

INSPECTION REPORT

BUSWELLS LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leicester

LEA area: City of Leicester

Unique reference number: 120040

Headteacher: Mr. Ken Judd

Lead inspector: Mr. George Crowther

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th May 2005

Inspection number: 266547

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	411
School address:	Beauville Drive Beaumont Leys Leicester
Postcode:	LE4 0PT
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Frances Radulovic
Date of previous inspection:	7 th – 10 th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Buswells Lodge has a challenging context in which to educate its pupils. It is bigger than most primary schools, with 384 pupils organised in 14 classes and 27 children who attend part-time in the nursery. The school is situated on the north-western edge of Leicester and draws most of its pupils from the surrounding Beaumont Leys estate, which is an area of high social deprivation. It serves families from a range of social circumstances but, taken together, these are much less favourable than the national picture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is much lower than expected for their age. Ninety-one pupils, an above-average proportion, have been identified as having special educational needs. These needs include a wide range of learning and behavioural difficulties. A very low number of pupils have a statement to outline more severe learning difficulties. The rate at which pupils join and leave is much higher than normal. For example, only about half of the pupils in the current Year 6 began school at Buswells Lodge. Just over half of the pupils come from white British backgrounds, with the rest coming from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being black British African, Caribbean, and Indian British Asian. With 24 languages spoken in the school, it is truly multicultural. No pupil, however, is at the early stages of learning English as an additional language, but 25 have been identified as needing additional support. In 2000 and 2002, the school gained a Schools Achievement Award for good results in national tests. The school has also gained a Leicester Green Life Gold Award, which recognises the good work it does to teach pupils about creating a healthy environment.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18814	George Crowther	Lead inspector	Science, art and design, music, religious education
9053	Viv Phillips	Lay inspector	
32522	Nova de Souza	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, English as an additional language
33101	Sarah Harper	Team inspector	English, geography, history, special educational needs
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology information and communication technology, physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Buswells Lodge is a good, effective school with a number of very strong features. The staff have created a secure, positive and lively environment for learning. As a result, the pupils' achievement is good and they are very keen to learn. The quality of teaching is good overall, and was very good in many of the lessons seen. Relationships at all levels are very good and support the pupils' learning very effectively. The headteacher's very purposeful leadership promotes a culture in which both teachers and children expect to do well. Very effective management is consistently focused on improving aspects of the school's work. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Often from low starting points, the pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science
- The headteacher's very good leadership sets the tone for a school that helps its pupils to succeed because it wants the best for them
- Pupils' well-being is given a high priority as a key part of the school's drive to raise achievement
- In many lessons, interesting and enthusiastic teaching helps pupils to learn quickly but, in a few lessons, the work is not challenging enough
- The school provides very good care and support for pupils, and often for families, but attendance is too low, so some pupils miss out on the good education on offer
- Good teaching for pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language helps them to be successful

Since the school was inspected in 1999, improvement has been very good. Results in the Year 6 national tests have improved significantly and, currently, results for both Year 2 and Year 6 are rising at a faster rate than for most schools. The school has dealt effectively with the points for improvement from the previous inspection. In particular, standards in science are much better and the school now has effective systems for managing the performance of teachers.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good. When children start school, overall attainment is well below that expected for their ages. They make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception classes, learning basic skills that will support the rest of their education and developing the confidence to be successful. Only a few children in the current reception classes, however, are on track to reach the goals expected nationally by the time they join Year 1. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils achieve well, owing to good teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Even so, by the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics are below average and standards in reading and writing are still well below average. Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 builds successfully on the progress made earlier in the school. In the current Year 6, the pupils have done well to reach below average standards in English and mathematics, and average

standards in science. The table shows that, in the 2004 Year 6 national tests, pupils achieved very well compared with the results they gained at the end of Year 2, but standards in Year 6 are not quite as high this year. Pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language do equally as well as other pupils.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are fostered well. The school works very hard to encourage pupils to be interested, sensible and focused learners. It is very successful. This leads to very positive attitudes to learning in most lessons and, for the most part, good behaviour. Lots of praise and opportunities for success breed an enthusiasm for school. Very good relationships create a very harmonious community. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is well below average and punctuality is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

The quality of teaching is good. In the nursery and reception classes, satisfactory teaching helps the pupils to build basic skills they will need later on. The activities are usually appropriate to the children's needs but, in some lessons, the organisation of learning is not effective enough, and there is insufficient focus on individual children developing the skills they need to learn next. Throughout the rest of the school, learning is very good in many lessons, and at least good in most, because teachers plan work carefully, use imaginative strategies to capture and hold pupils' interest, and insist that pupils focus on their learning. Teachers have a very good rapport with their pupils, based on mutual respect, and the pupils know exactly what is expected of them. For the most part, pupils are good learners who work hard and try their best with the tasks they are given. Very good relationships ensure that teachers manage pupils' behaviour in a very positive way. In a few lessons, the teaching does not have sufficient pace and challenge to capture pupils' interest, and tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs.

The curriculum is well planned and provides a good range of work in most subjects. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are very good at a whole-school level. At classroom level, there are inconsistencies in the way the information is used to provide the right challenge for the pupils. The school provides very good care and support for its pupils and has created a good partnership with its parents and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very clear leadership. He has a very strong set of values, based on each child achieving success, and these are shared by the whole school community. He uses the skills of the staff well to identify and tackle aspects of the school's work that can be improved. Senior staff offer good support and fulfil important leadership roles effectively. Some subject leaders have a very clear grasp of strengths and weaknesses in the work of their subjects and make a strong contribution to raising standards. Other subject leaders are still building their skills. Governors fulfil their role effectively. They have a very good knowledge of the school, and provide the right balance of support and challenge, but the way they check on the success of the school's targets for improvement is not rigorous enough. Management of the school is very good. Staff make very good use of assessment data to identify and tackle aspects of the school's work that need to improve. They are well supported in building their skills through a very effective system of performance management. The day-to-day management of the school is handled very efficiently by the headteacher, the staff and the administrative team.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have positive views of the school and the great majority feel that their children are doing well. They particularly appreciate the warm, friendly atmosphere. Pupils are very positive about their learning at school and they want to do well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to build upon its current success are

- Ensure that work in all lessons is appropriately challenging for all pupils
- Continue to develop and pursue strategies to raise levels of attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good. Many children start school with very weak skills and, overall, standards are well below those expected. In the nursery and reception classes, children make satisfactory progress but, by the time they join Year 1, very few reach the expected standards. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils achieve well in English and mathematics but, by the end of Year 2, standards are still well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement continues to be good because effective teaching is well focused on ensuring pupils develop their skills in English, mathematics and science. By Year 6, standards are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Considering their low starting points, pupils have done well to reach these standards.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Often from low starting points, the pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science
- The school is skilled at getting the best from all pupils, regardless of their ability or background but, in some lessons, more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently
- Pupils achieve well in ICT because of growing staff expertise and good resources
- Achievement in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory, but teaching does not always focus sharply enough on helping the children to take the next step in their learning
- Good support for pupils who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language helps them to be successful

Commentary

National test results

1. The results of the 2004 national tests for pupils in Year 2 are better than those reported at the last inspection, particularly in mathematics. Over the past three years, the results have improved at a faster rate than for most schools. Nonetheless, compared with all schools nationally, the 2004 results were below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. Compared with results gained by pupils in *similar schools**, those in mathematics were above average, but those in reading and writing were below average.

* 'Similar schools' are those with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.3 (12.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.5 (12.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.4 (14.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 48 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. In Year 6, the 2004 results are much better than those reported at the last inspection. Over the past three years, results have improved at a faster rate than for most schools. In 2004, they were above the national average in science, but below average in English and mathematics. The most important comparison, however, is that the results were much better than those of other schools whose pupils gained similar scores in the Year 2 tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	26.1 (23.3)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.4 (24.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.7 (27.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 54 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Given that children start school with attainment that is well below average overall, the test results, and the standard of work seen in pupils' books, represent good achievement in English, mathematics and science. The school faces, and meets, the considerable challenge of taking pupils who have very low levels of skills when they start school and, by Year 6, raising those skills so they are at or near the nationally expected standard. In addition, a high proportion of pupils join the school during their primary education, often with special educational needs or from another country, and the staff are very skilled at ensuring these pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Good teaching, with a significant proportion of very good teaching, means that pupils make good progress, building their knowledge, skills and understanding well. The very positive environment for learning, with high expectations of what pupils can achieve, plays a significant part in giving each child the confidence to be successful.

Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes)

4. The children's achievement is satisfactory. The staff make sure the children have a smooth start to school, and they build and maintain very good relationships with them. They work closely with each other to create a secure, safe and attractive environment for learning. There are some weaknesses, however, in the content and organisation of the teaching and learning, which prevent the children from making better progress. For example, in the nursery, too little attention is given to what each child is intended to learn from an activity, and what support will be needed. In reception, whole-class sessions often last too long, and so the children spend too much time sitting and listening, when many of them learn better doing something practical.

Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2

5. Pupils' achievement is good overall, and particularly strong in English and mathematics. Achievement in speaking and listening is good because teachers create well-chosen opportunities for pupils to talk about their work. Pupils achieve well in reading and writing because the teaching is well planned and organised to focus on the skills the pupils need to learn next. Pupils learn the skills needed to tackle unknown words through good teaching of basic skills such as letter sounds. In mathematics and science, pupils make good progress because the teaching is challenging and lively, and so pupils enjoy their lessons. In most other subjects, considering that pupils have weak skills generally, they produce work of the expected standard.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6

6. Pupils achieve well and cash in on the firm foundations that have been laid earlier in the school. The quality of teaching is good, which leads to lessons that are interesting and well focused on specific learning objectives. The pupils thrive on the clear structure the teachers provide for learning. Progress in reading continues to be good, with pupils taking an increasing interest in a wide range of books. In writing, most pupils make good progress, though this is generally a weaker skill, particularly in the quality of handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science because lessons are usually challenging and teachers use an imaginative range of methods. On occasion, in both English and mathematics, more able pupils are not challenged enough. In ICT, standards have improved since the last inspection because the teachers are making more confident use of the improved resources, and the pupils are very keen to learn. In other subjects, the standard of pupils' work varies. In religious education, standards are about as expected. In art and design, standards are below those expected for pupils' ages,

but reasonable, considering their starting points in Year 1. In some other subjects, such as geography and history, pupils do not study topics in sufficient depth to produce the quality of work seen in the core subjects.

Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language

7. The school has a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and a few who receive support because English is not their first language. The most significant thing the school does is to ensure that these pupils have the same good chances to achieve well as other pupils do. They benefit from the good quality of teaching in their classes, and sometimes the school makes special arrangements, such as the setting in Years 5 and 6, which allows a small group of pupils who have special educational needs to be taught separately. The pupils achieved very well in the lesson observed for this group. The school also has a teacher who offers specific in-class support for pupils whose first language is not English, which is successful. As a result of the school's careful attention to these pupils' varying needs, they achieve as well as others. The school welcomes all pupils, whatever their background or special educational needs, and makes sure that they are well supported in their learning.
8. At the previous inspection, pupils' achievement was satisfactory overall and good in Years 3 to 6. Achievement is now good overall. Standards at the end of Year 6 are much higher, as seen in the very good results pupils gain in national tests. The school is not complacent and recognises that there are aspects of pupils' work where it can strive for even higher standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is poor and punctuality unsatisfactory, even though the pupils really want to be in school. Once there, they have very good attitudes to learning and behave well. The school fosters spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Strengths in personal qualities identified at the last inspection have grown significantly and good work is in hand to improve attendance, so improvement in this area of work has been very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of considerable efforts by the school, attendance has begun to improve from the very low levels of 2001, but is still too low to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can
- Pupils enjoy school very much and, by Year 6, develop a real enthusiasm for learning
- The school's determination to raise standards of behaviour is one of its success stories, with consistent, impressive work on helping children to do the right thing
- Very positive relationships and daily routines shape the way children develop and flourish

Commentary

9. Although attendance was judged to be satisfactory by the previous inspection, it was below average at the time and lower than it is now. After that, the school's attendance dipped further, while in other schools it rose. A higher level of attendance is expected now to ensure that all children have every chance of success at school. The school's attendance rate is well below the national average. The school is well aware of the impact of high absence on achievement so has worked hard to halt the fall in attendance, which it has done successfully. The school spelled out for parents that they must explain every absence and used funds from the *BIP Project** to enable staff to check that they do, since when, pupils have had fewer days off without good reason. This is one of the few schools to meet local attendance targets. It knows that it faces a significant challenge in cutting absence, in spite of rewards for 100% attendance that children prize, such as certificates, a trophy, a helicopter visit and bowling trip. They are absent too often because their parents do not bring them to school

rather than for lack of interest in learning. In individual cases, high absence rates prevent children from doing as well as they could, particularly as they miss too many literacy and numeracy lessons.

**The national Behaviour Improvement Programme aims to raise attendance and standards of behaviour*

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.7
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.

10. As pupils insisted, they “like school because we do lots and lots and lots of interesting lessons”. Their love of learning is inspired by regular experience of lively, well-taught lessons with a mix of quick-fire questions, absorbing activities and chances of success for pupils of all capabilities. “You learn something new every day and teachers are always fair to everybody”. By Year 6, the pupils’ desire to learn and do as well as they can is very strong. It mirrors the school’s determination to do its best for all of them. The oldest pupils enjoy working independently, go the extra mile willingly and are reluctant to stop once their curiosity is fired, as evident in an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson.

11. The school has focused relentlessly on raising standards of behaviour and reducing instances of exclusions, bullying and bad manners. Incidents of racism are virtually unknown and, when they do occur, the school deals with them firmly. With the school's very positive stand on how to treat others, and the very good example set by adults, led impressively by the headteacher, children are left in no doubt about what is expected or what good behaviour looks like. As a result, gradually, they learn to respect and follow clear, simple school rules and the class rules that they help to devise. At first, many of them find this hard, especially when expectations are much higher and very different from experiences outside school. In time, almost all pupils learn good self-discipline and behave well, in response to constantly positive messages about the right thing to do. Those who find it very hard to follow instructions and obey rules know what they should do, even if they cannot always manage to do it. Most older pupils behave very well in lessons, which helps them to achieve well. The school uses exclusions reluctantly, but has no choice when pupils have failed to respond to its huge efforts to help them, and their behaviour is totally out of order. Exclusion rates are falling as extra support and initiatives, such as the use of learning mentors, help to curb extreme misconduct.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	229	25	
White – any other White background	9		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	19		
Mixed – White and Black African	5		
Mixed – White and Asian	3		
Mixed – any other mixed background	7		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	13	1	
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	10		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9	2	
Black or Black British – African	30		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	14		
Chinese	3		
Any other ethnic group	1	5	
No ethnic group recorded	27		

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

12. Pupils' personal qualities such as self-confidence, kindness, independence and enthusiasm for learning blossom as children become used to school routines and realise that the staff want the best for them. At first, their personal and social skills are often limited, but everyday routines nurture good manners, respect for others and a sense of community vigorously so, by Year 6, pupils' have developed into youngsters who are a credit to the school. With more attention to social interaction through *R-time* (a way of learning how to make good relationships and show respect for other people) the school's very good provision for social development is set to become first rate. Its encouragement of spiritual and cultural awareness has not kept pace with this, partly because gaps in pupils' broader experience of subjects such as history, geography, art and drama mean that opportunities to learn about worldwide, colourful, rich and varied traditions are missed.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good education for its pupils, with some very strong features. Teaching is good overall, often very good. The curriculum is satisfactory for children in the nursery and reception classes, and good throughout the rest of the school, with a strong, appropriate emphasis on the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science. Some other subjects, however, are not taught in sufficient depth. Very good systems for assessing pupils' developing knowledge and skills are not always matched by the way the information is used to ensure that work in lessons is appropriately challenging. Pupils are cared for and supported very well. The school has a good partnership with parents and other schools, and satisfactory links with the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and particularly strong in Years 2, 4 and 6. Learning in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory, but has weaknesses because the content and pattern of lessons are not always best suited to the level of ability of the children. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is good, often very good, and occasionally excellent. Any weaknesses are relatively minor and were only observed in a few lessons. Teaching is good for all subjects where a judgement can be made. The proportion of good and very good teaching has risen since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make lessons interesting and learning exciting, so pupils are keen to do well
- Teachers' very good relationships with their pupils help them to manage learning and behaviour very effectively
- In the nursery and reception classes, the content and pattern of learning are not always matched well enough to the children's needs
- Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them to explain work clearly and challenge pupils' thinking
- Teachers plan lessons carefully so they know exactly what pupils will learn and how the work will be organised
- In a few lessons, the teaching does not have sufficient pace and challenge to capture pupils' interest, and tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 45 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	9 (20%)	18 (40%)	15 (33%)	2 (4%)		

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

13. The teachers are very skilled in making learning interesting and enjoyable. They know the pupils are likely to learn more when the lesson is exciting, and so they find lots of ways to capture the pupils' attention and involve them practically in their learning. For example, in a very good Year 2 science lesson, the teacher's dynamic introduction grabbed the pupils' attention and focused their thinking on experiments about how things move. A good practical activity encouraged the pupils to work well in small groups, and the teacher's constant reminders about what the pupils should be learning kept their eye on the ball. In an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson, the pace of the learning and the teacher's challenging questions involved and motivated the pupils. Through a series of tasks, outlined very effectively on the interactive white board, the pupils learnt the skills needed to draw and interpret pie charts. The pupils' motivation never waned because the teacher kept setting new challenges, which demanded the pupils' attention and ensured they made very rapid progress. Year 1 pupils enjoyed learning about directions. The teacher took them to the hall, asked them to be 'robots', and so their understanding was hammered home in an enjoyable, practical activity. These lessons are typical of many seen, in which engaging teaching enthused the pupils and helped them

to learn very well. This is a school where most of the pupils enjoy their learning for most of the time, which is a key factor in their good achievement.

14. The very good rapport between teachers and their pupils is clearly evident in most lessons. Teachers have worked very hard to gain the trust and respect of their pupils, largely through giving trust and respect to them. As a result, the pupils like their teachers and are prepared to work hard for them. This has benefits in each lesson because the pupils are very willing to contribute to class discussions, they realise that good behaviour is expected, and they know that making an effort with their learning is what teachers want. In a very good Year 4 English lesson, all these qualities were evident. Pupils paid very good attention during the teacher's very clear explanation. When the teacher asked questions, the pupils were keen to offer their answers, and the teacher was very skilled in including all the pupils, valuing their ideas. The pupils settled quickly to their work, concentrated very well, and made very good progress. There are a number of pupils, particularly boys, who find it difficult to sustain good behaviour. The very good relationships teachers have with these pupils keep occurrences of unco-operative behaviour to a minimum and, when things do go wrong, the very good relationships help to put them right.
15. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory, but there were weaknesses in some of the lessons seen. The staff have created a secure and happy environment for learning, but the way in which the learning is organised is not always most appropriate for the children. In the nursery, a good range of appropriate activities supports the children's learning, but the staff are not sharply focused enough on how to make sure the children get the most out of them. The children struggle to work independently and the staff do not always provide enough guidance and support to ensure the children work purposefully. Lessons in the reception classes usually begin with a whole-class session, but this often lasts too long. The children spend too much time sitting and listening, when many of them learn better doing something practical, with the support of an adult. Although many of the activities seen were appropriate for the ability level of the children, some were too difficult, such as a focus on subtracting from numbers to ten when many of the children did not possess the necessary level of understanding.
16. Teachers usually have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, which helps them to explain concepts clearly and to encourage the pupils to take the next step in their learning. For example, in a very good Year 6 science lesson, the teachers wanted the pupils to extend their existing understanding of how materials change when they are heated or cooled, with a particular focus on the more able pupils improving the quality of their written conclusions to experiments. The very clear learning objectives, linked to well-structured teaching about the difference between physical and chemical changes, enabled most of the pupils to make very good progress. Similarly, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher's confident grasp of the subject led to a challenging set of activities, which extended the pupils' skills in carrying out mental calculations.
17. Teachers plan lessons carefully so that pupils will get the most from their learning. Plans are very clear about the main learning objectives for the lesson and how these will be achieved. Clear plans give teachers the confidence to teach at a good pace, and in an interesting and methodical way. For example, very good planning for a Year 3 ICT lesson helped pupils to make good progress in developing their text formatting skills. The teacher planned the sequence of learning very carefully, guided the pupils through new skills step-by-step, and so they were soon confident to work independently.
18. Within a picture of good teaching, there were some weaknesses in the satisfactory lessons seen. The main weakness was when the pupils were not challenged enough by the work they were given, and there are four reasons, sometimes in combination, why this occurred. In a few lessons, the work was too easy, or not focused strongly enough on what the pupils needed to learn next. More often, the work was challenging enough, but the teacher did not allow the pupils to work on it independently, and so the challenge it would have presented was absorbed by the teacher. In some lessons, when the teacher used work sheets to follow up whole-class teaching, these did not always challenge pupils sufficiently, particularly the more able. On occasion, the pace of learning slowed, either because the teacher talked for too long or did not make clear enough the expectation that pupils should get on quickly with their independent work.
19. Teaching for pupils who have special educational needs is good. The skills they need to learn next are identified well, and set out in a learning plan which guides both teachers and classroom

assistants. As a result, lessons are well focused on what these pupils need to learn, particularly in English and mathematics. Special support, such as the setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6, leads to very good teaching because the smaller group enables the learning to be matched more closely to the pupils' particular needs. Good systems for assessing the needs of pupils who are learning English as an additional language result in effective support, both in lessons and in small groups, aimed at specific targets for learning. Teaching for these pupils is also good. As a result, by Year 6, many of them reach the nationally expected standard in English.

20. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking on their progress are very good and much better than at the last inspection. The school now has very clear systems for tracking pupils' progress in all subjects. At a whole-school level, this ensures that teachers have clear information about pupils' attainment at a given point in time, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Day-to-day assessment, and its use to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, is not as good. In some classes, teachers use targets to make clear to pupils what they need to learn next. At present, however, such measures are not consistent across the school and, as a result, work seen in a few lessons was not matched well enough to pupils' needs. Marking is generally thorough, and offers lots of praise and encouragement. Only the best, however, identifies what pupils need to do next to improve their work.

The curriculum

As at the last inspection, the curriculum is good, with a strong, appropriate emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It is enriched by satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take part in activities outside lessons. The accommodation and resources are good overall and have improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the curriculum for English, mathematics and science is good, but the curriculum for some other subjects lacks depth
- Very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education helps them grow in confidence and become mature members of the school community
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good, and so these pupils achieve well
- The experience, expertise and stability of staffing has been a key factor in promoting very good improvement since the last inspection

Commentary

21. The school places great emphasis on the importance of all pupils achieving well in literacy and numeracy. It matches the curriculum to the needs of the pupils so they make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Provision for other subjects is at least satisfactory, but there are weaknesses. For example, the curriculum for art and design and religious education results in pupils reaching the standards that would be expected. On the other hand, aspects of geography are studied in insufficient depth and, in history, whilst all strands of the curriculum are covered, much of the work seen focuses on chronology and facts without creating opportunities for interpreting evidence and drawing conclusions. The school has identified the need to review its curriculum so that it aims for excellence in some non-core subjects rather than trying to cover them all in equal measure.
22. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good, and is rooted in the values of the school and the day-to-day relationships between pupils and with the staff. In all lessons, pupils learn about respecting each other, working together and having the confidence to express their views. In PSHE lessons, teachers focus on particular issues, such as in Year 5 when pupils thought about ways they could resist pressure from their peers to do something they know is wrong. A number of whole-school initiatives also make a very good contribution to PSHE. R-time (a way of learning how to make good relationships and show respect for other people) has recently been introduced throughout the school and early indications are that it is a valuable opportunity for pupils to develop greater awareness of

their social responsibilities. The school's involvement in the BIP programme has had a significant impact for some pupils as their attendance has improved and they are supported through lunchtime social activities. The introduction of learning mentors has helped to reduce the number of lunchtime incidents for these pupils, and so they are ready to learn at the start of the afternoon session.

23. The school aims to get the best from all its pupils. Those who have special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language achieve well because the provision is good. They benefit, as other pupils do, from the good quality of teaching, and so they make good progress in most lessons. Individual education plans identify specific targets for learning. A good example of these targets being used effectively was seen in a lesson for a group of pupils in Years 5 and 6. Each child's targets were fixed to their desk and, when they hit a target, they ticked a box next to it. The support for these pupils in lessons is focused because the planning is good. The additional support provided for pupils learning English as an additional language is well thought out and of good quality. Teaching assistants play a major part in helping these pupils and they have the skills to support learning effectively. Even when things go wrong, and pupils do not live up to the high standards of behaviour expected, the school is relentless in its view that pupils should be in school and learning. Very good support for some pupils enables them to be successful in this school when they might struggle elsewhere.
24. After-school booster clubs in literacy and numeracy are available for older pupils. They are invited to attend a club following a review of their needs. Parents are invited to the first session to find out how they can support their child's learning. These clubs have been successful in ensuring pupils reach the standard of which they are capable, as reflected in the school national test results in Year 6.
25. There are a number of clubs and other opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. Due to temporary staff changes, these are predominantly for the older pupils. All clubs are well attended and valued by the pupils. In football, both boys and girls attend weekly training sessions. The school has been successful in bidding for additional funding. Specialist instruction from Leicester Tigers was well received and pupils reached the semi-final of a tag rugby competition. Musical evenings are also possible because of pupils' efforts at learning musical instruments and their attendance at choir. The oldest pupils have the opportunity to participate in taster sessions for indoor archery. These are well managed and pupils have a very good awareness of safety at these sessions. They are proud of their achievements when their scores are displayed in the Year 6 entrance and available for all to see. Pupils' behaviour at these sessions is exceptionally good.
26. The staff have a good breadth of experience and expertise. The very low turnover of staff makes a significant contribution to developing and maintaining very good relationships with pupils, and to supporting their good achievement. Teachers work hard to get to know all pupils, for example spending time with pupils other than those in their own classes during playtimes. Staff who provide support for pupils who have special educational needs and for those learning English as an additional language add to the strengths in staffing.
27. The recently opened Year 6 building provides very good, spacious facilities to support pupils' learning and is well resourced. The pupils enjoy working in their new classrooms. The partition between the two classrooms works very well to support separate class teaching and is removed very quickly to enable whole year group to work together in activities such as R time. This is in contrast to open plan areas in the main part of the building where, as noted at the last inspection, for some of the younger children, the sound from the adjacent classroom can be distracting. Year 3 pupils work in an older, 'temporary' building which, whilst adequate, does not provide the high quality facilities seen in Year 6. Alongside the new Year 6 building, the school has extended and is improving the grounds. Pupils have planted bulbs and watered the newly planted shrubs. This provides a valuable

opportunity for pupils to exercise their responsibility for their environment and also to see how areas change over time. Resources for most subjects are good and well used.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of pupils' welfare, health and safety. It guides them well with their work. Pupils' ideas are valued highly so they are involved very well in making the school an even better place to be. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good in strengthening the high quality of care, in order to raise personal and academic achievement successfully.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Impressive levels of trust ensure that, however difficult things are, children of all ages and backgrounds have someone who takes time to listen, help, and urge them to do their best
- Pupils' well-being is given a high priority as a key part of the school's drive to raise achievement
- The school works very hard to build respect for people's ideas, so it takes pupils' views seriously
- The school offers all new pupils a very warm welcome, so they settle in happily
- Pupils are helped with their work in a well-meaning way that ensures good support, but activities, targets and advice are not always fine-tuned to the needs of individuals

Commentary

28. The school has to take particular care to develop the social skills that support learning because so many children who join have far less experience than usual of working, playing and talking to a mix of other people. The staff build very strong relationships with children so they feel happy, secure and keen to have a go with the work they are asked to do. They glow with the praise and encouragement offered, knowing that, if they make a mistake, no-one dwells on it, but urges them to try again or do better next time. "I like the way my teacher treats me. She is really kind." This is a great boost to confidence. Teachers notice and compliment pupils regularly for good manners, careful listening, thoughtfulness and other positive behaviour. This is part of the school's culture and makes all the difference to pupils feeling so well cared for and valued by staff.
29. The school's high quality care is rooted in its intent to do the best for all its pupils. A firm focus on boosting pupils' confidence, standards of behaviour and desire to learn ensures that the care given is used to raise standards resolutely, not just to keep children happy. "The teachers help you or push you so you know that you can do it. They try to improve your confidence."
30. All matters of health and safety are dealt with very carefully. All policies and procedures, including arrangements for child protection, are in place fully, as required. The school works very hard to promote healthy living, for example by using the Life Bus to teach pupils about making wise choices and staying safe from harm, even in the face of peer pressure to take risks.
31. Recent initiatives such as the use of R-time have emphasised how much the school values pupils' views. They have high quality, regular chances to share ideas within a setting where people are expected to take turns and to learn from each other. Although adults often have to work very hard to catch and hold the attention of the class, particularly with the youngest children, they ensure that everyone has a chance to say something and is heard with respect. The school uses its five golden rules very successfully to insist on consideration for everyone. As a result, it is part of the culture for pupils to talk about school life. Recently, questionnaires and a school council have also offered pupils a more formal 'voice' in suggesting improvements to school life.
32. The school's positive atmosphere, a warm welcome for visitors and practical help such as the pack of information for parents, help those starting school to settle in happily. Children who join at other times are made just as welcome and helped by friendly adults and pupils to find their feet quickly. Several pupils told inspectors they wished they had been here from the start. "I would not change anything about my school. It is the best school I have ever been to and I do not want to leave."
33. Adults know pupils of all ages and backgrounds very well so pupils feel able to ask for and accept help from staff. In the best lessons, such help is based on precise analysis of gaps

in understanding and the best way to take steps to fill them. For instance, in a very good Year 4 English lesson, pupils were asked to check their own targets before rushing to write down words ending in ‘-ough’. Very good prompts ensured that individual, more able children gave equal attention to presentation, speed and unusual examples, such as ‘although’ or ‘enough’. Otherwise, help with work is effective, but better as general encouragement than as specific advice based on accurate information about what a pupil needs to practise or learn next to achieve more. Pupils feel well supported. “I like all of the teachers at the school and every activity. I never get bored of what I am being taught because all of the teachers help me understand in a better way.”

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has built a good working relationship with parents. Its links with other schools are good. Community links are satisfactory. This represents good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school strives constantly to find ways of working well with all parents, including those who find it hard to respond to efforts to involve them in their children's learning
- Good links with other schools offer pupils extra, worthwhile opportunities to take part in activities such as sport and music, and better chances of smooth transfer from one school to another
- Community links have not developed as well as other partnerships, partly because of the impact of recent building work on site

Commentary

34. The school has made great efforts to improve its partnership with parents, which was criticised at the last inspection. As a result, its prospectus, home pack for new families, newsletters and other information are much clearer, more parent-friendly and easier to understand. Parents now have every chance of knowing what is going on and what is expected of them. Reports give a reasonable idea of what pupils have been learning in each subject, but the school knows that the language used is still not clear enough for all parents to understand just how well their child is doing and how to do better. Parents say the school is welcoming and staff are approachable, so no barriers to successful partnership remain on the school's part. The reality is that, for whatever reason, many families have difficulty in responding to the school's considerable efforts to work well with them, but relationships are positive, which is a secure basis for pupils to do well. Parents are pleased with what the school does for their children. They say their children like school because the teaching is good, teachers expect them to work hard, people are approachable and the school is well led.
35. Initiatives such as regular surveys of parents' views, easy access to staff before and after school, and the magazine style of the governing body's report to parents help to build bridges with families. The school is alert to any new venture that might bring it closer to parents, so that the home-school partnership is strengthened. Its biggest challenges are to reduce absence and involve parents actively with what their children learn and how well they do at school. Parents have a better idea of the link between absence and lack of progress as a result of efforts by additional staff to remind them. The school is making good use of work with the Sure Start playgroup initiative on site to help build confidence among new parents that they can help their children with learning.
36. Children starting school benefit from the close ties with the playgroup. The school's links with the local secondary school, which has specialist status for technology, have helped not only with extra resources but also in key work with individuals who struggle to cope with school routines and who might otherwise be excluded. Older pupils have frequent chances to work with secondary school staff. The school has close working partnerships with local primary schools, which have enabled pupils to relish experiences such as a musical evening much enjoyed by the local community, as well as success in football matches and sport, generally. The school is involved well with specific initiatives locally such as the 'Count Us In' project that supports families with children with disabilities and difficulties. Thriving links with people and community organisations further afield are limited, which curbs pupils' awareness of the wider world. As the school's goal is to raise aspirations and self-belief in the neighbourhood to help boost children's achievement, the community focus is local.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher's very good leadership ensures that everyone has a very clear focus on improving pupils' achievement. Management of the school is very good. Key staff provide good support for the headteacher, share his vision and manage aspects of the school well. Governors do a good job because they have a very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leadership and management have been strengthened since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very purposeful leadership has resulted in very high expectations of what pupils can achieve and the creation of a very positive environment for learning
- The school has very well developed systems to identify its strengths and tackle its weaknesses
- Senior staff provide good support for the headteacher, taking on important roles in managing key aspect of the school's work
- Governors make a good contribution to the effectiveness of the school because they understand its strengths and weaknesses and are fully involved in planning for the future
- The quality of subject leadership varies from very good to satisfactory

Commentary

37. The headteacher's very strong, principled leadership has been central to the very good improvement the school has made since the last inspection, especially in raising standards and creating a very positive learning environment. His expertise has been recognised by the local education authority for whom he has worked to provide support for other schools. He is very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has a very clear vision and relentless drive to improve the achievement of each pupil. Very comprehensive planning for future development reflects the high ambition for the pupils, staff and the school with decisive priorities and goals, which are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. The school has a very clear set of values which means that pupils, many of whom are from challenging circumstances, can thrive in a learning environment which has a high emphasis on their care, welfare and safety. This focus has been very effective because, as a result, pupils make very good progress in their personal development, show respect and want to learn. The headteacher has put into practice his vision for a shared leadership structure, thus encouraging teachers' professional development and making good use of their skills. Consequently, senior staff, who share the vision for school improvement, have been delegated very clear responsibilities to fulfil important leadership roles and provide effective support for the headteacher. Not only do they take subject responsibility, but they also have pastoral roles and lead central aspects of the school, such as the curriculum development responsibility held by the deputy headteacher. This gives senior staff a very good insight into the quality of their areas of responsibility.
38. Leadership and management provided by subject leaders are good, overall, but variable. The school is very aware of the quality of leadership in each area. All subject leaders have responsibility to identify priorities for improvement in their areas and contribute to whole-school strategic planning. A characteristic in subjects where there is very good leadership is that the leaders have a very clear grasp of strengths and weaknesses, such as in science and information and communication technology. However, in other subjects, leaders are still building their skills and do not yet have a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement.
39. Governance is good. Governors have varied experience in the role but they are very committed to, and supportive of, the school. Together, they have very good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and all share the vision for improvement. They play an effective role in planning for the school's development and have provided challenge

in areas that concerned them. For example, governors' opinions were central to the decision to replace old mobile classrooms in order to provide a better learning environment for pupils in Year 6. Governors also played a crucial role in the development of effective new behaviour policies, and they review all new policies very thoroughly. However, governors do not check carefully enough on the progress the school is making towards its main priorities for improvement.

40. The school is managed very well. It evaluates its performance very thoroughly and uses the information very effectively to bring about improvement. The areas the school identifies for improvement are based on a rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and often implemented through very good systems for performance management of teachers. Staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities and teachers' performance is reviewed very effectively. All targets are linked closely to priorities for school improvement and staff are provided with good opportunities for training to develop their knowledge and skills and, thus, improve pupils' achievement. However, the performance management system for non-teaching staff is not developed enough. School systems to check on the progress of pupils are very good but the use of assessment data to respond to individual needs is inconsistent. The school provides very effective support for teachers who are new to the school, including newly-qualified teachers, which enables them to settle in quickly. The school is managed very efficiently on a day-to-day basis because of the very effective support that staff and the administrative team give to the headteacher.
41. Financial management is very good. All budget and spending decisions are linked to the priorities set out in the school's plans for development, and the headteacher and governors review the budget frequently. Recently, significant improvements have been made to the buildings, which are having a positive impact on the achievement of pupils and on their attitudes to learning. The headteacher is very skilled at identifying where funding is available for projects.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,325,999
Total expenditure	1,242,549
Expenditure per pupil	3023

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	83,498
Balance carried forward to the next	83,450

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and the reception classes) is satisfactory and similar to that reported at the last inspection. When children join the nursery, overall attainment is well below that expected, with particular weaknesses in communication, language and literacy, and personal and social skills. Children's achievement is satisfactory but, owing to their low starting points, very few are on course to reach the learning goals expected nationally by the time they join Year 1. Attainment is rather higher in mathematical development where about a third of the children are on track to reach the expected standard.
43. Very good procedures support children when they join the nursery, and others who arrive during the Foundation Stage. The 'Home Pack' gives parents clear guidance on the curriculum and how they can support their child at home. Parents are welcome in the classrooms and this enables children to settle in very well. Staff build and maintain very good relationships with the children. They work closely with each other to create a secure, safe and attractive environment for learning.
44. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is at least satisfactory for all areas of learning, and good for mathematical and creative development, but there are some weaknesses. Well-established routines set the tone for learning and help the children to feel secure. For example, registration time is used well for pupils to develop their speaking, listening and counting skills. Whole-class sessions and opportunities to learn from a range of activities help the children to build their basic skills steadily. In a number of the lessons observed, however, too little account was taken of the children's existing level of ability, and so the content and organisation of the work were not best suited to enable the children to take the next step in their learning. For example, the nursery provides a good range of activities that children can choose but, owing to children's weak skills, they are not always sure what to do. The staff give too little attention to what each child is intended to learn from an activity, and what support will be needed. An attractive outdoor play area for the nursery children makes a good contribution to the learning environment, but it is not structured well enough to develop skills in areas other than physical development. In reception, whole-class sessions often last too long, and so the children spend too much time sitting and listening, when many of them learn better doing something practical, with the support of an adult. Many of the activities seen were appropriate for the ability level of the children, but some were too difficult, and so the less able children did not make progress at their own level.
45. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory and keen to develop the provision. There are good systems for checking on children's progress, but not enough use is made of this information to provide appropriate activities. Children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language receive good support from the staff and make just as much progress as others.

Personal, social and emotional development

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children enjoy coming to school and develop positive attitudes to learning
- Well-established routines help children to learn about acceptable behaviour
- Opportunities are missed to develop children's social skills during informal play activities

Commentary

46. Many children start school with very weak personal and social skills, but they make sound progress in this area of learning. They settle into the routines of the nursery well because the staff make them feel welcome, secure and valued. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the staff have very good relationships with the children, which provide a very good role model for children's personal and social development. As a result, the children develop positive attitudes to school, which support their learning effectively. The children learn how to behave appropriately because the expectations are clear and reinforced consistently. They are increasingly responsive to their teachers, becoming attentive listeners during most lessons, particularly during assemblies. For example, during an assembly on the theme of 'Dark and Light', the teacher read the story *'Can't you sleep little bear'* with great feeling, which held the children's interest and attention. They responded very well to her questioning and reverently to the prayer at the end. Opportunities are sometimes missed, however, to motivate and engage children. For example, the staff do not always notice when some children do not take part in whole-class activities. Almost all children dress and undress independently for physical activities, showing better skills in this aspect of their personal development than others. Children are encouraged to make choices about their play, but there are too few chances for pupils to play in pairs or in groups to improve their social skills.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children take books home regularly, which supports the development of reading skills
- Opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills are not always taken
- The range and quality of books is weak

Commentary

47. Many children start school with very weak speaking and listening skills, but they make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. Although there are many good activities to develop speaking skills, some opportunities are missed. For example, staff do not always take chances to extend the children's vocabulary during role-play activities, when more adult input would accelerate the development of speaking and listening skills. Some more able children can talk articulately about what they are doing, as when a group explained how they were getting their model to fly. For the most part, however, there are too few structured activities to enhance and extend children's language skills. Children in both the nursery and reception classes are encouraged to take books home regularly, but the limited range of good quality, appropriate books reduces the effectiveness of this good practice. Children make satisfactory progress learning to write by following the model adults provide for them and making marks on paper. More able children in the reception classes write their own name, recognise initial sounds and read simple words and phrases with adult support. Overall, however, there is too much emphasis on getting children to copy work rather than on letter formation and independent writing.

Mathematical development

Provision in mathematical development is good.

Main strengths

- All the staff use every opportunity to encourage children to count
- The staff promote mathematical language well

Commentary

48. When the children start school, standards in mathematics are below average overall, but they make good progress. Counting skills are developed as part and parcel of everyday

routines, such as when children count those present during registration. In the nursery, the more able children count objects up to ten competently, sort by colour and shape and recognise numbers one to ten. In the reception classes many learn to count to twenty and, using a number line, arrange numbers in sequence. Most, however, are more confident handling numbers up to ten. Mathematical skills are developed well through other areas of learning. In the nursery, children sing counting songs, such as 'Five little ducks', to reinforce their counting skills. In reception, they learn to match shapes using a computer program, to sort out objects by shape, and most name the basic shapes of square, circle and triangle. The children learn about symmetry. They paint on one half of a sheet of paper and then fold it to make symmetrical patterns. Adults constantly reinforce mathematical language by asking the children questions about comparisons, for example, "Are they all the same size? Which one is bigger/smaller?" On occasion, the whole-class work is too difficult for some of the children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for using computers
- Weaknesses in teaching sometimes limit children's ability to explore knowledge and understanding of the world effectively

Commentary

49. Most children start school with a limited knowledge of the world, but all make sound progress in this area of learning. The staff provide good opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and skills using computers. In a nursery lesson observed, children used the mouse competently to move objects around the screen. They were familiar with a number of simple programs and confidently chose the one they wanted to work on. They were enthusiastic about what they were doing and focused on their work. In a less successful lesson, a computer screen was used to teach letter formation. Children traced over the letter 'm' in turn, but the activity was not stimulating and the children lost attention and interest. Construction kits are easily accessible and children confidently make models when allowed to choose their activities. In a lesson on the rain forest, children were not given opportunities to look closely at the beetles and other animals on the computer program and not encouraged to describe them. As a result, the children did not make the progress of which they were capable.

Physical development

Provision in physical development is satisfactory.

Main strength and weakness

- Daily use is made of the good outdoor space and good resources
- Children do not always behave well enough during indoor physical development lessons

Commentary

50. The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. There are well-planned and organised opportunities for children to improve their physical skills both in the hall and outside. During the daily, supervised outdoor sessions, children in the nursery have access to a good range of equipment that develops well their skills of balancing, co-ordination and sense of space. Children were observed using a range of wheeled toys confidently. The children's ability to control tools such as scissors and pencils develops well through drawing, making and constructing. Good adult support provides guidance, for example demonstrating how to use scissors, hold a paintbrush and decide on shapes and colours, so that the children achieve well. In a physical education lesson on movement, the over-exuberance of the nursery children resulted in them not listening well enough to develop their skills.

Creative development

Provision in creative development is good.

Main strengths

- The children have lots of opportunities to explore colour and texture
- A range of well-planned art and design activities provide good chances for learning

Commentary

51. When they start school, children's skills in this area of learning are below average, but better than in most other areas. Children use a wide range of materials and concentrate well on their work. They make pictures and models with a variety of materials and paint.

Nursery children do not show much independence but, when making animal masks, the staff used good questioning to develop the children's designing and making effectively. Children use tools safely and offer reasonable suggestions and explanations for their choices. Regular opportunities to learn simple songs and chants support learning in other areas of development. For example, reception children sang 'Ten in a bed' when learning about subtraction. Children make good progress in this area.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils are very keen to learn and confident to contribute in lessons because of the very positive relationships they have with their teachers
- Well planned lessons provide an effective structure that helps pupils to make good progress
- The teachers' good use of questioning, at the beginning and end of lessons, helps pupils to focus on what they are learning
- Tasks are sometimes too easy for the more able pupils, and so they make less progress than they should

Commentary

52. Results of the 2004 Year 2 national tests were well below average in both reading and writing. Standards in the current Year 2 are also well below average, but this represents good achievement, considering the very weak skills with which many pupils start Year 1. The 2004 Year 6 test results were below average, but much better than those gained by similar schools. Achievement by Year 6 is good. Standards in the current Year 6 are below average, but the year group includes a higher proportion of pupils who have special educational needs than in 2004. Overall, standards are higher than those reported at the previous inspection.
53. Achievement in speaking and listening is good because teachers create well-chosen opportunities for pupils to talk about their work. They also encourage pupils to listen to each other and be mindful of turn taking in discussions. For example, a Year 2 pupil had been thinking carefully about words covered in a previous lesson and was keen to share with the class his word 'feather' containing the 'ea' phoneme. His pride in his contribution was visible as the class responded very well and quickly added more ideas. When teachers encourage pupils to use 'talking partners' to discuss and exchange ideas, the quality of speaking is boosted considerably. Year 3 pupils discussed the credibility of the story of *Greyfriars Bobby* and gave some reasoned responses in their answers because they had time to reflect. Year 6 pupils were given the task of deciding whether text was fact or opinion. They shared their answers confidently with a receptive audience. Teachers give pupils the time and confidence to develop their skills.
54. Pupils achieve well in reading because teachers give them the skills to be successful and make reading enjoyable. The youngest pupils make good use of pictures and illustrations to help them understand what they are reading, and some are beginning to use their understanding of sounds to read new words. Teaching in Year 6 reinforced the practice of 'chunking' words to help with reading. Despite teacher's efforts, however, not all pupils have a sufficient range of strategies to help with unfamiliar words. In lessons, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to read short texts. Pupils of all ages and abilities are keen to read aloud because they are well supported. The wider range of reading books purchased last year is well used. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their books when asked about

reading. This enjoyment of reading is encouraged because teachers of the oldest pupils continue to read stories aloud to the class. Year 2 pupils thoroughly enjoy reading to their 'reading partners' in Years 5 and 6.

55. Across the school, there has been a focus on improving standards of writing. As a result, pupils are making good progress. During the inspection, pupils made most progress where the writing activity was closely linked to the discussion at the start of the lesson. For example, more able Year 1 pupils wrote and read their own sentences using words with the phoneme they had been learning. In a Year 5 lesson, the most creative sentences were when the challenge of the task matched the ability of the pupils. One pupil wrote, "She was never afraid ... because she had no emotion". Other sentences, however, were less interesting because the starter was insufficiently challenging for more able pupils. Year 6 pupils wrote in an appropriate way about a fire drill, for example "Line up in an appropriate manner whilst your teacher checks the register." Good, frequent opportunities are made for all pupils to practise handwriting, but that in pupils' books varies considerably in quality, and is weaker when they complete worksheets or add labels to diagrams than when writing a recount. Spelling skills are developed. In Year 4, more able pupils recognise that, although some words sound plausible, such as 'rair', when written down they do not look sensible. These pupils good recognition of spelling patterns ensured they could identify mis-spelt words. Older pupils use a dictionary well to check the spelling of words.
56. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour so pupils settle quickly at the start of a lesson and no time is wasted. Detailed planning provides a clear structure to each lesson, and so questions are focused and used skilfully to check pupils' understanding. Sufficient time is spent at the start of the lesson in setting the scene for the main activities. As a result, pupils know what to do when they are working independently. Setting in Years 2 to 6 enables teachers to match work to the overall needs of the pupils, but group work is not always sufficiently targeted to challenge the more able pupils. Pupils with special education needs and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because the staff provide good support. They use questions carefully and prompts to enable these pupils follow the thread of discussions. Where teaching was very good, teachers used a range of methods to maintain pupils' interest. In Year 1, the teacher introduced a toy rabbit from a story the class had been sharing to help her with the teaching activity, taking words from a box for pupils to read. The pupils were engrossed, watching the rabbit closely and offering to read the word. Where learning was satisfactory, the activity did not fully meet the objectives of the lesson. For example, in Year 6, pupils wrote instructions, using a range of conjunctions, of what to do in a fire drill. As a result, some pupils over-used conjunctions and their writing was not fluent. Teachers make good use of closed questions to ensure pupils understand tasks and recall facts, but too little use is made of more open questions, with time for reflection.
57. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The use of writing targets as part of a whole-school strategy has enabled pupils to make good progress, but too little use is made of assessment data and work scrutiny to spot areas for development. The impact of the focus on writing will not be fully evaluated until the end of the current two-year cycle of assessment. As a result, necessary adjustments may not be made early enough. The school is aware of the need to develop pupils' understanding of the link between sounds and letters. A review has shown that planning is good and links very closely to the National Literacy Strategy but, in some lessons, the activities are not sufficiently targeted to meet the needs of pupils enabling them to develop more creative writing. Improvement since the last inspection is good, as shown by rising results in national tests.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

58. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are well developed across the different subjects. Pupils listen carefully and this helps them to understand and use the

correct technical vocabulary. In a Year 2 ICT activity, the teacher took the opportunity to reinforce the spelling of key words. When pupils have had a first hand experience, their explanations are good, such as when talking about their residential trip to Castleton. An over-use of worksheets in some subjects limits opportunities for pupils to apply their witting skills across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching
- Relationships are very strong and pupils display good attitudes to learning
- Lessons are planned thoroughly but, in some lessons, activities are not challenging enough for the more able pupils
- Good leadership and management of the subject has resulted in good improvement since the last inspection

Commentary

59. When pupils start school, overall attainment in mathematics is well below average. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 have been well below the national average, overall, since 2001. In 2004, the results improved and, though they were below the national average, they were better than those gained by similar schools. Similarly, since 2001, results at the end of Year 6 have been well below average overall. However, they did improve in 2002 when they were average. In 2004 results were below average but much better than those gained by similar schools.
60. Often from low starting points, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, but standards in the current Year 2 are below average. More able Year 2 pupils are working at standards that are in line with those expected, though the proportion at this level is much lower than seen in many schools. They have good knowledge of place value, which they use effectively to add and subtract numbers below 100. They are usually accurate when using number operations to solve money problems. Although average and less able pupils cover the same range of work, they are not as accurate in their answers and use simpler numbers. Less able pupils have skills that are much weaker than expected for this age. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6, though the standards in the present Year 6 are below average, overall. A small number of more able pupils are working at levels that are above average because they are given suitably challenging tasks. The school is very successful in enabling pupils throughout the school to achieve well.
61. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear links to the structure and progressive tasks in the National Strategy. This enables pupils, in the main, to gain new skills and knowledge which are suitable to their needs. Where teaching is very good, it is dynamic and extends pupils' learning through imaginative tasks that keep pupils interested and fully involved in challenging activities. However, where teaching is satisfactory, a weakness is that it does not provide rigorous challenge or independence to help the more able pupils reach the higher levels of which they are capable. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, thus enabling them to achieve as well as their peers. A good feature of most lessons is that mental mathematics tasks immediately engage pupils, consolidate their prior learning of basic skills and provide suitable challenge to all pupils. As a result, lots of hands are raised when the teacher asks questions, as pupils are very keen to show their knowledge. Questions are particularly effective when pupils are asked to explain their answers and the methods they used to calculate them, thus extending their understanding. In a small minority of lessons, however, starter tasks were repetitive, took

too long and did not offer all pupils sufficient opportunity to participate. They continued beyond the point when pupils had grasped the concept and were ready to participate in tasks to use the skills they had learnt. As a result, a minority of pupils became restless and lost concentration until tasks moved on to the main activity. Teachers' high expectations for good behaviour, and the very good relationships they have with their pupils, result in pupils having good, often very good, attitudes to their learning. They work well together in pairs and small groups and respect the answers given by others.

62. The subject is well led and managed. As a result, standards and the quality of teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection. Also, the school now has very good systems to know how well pupils are doing. It makes good use of the data to identify priorities for improvement. For example, setting is now in place in Years 3 to 6 and there is a drive to improve pupils' problem solving skills. The impact of these initiatives is not being fully seen yet, and the setting arrangements do not always ensure that the varying needs of pupils within a set are being fully met. Teachers mark work very regularly and Year 6 pupils know how well they are doing. However, pupils are not consistently helped to know how to improve their work through constructive comments. The subject is well resourced and teachers are using new technology well, with improving use of interactive whiteboards. The schemes of work are fully in place to support learning, and teachers are given good opportunities for training. However, there is insufficient formal opportunity for the co-ordinator to gain knowledge of the quality of mathematics teaching and learning across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. Opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects are satisfactory. For example, in Year 2 science, pupils measure the distance travelled by a toy car using a metre rule and are able to read the scale. In Year 6 science, pupils use measurements of volume, record their results in tables and draw simple graphs.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and, by Year 6, almost all reach at least average standards
- Good teaching ensures that lessons are interesting and pupils learn effectively
- The curriculum is well planned to include a good range of work but, in some classes, there is too little emphasis on learning through carrying out experiments and investigations
- Pupils of all abilities often do the same work, and so individuals are not always challenged appropriately
- Very good leadership and management correctly identify aspects of pupils' learning that need to improve; past action has been successful and current plans for improvement are clear

Commentary

64. At the last inspection, raising standards in science was a key point for improvement. Standards are now much higher because planning for the subject and the quality of teaching are much better. In 2004, teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment showed that standards were well below the national average. At this age, the weak literacy skills of many pupils are a significant factor in lowering standards. In the Year 6 tests, however, results were above the national average, and much better than those gained by similar schools. As pupils' all-round skills improve during Years 3 to 6, standards in science improve significantly. Almost half of the pupils reached the higher Level 5, which exemplifies pupils' good achievement by Year 6.
65. Standards in the current Year 2 are well below those expected for pupils' ages. Most pupils know some factual information, at an appropriate level, for example that forces make things move faster or slower, or that heating materials will make them change. With considerable support, they are beginning to test ideas in a practical way, and many make simple predictions and conclusions. Most are at the very early stages of carrying out experiments, explaining why these need to be fair, and relating what they have found out to their knowledge of science. Pupils' weak literacy skills hamper their explanations and recording. However, the very good teaching seen in Year 2 challenged the pupils to take the next step in their learning by using an experiment about toy cars traveling down ramps with varying slopes. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and learnt a lot from it. Although pupils of all abilities generally do the same work, at this stage, it is clear from the lessons seen that appropriate challenge is provided for all pupils. Considering the low starting points from which many pupils begin Year 1, achievement by the end of Year 2 is good.
66. Standards in the current Year 6 are close to those expected for pupils' ages, but not quite as high as indicated by the 2004 results in national tests. The main reason for the discrepancy is that pupils' current experimental work is largely at the expected level, but the tests have a greater emphasis on factual work, and so more pupils reach the higher Level 5 in the tests. Nonetheless, the fact that almost all Year 6 pupils are reaching the expected level of attainment, and a good number is exceeding it, is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' past work shows a good emphasis on finding out things through experiments. Thoughtful predictions, control of variables and careful recording of results lead to sensible conclusions based on the evidence. Most of the pupils still conclude by saying what happened rather than using a scientific explanation, but teachers are currently working to strengthen these skills. Pupils evaluate their work well and suggest improvements. By Year 6, pupils' achievement is good, owing to the rich and diverse set of experience they have had.

67. The quality of teaching is good, and was particularly strong in the lessons seen in Years 2 and 6. Teachers make lessons interesting, and so the pupils are eager to learn. For example, Year 3 pupils learnt about how plants take up water through roots and tubes in their stems. A very effective discussion reviewed the work they had already done on how plants grow, and then they set up an experiment with a chrysanthemum placed in a container of water and food colouring. When the teacher used a digital microscope to show the pupils a cross-section of a stem, they were fascinated to see the tubes they had been learning about. Lessons such as this, with a good variety of learning experiences, ensure that pupils achieve well. All lessons are well planned with clear objectives, shared with the pupils, so they know what they are going to learn. Teachers' very good knowledge of science leads to clear explanations, lively question and answer sessions, and a strong focus on learning scientific skills. For example, a very good Year 6 lesson, in which the whole year group was taught by both teachers, had a very strong focus on developing the pupils' ability to write conclusions in a scientific way. A very animated whole-class discussion revised what the pupils knew about reversible and irreversible changes when heating and cooling materials. The teachers made very good use of information displayed on the interactive white boards to focus the pupils' thinking. A wide range of activities, well matched to pupils' existing skills, ensured each was challenged to explain changes that are chemical or physical. As a result, the pupils made good gains in the quality of their conclusions. Based on pupils' past work and some of the lessons seen, however, tasks are too often the same for all pupils, which does not provide the right challenge for all, particularly the more able. Most lessons move at a good pace and teachers are very skilled at managing pupils' work and behaviour so that they are well focused on their learning. On occasion, when the teacher allows the pace of the lesson to flag, pupils quickly lose concentration.
68. In general, the planning of the curriculum is far better than at the last inspection and, because teachers plan in year-group pairs, it is consistent. In some classes, however, there is still too much emphasis on factual work and too little attention to developing the pupils' skills in carrying out experiments and investigations. The school is aware of this and is taking action. Although pupils' literacy skills are developed well in some of the recording they do, in general, teachers use too many worksheets, which give pupils a structure for their recording but do not make sufficient demands on their writing skills. The use of ICT is growing, but it not yet a consistent feature of pupils' work. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are very good, but this information is not yet used consistently to plan appropriately challenging work. Leadership of the subject is very good and has provided a strong lead in the improvements that have been made since the previous inspection. Management is also very good and, through constant checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' work, has identified the aspects of learning that need to improve. Resources are good, but the smaller classrooms restrict possibilities for practical work. Since the last inspection, very good progress has been made in improving pupils' achievement in science, and the school has high aspirations that further improvement can be made.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching enables pupils to acquire new skills and achieve well
- Leadership and management are very good and there is a very clear ambition for improvement
- The specialist computer room is a good facility that is used effectively
- In some lessons, more able pupils are not always offered suitable challenge

Commentary

69. Pupils start school with weak skills. In the only lesson seen in Years 1 and 2, the standards were below those expected. During Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding but, by Year 6, their skills are below the national expectation. This represents good achievement, however, considering pupils' low starting points.
70. Teachers have good subject knowledge and, consequently, pupils gain new skills, which they use in interesting activities. Lessons usually start with a brisk review of prior learning, in order to consolidate pupils' skills. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to introduce new skills and often involve pupils in the demonstrations. Well-structured lessons are planned with clear objectives, which are shared with pupils, so that they are aware of what they are to learn. In a minority of lessons, pupils are told the level of the work and how to attain a higher level. This enables them to know how well they are doing and what to do to improve. In one lesson seen, the introduction was in the library because the teacher had planned a purposeful activity to help pupils design a magazine. The pupils chose books with covers that immediately attracted them and evaluated the effect of different layouts, word styles, pictures and colours. This served as a good introduction to the following activity to help pupils to learn how to format text on the computer.
71. Teachers have very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and, as a result, pupils mainly work very hard and display very good relationships. In one very good lesson, the dynamic and enthusiastic teaching motivated pupils to respond very positively and enjoy their tasks. They learned very effectively how to use resources to find information about animals, owing to the very high expectations and clear explanations of the teacher. More able pupils were challenged through extension activities and pupils with special educational needs were given very effective support to enable them to achieve as well as other pupils. Literacy skills were used well in the lesson as pupils had to check spelling to search for information and then read the text carefully to find the answer to the questions. In a lesson where the teaching was satisfactory but had weaknesses, the pupils were given very open tasks, which were planned to enable them to apply the skills that they gained in the first half of the lesson. Although the pupils had valuable time to experiment with various skills, the tasks were insufficiently challenging for the more able pupils whilst being too difficult for less able pupils.
72. The subject is led and managed very well. An indication of the quality of leadership is the use of the co-ordinator by the local authority to support other schools. There is a very clear ambition to improve pupils' achievement and teachers' confidence and competence. This is clearly seen in the subject improvement plan and the very good support provided for the staff through training. As a result, improvement since the last inspection is good. The scheme of work now covers all areas, though a more balanced curriculum is still being developed so that data handling and control have more emphasis. Procedures to check the progress of pupils are very thorough, but teachers' assessments are over generous and show standards in line with national expectations. The computer room provides a good facility that is well used.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. The use and development of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects is satisfactory. Class teachers regularly use interactive whiteboards to present tasks, often using individual pupils to demonstrate the skills. In Year 2, use of the internet on an interactive whiteboard excited pupils and engaged them in the lesson. In Year 6, pupils get good opportunities to use computers. In history and science, they use websites for research. In English, they edit and correct spellings in pre-prepared paragraphs. In mathematics, well-prepared slides enabled pupils to learn about the stages of gathering data, representing it in graphical form and then interpreting the results.

HUMANITIES

74. No lessons were observed in geography or religious education, partly because few lessons were taught in these subjects during the inspection, but mainly because they were not a focus for the inspection. Two lessons were seen in history because the school decided it should be inspected in more depth than the other two subjects. Owing to the lack of first-hand evidence about the quality of teaching, it is not possible to make judgements about

overall provision in any of these subjects. Examples of pupils' past work were available, however, from which to make judgements about standards and the quality of the curriculum. Inspectors also examined teachers' planning and talked to teachers and pupils.

75. The overall picture is that pupils' books show a satisfactory amount of recorded work in religious education, indicating sound coverage of the curriculum. In geography and history, however, whilst some good work is produced in some classes, the emphasis on these subjects is less than is normally found, particularly in Year 3 to 6. As a result, the quality and quantity of work does not match that found in the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science. To a certain extent, this is because the school has made a conscious decision to ensure that pupils gain the basic skills in the core subjects. The effect is that the curriculum as a whole is narrower than in many other schools, but the pupils' good achievement in the core subjects, building skills that are a pre-requisite for success in the wider curriculum, provides considerable justification for the school's choice.
76. In most classes, work in the humanities is recorded in one book. Whilst this may be considered economical, it makes it difficult for subject leaders to track the quality of the curriculum and pupils' progress in an individual subject. This is compounded by the fact that work in some books is not dated. In contrast, since the last inspection, the assessment of pupils' attainment and checking on their progress has improved considerably, with good systems now in place.
77. In **geography**, work in pupils' books, displays around the school and curriculum plans show a sound range of experiences, but little work that is covered in any depth, particularly for the older pupils. By Year 6, standards are below national expectations. Much of the work records simple information, such as classifying features as human or physical, naming oceans and continents or labelling a diagram. There is little work that gets to grips with the similarities and differences between places in the world and the impact this has on the lives of the people who live there. Much better is the work undertaken by the older pupils on their residential visit to Castleton. Photographs taken on the visit show pupils' involvement in practical investigations, but this learning is not fully reflected in the work seen in school, as much is work sheet based and, for some pupils, incomplete. Pupils in Year 4 have studied Chembakolli in India and produced a booklet of key features. Work seen shows that pupils are developing their understanding of places around the world, but the skills of exploring geographical issues are not taught and used sufficiently.
78. In **history**, the standard of the work seen is below that expected for pupils' ages. Across the school, work seen in pupils' books shows sound coverage of chronology and of the identification of key facts within a given time period, such as 'Tudor Times', but little attention to exploring historical themes. Better is the work carried out by Year 6 pupils studying photographs and forming opinions as to similarities and differences between John Lennon and a pop star of 2005. They identified that, although the clothes are different, the subjects of the photographs care about their image and so they are wearing 'fashionable clothes'. In order to demonstrate their understanding of the difference between fact and opinion, pupils recalled some historical facts they had learned when studying the Tudors in Year 4. They know that Henry VIII had six wives and that the portraits of the time do not really tell the whole story about his character. Year 4 pupils identify some key events when designing a poster to show 'What the Romans did for us', such as the construction of Hadrian's Wall and the building of roads. Much of this was a recall of key facts covered in previous lessons. Discussion showed that one pupil could make the link between the new roads and the distribution of new foods, but this was not typical of the class. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Planning has been reviewed and the school is aware that the depth of coverage of this subject does not yet enable pupils to use and compare information from a wide range of sources and draw conclusions. Recent

purchases of artefacts and replica toys, such as Victorian cup and ball game, have been well received by pupils and are useful stimuli for discussion.

79. In **religious education**, a good scheme of work effectively supports teachers' planning of lessons. Pupils' past work shows that the curriculum in most classes provides a satisfactory range and balance of content and meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The exception is Year 5 where there is less recorded work than in other classes. As at the last inspection, by Year 6, standards are about the same as those expected for pupils' ages. In Year 2, pupils cover a sound range of work based on stories from various religions. They re-tell the Bible story of The Prodigal Son, thinking about the theme of forgiveness, and the Buddhist story of The Monkey King who gave his life to save his subjects. They study creation stories from Islam and Christianity, and find out about celebrations, including Pancake Day and Easter. Much of the work is finding out about religion, and there is less evidence of pupils extending the ideas to reflect on their own lives, except in a good piece of work where the pupils think of ways in which they care for others. The work is well presented but, owing to many pupils' weak literacy skills, much of the writing is copied, and so there is little sign that pupils are expressing their own views in writing.
80. During Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to study aspects of Christianity, as well as learning about other faiths. The school has wisely chosen to include content from all the religions represented in the school because it wants all the pupils to see that their religion is valued. For example, Year 3 pupils learn about festivals from a variety of faiths, including the Hindu festival of Divali, the Jewish festival of Passover and the Christmas story. They also begin to compare different traditions when they find out about a Sikh wedding ceremony and contrast it with their own experience of weddings. By Year 6, pupils are encouraged to be more reflective through their challenging work on 'Life and death'. They speculate on what happens after death and find out what people from various religions believe. Comparing the traditions and beliefs of religions becomes a larger part of the pupils' work, such as when they study the similarities and differences between the Bible, Torah and Qu'ran. As in Year 2, much of the work in Years 3 to 6 is factual, and there are too few occasions when pupils are challenged to relate what they have learnt to their own lives, values and beliefs. Management of the subject is good, with considerable support provided for staff to implement the new scheme of work, and a clear overview of the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and a comprehensive subject portfolio.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

81. Only one lesson was observed in each of art and design and physical education, and no lessons were seen in design and technology or music. As a result, it is not possible to make judgements about overall provision in any of these subjects. The school decided that art and design should be a particular focus for the inspection and, as a reasonable selection of pupils' work was available, it was possible to make judgements about the quality of the curriculum and standards in this subject. Reports on other subjects are based on any pupils' work seen, teachers' planning and the views of subject leaders.
82. In both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in **art and design** are below those expected for pupils' ages. The last inspection judged standards to be average. Pupils experience a sound range of work, which helps them to build their skills steadily. Many start Year 1 with weak skills, particularly in drawing, so the below average standards are as expected and are not a reflection on what the school provides. Throughout the school, there are good examples of pupils' art work. Year 1 pupils' drawings of animals, linked to their work in science, have less detail that would be expected for the pupils' ages, but some show good skills, such as a spiky hedgehog. Paintings in which Year 1 pupils have experimented with various patterns, on paper divided into a grid of squares, are very attractive and show how

the pupils are given opportunities to explore line and colour. In Year 2, drawings of flowers and plants, in oil pastel and chalks, are not as well observed as often seen for this age, but the best capture the shapes and colours well. Much better are the 'seaside' collages in which pupils have used a range of coloured paper and material effectively. By Year 2, pupils are developing a sound range of skills, in a variety of media, but many still find drawing challenging.

83. Pupils in Year 3 have recently completed clay sculptures of 'people on the move'. Their sketch books show how they have experimented with designs and used the final one as the basis for their clay work. Their printing and painting, inspired by the box-like work of Piet Mondrian, is very eye-catching and of good quality. Sketch books in Year 4 show that the pupils have carried out considerable research gathering ideas for making a chair to suit the character of a particular person. This indicates an appropriate emphasis on the design element of the subject. These pupils have also used their art skills well to illustrate geography work about a village in India. In Year 5, still-life drawings of fruit show that pupils' drawing skills improve as they move through the school. The work these pupils completed in their sketch books, experimenting with oil pastel, crayon and wax crayon, supported the quality of the final drawings well. An imaginative variety of containers, made in clay, is the fruition of a project looking at the way art is used to embellish everyday objects. Year 6 pupils' work based on the theme 'People in action' is striking. Colourful foreground figures are complemented by multiple similar shapes receding into the background, which give the effect of movement. These are very carefully drawn and presented. By Year 6, pupils have a sound set of skills, which they use to pursue a variety of art work, but the overall range and quality is below that expected. As noted at the last inspection, pupils' use of sketch books in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, but the amount and quality of work varies considerably.
84. In the one lesson observed, in Year 2, the quality of teaching was good. The pupils evaluated a mural in school, and then drew their own mural based on a 'sea' theme. Whilst the overall quality of pupils' drawing was weaker than often seen for this age, the teacher used the best examples effectively to teach the pupils about the bold colours and large figures needed for a mural. Throughout the school, art is used successfully to support work in other subjects. A visiting artist enriched the curriculum by helping talented pupils to create some high quality prints. Management of the subject is good.
85. In **design and technology**, analysis of pupils' work shows that they receive an appropriate curriculum. In Year 2, assessments made by teachers indicate that standards are average. Pupils can design and make puppets using suitable tools to measure and cut different materials. They also use construction kits to make their own vehicles. Pupils continue to make progress in Years 3 to 6. In Year 4 they learn how systems that operate with remote control work. In Year 5 they reflect on their designs and explain their methods, for example when making bread. By the time pupils reach Year 6, their work, though limited, indicates standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. However, there is insufficient evidence to judge whether pupils evaluate their work in depth.
86. In **music**, very little evidence was gathered because the subject was not a focus for the inspection. The potential for inspection was also limited by the absence of the subject leader on maternity leave who, when present, teaches all classes. Pupils sang in only one of the assemblies observed, partly owing to the absence of a pianist. In an assembly for Years 4 to 6, pupils' singing of 'This little light of mine' was enthusiastic and of the expected standard. There are clear, detailed plans for class music lessons and a sound range of music activities outside lessons from which many pupils benefit. About 50 pupils are learning to play an instrument, taught by visiting specialists. Since the last inspection, the school has developed this provision considerably, aiming to give increased opportunities to pupils who show particular talent for music. The school choir, mainly for pupils in Years 5

and 6, provides an additional opportunity for pupils to develop their skills and to perform in concerts. Pupils' social skills are developed well through concerts and performances in school, which are much enjoyed by parents.

87. In **physical education**, there is insufficient evidence to make any judgements. Only the first part of one Year 5 lesson was seen. In this lesson pupils could time and record the performance of others in athletics. Their skills in this activity were broadly in line with the expectation and pupils gained further knowledge of arm and leg actions when sprinting.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

88. Only one lesson was seen in this subject and there was no past work completed by the pupils that could be used to evaluate the standards achieved. As a result, it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum section of this report evaluates provision for pupils' personal, social and health education as very good.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).