get the best from schooling. All staff have been trained to a high standard and are very well equipped for the work they do. The accommodation is very good. Rooms are large and there is a satisfactory distribution of other spaces for small groups. The hall is of a good size and staff have found space to create library and mathematics areas. The school is well equipped in terms of learning apparatus and materials. The careful and regular reviews carried out by subject leaders help to ensure gaps in resources are filled and old unused material removed.

30. The programme of out-of-hours activities has been strengthened. It is excellent and includes a wide range of lunchtime and after-school club activities that promote standards across the curriculum, in subjects such as science, mathematics and physical education.

Care, guidance and support

Very good provision is made for children's care, welfare, health and safety. A very high standard of advice and guidance supports fully children's educational progress and personal developments. Children's views are valued highly and they make a valuable contribution to the school's work.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Very good pastoral care provided for all children means they are confident in their learning.
- The Learning mentor and the home school support worker provide an invaluable service to disadvantaged children.
- Effective health and safety arrangements make the school a safe place to work in.
- Arrangements for induction to the school and to transfer to the juniors are very good and enable children to settle quickly.

Commentary

31. Parents are rightly very pleased with the high quality of care their children receive. Teachers and support staff provide extensive guidance to children about their work and personal needs. High quality support is provided to children with special educational needs. An effective system for recording educational progress and personal development is used really well to set targets for improvement.

32. A distinctive feature of the school is the additional help provided to about 30 children and their families who are experiencing social disadvantages or are faced with particularly challenging personal needs. The learning mentor and the home school support worker, who make a very significant contribution to the school's provision, liaise very closely with the parents and children involved, as well as with teachers and external agencies. As a result of this support, the learning and personal needs of the children are being met extremely well. It also means the children concerned attend regularly, concentrate more on their learning and achieve very well. The service is financed through the specialist grants made available as part of the Excellence in Cities initiative to meet the needs of families in this part of the Borough.

33. The school places a strong emphasis on health and safety. Health education is a regular feature of the personal, social and health education programme. The headteacher ensures that children benefit a great deal from the nutritional food provided at the breakfast club, the menus agreed for the lunchtime meal, a nourishing snack at play time and participation in the school fruit scheme. Many parents who provide sandwiches for lunchtime also cooperate in providing a balanced meal. Illness and accidents are dealt with competently by staff who have received training in first aid. Governors make regular inspections and risk assessments to make sure children work in a safe environment. Effective arrangements are made for dealing with child protection issues.

34. Very good arrangements are made for the induction of children new to the school, including the provision of helpful leaflets. Parents of children joining the nursery are offered home visits and

go to see the nursery with their child in the preceding term. The intake into the Reception class each September is organised very well so that children soon settle down in their new classes. Children joining the school at other times are warmly welcomed and well supported. There is very good liaison with the neighbouring junior school and comprehensive arrangements ensure the smooth transfer at age seven.

35. Care and guidance for children with special educational needs is very good. The special needs coordinator has very good links with outside agencies. This ensures that all involved have access to appropriate advice and support. Children from minority ethnic communities, including some from refugee backgrounds, quickly build good relations with teachers, teaching assistants and the learning mentor. When new to the school, they are welcomed in sensitive ways. The school is building its resources for them both in respect of teaching materials and community language communications with parents. This helps the children feel at ease and valued in the school community.

36. The school consults children regularly about their views of the school. This includes discussions in class during '*Circle Time*' on areas such as behaviour rules, safety issues and school clubs. A recent pupil survey indicates a high level of satisfaction with the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Excellent partnership arrangements with parents make a significant contribution to the work of the school. Excellent links with other schools and the local community enrich children's learning opportunities.

Main strengths and weaknesses.

- Parents hold the school in the highest regard and their views are acted on to bring about improvements.
- High quality communications means parents are informed really well about their children's progress and school activities.
- Close co-operation with nearby schools has a significant beneficial impact.
- The school plays a highly active role in the local community.

Commentary

37. The school is very welcoming to parents and encourages them to support their child's learning in many different ways. Parents' views about the school are sought annually through an external provider. The results are carefully analysed and used to secure improvements. For example, in 2004 the parental survey showed there were not enough after school clubs for the children. Now there are many clubs that broaden children's experiences and enhance standards in subjects such as mathematics, science and physical education. Several parents provide voluntary assistance with reading or other classroom activities. Written advice and popular workshops on reading, writing and mathematics games give parents a good insight about their child's work. Reading and other tasks undertaken at home are supported well. Parents groups are increasingly supporting the school's programme of social and fund raising activities. The proceeds are used to help meet the cost of school visits and to improve amenities.

38. Very good information about school events and topical issues are set out in regular newsletters. The school's prospectus and the governors' annual report provide helpful details about the school and children's achievements. Parents are advised well about their child's progress at termly meetings with the class teacher. The annual written reports give good quality information about standards and include targets for improvement.

39. A highly effective learning mentor and home school support worker establish an early and lasting relationship with parents of children from minority ethnic groups, including those for whom English is not a first language. They help the children settle into school, make sure parents

understand the way the school operates and maintain a continuing dialogue with them about their children. Good links with local support and advisory services for ethnic minority education help the school in making good provision. Parents of children with special educational needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit from the advice and support from specialist advisors.

40. Parents of children with special educational needs have regular meetings to discuss children's progress and are given very good support by the school.

41. The school is a very active member of the Harold Hill Schools' Partnership and the Primary Schools Cluster Group. Co-operation between the many schools involved has supported developments in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, music and art and design. There are particularly strong links with the junior school including close co-operation between subject leaders to support continuity in children's learning. The Nursery Support Group meets each term to review progress and arrange for in-service training for staff in local nursery schools. The Excellence in Cities programme helps to provide assistance for gifted and talented children and to promote mentoring arrangements to help disaffected or disadvantaged families.

42. The Havering Business Education Partnership organises a reading partner scheme. Adults from business or who have recently retired visit the school frequently to listen to children read and help them to understand its importance to their future life. The Partnership also provides support for many other business linked activities. For example, children play a leading role in the annual production of the Harold Times newspaper and contribute to the Link FM radio programmes in July. Visitors from the local community support aspects of the personal, social and health education programme. A room at the school is available and in frequent use by the community. The accommodation is also used for family support services, such as surgeries held by the school nurse, physiotherapy, social service meetings and for adult education in child care. The family learning programme includes a positive parenting course that also informs parents about many wider issues relating to education, information and communication technology courses and curriculum information meetings.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and has created a very effective team of senior managers and governors. Governance is excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Excellent leadership of the head teacher means there is a strong focus on enabling children to achieve as well as they possibly can within high quality provision.
- The exceptional business and community links of the governing body enhance the curriculum and have a significant impact on raising standards.
- Very high quality leadership of teaching and the curriculum provides a rich range of innovative learning experiences for the children.
- Strategic planning is excellent and all who work in the school share in its very clear educational direction.
- The use of self evaluation for school and subject management is outstanding.
- The school's finances are managed very effectively.

Commentary

43. Leadership and management of the school are very good overall, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She has extremely high aspirations for the school and enthuses all around her with a desire to do the very best for the children. She actively seizes new initiatives, evaluates, adapts and implements them to maximise the resources available to the staff and children. In addition, the school maintains high quality contacts with other schools and external agencies that support and extend children's learning.

Excellent strategic planning reflects the schools continual drive to raise standards and provide a rich and innovative experience for the children.

44. There is a very strong sense of teamwork throughout the school and everyone's views are taken into account. The headteacher and senior managers provide exceptional role models for staff in teaching and curriculum leadership and this has a significant impact on standards. The use of self evaluation for school and subject management is outstanding. The programme, developed by the headteacher gives time and support to coordinators so that strengths, weaknesses and needs are identified precisely. This means that development plans are very good and clearly show realistic and well thought out targets for further improvement. Performance data is used very effectively to track children's progress and identify what needs to be done next.

45. The quality of subject leadership varies because some staff are new to their roles or new to the school. Leadership and management of science are excellent and in English, design and technology, information and communication technology and the Foundation Stage they are very good. Responsibilities for religious education and mathematics have been allocated recently and there has been little emphasis music. These subjects have been overseen by the head teacher in the past and there is now work to do in developing the roles of the leaders in these subjects.

46. A very effective performance management programme for teachers and support staff identifies training needs for the school and for the individual's personal professional development. This very good practice is reflected in the school's third re-recognition as an Investor in People. The school provides an excellent base for contributing to initial teacher training and other school based training. The induction procedures for new staff are very good so that staff settle in quickly.

47. Parents and visitors are made very welcome by staff and children. The school day runs seamlessly. Administrative and other non-teaching staff are fully part of the team and work hard to keep the school running smoothly. Teachers are well supported by their teaching assistants and have time to carry out their leadership and management tasks.

48. The governing body is exceptional. It has built up strong business and community links that really enhance the work of the school and enrich the curriculum. Governors play a full part in shaping the vision and direction for the school. The governing body's knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is particularly good. They meet regularly and give very good support and challenge to the senior leadership team. Governors play a full part in the life of the school and meet with subject coordinators at least annually so that they have an excellent view of the improvements required.

49. The highly effective and forward thinking staff and governing body do their very best for the children. The school is not afraid to make hard decisions when the quality of provision falls short of that expected. These factors, together with very high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes to work, are significant aids to children's learning. All in the school are aware of the barriers that impact learning and take determined action to overcome them. Parents believe that the high levels of respect staff have for the children to which children respond really well is a major factor in breaking down the barriers. The school has also worked hard to improve parental and community support with considerable success.

50. Responsibility for the leadership and management of provision for children learning English as an additional language lies with nursery teacher. This is appropriate since the greater number of children with English as an additional language needs is found at the Foundation Stage. The subject leader and teaching assistants have had training in this area of work and good arrangements are in place to check children's needs are being met. The very effective deployment of learning mentors is important in this context since they maintain a close day-by-day link with parents of children from ethnic minority groups and from asylum-seeking homes. Provision for gifted and talented children is led by a Year 2 teacher who has received specialist training in this area of work. Together with the headteacher she ensures regular evaluations are made of the progress of these children and communicates with parents to enable individual children to take advantage of the gifted and talented provision available from bodies outside the school.

51. Leadership and management by the special educational needs coordinator and senior staff are very good. The headteacher coordinates the work of the year group leaders to ensure that the children's needs are met very well. Special funding and other initiatives are used very well to promote children's learning. The school actively seeks to pilot new support initiatives for the benefit of the staff and children. The support team is effectively led by a senior teaching assistant who coordinates the team's work, looks after resources and liaises with senior managers to ensure that problems are quickly resolved. A very good special educational needs development plan shows realistic priorities for improvement including more effective use of questioning and children's evaluation of their own performance.

52. The annual budget is set having regard to the educational priorities established in the school development plan. The headteacher together with the governors ensures that expenditure and income during the year are carefully monitored against the budget provision. Best value principles are observed fully and specific grants are used very effectively for the designated purpose. The school has recently received a very positive audit report.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	631,963	Balance from previous year	47,053
Total expenditure	620,496	Balance carried forward to the next	58,520
Expenditure per pupil	3,118		

53. The balance carried forward at 31st March 2004 was nearly twice the recommended amount. However, this had been saved for a specific reason. It was utilised early in the 2004 - 2005 financial year to meet the cost of planned improvements to school buildings to benefit staff, children and community. After taking into account the school's context, the standards of achievement, the quality of teaching and the overall very good leadership and management, the school provides very good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

54. Children enter the nursery at the beginning of the school year in which they become four. They attend for a morning or afternoon session each day of the week. Their attainment on entry is very broad and includes children who speak very little English and children with significant special educational needs. Overall, it is well below that expected for children of this age.

55. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. All the teaching observed in the nursery was very good and much of the teaching in the Reception classes was good. Teaching methods and the focus for the children's learning are well informed because the staff have very good knowledge of the needs for this age group. As a result, classes are organised very well and children enjoy a good range of stimulating activities that promote good achievement throughout the Foundation Stage. Children with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language are integrated fully into all activities so they too achieve well.

56. All staff make good use of available space, including the outside provision. The mix of teacher directed activities and those that the children choose for themselves are prepared thoroughly and are relevant to the children's age and interests. The atmosphere within the nursery and Reception classes is really purposeful as children behave very well.

57. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are very good. High quality planning takes into account the need to build on children's learning and places strong emphasis on developing children's independence and speaking and listening skills. The planning also takes into account the national stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Staff are fully aware of what each child is to achieve within each activity and this makes it easy for them to check progress. In addition, observations of achievement are noted frequently and give teachers a clear view of what children need to learn next. Accommodation and resources are very good and used efficiently to benefit the children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff enable children to be independent and use their initiative.
- Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour are high quality.

Commentary

58. Staff in the nursery enable children to develop good work habits from a very early stage. Teaching is very good in the nursery and Reception classes so that and children achieve very well. Many are on course to exceed the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year. Staff have very high expectations of the children's behaviour to which the children respond really well. As a result, the atmosphere is a happy and purposeful one. The children work sensitively, quietly and become absorbed in their work, but with the needs of others in mind. Children are taught to look after resources, keep the rooms tidy, listen to adults politely and to each other, as well as care for one another. They move around the rooms and the school quietly and in an orderly fashion. The children are keen to learn and make choices about their work. They quickly become independent and often use their initiative in their play. *Snack time* is very effective in developing children's social skills of eating together, good manners, as well as speaking and listening skills.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enter the nursery with limited speaking skills. Staff do all they can to enable children to develop clear spoken communication skills.
- Some children in the Reception classes are already exceeding the early learning goals and are working at the early stage of the National Curriculum in reading.

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Commentary

59. Teaching in the nursery is very good and it is good in the Reception classes. In the nursery, staff give children many interesting things to talk about. For example, the visit of a group of fire-fighters with their fire engine and a road crossing supervisor in uniform provoked much discussion. Children also go on walks into the locality and describe what they see. Digital photographs and pictures of the snowy weather were used to promote a wide range of vocabulary linked to children's experiences. A toy rabbit, *Patches*, goes to stay with a child in the class. When *Patches* returns, the child talks to the rest of the class about what they have done together. Adults interact with the children often in their play or other activities encouraging them to talk in full sentences. Role play activities are modelled first so that children enter into the roles realistically. For example, during the inspection staff set up a hairdressing shop. An adult and child played in this together in front of the class so that all children acquired the appropriate vocabulary and could then build in their own experiences. Children enjoy browsing through books and there are many opportunities for mark making or writing their name.

60. In the Reception classes, staff build effectively on the very good work done in the nursery. They have adapted the National Literacy Strategy to meet the needs of the children who are taught key skills in the use of phonics to help them with their reading and spelling and correct letter formation to aid their handwriting. Children take books home to read with their families and often read to an adult. In this way, they become confident readers and brighter children are reading at levels expected in Year 1. The *Time to Talk* programme builds effectively on work done in the nursery to extend the speaking skills of children who find it hard to communicate orally. In spite of this good work, children generally find it hard to learn to read and write as they have a lot of ground to make up. This means a significant number will not meet the early learning goals set for them nationally by the end of the Reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff make very good use of resources and the outside area to help children develop their mathematical skills.

Commentary

61. Teaching is very good in the nursery and Reception classes and most children are on course to meet the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year. Mathematical development is included in all the areas of learning so that children understand its importance in their daily life. Often numeracy is included informally into activities where adult spot the opportunities to extend learning. In the Reception classes, children used puppets to help them pick out a number of objects, remove one and work out the answer. They related their number story, such as, *I had seven. Sammy Snake crawled by and took one away and then I had six*, to their puppet and later to the class. This innovative idea was very successful in developing children's

number skills as well as their communication skills. Brighter children do well and exceed the early learning goals set for them in this area of learning.

62. In both the nursery and Reception classes, teachers make the most of the outside areas to develop a range of mathematical skills. For example, children threw beanbags to each other and into hoops identifying how many they started with and then taking away the number that were dropped or did not land in the hoop. Nursery children learn a lot about sequencing numbers, patterns and recognition of two and three dimensional shapes. They do their best to write their numbers accurately.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many practical activities are used to extend children's experiences of the world around them.

Commentary

63. Teaching and learning are very good in the nursery and good in the Reception classes. However, not all children are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of their Reception year. In the nursery and Reception classes, outside visits and visitors to the school help children to learn about people who help us and the immediate locality. Day to day discussions about the date and the weather enable children to understand about time passing and the seasons of the year. When learning about sound, children made *telephones* from plastic cups and discovered the importance of keeping the string tight to help sound to travel. Display tables encourage children to investigate items when looking at them with magnifying glasses, or explore the properties of magnets. Information and communication technology is used in all classes to develop skills in literacy, mathematics and art and design. In one lesson observed, children programmed a toy to move across the floor and change direction. In another, they learned about the sounds letters make by using an interactive programme. Children plant seeds and bulbs in the garden to find out how they grow.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children are on course to meet the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year.

Commentary

64. Teaching and learning is good overall. Nursery staff make the most of the outside area to develop children's skills in riding wheeled toys, steering them carefully so they do not bump into each other. Many other activities develop children's skills in moulding materials and using small tools such as, pencils, paintbrushes and scissors. In the Reception classes, children enjoy physical education lessons in the hall that enable them to jump, roll, balance and climb successfully. They take responsibility for setting out apparatus and for putting it away and collaborate really well as they carry each piece. As a result of these good features children are on course to meet the early learning goals.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Role play extends children's creativity, but children have fewer opportunities to express their ideas in art and design.

Commentary

65. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage as children have worthwhile opportunities to develop their creativity in the many play activities and especially role-play. In the nursery, staff become involved in children's play to encourage their creativity. Staff give the children the experiences they need to play constructively. For example, children in the nursery, when playing outside are taught to cross the road safely. Children incorporate this knowledge into their games when riding the wheeled toys. Ongoing role play activities include an office, travel agent, veterinary surgery and doctors. Work in art and design includes collage, painting, printing and the study of famous artists. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to explore their ideas and express their creativity using a wide range of media. This means not all children will meet the early learning goals at the end of the Reception year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and in some instances very good. Imaginative lessons capture children's interest, so they work hard and often achieve well.
- There is clear evidence that the school's efforts to raise standards are bearing fruit, especially in Year 1.
- Teachers plan very good links between English and other subjects, so children see the purpose in their work.
- Children's attitudes to their work and behaviour in lessons are very good.
- English is led and managed very well by the subject leader.
- Girls achieve much better than boys.
- Achievement in writing is not as good as in other aspects of English.

Commentary

66. Staff have made determined and successful efforts to sustain the standards found at the last inspection, despite increases in the numbers of children with special educational needs or learning English as an additional language. While standards at the end of Year 2 remain below average, initiatives to bring improvements are having an impact, with levels of performance rising in Year 1. Recent national tests and assessments show standards well below those found nationally, but close to those seen in schools in a similar context. More children than usual are reaching the higher Level 3, but this is balanced by the large number who do not reach nationally expected levels.

67. Girls do much better than boys. While this reflects the national picture, the gap between boys and girls is much wider than usual. The school is aware of this and has implemented a varied range of different and innovative teaching methods that appeal to the ways in which children like to learn. These are having a significant impact in Year 1, where the teaching is very good. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language make good headway, but could progress even faster if the targets set for them were more detailed and more rigorously addressed.

68. There is variation within the different elements of the English programme. While standards in speaking and listening and in reading, are below average, the children still achieve well in view of the low levels of language skills many bring with them to school. In writing, however, standards are well below average and children could do better. Weaknesses in this area of work are a barrier to their learning.

69. There is a growing confidence in children's speaking and listening. By the end of Year 2 most are happy to join in class discussion, raising and answering questions and listening well to teachers and classmates. Especially in Year 1 there is evidence of a broadening vocabulary. This said, most children are ill at ease when asked to talk about feelings, to give reasons, or present simple arguments. The greater part of their oral contributions in class consists of short factual answers. However, in design and technology, children can explain complex ideas clearly and they can demonstrate them while they are talking.

70. Most children read enthusiastically and with expression, enjoy their books and have a sound range of skills to help with difficult words. They take books home to read regularly and have their own favourites. They know what authors and illustrators do and where to find a contents page or index. The majority of the children use their knowledge of sounds to help them with their reading, but can also make intelligent use of pictures and story context when words are irregular or unusual.

71. Writing is difficult for many children. By the end of Year 2, few have a comfortable fluency in pencil movement. Their handwriting is often jagged and their pencil grip tense. The effort of making legible marks on paper is such that, for many of them, the resulting work is brief and lacking interest for a reader. Where children overcome this difficulty, their work shows a freshness and originality of expression. Spelling skills are close to those expected from children of this age and some in the older classes are beginning to use full stops, capital letters and speech marks correctly.

72. Most other subjects call heavily on English and contribute to children's literacy development. Discussion and role play make an important contribution to speech development, but children's difficulties in exploring ideas orally impede their progress in subjects such as religious education. Because of the problems children have with writing teachers look for alternative ways in which children can record their work. This is good practice, but there is a need to balance this with opportunities for children to write in short, neat and correct simple sentences.

73. English is mostly taught well and some very good lessons were seen. Most lessons are imaginative in content and taught with an expressive enthusiasm that the children find contagious. This results in very good levels of concentration and effort. Teachers establish a good balance in lessons between giving a firm structure to the tasks they set and calling on the children to show initiative and make some decisions. Role play has a growing place in the curriculum and provides very good opportunities for the children to broaden their speaking skills through taking on different characters, with different voices. Children are encouraged to answer questions and take part in discussions both with the whole class and with talk partners. Where teachers are alert to the need to foster more complex forms of speech, children's oral skills are extended. This includes language to:

- compare different ideas or points of view;
- explain why a particular answer has been given;
- draw a simple conclusion from their practical work;
- imagine different ways a task could be undertaken and what the different outcomes might be;
- link new learning with other ideas met previously;
- add detail to a previous answer or comment.

74. Sometimes in Year 2, however, only brief, superficial answers are called for and opportunities to challenge thinking are missed. In some lessons, teachers themselves are not assured in their use of standard English and the model they present to the children is not as good as it should be. Much of the English work is taught to groups of children based broadly on ability. While this is successful in many respects, tasks are not always adapted well enough to meet the needs of the less capable children.

75. Children's very good behaviour and positive, confident approach is a feature of English lessons. Even when work is hard, they apply themselves to it and manage to sustain their concentration. They work very well together in small groups and with their talk partners. They are keen to learn. Attitudes like these, together with the good teaching they receive, underpin the good progress they make.

76. Leadership and management are very good. The subject leader is enthusiastic and sets a very good example to colleagues. Planning arrangements for lessons are very good, making excellent links between English and other subjects so that learning makes more sense to the children. Teachers' plans, lessons and children's work are checked regularly and rigorously to ensure good progress is being made. New initiatives are introduced to meet the particular needs of specific groups of children and very good links and partnerships are maintained with parents.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

77. Teachers make the most of opportunities to promote children's spoken language across all the areas of the curriculum. There is a particular emphasis on developing children's thinking skills in subjects such as science and design and technology. In view of the difficulties children experience in writing, teachers find a range of ways for children to record their findings. This extends their knowledge, skills and understanding, but means writing is not used often across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in national tests in 2004 were very good when compared to similar schools.
- Very good teaching in most classes in Year 1 and 2, including the use of a wide range of teaching methods that meet children's learning styles, means they achieve very well.
- Children's exceptionally good attitudes and behaviour contribute to their very good achievements.

Commentary

78. In national tests in 2004, results were average compared to all schools and very good when compared to those with children from similar backgrounds. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection because many more children are reaching the nationally expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3. Children's books and lesson observations indicate standards at the time of the inspection were similar to those found in most schools. Children with special educational needs or English as an additional language are supported very effectively so that their achievements are also very good.

79. Teaching in most classes is very good. This is because teachers use a wide range of teaching methods that appeal to the ways in which children like to learn. These methods involve exercises called *brain gym*, practical and small group work in and out of the classroom and information and communication technology. In addition, teachers devise activities that include visual, aural or other physical activity so that learning is made really meaningful and purposeful. Teachers are very clear about the key skills they wish children to learn. They present each one in a short session that is immediately followed by an activity to practise the new knowledge or skill. In each lesson there is high quality discussion, questioning and sharing of ideas so that children feel fully involved in their learning. For some lessons, children are taught in groups according to their ability. The teacher who is responsible for the lowest attaining group is very good in Year 1. Teaching assistants are skilled and use national initiatives very effectively to consolidate and enhance the learning of children with special educational needs or who find learning mathematics difficult. However, in Year 2, there are inconsistent expectations of what children know and can do. Agreed lesson plans are not always implemented consistently. During the inspection a challenging activity was replaced for an inappropriate one that did little to move children's learning on as much as it should.

80. Children respond extremely well to the exceptionally high expectations of all staff of their behaviour. This means there is a really positive atmosphere in which children learn without interruption. They listen very attentively and politely to their teachers and to each other. In whole class and small group sessions children contribute their ideas confidently, knowing their ideas will be valued. The children take pride in the presentation of their work and enjoy their success in the subject. These factors contribute a great deal to children's achievements.

81. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has only just taken on the responsibility, but is aware of the quality of provision throughout the school. With the strong

leadership of the headteacher, mathematics has been an important focus for development. The National Numeracy Strategy, other national initiatives and innovations have been evaluated and implemented with real success enabling many children to overcome their barriers to learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. Mathematics is used successfully across the curriculum. Often this is planned, but teachers also incorporate mathematics incidentally into physical education and music. An after school science and mathematics club also adds much to children's achievements in using mathematics across the curriculum and understanding its relevance to daily life.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are excellent.
- Standards have improved considerably overall and are now in line with those found in schools nationally and very good in comparison with similar schools.
- Teaching standards have improved since the previous inspection and are now good overall.
- There are very good links across the curriculum and in the use of information and communication technology.
- There is sometimes insufficient challenge for higher achieving children, this means they do not always progress as quickly as they could.

Commentary

83. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection. Teacher assessed results at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were similar to those of all schools nationally, but in comparison with similar schools they were very good. Currently, standards in Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally for children of a similar age. In Year 1, many children are working within the expected levels of attainment and some are already working at a higher level, showing continuing improvement.

84. Children achieve very well, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Children are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy their science lessons. Their work is generally presented well as they take pride in doing their best. In Year 2, children were observed to be really interested in finding out about forces and friction as they tried to move a brick on different surfaces. They made good suggestions about the effects of texture on movement. In Year 1, children demonstrated how to stop and start vehicles. They explained confidently the difference between a push and pull and went on to estimate how far something would travel with a hard or soft push.

85. The quality of teaching is very good overall. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. There are good opportunities for children to experiment and investigate. In one very good lesson seen, the teacher had high expectations for behaviour, the lesson had good pace and questioning was used very effectively to probe and extend children's understanding. Good links are made with previous learning and with other subjects. For example, riding on large wheeled toys helped children to understand forces. They were then encouraged to explain their findings in whole sentences.

86. Children are often absorbed in their imaginative tasks as they work together; for example, experimenting with toy vehicles to find out about pushes and pulls. Teachers make very good use of information and communication technology to enhance children's understanding and also use scientific language well, clearing up misunderstandings with knowledgeable explanations. Other

adults are used extremely well to support and challenge children. Where teaching is satisfactory, tasks are interesting but prepared worksheets do not meet the needs of different ability groups.

87. Teachers' planning is very good and assessment is used well to monitor children's progress and plan what needs to be done next. The school is working on strategies to involve children in setting their own targets so that they learn more quickly. There are some examples of homework being used effectively to support classroom learning.

88. Leadership and management are excellent. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Strong leadership has focused on strengths and weaknesses so that the standards have improved all-round in teaching and learning. New assessment systems, linked to national standards, have been introduced to ensure continuity in levels across the year groups. Planning and teaching are monitored carefully to support and develop teachers' scientific knowledge. This shows in the raised standards of attainment. The subject leader is an excellent role model for her colleagues and knows exactly what is needed to improve standards further.

89. The curriculum for science is very good. The national requirements are taught imaginatively through a topic approach. There are good links with other subjects, for example, in art and design children make pictures to show animals in different habitats. Resources are arranged well to support teaching and there is a good range of books. Photographic evidence shows good use is made of visits and visitors to support learning in science. There are good after school clubs to further extend children's experience.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children enjoy the subject and achieve very well.
- Very good leadership and management are having a significant impact on resources.
- Resource provision is very good so that children can work on computers often.
- Very good links with other subjects give children the opportunity to apply their skills to other aspects of their work.

Commentary

90. Standards overall are good. Some children have very good basic skills and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Achievement is very good and children with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language also achieve very well. Children's behaviour is very good and was excellent in some lessons. This means children work hard and learn a great deal.

91. Children use their skills well in subject specific lessons and across other subjects. They have good recall of previous learning and can describe how to solve a problem they might encounter. For example, in one Year 2 lesson seen, the children described how to stop the whole page filling with colour when using a graphics package to draw a coloured picture of a form of transport. In Year 1, children confidently send *Pixie*, a programmable toy, to a designated point in a house. They enter directions and turns to get it to reach to the right place accurately and can say what needs changing if it does not quite reach. A few children use the word processor well to produce good quality writing at length. However, there is work to do in enabling more children to change the font size, colour and texts.

92. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was very good. Teachers use questioning and demonstration very well to show children techniques in using software and hardware. Lessons move at a fast pace and activities are well suited to different ability groups and all are challenged appropriately. Teachers' planning is clear and good assessments made each term help teachers to

judge accurately children's progress and move them to the next step. Work is neatly presented and completed with care in all age groups.

93. Very good subject leadership and management have enabled teachers to make the most of the resources and raise standards. The provision of shared computer bays in each year group means that children have good opportunities to develop their skills and use a variety of hardware, including a scanner, microscope, video and digital camera. The mobile unit, containing a range of resources including a wireless links for each class to access the internet, enhances the range of teaching methods. The confidence of all staff has been boosted by good training opportunities. Good technical support ensures that systems run smoothly from day to day. The subject leader's use of self review to develop a strategic plan is excellent. She has pin pointed the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and has a clear vision for the future. Good links have been made with parents to support children's learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

94. Information and communication technology is used very effectively across the curriculum particularly in English, mathematics, science, geography and art and design. The school is continuing to develop these links though the topic approach. In Year 2, children have made pictures to show how animals move and they have added text. In Year 1, children have used a graphics program to make repeating patterns in a wallpaper design for a model of a bedroom. There is good provision for out of school activities and children use the computers in a club in the morning before school. The bar coded library system gives children a good working example of the application of information and communication technology to everyday life.

HUMANITIES

95. No lessons were seen in geography, history or religious education. Analysis of children's work, displays and documents as well as discussions with senior managers form the evidence base. A discussion was held with some Year 2 children in religious education. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in these subjects.

96. In **geography**, there are some examples of very good work, particularly in Year 1. Children take pride in their work and it is mostly presented well. In Year 1, there are some very good examples of children making bird's eye view plans of their bedrooms. This work was well executed carefully drawn and labelled. In Year 2, in their study of movement, children are developing enquiry skills and are beginning to make observations and comparisons about features in the environment, to discuss changes and improvements. They have used local maps and can accurately name the countries of the British Isles.

97. Some innovative practice makes very good links with other subjects. For example, in Year 1 children have developed plans for model bedrooms to be made in design and technology lessons. In Year 2, research about lighthouse lights links well with work in science on electricity. Very good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich children's experiences. The imaginative play areas in classrooms are used well to advance children's geographical skills. The headteacher has given very good support to the new subject leaders so that the standard of subject review is very good. The coordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. A good range of resources is available to support teaching and learning.

98. In **history**, children in Year 2 are developing an understanding of the immediate past and beyond. Time lines are used effectively to help children develop a sense of chronology and link today's events with the past. Following a visit to museum children have written about schools in Victorian times. They have learned about famous people in the past and can recall some facts about the life and work of, for example, Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. In Year 1, a visitor to school set up rooms in a Victorian house and the children have written good accounts of their role play about home life in those times. Artefacts and books are used well to enhance children's experience and these, together with a wide range visits and visitors, mean that the children have

good opportunities to develop their skills. There are some inconsistencies in teachers' expectations for children's writing, particularly in Year 2. There are very good links with other subjects particularly in information and communication technology. In Year 2, for example, children are making coloured drawings of the history of different types of transport. There is a good collection of resources and artefacts linked to the topics studied to enhance children's learning.

99. Children's books show that the school's programme of work for **religious education** is soundly based on the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Due weight is given both to factual learning about religions and to learning about their implications for daily life. Children learn, for example, about what it means to be a friend, about different ways of helping people and about events that make us happy or sad. They learn about what the inside of a church is like and what vicars' jobs entail. They also learn about a range of faiths, including Christianity, its celebrations and core beliefs. Children's achievements are in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus.

100. Work in books is at a simple level, constrained by children's limited writing abilities. Discussions with children show that, while they have a sound recall of recent work, their memory of earlier learning is not as strong. They have great difficulty in talking about the implications of what they learn.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

101. No lessons were observed in physical education or art and design. Two part-lessons in design and technology and music were seen during the inspection. This means it is not possible to make an overall judgement about provision in these subjects. Further evidence was gained from scrutiny of children's previous work, curriculum plans and discussions with staff and children.

102. Much of the work in **art and design** builds on an appreciation of work by established artists. Recently, for example, children have looked at primitive paintings by Henri Rousseau, featuring exotic imagined jungle scenes. They have used some of these ideas as stimuli for their own collages of animal environments. The influence of the Rousseau paintings is clear in the children's vibrant use of colour and in their patterning and texturing of flat surfaces. Standards observed were similar to those found in schools nationally.

103. Children in Year 1 have been studying the designs of William Morris. An excellent display of prints, fabrics and manufactured objects, reflects children's observations and use of William Morris' designs in their own work. Their work has included a range of well-planned and very productive activities, with a particular focus on pattern and close observation. Some children have used paint to create a busy frieze of cycle tyre patterns based on a trip to the car park. In discussion, several could make a link between their work and the paintings of Mondrian. Another group of children studied real examples of some of the flowers Morris built his designs around. They each made a carefully observed drawing of one of the flowers, using black drawing pencils and planned next how to find ways to convert the drawings into prints. Displays throughout the school show that a good range of art and design activity is provided, as well as an out-of-hours art club. Work is original and particularly strong in the areas of colour and pattern. The subject benefits from close links with other areas of the curriculum.

104. Work seen in **design and technology** was of a high standard. It was imaginative in conception and linked very well indeed with work in other subjects through the current school topic of transport. In part of one of the lessons seen, children were starting to make two-wheeled chariots. An excellent discussion was instituted, with children having to think hard about what they might do and find words to express difficult ideas.

105. The children then made choices from a wide variety of fixtures, such as, glue, tapes and wires, to try to find a way of fixing their simple axles to a ruler, representing the chariot at this stage of the planning. They quickly found the shortcomings of glue, sticky tapes and wall putty. The axles

would not turn. So they experimented with wires and pipe cleaners. A fundamental lesson in simple technology had been learned in a matter of minutes, by their own discovery.

106. In the other part lesson children were following up a recent walk into Harold Hill to look at local roads and street furniture. On a model four-way roundabout, some used construction kits to make street furniture while others planned a route for a computerised floor vehicle. Another group, independently and with total confidence, used a new computer programme to design a similar project.

107. The headteacher leads in this subject and has built many productive links with local organisations. The Construction Industry Training Board, for example helped children in their project on bridges. Design and technology is a very strong component of the school curriculum.

108. **Music** is taught well mostly by a specialist teacher. Children sing tunefully and enjoy playing a range of tuned and percussion instruments. In the two lessons observed, children learned to sing a new song quickly and accompanied it successfully, keeping a repeated beat called *ostinato*. Children really enjoyed their work and behaved exceptionally well, especially when waiting to play their instruments. However, children did not receive enough encouragement to refine and improve their performance. The school takes part in local music festivals. The children also perform concerts for families and friends and these are valued highly by parents.

109. The **physical education** curriculum covers all aspects of athletics, gymnastics, dance and games. After school clubs add much to the provision. The school's determination to ensure that children enjoy many physical activities has led to the award of the Activemark.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

110. This was not a main focus for the inspection. However, there is a very good programme that successfully promotes children's personal, social and health education. All adults make the most of opportunities to teach children formally and informally about good manners, cooperative and collaborative working and giving consideration to others. More formal sessions, such as *Circle Times* enable children to talk about matters of concern in a constructive way. The school's involvement with the community and businesses give children a good idea about their role as citizens and the contributions they can make to society.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	1
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	1
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	1
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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