

INSPECTION REPORT

CAPTAINS CLOSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Melton Mowbray

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119988

Headteacher: Mr G Dexter

Lead inspector: Mr E Jackson

Dates of inspection: 1 – 3 November 2004

Inspection number: 266561

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	172
School address:	Saxelby Road Asfordby Melton Mowbray Leicestershire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Jones
Date of previous inspection:	Dec 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Captain's Close is a smaller than average sized primary school with 172 pupils on roll, serving mainly the village of Asfordby, near Melton Mowbray. It offers a wide range of activities, including swimming, pre-school provision, and adult day and evening classes here and in another local primary school. Almost all its pupils are of white British heritage, with a small number from mixed heritage and Chinese backgrounds, and no pupils currently learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average, ranging from moderate to severe learning difficulties, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals is broadly average. Socio-economic circumstances locally are generally below average, although this covers a wide range. Attainment at entry to the school varies year-on-year, but is generally below average, although this again covers a wide range. The school received an Achievement Award for its improved results in national tests in 2002, and has also attained a 'Learning Through Landscapes' award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education English as an additional language
9884	M Roscoe	Lay inspector	
30745	P Thorpe	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education
18346	R Bristow	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Information and communication technology Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. It has some very good features, with occasional examples of outstanding practice. It is very well led, and provides good teaching for all its pupils, based in excellent working relationships. This leads to almost all pupils achieving well, and some of them achieving very well, so that standards attained are above average. Staff and governors support the headteacher well, and there are very good community and parental links. Given the below average cost, the standards achieved, and the good quality of education provided, the school gives **very good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good standards achieved in national test results by the end of Year 2 and 6 compared to similar schools.
- The headteacher gives a determined, positive lead, supported well by staff and governors.
- The good quality of teaching leads to good achievement overall, and very good achievement for the youngest and oldest pupils.
- Pupils work hard and behave very well because the quality of working relationships is excellent.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and is good.
- Provision for art and design and design and technology is not as good as for other subjects.
- More flexible use could be made of the teaching space.

The school has improved well since the last inspection. Standards achieved are much better because teaching and learning have improved. Provision for information and communication technology is also much better, helping to drive up standards rapidly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement is good. Eleven-year-olds achieved above average results in the national tests in 2004 in English and mathematics, and well above average results in science. These results compared very well with those in schools in similar circumstances and maintained the improving trend above the national average. In both Year 2 and 6, girls outperformed boys here, and the average of all pupils nationally, in English. In these same year groups, boys outperformed girls here and the national average in mathematics and science. This year, standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 are unlikely to be quite as high as in the last two years, although above average in English and science. This is because the entry level of this group was lower than is usual for the school. However, the pupils achieve well.

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

science	B	C	A	A
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*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.*

In 2004, results in national tests were well above the national average by age seven in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics, and also well above those in similar schools overall. This maintains the improving trend above the national trend. Currently, Year 2 pupils achieve well, and they are on track to attain at least above average levels in reading, writing, and mathematics, but broadly average standards in science. The standards achieved in information and communication technology by Year 2 are above average and average by Year 6, and have improved very well since the last inspection. Children achieve as expected in the Agreed Syllabus in religious education in Year 2 and Year 6, a good improvement since the last inspection. Children in the reception class achieve very well in personal, social and health education, and are on track to exceed the goals children are expected to teach by the end of reception. In all the other areas of learning they achieve well and are on track to reach the expected levels, except in creative development, where their achievement is satisfactory. **Pupils' personal development is very good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** Their attitudes to learning and behaviour are also very good, founded in the excellent relationships fostered by the staff.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching is good, with some very good and occasionally excellent features. This leads to good progress in learning for the pupils. Teaching for the youngest and the oldest pupils is very good, and leads to very good progress in lessons. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well, and pupils use these skills well in their work in other subjects. The very effective use of the school's swimming pool leads to exceptionally high standards by Year 6. More flexible use could be made of the accommodation to work with pupils grouped according to need and interest. The curriculum is good, and is very well-enriched by after-school clubs, visits, and visitors in to school. However, more could be achieved in art and design and design and technology. Care, guidance and support are good, with improved assessment procedures used well to plan new work, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. Partnership with parents and the community is very good, and adds significantly to the quality of life in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher leads the school very well, setting the tone of high expectations of achievement and personal development. Other key staff support him well in managing the school effectively. The school's management systems and processes are smooth and effective, including performance management for the staff. Governors perform their duties well, both supporting and challenging the school effectively. Individual governors work closely with subject leaders, and are very well-informed about the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very pleased with the school, and with the progress made by their children. They welcome its openness, the high quality of teaching, and the caring atmosphere which were all confirmed by the inspection. A small minority would like more information, but the inspection finds information for parents to be very good. Pupils also feel positively about the school, and welcome the many opportunities they have here.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- implement the action plans in the current school improvement plan to raise standards in art and design and design and technology;
- develop teaching and learning further through the more flexible use of the accommodation, and more flexible groupings of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils become confident learners because they develop the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy well.
- Boys do better than is usual for boys nationally because they receive good support, and respond well to the strong atmosphere of confidence and success.
- Children in the reception class make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
- Key skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are used well to support learning in other subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted or talented achieve well because work is planned carefully to meet their needs.
- Because art and design and design and technology are not yet sufficiently emphasised, although recognised for development in the current school improvement plan, the pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection in 1998, standards were in need of some improvement, particularly in English, religious education (RE), and science in Years 3 to 6. The school has made very good improvements in the standards attained in national tests at both seven and 11 since then. The improvement in science is particularly impressive, and good progress is now being made in RE, where pupils reach the levels

expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Those few pupils from mixed or Chinese heritage achieve well, and are fully included in all the school's activities.

2. In 2004, results in national tests were well above the national average by age seven in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics, and also well above those in similar schools overall. This continues the very good improvement in the last two years in particular, and maintains the improving trend above the national trend. Girls outperformed boys and girls nationally in reading and slightly outperformed boys here. However, boys here outperformed boys and girls nationally, and girls here, in both writing and mathematics. This is impressive, matched by the much higher proportion of pupils in the school who reached the higher Level 3 than is the case nationally. These results were also well above those in schools in similar circumstances.
3. Currently, Year 2 pupils achieve well, making good progress in their learning during the inspection. They are on track to attain at least above average levels in reading, writing, and mathematics by the end of the year, but broadly average standards in science. Their scientific knowledge and understanding is good for their age, but their investigative skills are average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.7 (16.8)	16.0 (15.7)
writing	15.9 (15.9)	14.8 (14.6)
mathematics	17.8 (17.5)	16.4 (16.3)

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

4. Eleven-year-olds achieved above average results in the national tests in 2004 in English and mathematics, and well above average results in science. These results built well on the pupils' prior attainment, and compared very well with those in schools in similar circumstances. This improvement also maintained the improving trend above the level of national improvement. Fewer pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English than the school anticipated, but almost all pupils attained the expected Level 4, as in 2003. In mathematics, achievement at Level 5 was just above average, but in science it was well above average. As in Year 2, girls outperformed boys here, and the average of all pupils nationally, in English. Girls also outperformed the average of girls and boys nationally in mathematics and science, but as in Year 2, boys outperformed girls here and nationally in mathematics and science.
5. This year, standards of attainment are unlikely to be quite as high as in the last two years, although achievement is above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. This is because the entry level of this group was lower than is usual for the school. However, the pupils achieve well, and progress during the inspection in Years 3 to 6 was good overall, and very good in Year 6.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.6 (27.4)	27.0 (26.8)

mathematics	28.3 (27.4)	27.2 (26.8)
science	30.8 (28.5)	28.9 (28.6)

There were 19 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. The school does well to help girls achieve levels above those achieved on average by girls and boys nationally, but particularly well in helping boys to achieve higher levels overall than girls here and girls and boys nationally. The inclusive nature of the school captures a shared view that all pupils can and should do their best, accepted willingly by the pupils, including the boys. The skilled targeting of extra support to help those pupils, often boys, who need specific help also contributes significantly to boys' overall achievement. Further, the range of interesting activities, and the level of challenge, particularly for the oldest pupils, excite and motivate them so that the lack of full engagement in the lesson that is sometimes seen amongst older boys is entirely absent here. As well as the class teachers and support staff, the headteacher takes some credit for this, as he is a strong motivator and role model for the boys.
7. Children in the reception class make very good progress in their learning, and achieve well. This is in response to very good teaching and support. From a lower than average starting point at entry, these children are already on track to achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in all the areas of learning except creative development. They achieve particularly well in swimming as they have the benefit of the school's swimming pool. Their achievement in creative development is satisfactory, but not as high as in other areas because there is not ready access to creative activities in the reception area on a continuous basis. There is a good emphasis on developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills, and their good achievement here has a good influence on their learning in other areas.
8. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and attain standards appropriate for their age and abilities: they thrive on the value placed on their contributions in lessons. The school also identifies pupils with special gifts or talents, particularly in English and mathematics. These pupils also make good progress and achieve well, some of them very well. This is because the staff plan work carefully to match pupils' individual needs, and monitor carefully that they are making the progress they should.
9. Pupils are encouraged to become skilled learners, and to use their good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to help them in all areas of their work. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their work, and to listen to and value each other's contributions. Work in personal education, sometimes known as 'Relationship Time', supports this well.
10. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good by the age of seven where standards have improved from well below national expectations to above them. Standards by the age of eleven are now in line with national expectations. Progress in ICT is accelerating rapidly as the staff make very good use of the recently improved facilities. They and the pupils enjoy experimenting and applying their developing skills both in subject activities, but also across the curriculum.
11. A very good example of this occurred when two staff used a newly acquired music program to help pupils develop their own compositions. The music coordinator successfully encouraged Year 5 pupils to sample the sounds for themselves whilst developing their work. By the end of this first lesson using this program, pupils could

set out their composition on the class interactive screen, and 'play' their piece, explaining why different elements were placed as they were, and why they had chosen a particular tempo and instrumentation.

12. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress and achieve very well in geography, following the exploits of travelling bears. History is taught well, so that pupils achieve well across the school. They often have good opportunities to extend their research, reading, writing and ICT skills in this work. A real strength of pupils' development in physical education (PE) is in swimming. The standards achieved far surpass those expected nationally, and many pupils have reached high levels in personal survival and lifesaving skills by the time they leave. This is because the swimming pool is used very effectively, and the quality of teaching is high.
13. Whilst music is given a reasonable place in pupils' learning, standards of singing are about average. There is little evidence of pupils' ongoing work in art and design and design technology around the school. From discussions with pupils, they enjoy these areas of learning, but their knowledge and understanding, and opportunities to develop their skills, are limited. However, it was clear when Year 6 pupils sketched musical instruments that some of them have real talent that is not currently nurtured sufficiently. The school has recognised this, and these subjects are priorities in the current improvement plan.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and consistently behave very well. These strong features are enhanced by the very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The school creates an atmosphere where enthusiastic relationships secure harmony amongst the entire school community.
- Potentially disruptive pupils are supported very well because rules and appropriate sanctions are applied consistently well by all adults.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to look critically at school rules.
- Teachers create valuable opportunities to promote a sense of wonder which heighten pupils' spirituality.

Commentary

14. The school is effectively promoting pupils' personal development through the outstanding relationships which permeate its work. The outcome is a very good learning environment where they are welcomed warmly from 8:30am onwards. This early start encourages very good attitudes to school and provides time for sharing activities with parents or chit-chat amongst classmates.
15. Other regular opportunities are created for pupils to talk with their peers, staff and other adults. This is paying dividends in raising pupils' self esteem resulting in a community where pupils work and play in a calm and often considerate manner and in which they speak confidently with adults.

16. Behaviour is good during lessons and sometimes excellent. Most pupils can be relied upon to behave sensibly in various contexts such as assemblies and lunchtimes. All staff have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and take time to discuss with them what is right and wrong and the impact of their actions on others. This aspect of the discipline procedure works effectively. Low-level nuisance behaviour was observed in a minority of satisfactory lessons, and when some pupils try to annoy others at lunchtimes. No unkind acts were seen and parents praise the prompt action when rare unacceptable behaviour occurs.
17. Pupils are well acquainted with the system of rewards and sanctions, but are not sufficiently encouraged to comment on these in light of their own personal values. This means that a minority of pupils do not always understand what is expected of them.
18. The school instils a very good moral and social dimension into its work. Pupils learn to respect each other's feelings by practising what adults say and do. As pupils mature they show consideration for others because they have been taught that saying 'sorry' is as important as 'thank you'. This is very much the case when mixed age and gender groups play on the climbing frame. Pupils with special educational needs develop very good attitudes to learning. They work well with other pupils, and are proud of their achievements, as their self-esteem is promoted well.
19. Staff have made very good improvements in provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development since the last inspection. Pupils of all ages are actively encouraged to explore their emotions and share these with others. This happens in lessons and also when adults guide pupils towards examining their own conscience before apportioning blame to another child. Pupils have a real diversity of experiences in assemblies which often focus on celebrating achievement and help them to value the life and works of others.
20. Pupils' cultural awareness is good. They have a clear understanding of major world faiths such as Hinduism. This was shown by their excellent response to the authentic experiences provided during the recent Diwali celebrations.
21. Pupils are willing to be responsible. Many act as class monitors. Year 6 pupils fulfil their whole-school roles well. The school council provides pupils with an opportunity to 'have a say', but not on matters that are relevant to each age group, because the members do not operate independently of adults and this limits their aspirations.
22. Attendance is very good, and above the national average. Many pupils take full advantage of the opportunity to arrive early, and punctuality is very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good, with some very good teaching leading to rapid progress in learning, particularly for the youngest and the oldest pupils. The school offers a good curriculum, with good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment is good, and there is good improvement since the last inspection in the use of the information gathered to plan new learning for the pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good with some very good and occasionally excellent features. This leads to good progress in learning for almost all pupils, and frequently very good progress for the youngest and the oldest pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff make learning come alive, so that pupils become engrossed in their work.
- Excellent teaching was seen in assembly for the whole school, and in swimming for Year 4 pupils.
- Very good lessons were seen across the school and across the curriculum.
- Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, so that pupils achieve as well as others and make good progress.
- Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of learning and personal conduct.
- Occasionally, lesson introductions are too long.
- Support staff's skills are deployed very well to specifically targeted pupils and groups.
- Teachers and pupils move between teaching areas skilfully, but the teaching space is sometimes not used flexibly enough.

Commentary

23. Teaching has improved well since the last inspection, and the impact of this is clear in the pupils' achievements. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and the general climate for learning created by the staff is very purposeful. Parents feel that this is one of the school's key strengths, confirmed by the inspection. When classes are in session, aided by the open-plan nature of the building, there is that quiet hum of work that permeates a school when the pupils are interested in what they are doing, and the staff are free to focus on the lesson objectives, not just managing behaviour. The central influence here is the excellent quality of the working relationships developed, based in the high expectations and example set by the headteacher and other key staff.

24. Teachers share their skills confidently so that the pupils experience a good range of styles and competencies. A specialist swimming teacher takes all the pupils, a group at a time, up to Year 4, in the pool. This is an excellent resource used very well to support pupils' physical development. The part-time music coordinator sets a very good example in helping the pupils compose their own piece of music using ICT. A highly

skilled and gifted gymnastics teacher runs a club after school that helps pupils to extend their physical control, learn poise, and challenge themselves to improve at a high level. The literacy coordinator leads the school very effectively in promoting pupils' writing skills. Year 2 pupils make very good progress in using ICT programs to label images and then save their work, because the teacher is confident and manages the situation very well.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	12 (29%)	20 (49%)	7 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- 25. Children in reception settle very quickly into the rhythm of the school day as they come into school with their parents or carers to take part in welcoming activities. All class areas are available for the pupils from 8.30 in the morning, with a formal start at 8.50. Staff manage this relaxed opening to the day very well, preparing a range of starter activities for pupils to engage in if they wish. As parents stop to discuss issues with the staff, children discuss their own issues with their friends, and the headteacher is available to greet and share a joke or a moment of sympathy with everyone, the tone created at the beginning of the day is totally in keeping with the school's overall aims and ethos. This permeates the processes of the school, so that all the pupils know what is expected of them, but also know that if they do their best, they will contribute successfully to their own and everybody else's learning.
- 26. The young children in the reception class receive very good support in their learning from a skilled and conscientious teacher, supported well by her assistant. As assistant headteacher, she sets a very good example to other members of staff, and leads the teaching team very effectively by example.
- 27. The story of Rama and Sita enthralled the whole school in assembly.

The assistant headteacher appears at the front of the hall in a shimmering Indian style outfit. The children in her reception class and right back to pupils in Year 6 are alive with appreciation and expectation, as they know how good a story-teller she is. Linking the story with many other religious celebrations of light as a symbol of good, she lights divas, explaining their significance in the Diwali festival for Hindus and Sikhs. The pupils are alert, leaning towards her, sharing the moment. Drama trained, she uses all the skills of a natural teller of tales, hands, eyes, posture, character voices all leading the story on. A Big Book is used seamlessly and very effectively for illustration, as is a three-person doll. This is a powerful example to watching staff of how a story told to children rather than read can have greater impact. The pupils (and the adults) wince at the demons, fear for Sita, will Rama and the monkey god on, captivated by the story-spell that is evocatively woven around them. When Rama ascends the throne. the whole assembly of people. including the

28. The oldest pupils also enjoy a high level of skilled and enthusiastic teaching, supported well by teaching assistants. Across the curriculum, the planning of work for Year 6, and the high expectations of their involvement, speed of working, and cooperation with adults and other pupils leads to brisk lessons and very good progress in almost all aspects of learning. Here, for example, the teaching of handwriting is valued as any other learning of a skill, so that teaching motivates and inspires the pupils to improve their cursive style. What could be a mechanical exercise is a lively, challenging activity, used also very well to reinforce various spelling rules. However, the general level of involvement in art and design and design and technology activities is low, from discussions with pupils in Year 6 and evidence round the school.
29. Very good cooperation between staff in the different sections of the school ensures that what is known about the pupils from assessment of their learning is shared, and used effectively in setting targets and planning new work. This is a good improvement since the last inspection, and is an important factor in the progress made. For example, a Year 4 teacher works with a newly-qualified Year 3 teacher to plan jointly some aspects of the curriculum for their pupils. In these planning sessions, there is good discussion about individual and group progress, used to plan the next steps, but also to consider which pupils need more help and those who need further challenge in extension activities. This is also a very good sharing of experience, so that the newly qualified teacher can test his ideas with a more experienced colleague.
30. Overall, teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and activities are well matched to their needs, particularly during literacy and numeracy sessions. Teaching support makes a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in English and mathematics. Relationships are strong and contributions are highly valued. Teachers are fully involved in writing, reviewing and revising learning targets. The pupils are provided with a full range of opportunities, and their talents are fully explored. However, older pupils are capable of being more involved in their annual reviews and contributing to the reviewing of targets in their individual education plans.
31. The school is focusing on the more effective use of whole class sessions, such as the whole class introduction in mathematics. These are generally effective, and help pupils to practise specific mental strategies for solving problems, or to review number facts and calculations. Occasionally, however, these last beyond their effectiveness for such large groups of pupils at widely different stages of understanding. In the best lessons, smaller groups moved away to work with support assistants after a brief but energetic 'mental starter' so that the teacher could focus development activities on those left, with closer levels of understanding and skill. For example, in a Year 5 lesson to develop data-handling skills, the teacher deployed two support staff to work with groups of lower attaining pupils using the class computers and practical materials, after a short whole class review of counting on and back in decimals. She then extended this work effectively with the larger group left with her.
32. In a very good mathematics lesson, the Year 1 teacher took very good advantage of the opportunity to use the whole infant teaching area whilst Year 2 and reception were

using the hall and the ICT suite respectively. The pupils became fully absorbed in all the activities, planned as part of the transition from reception to Year 1 work. As in many lessons, the teacher and pupils made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to accelerate their learning. However, teaching spaces are not always used as flexibly as they might be. For example, older pupils often sit squashed close together in a cramped area in front of the whiteboard. It would be relatively easy for these pupils to be trained to move the class furniture carefully to make more space, and return it afterwards. Sometimes, pupils sit on the carpet when they could as simply and with more comfort sit in their usual places. There are also opportunities missed to re-form groups of pupils across classes, matched by interest or need, so that teaching could be more focused.

The curriculum

There is a **good, broad and balanced curriculum**, enriched by a **very good** range of activities planned in addition to the normal school day.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff plan lessons and activities that interest the pupils, encouraging them to learn well.
- There are very good opportunities for pupils to engage in stimulating activities outside the normal school day.
- The pupils' involvement in art and design and design and technology activities is too restricted.
- Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the rich curricular activities, tailored to meet their specific needs.
- Resources shared with the community benefit pupils significantly.
- Provision for personal, social and health education is good.

Commentary

33. Learning is planned to avoid pupils repeating learning experiences unnecessarily. The curriculum has been improved to meet all statutory requirements. National guidelines have also been adapted to improve areas of learning and subjects since the last inspection. Religious education follows the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus. Governors monitor the curricular provision extremely well by linking with each subject co-ordinator. They have planned provision for sex and relationships education which is delivered through topics in science and personal, social and health education. From its own evaluation, the school has decided that creative aspects of the curriculum are less well developed than they could be, and that skill development in design technology, art and design and music is narrow. Good compositional work in music by Year 5 and 6 pupils using ICT illustrates how the school has already begun to trial improved procedures in this aspect.

34. The curriculum has been enriched considerably by a range of activities, in addition to those experienced during the normal school day, that add much to the breadth and relevance of the curriculum. Well planned residential experiences provide invaluable opportunities for the development of personal and social skills for pupils in junior classes. Carefully planned visits such as the World War 2 study of Beaumanor House

make topics more exciting and visitors add another good dimension to pupils' learning whether dancers, singers, and theatre groups or the regular visits by ministers of religion or members of the community. Strong links with the community foster very good physical development especially in swimming. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop sporting skills with opportunities for competition against other schools. There is a wide range of out-of-school club activities which include gardening, computer skills, art and seasonal sporting activities shared by both boys and girls. The school is rightly proud of its involvement in the Learning through Landscapes project which has helped to improve the outdoor provision.

35. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education personally, socially and academically. After a good start in the Foundation Stage, all pupils achieve well and parents report many successes when pupils transfer to secondary education. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities and access the full range of curricular experiences as well as activities outside the normal school day.
36. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy have added consistency to the teaching of skills. Daily literacy and numeracy sessions are taught well throughout and are often taught very well for older pupils, leading to rapid progress in key skills. Teachers and support staff are deployed effectively to ensure that all pupils regardless of gender, age or background achieve equally well. Higher attaining pupils work at levels appropriate to their needs and pupils with special educational needs achieve well from their starting points. Their individual education plans have measurable targets; they receive effective support and are fully included in all planned activities. Well trained teaching and support assistants ensure that progress is good throughout.
37. Teachers and teaching assistants have sufficient knowledge and skills to deliver the full curriculum, but most additional support is appropriately available for pupils in English and mathematics. Overall, resources are generally satisfactory for a school of this size. The school is aware of the need to improve resources in art and design and music. Recent investments in the computer suite and in the professional development of staff have transformed the teaching of key skills since the last inspection and contributed to a much wider use of computer technology to support learning in other subjects.
38. Pupils enjoy the company of others and are encouraged to accept responsibilities. They develop citizenship skills whether helping to run the school bank; improving their own environment, developing opinions or making choices. Relationships and sex education are taught effectively through science and PHSE. Pupils are aware of what makes a healthy diet and they understand the differences between helpful and harmful drugs.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils receive good quality care, support and guidance, and this contributes effectively to their learning. Procedures for ensuring that pupils work and play in a safe environment are satisfactory.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Strong personal relationships help to promote a family atmosphere in which pupils are respected and cared for well.

- Staff, supported well by governors, are vigilant in ensuring that the premises are safe for the pupils' use.
- Risk assessments should be extended to the practical subjects taught.
- All staff are aware of child protection matters and the application of first aid because of recent training.
- The personal and academic development of each pupil is well supported by assessment information.
- Pupils' opinions are valued, often through the School Council.
- The guidance given to pupils on how to improve their performance is not effective in some aspects of creative development.

Commentary

39. Pupils are treated with the utmost kindness by staff. This ensures that they have the best chance to benefit from their time in this friendly school, and willingly turn to any adult for help. Parents welcome this as it makes children want to come to school and allows them to flourish.
40. Some parents have concerns about lunchtime procedures and inspectors agree that these need to be tighter to ensure that pupils' needs for quiet and adventurous play are safely met. There are too few opportunities available for pupils to find space or relaxation, free from the distractions caused by adults making their way to and from the community mobile classroom.
41. Regular briefings for new staff and training for all staff ensure familiarity with best practice in pastoral care, including first aid. Drugs are stored appropriately, although pupils who rely on inhalers do not have the necessary immediate access to them. Regular checks are made for hazards within the premises. However, this practice should be extended more fully to activities in the different subjects of the curriculum. These issues were discussed fully with the Governing Body.
42. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and all statutory requirements are met. Areas for development are identified early and teaching and non-teaching support is managed and organised flexibly to respond to need. Targets are shared with pupils and revised half-termly. The school makes very good use of its links with outside agencies. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well and this improves the quality of their learning. Plans are in place to involve older pupils in their annual reviews.
43. Staff make it their business to find out about pupils' personal circumstances, so they are aware of any difficulties or successes. This helps pupils to feel comfortable about asking for help in lessons and confident in their own ability to succeed. Pupils are consulted through the elected School Council, which gives them a voice in its life and work. They help to draw up rules, and know that their views are valued by the staff.
44. Teachers have good systems to check how well pupils are achieving and this information, along with analysis of test results, is passed on with their targets for improvement as they move up through the school. The school plans to add to this good practice by including pupils in the setting of their own personal improvement targets. Assessment procedures work well in most aspects of the school's work, and

are particularly strong for those pupils in the reception class. However, guidance in the creative aspects of the curriculum is less helpful.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are very good. Links are satisfactory with other schools and establishments.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Parents work hand-in-hand with the school and make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home.
- Formal and informal methods of canvassing parental opinion are at the root of the home-school partnership.
- Outcomes of consultations are not shared formally with parents to help them see how their views have influenced decision-making.
- Links with a wide variety of organisations and people from different fields of life contribute very well to pupils' personal development.
- Members of the community and various groups use the school's facilities productively.

Commentary

45. Parents express high levels of approval of the quality of education and how they are encouraged to be involved in their children's education. This results in outstanding support, mainly because of the frequent, relevant information that explains what is taught and also how to help children with their homework. The genuine open-door policy works effectively because parents feel comfortable approaching school for any reason.
46. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept very well informed by the school. Individual learning targets for the pupils are amended and shared formally twice a year. Details of gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are often shared with parents on a more regular basis. Growing links with partner secondary schools aid continued provision.
47. Staff and parents work together to give and receive information about a range of issues. The Parent Partnership Committee (PPC) takes a leading role in facilitating frank discussions with the school. With the influential 'Friends of Captain's Close' group, providing essential funds, important improvements to pupils' pastoral care are brought about. Recently, the PPC asked that parents be informed of the positive steps taken to promote good behaviour. This was followed up immediately by staff. This willingness on the part of staff to meet parental expectations is indicative of their commitment to a rich home-school partnership. Consulting with parents informs this important aspect. Some parents however feel left 'out of the loop' because of a lack of feedback on outcomes of school-initiated surveys. This view surfaced in the otherwise very positive pre-inspection meeting with parents and was confirmed by the questionnaire analysis.
48. The school has mutually beneficial links with the adjacent pre-school group and other schools. These ensure the smooth induction and transfer of pupils into various stages of their education. Work with a multi-ethnic primary school in Leicester serves to

strongly increase pupils' awareness of cultural diversity. Other productive links provide pupils with useful insights into the recreational needs of the young and old in the local community. Visitors are invited into school to talk about their jobs or their country of origin. This aids pupils' understanding of the wider world.

49. The school is an important focal point for the community and used extensively by groups and others for a range of publicly subsidised activities. Day and evening classes on the school site provide a programme of support for groups in the community. These involve adults in regular forum meetings and in membership of knitting, gardening and badminton clubs. Also an important community facility in a detached building hosts a Parent-Toddler club and pre-school group. The school swimming pool is also used extensively by other local schools, and in the evenings.
50. Funding is provided through the County's `Delegated Community` budget and the headteacher is the overall coordinator for the work, ably assisted by the school's secretary. The obvious community link between the programmes and the school's daily work is in the age range of the user groups. This is in addition to the active promotion of citizenship to pupils. Funding for these facilities is currently under review by the local authority, and is significantly less this year than in previous years. It is too soon to know the impact of these cuts on the quality of pupils' education overall, but governors are concerned that the school's high reputation in the community will fall as reductions work through.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good**. The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and high aspirations for the pupils.
- The governing body are effective and knowledgeable, and contribute well to the high quality leadership of the school, and its effective management.
- There is a strong and successful focus on fostering very good relationships and positive attitudes for the pupils.
- Those staff in leadership roles contribute well to the overall leadership and management of the school.
- Some aspects of the creative curriculum are not planned well.
- There are very good links with the community that impact strongly on the high ethos for learning.
- Management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

51. The headteacher provides the school with very clear and purposeful leadership. He leads the staff in a very strong commitment to promoting very good relationships. Care and support for pupils are high priorities. Senior staff make a good contribution to the leadership of the school through a strong mutually supportive senior management team. They invest a great deal of time and energy in monitoring and evaluating

success, and the prioritised developments in pastoral and academic provision. This is reflected in the very good progress pupils make in their personal development throughout the school and in the rising standards they achieve. Management procedures work well and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

52. Development planning is thorough. All subject co-ordinators construct detailed action plans and these are incorporated into the whole school improvement plan. Performance management targets focus on raising standards and link with this improvement plan. This helps to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of the school's priorities for development and are able to play a constructive part in fulfilling their responsibilities. Subject management is good, although further development is required in art and design and design and technology, recognised in the current school improvement plan. Co-ordinators have appropriately delegated responsibilities and carry out the work diligently. The Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and literacy and numeracy are all well led. The provision for staff professional development is very good and the school has a very good induction programme for newly qualified teachers.

53. Coordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The new co-ordinator has responded enthusiastically to her new challenge and has a determined action plan. She continues to play an effective part in raising whole school awareness of how to respond to pupils' needs. A very sound intervention programme is managed well in literacy and numeracy and achievements regularly influence the setting of manageable targets. An enthusiastic governor monitors the provision for pupils with special educational needs effectively. Consequently, the governing body is extremely well informed and carries out its statutory duties very well.
54. The school has nurtured very good links with the community. The school is used for a good variety of day and evening classes and the swimming pool is also available for community use. Ministers from two local churches, along with others who work in the community, are regular visitors to the school. These regular contacts alongside visits pupils make to the locality greatly enhance the quality of education the pupils enjoy.
55. The governance of the school is good overall. The chair and other governors maintain close contact with the school and forge a constructive link with the local community. Governors are kept well informed about developments and decisions are only taken after due discussion and consideration of the available information. The governors fulfil their statutory duties very conscientiously, including those related to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex education. Governors have a very clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. They make sure they are familiar with the available data to understand and deal with issues arising from analysis. Governors provide good support for senior staff and challenge the school's performance to seek improvement.
56. The school's financial planning is good and specific grants are used appropriately. Careful consideration is given to ensure that the principles of best value are followed. In view of the quality of education that contributes so well to giving pupils a positive attitude to learning, the good standards that most pupils achieve and the rising standards in national tests, set against the below average unit cost, the school provides very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004.

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	491,614
Total expenditure	489,992
Expenditure per pupil	£2,740

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	58,960
Balance carried forward to the next	60,582*

*Includes 39,623 capital funding.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The good management of this stage of children's education has been a significant factor in this. Children generally enter school with below average knowledge and skills when compared with those expected for their age, although this covers a wide range of attainment. This is particularly the case in speaking and listening skills. Through very good teaching, children's confidence and enjoyment in learning is successfully nurtured from the beginning. The teacher's planning takes account of children's needs and identifies clear links between all areas of learning. All staff work well together to create a supportive atmosphere where every child feels special.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and children are excellent.
- Children's positive attitudes and independence are very well promoted.
- There are very clear rules and routines which make children feel safe and secure.

Commentary

57. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well. Many children enter school with immature personal and social skills. They settle down quickly and feel both happy and secure. Clear boundaries and the very good role models set by the adults contribute very well to children's growing confidence. Children are attentive, behave well and are eager to learn. They enjoy coming to school and learn to conform to the high standards of behaviour expected by the staff because of gentle intervention that gets them on track in a positive way. Children are purposefully engaged in a very good range of activities, and show consideration for property and each other. Most are on course to do better than expected by the end of the Reception year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The development of language skills effectively pervades all learning activities.
- Children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the very good teaching of basic skills.
- Children experience a variety of writing.

Commentary

58. Children make good gains in learning because they are taught very well. Teachers make continuous checks on children's progress and have a very good understanding of individual strengths and weaknesses. Their regular evaluations of planned work help build on what children have already achieved. Many children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. A strength of the teaching lies in the way staff constantly talk to the children and expect them to listen carefully. The development of language is a high priority in all areas of learning, and adults' encouragement to develop talk at every step ensures that all children achieve well. The children take books home to share with parents and this strengthens the strong link between home and school because good communication is established about how well children are doing. Children begin to understand the need to write for different reasons. For example, the children write a letter to younger children in the pre-school group with an invitation to join them for a winter walk.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of activities to develop and strengthen children's knowledge of number, position and shape.
- Children quickly learn to use the correct vocabulary.

Commentary

59. Teaching and learning are very good and children achieve well. Most children are likely to reach the levels expected by the end of the Reception year. Teachers develop children's understanding of number, position and shape through carefully planned practical activities often linked to other areas of learning. A good example of this was how the children were learning to enter instructions and directions into a programmable toy. Children are soon able to use the correct mathematical terms to do with shape and size. Teachers encourage children to join in number rhymes and games as an enjoyable way of reinforcing counting, recognition and understanding of number.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have very good opportunities to learn about other cultures.
- Children have a good understanding of how things change and grow.
- ICT is used well to support children's learning.

Commentary

60. Children achieve well because teaching and learning are often very good. Children are encouraged to talk about themselves and their families. They bring photographs of themselves as babies and compare themselves then and now. They are clearly developing an understanding of how things change and grow. Festivals from other faiths are celebrated with enthusiasm. For example, celebrations for 'Diwali' included welcoming an adult member of the Hindu faith into the classroom to answer questions, painting Mendhi patterns and trying special Diwali food. The school also has regular contact with children from other faiths through visits to a local school.
61. Children use the computers both in the classroom and the ICT suite regularly to reinforce their learning. Children's knowledge of the local community is widened through walks round the local area and contact with visitors to school. Most children are likely to achieve the levels expected by the end of the Reception year.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have regular opportunities to swim.
- The outdoor play facilities are good.
- Skills for writing, are developed well.

Commentary

62. Children achieve well and most are on course to reach the early learning goals set for them in this area. They have good opportunities to develop their skills in the swimming pool. They are increasing their confidence and co-ordination at a rapid rate because of the very good teaching. The outdoor play area and resources are effectively used to support all areas of learning. Children demonstrate good body control and awareness of space. Their skills in manipulating pencils develop well because of the regular opportunities to apply them.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan and create effective role-play areas.
- Children are introduced to music from different cultures.
- Activities such as painting, sand and water are not available every day.

Commentary

63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children achieve at a satisfactory level but are unlikely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The staff use role-play to extend learning in other areas. For example, children were encouraged to act out the routines of 'going to bed under a dark starry sky'. This linked in well with the current theme of 'Light and Dark'. As part of their Diwali celebrations, children enjoy listening to music from India and responding to the different moods it creates. They join in enthusiastically with traditional rhymes and songs. However, children have limited opportunities to express their ideas through using paint, clay and other materials as these activities are not available every day.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

English

The provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Writing has improved considerably in the last two years.
- All groups of pupils are challenged to achieve well, including higher attaining pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs have support and activities that help them make good progress.
- Very good teaching inspires the older pupils to lift their achievement very well.
- Literacy skills are used well to enhance learning in other curriculum areas.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.

Commentary:

64. Standards in English are good overall. When compared with all schools nationally, standards by Years 2 and 6 are above average. High standards against similar schools have been maintained.
65. In the six lessons and parts of lesson seen in English, and in the observation of pupils' previous work, standards of writing have improved considerably. They have improved from well below national standards by the age of seven and below them by the age of eleven at the last inspection to being above average in both cases. This is for both boys and girls, with an increasing proportion of pupils performing at the higher levels.
66. Pupils build well on their prior learning in Year 1. They make good progress in a wide range of writing styles including story, letter, instruction and report writing linked to other areas of the curriculum, especially history. Pupils in Year 2 write freely with most using full stops, capital letters and question marks accurately. A good proportion write at the higher level 3, with characters being described and spelling becoming more accurate. Pupils in years 3 and 4 are taught to write in paragraphs; and good attention is being given to the teaching of spelling patterns. Older pupils enjoy using increasingly complex sentences and more exciting vocabulary.
67. Achievement in developing speaking and listening skills, which are given the highest priority, is always at least satisfactory, and often good. Pupils are encouraged to ask and answer questions and they thrive on the value and respect which is given to their responses by other pupils and adults. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy reporting back on the exploits of their 'travelling bears' and are becoming increasingly more confident when talking to differing audiences. Speaking and listening skills are promoted across the curriculum whether explaining the significance of dance in a physical education lesson; talking about events in history or expressing opinions about materials in science. Pupils are growing in confidence with most eager to share with wider audiences such as poetry in class and school assemblies, or performing in school productions such as 'Robin Hood'.
68. Achievement in reading is above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 6 have explored and understand a range of 'genre' from myths and traditional tales to science fiction. Parents contribute to the good quality of reading and gains are shared well in reading diaries. Pupils are heard to read regularly using the skills of both teachers and teaching assistants. All pupils are taught in small groups to use the non-fiction library, by well trained support staff, and learn good practice. Pupils share their teachers' enthusiasm for literature and, as in a Year 3 lesson on script writing, they are well motivated to read expressively. Pupils take pleasure in reading and enjoy the progress they make.

69. The teaching of English is consistently good and often very good in Year 6. The National Literacy Strategy is now well embedded in the school's work and the high levels of skill and understanding shown by teachers in exploiting its different elements has contributed well to the raising of standards. All teaching is characterised by the use of a good range of teaching strategies including partner discussions, encouraging pupils to evaluate their successes, and constantly reminding pupils of the object of the lesson. In the Year 3 lesson, pupils benefited considerably from the sharing of learning strategies, such as, 'What do we need to be successful?' Pupils are well motivated and there are high expectations of their behaviour, all of which contribute appreciably to the quality of learning. Teaching assistants are deployed particularly well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
70. The co-ordinator provides exceptional leadership and inspires both colleagues and pupils. She identifies and shares areas for improvement with her colleagues, and with her link governor drives improvement forward. Since the last inspection, all pupils now have targets which are revised on a half-termly basis and intervention programmes are brief and effective. There has been good improvement in the planning and provision for pupils with special educational needs. Systems for assessing gains in skills and knowledge are very effective and individual progress is tracked. Marking of pupils' work is good and pupils are informed of their successes and prompted how to improve.

The use of literacy skills across the curriculum is very good.

71. Pupils are well taught how to apply their skills. Literacy skills are increasingly used well in other subjects and older pupils are developing good research and study skills when extracting information from text and internet sources, or taking notes when interviewing visitors. They use non-chronological writing in history, geography and religious education, record concisely in science, often using bullet points, and write lists and instructions effectively in design and technology. They report concisely and write descriptively, expressively and persuasively. Communication skills are improving and computer technology is becoming more important when writing for a variety of purposes in different subject areas.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The standards achieved are much higher than at the last inspection.
- Pupils develop good basic skills in numeracy because the staff build well on the good foundation laid in the reception class.
- Very good use is made of ICT to support all areas of the subject.
- Staff support pupils' learning with practical experience as often as possible.
- Whole class activities sometimes last too long.

Commentary

72. Standards in mathematics have been well above average by the end of Year 2 for the last two years. This represents very good achievement since entry, and underlines the effectiveness of the school's target-setting and teaching. The progress and level of work of the current Year 3 pupils builds well on these strong foundations, and some of the current Year 4 pupils already work at very high levels for their age. This confirms that the staff use what they know of pupils' prior attainment to plan new work for them, to challenge them to make continued improvement. The current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve at least above average levels by the end of the year. This represents good progress and achievement from their entry level attainment.
73. Standards in Year 6 have been above average in national tests for the last two years, maintaining the school's well above average performance compared to similar schools. The current Year 6 have achieved well from an unusually low starting point at entry to the school, and are on track to reach at least average levels by the end of the year. As there are large groups of pupils with special educational needs in this class and in Year 5, support assistant time has been targeted here. This ensures that pupils receive help when they need it, and that they have appropriate work in small groups or individually to focus directly on tasks and activities that meet their needs closely. Additionally, the headteacher often works with higher attaining groups to challenge their thinking, and extend their range of problem-solving techniques.
74. Boys generally achieve higher levels than girls here and boys and girls nationally, as discussed earlier in the report. Girls achieve well, and boys also achieve well, with some of them achieving very well. This is in part because the support staff are deployed effectively to help those who need specific support. It is also affected by the headteacher's role in promoting high achievement through joining in lessons to prompt and challenge pupils. A further influence is the good amount of practical work using materials and equipment to reinforce mathematical ideas that is promoted well by the staff. These combine to give boys as well as girls confidence and promote their learning well.
75. The quality of teaching is consistently good, leading to good progress in learning, and good achievement across the subject. Staff have effectively adapted guidance from the National Numeracy Strategy to meet the needs of pupils, and have a current focus on the impact of the opening and closing sessions of lessons on pupils' progress. Inspection evidence is that these sessions are generally used effectively, and very well when support staff are deployed early in the lesson to work with specific groups. Occasionally, the opening sessions last too long, particularly when new material is being introduced. This then means that some groups of pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
76. Good examples were seen of staff adapting the lesson opening to meet the pupils' needs, in line with the school's improvement plan. Rather than keeping the whole class together for 20 minutes, some staff ensured that different groups of pupils received specifically targeted tasks. In Years 5 and 6, after a shared, snappy mental starter, small groups of pupils left the main group to work with a support assistant on work in shape and data-handling matched to their level of need. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher worked with the whole class using individual whiteboards to work out perimeters of rectangles, then set most of them working on further practice activities. Based on her marking of the pupils' work from the day before, she kept a group of about eight pupils

of differing prior attainment to revisit aspects of the topic that her marking revealed had not been fully understood.

77. Pupils in Year 1 build well on their good learning in reception because the teachers share assessment information effectively, so that the next teacher is able to work directly from where the pupils are in planning new work. In a lesson to recognise and use coins, and understand that different values attach to them, the teacher used a wide range of resources very effectively to challenge and motivate them. The pupils revelled in the game she played with them, charging them different prices to use different equipment, such as threading beads, building bricks, or a computer program. These activities in themselves were supportive of their wider mathematical development, made good use of the open space available, and reinforced the idea of monetary value as the more popular activities were higher priced.
78. The headteacher leads the subject very well, setting a good example in his own interventions in lessons when working with groups. He keeps a very good overview of the quality of teaching and learning through classroom observations, and knows each child's potential and targets. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

Mathematics across the curriculum

79. Mathematical skills are used well across the curriculum. The growing use of the ICT suite and interactive class whiteboards is encouraging staff and pupils to handle data across the whole curriculum more confidently. Understanding of coordinates is used in map-reading, and good basic skills in numeracy help pupils present their findings in history and science.

SCIENCE

The provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of key facts.
- The school has as a well established environmental area.
- Pupils use a wide range of scientific vocabulary.
- There is still insufficient emphasis on all pupils developing their investigative skills, despite a recent effort to focus more on this aspect.

Commentary

80. Pupils in Year 2 reach the expected standards for their age. Pupils in Year 6 achieve above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Achievement is good in view of the below average levels of pupils' attainment on entry to the school.
81. Teaching and learning are good. Good teaching has played a significant part in the progress pupils make in their knowledge and understanding of key facts. Very good teaching has played a major part in the recent good improvement in standards for

older pupils. As a result of a thorough analysis by the staff of what has worked well and what needs further work, there has been a more concerted effort to make sure that lessons involve practical experiences. However, in order to improve standards further, pupils need more opportunities to investigate, make decisions and increase their understanding of how to conduct a fair test.

82. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 use the good skills pupils develop in the Foundation Stage as a starting point to broaden and develop their knowledge and understanding of key scientific facts. Teachers plan lessons using objects that pupils are familiar with, such as the plants they have grown themselves.
83. Teachers throughout the school prepare and resource their lessons well and ensure that pupils understand previous work before receiving new information. The quality of teachers' questioning is generally good and stretches pupils' thinking. The use of paired discussion enables pupils to exchange ideas and begin to solve problems. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and are becoming increasingly familiar with a broad range of scientific terms. In some lessons, ICT is used well to enhance pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 6 were amazed to see live pictures of the earth from a satellite and this proved to be a very good introduction to a new topic. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils work together and co-operate well during lessons.
84. The leadership and management of the subject are sound. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the role but has clear plans for the development of the subject. Assessment procedures at the end of each topic are satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the pond and the well developed school grounds as a resource for scientific investigation, and visits and visitors contribute positively to pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are very good, and contribute well to pupils' good achievement.
- Pupils really enjoy improving their skills in the subject.
- The subject is well led and staff have good subject knowledge.
- Subject skills are used well to support learning in other subjects, such as in musical composition.

Commentary

85. The provision for the subject has improved appreciably since the last inspection when it became a priority area for development.
86. Well- targeted investment on resources and the development of teachers' professional skills has proved to be effective. Pupils' achievement is good by the age of seven where standards have improved from well below national expectations to above them. Standards by the age of eleven are now in line with national expectations but the rate

of progress in their learning from a low base has been tremendous, with many pupils lower down the school on track to exceed national expectations.

87. Teaching is never less than good and is occasionally very good. This leads to good and sometimes very good progress in pupils' learning, particularly of new skills. The recent equipping of a computer suite has promoted the teaching of skills to whole class groups and the expert level of support enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. High expectations of pupils' behaviour promote a good atmosphere in lessons. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their experiences and respond positively to the levels of challenge and the freedom they are offered to make decisions and share opinions.
88. Teachers promote the use of computer technology well, not only for whole school skill development but also for opportunities to support learning in other curriculum areas. Pupils research the internet to extend their skills and knowledge with many following up studies at home. Pupils log on, use menus, print and save confidently and are eager to share their talents with their partners. Technology spreads to the classrooms where interactive white boards have added a new and exciting dimension to teaching and learning as was experienced by older pupils using 'Compose World' to create their own music before discussing how to improve their compositions. The computer club enables pupils to widen their skills with all those attending knowing how to use digital cameras effectively.
89. Following a period when the subject caused concern, leadership and management are now good. Policies, equipment and the technical aspects of how to teach the subject have all been put in place. The subject rightly continues to be an area for development, in order to build on the improvements made.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

90. During the inspection computers were used well to support learning in other subjects. Good support was evident in history where younger pupils investigated Louis Braille, and older pupils researched the events of World War 2. Data is recorded and interpreted well in science and mathematics and communication skills are improved as pupils record their findings in prose or verse. The use of computers to compose has added a new dimension to achievement in music.

HUMANITIES

It is not possible to judge the overall provision for geography.

91. Evidence from the geography policy, scheme of work and planning indicate that skills are developed term on term and there is sound coverage of the requirements of the national curriculum. The locality is used for field work and residential experience adds an extra dimension to studies of rivers and landscapes. Caring for the environment contributes well to the development of pupils' citizenship skills.
92. The subject is to be included in the next review. The co-ordinator links her guidelines to those required nationally and she has a clear vision for the future which she shares effectively with her link governor.

History

The provision for history is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in history is now good because the teaching has improved.
- Pupils' historical enquiry skills are well developed.
- Good use is made of pupils' literacy and communication skills.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Commentary

93. History has improved since the last inspection and is now good. A study of famous people in Years 1 and 2 has helped children to develop an understanding of chronology. Well planned experiences which guide them to explore the immediate environment and the past from beyond their living memory have helped them to appreciate that information can be gained not only through text, video and internet, but also by asking questions. In their study of toys, pupils were able to acquire information by asking their families, making good use of homework to support work in class.
94. In the two lessons seen, teaching was at least good, as were two English lessons which used and developed pupils' historical enquiry skills. Teaching for the oldest pupils is very good and pupils make rapid progress, and achieve well overall. Relationships are very good and pupils have the confidence to express themselves freely, knowing that their contributions will be valued by teachers and support staff who use a wide range of strategies to motivate them. Computers are used increasingly well, not only in the suite, but also in the classroom to search for information and to record findings.
95. Older pupils have explored past civilisations and are developing a picture of their natural heritage, such as democracy and the Olympic ideals, through a study of Ancient Greece. They appreciate the legacies of 'invaders' such as the Romans and have looked at the roles of women in different societies. More recently, older pupils have considered the disasters of war. They have interviewed 'evacuees' and written moving accounts and verse concerning the horrors of Hiroshima. Well planned visits have enabled pupils to gain knowledge about the war years and have added first hand experiences to their studies. Literacy skills are very well developed, and research skills, developed through text, internet and first hand experience, are extended as older pupils carry out projects for homework. Speaking and listening skills are promoted at every opportunity as pupils are encouraged to share their experiences within the classroom and with wider audiences such as when sharing poetry in school assemblies.
96. Pupils' experiences contribute significantly to their spiritual and cultural development. Older pupils express firm opinions on relationships between countries. When watching video evidence, pupils in Year 2 were clearly moved by the reasons for Louis Braille's blindness and the fact that his skills were not fully appreciated until after his death.
97. Leadership and management of the subject is good, and there are good links with the governing body to monitor the quality provided.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in Religious Education is **good**.

- Pupils have sound knowledge of the key features of different faiths.
- Pupils visit different places of worship.
- Religious Education contributes well to pupils' personal and social development.

Commentary

98. The standards pupils reach at Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has begun to follow the guidelines from the recently rewritten locally agreed syllabus and, as a consequence, pupils' knowledge and understanding are rising and their achievement is good. Pupils study the major world faiths of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism, adding well to their cultural as well as religious understanding.
99. By the end of Year 2, pupils know a range of stories from the bible and are familiar with the significant events in the life of Jesus. Pupils are beginning to understand the similarities and differences between faiths and are aware that each faith has its own festivals, special places of worship and holy writings. Older pupils gain a deeper understanding of stories from the Bible and their meanings that are relevant to their lives today. They know many key features of the major religions and what an important part faith plays to the followers of them. Important festivals from these religions are celebrated throughout the school. For example, Diwali lights are lit and the story behind this festival is told during a special celebratory assembly. Later pupils in Years 1 and 2 take part in special activities and enjoy traditional food.
100. Teaching is good, leading to good learning for the pupils. Teachers handle issues sensitively and pupils' increasing knowledge of the major religions of the world adds much to their appreciation of the variety of faiths and cultures represented in our society today. Themes and issues explored in the daily act of worship reinforce what pupils learn in religious education as well as contributing well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
101. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator supports colleagues well. She monitors effectively the curriculum, teachers' plans and pupils' work. Procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress. The school regularly welcomes the ministers from two local churches and pupils benefit from visits to the churches where they can experience a 'mock' wedding and baptism as well as look at the building and symbols of Christianity in detail. Older pupils also visit places of worship belonging to other faiths.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Insufficient evidence was seen to form an overall judgement about provision and standards in **art and design, and design and technology**. From discussions with older pupils, it appears that these subjects have a lower profile currently in the school than was the case at the last inspection, and that their knowledge and understanding is lower than expected for their age. Teachers' plans indicate that the curriculum broadly follows national

guidelines and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers ensure that pupils develop practical skills and have an understanding of the design process. Teachers rightly emphasise the importance of pupils observing closely and recording accurately and carefully as well as developing their own interpretations of what they see. An arts club is available for pupils to attend in their own time.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**, with some good features, and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are enthusiastic, and motivated the pupils to learn effectively in lessons seen.
- The subject leader is a specialist who has only recently taken over the role, but has good ideas for its promotion.
- Children sing enthusiastically in assembly, but standards of singing are not high enough.
- There are insufficient resources to support the development of pupils' musical skills.

Commentary

102. Standards are broadly average in the aspects seen, musical composition using ICT in Year 6, and learning pulse and rhythm using untuned percussion instruments in Year 2. Singing is promoted, but pupils do not learn techniques such as posture, diction, breathing and phrasing effectively enough. However, the joyous rendition of the school 'rap' in assembly shows that the pupils can be enthusiastic when motivated. Achievement is satisfactory across the school, including for pupils with special educational needs. There has been some staff development that has improved the subject overall since the last inspection. Some pupils have the opportunity to learn keyboard and piano skills, but this was not seen.

103. The quality of teaching seen was good, with a very good lesson for Year 5 pupils. This leads to good progress, although achievement overall is satisfactory. The newly appointed subject coordinator has introduced a program to promote composition using sampled musical sounds. This was used by both Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. The jazz style chosen by Year 6 had limited potential as the sounds were unconvincing. However, the pupils' recall of musical styles and famous artists from the 1930s onwards was good.

104. Year 5 pupils responded very well to the challenge to compose a piece of music with a hint of mystery, using on-screen symbols for recorded phrases played by chosen instruments at a variety of tempos. The teacher used her subject knowledge well, and managed both to impose herself effectively on a group of boys who were at first reluctant so that they became enthusiastic participants, and give the pupils opportunities to use the program independently to check the quality of the phrases. Two pupils 'played' their compositions at the end, showing mature understanding of how the structure they had chosen created the effect they wanted in response to questions from the teacher and other pupils.

105. Year 1 and 2 pupils worked together in the hall, and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. The two teachers cooperated very well in leading the lesson at a good pace, giving a very good example of how to work together to the pupils. The pupils made good progress in learning a new song, and playing untuned percussion to accompany it. Opportunities were missed to let the pupils see the words, to use their reading skills, and to challenge Year 2 pupils to show the younger ones how they could extend and vary their rhythms.
106. The coordinator has only been in post since September, and has only a short time to have an influence on developments. She has been involved previously, and has a good understanding of what is needed. She is keen to help the non-specialist staff develop their confidence, and to increase the musical resources as funds allow. This is timely, as there are insufficient instruments available, particularly representing a variety of musical traditions other than European.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**, and has improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very effective use of the school's shallow pool promotes exceptionally high swimming skills.
- After-school clubs add significantly to many pupils' physical development.
- Achievement in games and dance lessons seen was satisfactory, and could be better.

Commentary

107. Attainment is above average overall because the pupils achieve exceptionally high levels in swimming. Building on the good work from reception, pupils have regular lessons that develop their confidence and skill very well. Year 4 pupils all swim, and most of them swim well for their age, with a significant number achieving higher standards than those expected by the end of Year 6. Reportedly, Year 6 pupils achieve very high standards in personal survival and life-saving in their lessons in the local swimming baths. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well, and good provision is made for pupils talented in swimming.
108. Many pupils also attend swimming clubs in the evening, taken by the teacher who teaches them during the day. This extends their stamina and style well. There are also very good after-school clubs for Tae Kwon-do and gymnastics. Both set high standards, and are very well attended by both boys and girls. The school is fortunate in having an international gymnast on the staff, who leads the gymnastics club with great enthusiasm. She sets high standards, and the club members respond very well.
109. Because the teaching of swimming is of high standard, teaching and learning overall are good.
In games lessons for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, teachers give the pupils satisfactory practice in developing hockey skills. Some of the Year 5 pupils took advantage of the wide space, and the teacher needed to work hard to keep them on task, which she did. Year 6 pupils worked well, but the effect of the practice was lessened by them

having to wait their turn to dribble the hockey ball, rather than having opportunity to work individually or in pairs. In a dance lesson, Year 2 pupils learned to express their feelings through facial expression and movement of their bodies. They made satisfactory progress, but might have achieved better had there been some further stimulus such as music to inspire them. The coordinator is being supported in the role as he is a newly qualified teacher. The subject is secure, and there are good grounds and an indoor hall to support games and physical activity. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in team games, playing football, netball and swimming against other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for personal, social and health education (PHSE) and citizenship is **good**. Pupils enjoy the company of others and are encouraged to accept responsibilities. They develop citizenship skills well through membership of the School Council, helping to run the school bank, improving their own environment, and developing opinions or making choices. Relationship and sex education are taught effectively through science and PHSE. Pupils are aware of what makes a healthy diet and they understand the differences between helpful and harmful drugs.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	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	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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