

INSPECTION REPORT

**COCKERNHOE ENDOWED CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cockernhoe, Luton

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117446

Headteacher: Elizabeth Rymer

Lead inspector: Raymond Jardine

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 September 2004

Inspection number: 266645

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	104
School address:	Cockernhoe Green Luton Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU2 8PY
Telephone number:	01582 732509
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Edward Newman

Date of previous inspection: 5 July 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cockernhoe Endowed Primary is a voluntary aided Church of England school that serves the village of Cockernhoe, surrounding villages and new housing estates on the southern edge of Luton, from which most of its pupils come to school. There are considerably more girls than boys on roll and this difference is particularly large in Years 2 and 4. The school has four mixed age classes. It is smaller than other primary schools and is a very popular choice amongst parents, being heavily over-subscribed in recent years. Almost all the pupils are of white UK origin; just five pupils are from a range of other backgrounds, including British Indian, Caribbean and African. None speak English as a second language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The social and economic circumstances of pupils' families are wide ranging, but overall they are above average. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving other than at the usual times is low. There are 13 pupils on the register of special educational needs; broadly average. Six receive additional support from outside agencies and one of these has a statement of special educational needs. Five pupils have moderate learning and one has profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is typically a little above average but it does vary; that of the current Year 6 pupils was below average. The school won a National Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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19916	Deborah Kerr	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography History Music Physical education Foundation Stage

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cockernhoe Endowed is an effective school with some very good features. It provides good value for money. The school's ethos very successfully encourages pupils of all abilities to work hard, respect and value others and behave well. The teaching is good and much of it very good; consequently pupils achieve above average standards in most subjects. The school is led and managed well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in English, science and music. However, their information and communication technology (ICT) skills are less well developed and are not used enough.
- Most lessons are challenging and expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are high. Pupils respond very positively; they enjoy learning, are very productive and behave very well.
- Children receive a very good start in their Reception year. The curriculum for them is very well planned, although facilities for their outdoor learning and play are inadequate.
- The school is a very orderly and hard-working community. Teachers and support staff are very dedicated and work closely as a team under the very good leadership of the headteacher.
- Teachers and support staff know the pupils very well so that they are very well cared for and guided. Assessment is used very effectively to monitor pupils' progress and to set targets.
- The curriculum is well planned and much enriched through visits, and visitors. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in arts and sports.

There has been good progress made since the last inspection. Weaknesses in Reception Year and physical education reported then have been addressed effectively. Standards in Year 2 are higher while well above average standards in Year 6 have continued, particularly in English and science.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A*	C	C
science	A*	A*	A	A

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

Overall achievement is good and it is very good in Years 1 to 2. It is also very good in English, science and music. In 2003, Year 6 standards were well above national and similar school averages in English and science; mathematics standards were about average. The results for 2004 show similar standards in English but some good improvements in mathematics and science and the school met its targets. Standards in the current Year 6 are

about average in English and mathematics and a little above in science. These pupils are achieving well, taking account of their below average standards when in Year 2. Year 2 standards in 2003 were well above similar schools in reading and writing and above in mathematics; there were further improvements in 2004 in reading and mathematics. In the current Year 2, well above average standards and very good achievements are being sustained in all these subjects. Pupils with special educational needs progress very well. Gifted and talented pupils also achieve very well, especially in science, music and sports. However, ICT standards are about average and pupils could achieve more. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well. Most are on course to meet or exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good and most are likely to exceed the goals for this area.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. They have very positive attitudes, work hard and enjoy school. Behaviour is very good and there have been no exclusions. Attendance and punctuality are also very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good.

Teaching quality is good. Much of the teaching is very good, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Lessons are interesting and challenging in most subjects and work adapted well to the range of pupils' needs. Learning support assistants work closely with teachers; pupils with special educational needs are supported and guided very well as a result. Teachers' very clear explanations and good questioning help pupils acquire new ideas quickly in class discussions. Sometimes, however, they are too long so that pupils are not involved enough in group and individual work. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly and assessment used very well to monitor their progress in key subjects and to guide them in their next steps in learning. The curriculum is broad, balanced and much enriched through residential and other visits and a very good number of extra-curricular clubs and sports are available. Pupils are very well cared for guided and supported. Partnerships with parents are very strong. Links with the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and direction for the school, strongly focussed on achieving high standards. The school monitors and reviews its work effectively, especially teaching and pupils' achievements. The monitoring role of governors and some subject co-ordinators is being developed further within its review cycle. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well in most respects, but the effectiveness of the new race equality policy needs monitoring. Governors are committed and supportive; they are effective in influencing the school's development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are very satisfied; parents are pleased with the school's work in key areas such as their children's achievements and the range of activities offered. A minority would like

the school to seek their views more actively. Inspectors agree and the school is working to improve its communications. Pupils enjoy school life, find other pupils friendly and feel that they work hard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Extend resources and training to enable pupils to develop and apply their ICT skills more broadly across the curriculum and so raise standards further.
- Improve the facilities for outdoor learning for the Reception Year class.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Monitor the impact of the school's race equality policy.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good overall. Children in Reception achieve well in most areas of learning and very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve very well and attain standards that are well above average. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good. Standards in the current Year 6 are about average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English and science, in particular, has been consistently very good in recent years, with many pupils achieving above the expected levels in Year 6.
- Pupils are not achieving as well as they could in their ICT skills and they do not apply these skills sufficiently to help raise standards in some subjects.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress; they are supported very well both in lessons and through withdrawal for additional literacy.
- Achievement in music is very good and pupils achieve well in physical education; gifted and talented pupils in particular excel in these subjects as well as in science.

Commentary

1. In 2003, standards in Year 6 in both English and science were well above both the national averages and those of schools whose pupils attained similarly in Year 2. These high standards have been maintained over the past four years in both subjects. Standards in mathematics have also been well above the national and similar schools' averages or higher in past years but dipped to about average in 2003. Overall, Year 6 pupils achieved very well compared to other schools nationally, mainly due to their standards in English and science; a very good proportion achieved the higher level 5.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.2 (29.5)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.0 (30.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.8 (32.4)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Results for 2004 show some further improvements. The well above average standards in English have been maintained. Standards in mathematics have recovered considerably from the dip reported in 2003. In science, standards have also improved further from the already well above average standards of the previous year. Taking account of their above average attainment at the end of Year 2, pupils achieved well, and very well in science. The school exceeded its Year 6 targets in both English and mathematics and a very good proportion of pupils achieved the higher level 5 in all these subjects in 2004.

3. Inspection findings confirm that the pattern of good achievement, and in some subjects very good, is being maintained. Overall standards in the current Year 6 are lower than last year, but this year group has a larger proportion of pupils who are less able or with special educational needs than is typical for the school; their results were considerably below average in national tests in Year 2. Standards currently in English and mathematics are about average and a little above in science. Pupils are achieving well in mathematics and very well in English and science. The curriculum in both English and science is very well planned and both subjects are led very effectively by experienced co-ordinators. In mathematics, too little emphasis is given to problem solving in later years and achievement is not as high.
4. In Year 2, standards in 2003 showed a very substantial improvement compared to previous years, being well above similar schools in both reading and writing and above average in mathematics.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.9 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	17.5 (12.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.8 (14.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Year 2 results for 2004 show further improvement in all these subjects, but particularly in reading and mathematics where considerably over half of all pupils achieved the higher level 3. Targeted support through booster classes for particular pupils has substantially improved the proportions achieving Level 3. Standards seen in the current Year 2 are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are achieving very well in all these subjects.
6. Children in the current Reception Year are about average or a little above in their attainment and are very new to the school. Good provision is made for them and they achieve well in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development. Most are likely to meet or exceed the goals for the end of Reception in all these areas, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development where the provision is very effective. Curriculum planning is much improved since the last inspection when there were weaknesses identified, and the Foundation Stage is now very well led.
7. Pupils reach average standards in ICT throughout the school but they could achieve more. The new ICT suite, in use for less than a year, is now having a positive impact on pupils' acquisition of basic ICT skills. However, ICT is not used enough within some subjects and some aspects of ICT such as the use of sensors for control and monitoring are under-developed. Music is a strength of the school and pupils achieve high standards throughout. Standards seen in physical education are also above average and there has also been much success in competitive sports.
8. Those few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds play a full part in lessons and other activities and make similar progress to their peers. They are regularly assessed and their

progress monitored closely as they move up the school. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Both in lessons and through occasional withdrawal sessions, they are very well supported, especially in their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers work very effectively with their learning support assistants to plan appropriate work for their needs. The more able, gifted and talented pupils achieve very well, especially in music, sports and science. Many opportunities are provided for them through extra-curricular activities and visits and there is also a high level of challenge provided in most lessons.

9. There are several reasons for pupils' good achievements. The headteacher provides clear direction for school improvement and has promoted close teamwork amongst the staff. Some very good appointments of new staff that brought new expertise into the school have led to some substantial improvements in Reception Year in particular. The school also assesses and monitors pupils rigorously in key subjects and directs resources and support to where they are most needed to help raise standards. Another key factor is the school's climate, which very successfully promotes a strong work ethic and high standards of behaviour amongst pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The school provides a stimulating environment that promotes very positive learning attitudes and ensures that pupils develop a very strong work ethic. Behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy school, hence their very good attendance and punctuality. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils say they are happy and enjoy school and as a result attendance is well above the national average and punctuality is very good.
- Pupils' very positive learning attitudes and strong work ethic are enhanced by the school's high expectations and stimulating environment.
- Behaviour and relationships throughout the school are very good.
- The school provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes towards school are very good. They enjoy school and find the work challenging and interesting and this contributes to their good progress and achievement. The strong work ethic demonstrated by all pupils is engendered through the school's ethos of high expectation and its stimulating environment. The positive findings after the previous inspection have been successfully maintained and in many respects further strengthened. Attendance is very good and well above the national average, and in the mornings pupils arrive in good time and are keen to make a start with their work.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2
National data	0.4

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

11. Behaviour is very good and the implementation of the school's behaviour policy is consistent and successful. No pupils have been excluded for the last three years. Pupils demonstrate care and consideration towards each other and are courteous and polite towards adults. Pupils say that they are happy and enjoy school because it is friendly and welcoming and they like their teachers and trust them. They say that teachers and other members of staff are good at dealing with any poor behaviour such as bullying or where someone demonstrates a lack of consideration towards others, and such issues are dealt with in a just and fair way. Pupils are encouraged to take on many responsibilities around the school. School councillors take their responsibilities seriously and have an influence on the life and work of the school. Older pupils develop their leadership skills by helping with the organisation of sporting and other extra-curricular activities. Becoming a captain of a school team is a highly prized honour.
12. The school provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. The spiritual ethos of the school is well established. Pupils are given many opportunities to explore their own values, feelings and emotions through literacy, religious education, history and music. Personal values are also strongly promoted through the personal, social and health education programme. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development in Reception Year is very well planned and structured; most of them are likely to exceed the goals for this area of learning by the end of their Reception year. The school provides a clear moral code with a very strong commitment towards the principles of equality, inclusion and diversity. There is a strong sense of community within the school and this is demonstrated by the way pupils support each other both at work and at play.
13. There are good opportunities for pupils to explore and experience their own and other cultures. Pupils' past work and classroom displays clearly demonstrate their enthusiasm and interest in life in ancient Egypt and Rome. Currently older pupils are supporting and corresponding with two children from the Philippines, comparing the differences in their education and environment. Although there are a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds in the school pupils' general awareness of the multicultural nature of many communities in Britain is not particularly well developed. Nonetheless, pupils are learning to act according to their own principles and to challenge such things as injustice, discrimination and poor attitudes.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, and a considerable proportion very good. The curriculum is broad, well planned and much enriched through visits, visiting speakers and a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs. Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. They are much involved in school life and their views influence the school's work. Partnerships with parents are very good; links with the community are good and with other schools, satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching is very good, particularly in Years 1 to 4. Assessment overall is very good. Pupils are very thoroughly assessed in English, mathematics

and science and work adapted very well to their needs, but assessment arrangements are not as thorough in some other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in English, science and music are very good.
- Most lessons are challenging and pupils very productive, although in ICT the more able are sometimes not challenged enough.
- Teachers' questioning and explanations very effectively develop pupils' thinking in class discussions, but these can sometimes extend for too long a period.
- Learning support assistants are very effective in their support for less able pupils and those with special educational needs so that they learn very well.
- Assessment and marking are very good; pupils understand what they need to do to improve and teachers monitor and review their progress closely in key subjects.

Commentary

14. Teaching and learning are good overall and sometimes very good throughout the school. Teaching is more consistently very good in Years 1 to 4. There are also strengths in the teaching of English, science and music. Most pupils find lessons interesting and feel well supported when they need help. They respond very well to their teachers' high expectations of their work and behaviour and they are consequently very productive, as the volume of work seen in books demonstrates. This is a major contributor to pupils' good, and in some subjects, very good achievements. Pupils are managed very well and relationships are excellent. As a result, pupils sustain concentration, behave very well and time is generally used effectively in most lessons. Those few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are fully engaged in lessons and learn as well as their peers. Praise and rewards are used very successfully to encourage and motivate pupils. Parents also think the teaching is good and that their children are expected to work hard and do their best.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	7	11	2	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

15. Most lessons are planned and structured well around clear objectives, and feature a good balance of whole class teaching and group or individual work. Teachers use questioning very effectively to help pupils recall prior knowledge and to speculate and explain. They often explain new concepts and principles very clearly, showing good subject knowledge in their management of whole class discussions, although the lack of computer projectors and whiteboards in classrooms adversely affects the quality of presentation and illustration. Sometimes, particularly in Years 5 and 6, class discussions extend for too long so that some pupils lose concentration and they do not spend enough time working independently to develop and consolidate what they have learned. New technical vocabulary is highlighted and reinforced effectively; teachers model its use and strongly encourage pupils to assimilate new terms into their spoken and written work; for example in science where Year 6 pupils use appropriate terms to explain each stage of plant reproduction. However, teachers' and learning support assistants' ICT skills vary

considerably across the school; some need additional training to ensure they use the new suite and associated resources effectively.

16. The teaching of pupils in Reception Year is good in all the areas of learning and very good for pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The provision made for them is much improved as a result of the appointment of a teacher with specialist expertise in this age group. Very strong features are the high quality of the teacher's planning and record keeping that ensures each child is appropriately challenged and their progress monitored, and the very effective partnership with her learning support assistant who is very effective as a result.
17. The close working partnerships between teachers and their learning support assistants are very evident in lessons. There are daily discussions between them to plan the focus of their work in each lesson. In consequence, the level of support provided to less able pupils and those with special educational needs is very good. Teachers and their assistants assess and monitor these pupils thoroughly and provide a very good balance of guidance, support and questioning as they work with them. Tasks and activities for the class are often adapted at three levels of difficulty and pupils grouped accordingly to ensure all are appropriately challenged, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This equally benefits the more able and gifted pupils in the class, although in some ICT lessons, where pupils are often given similar tasks to do, the more competent pupils are not challenged enough and do not achieve as much as they could.
18. Teachers assess pupils very thoroughly in their reading, writing, mathematics and science and use these well to guide their planning. A range of standardised assessments are used and pupils' progress is tracked and regularly reviewed. The information guides the use of booster classes and some withdrawal for additional literacy and numeracy for individuals who would most benefit from them. A very good feature is the use of short term curriculum objectives for literacy and numeracy to guide pupils in their next steps in learning. These feature prominently in the front of their books; pupils are strongly encouraged to review their achievements in relation to them. Teachers also assess each pupil in relation to them and supplement this through very effective marking and commentary about pupils' written work. Consequently, pupils understand very well what they need to do to improve. Parents say they value having these objectives shared and reviewed with them at parents' meetings and they feel well informed to help their children at home. Homework very effectively extends the learning from lessons, although some parents think too much is given in the periods before pupils are assessed. Assessment is less well developed in some other subjects; a framework for assessing pupils' ICT skills is currently being developed.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good. The school has a rich, broad and balanced curriculum which enables all pupils to achieve well. Provision in the core subjects is good for mathematics and very good for English and science. A good range of clubs and activities support learning, particularly in sports and music. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good provision for literacy and science has maintained high standards since the previous inspection.

- Those pupils with special educational needs are assessed at an early stage and a programme of support and review planned very well for them.
- The provision for the Foundation Stage has been improved considerably since the previous inspection and has very strong features, enabling children to make a very good start to school.
- Specialist teaching in music and physical education and very good provision for extra-curricular sports and music activities promote high standards and high levels of interest in these subjects.
- Outdoor accommodation for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.
- ICT is not used enough in other subjects and standards are lower than in other core subjects.

Commentary

19. The curriculum has been improved since the previous inspection and promotes achievement that is at least good, and often very good. The very good provision for the core subjects of English and science means that these subjects are taught particularly well and all pupils achieve very well. Teachers follow the national guidance for literacy and numeracy and match work carefully to pupils' capabilities, including those from minority ethnic groups, those with special educational needs and the more able. The quality of the science curriculum is particularly notable, hence the consistently high achievement in this subject. Scientific enquiry skills are developed systematically from year to year and pupils are given many opportunities to work practically and carry out scientific investigations for themselves.
20. The provision for the Foundation Stage and for physical education has been improved considerably since it was identified as a weakness in both areas at the previous inspection. The Foundation Stage curriculum is now meticulously planned in line with national guidelines for the subject, ensuring that children have many practical experiences across all areas of learning. As yet, the school does not have a secure, covered outdoor area for the Reception class so opportunities for regular outdoor activities, although carefully planned, are dependent on the weather. Physical education teaching and provision have improved since the appointment of a subject specialist and standards across the school are rising rapidly as a result. A wide range of sports activities and clubs contributes to the subject's high profile within the school. Music continues to be a strength of the school. Lessons are taken by teachers with expertise in the subject and standards are high in all classes. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn to play instruments, sing in the choir and perform to audiences both within and outside the school. The school's musical tradition is a significant factor in its continued popularity with parents and the local community.
21. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well planned. Those pupils who may require additional support are identified at an early stage and assessments of their needs made, often with expert assistance from a range of outside agencies. Individual education plans are detailed and very specifically set out objectives and teaching strategies as well as expected targets. Pupils for whom support is wholly school based have half-termly reviews. For those at higher stages of need and who have statements, there are termly reviews with teachers, learning support assistants and with parents and the pupils concerned. The school also provides substantial additional resources to ensure specific pupils are appropriately supported; key amongst them are the very good learning support assistants who work very effectively with these pupils.

22. The school has put considerable effort into improving resources for ICT, particularly within the past year when a new ICT suite of nine computers was installed. Standards are rising in the subject as a result and pupils' basic skills are improving. However, pupils' standards are still a relative weakness when compared to other core subjects. Some aspects of ICT are not developed enough and ICT is not yet being used sufficiently to help raise standards in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

The standard of welfare, care and support is very good. Relationships are very good and pupils trust their teachers and other staff and know that their views and opinions are valued. The quality of the academic and personal advice and guidance given to pupils is very good. The school has good systems for seeking and acting on pupils' views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Welfare support and pastoral care are very good; there is a high degree of mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.
- The school's ethos and environment contribute much to pupils' attitudes and social development.
- There are very good arrangements for child protection, health and safety.
- The quality of academic and personal guidance provided for pupils is very good.
- Pupils know their views and opinions are valued.

Commentary

23. The welfare and pastoral support provided by the school is very good. Pupils' personal and academic development is monitored and the guidance provided is matched very well to their individual needs. Staff know pupils well and provide an environment in which everyone is encouraged to work hard and achieve their best. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and effective and much improved since the previous inspection, when health and safety procedures were reported as being unsatisfactory. There is a good provision for first aid.
24. Pupils are very well supervised and are taught to use school equipment safely and observe high standards of personal hygiene. There is an effective personal, social and health education programme. The school is cleaned and maintained to a high standard. The headteacher, who is the child protection officer, ensures that all staff are well trained and able to exercise their child protection responsibilities with vigilance and care. There are well established links with all relevant external agencies involved in meeting the needs of vulnerable families and for dealing with child protection issues.
25. There are very good arrangements for welcoming and supporting pupils when they first enter the school. The arrangements for pupils when they transfer to the extensive number of available secondary schools are satisfactory. The relationships and trust among pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils express confidence that, when they have concerns or need to seek help or guidance, staff will listen and respond to their needs. Through the school council, which includes elected representatives from each class, pupil opinion is sought, considered and acted upon.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has achieved a very good partnership with parents. They have positive views and value the quality of education and personal care that it provides. Involvement with the local community is good and there are satisfactory links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views about the school's provision.
- There is a very close partnership between the school and parents.
- Links with the local community are well developed.

Commentary

26. The school has achieved a very good working partnership with parents and this has been well sustained since the previous inspection. Regular presentations are organised to help parents gain a better understanding of the curriculum, teaching and learning process. The annual progress reports provide a good overview of curriculum coverage and pupils' attainment and progress. Individual learning targets are discussed with both parents and their children during the termly consultation meetings and this, together with the curriculum briefings provided, empowers those parents who like to participate in and support their children's learning.
27. The positive views of parents and their satisfaction with the quality of education and care provided by the school are evident in the comments they made at the parents' meeting and returned pre-inspection questionnaires. A few parents indicated that they would like the school to seek their views and opinions in a more regular and formal way. Work is currently in progress to improve communications, particularly to seek parents' views more actively. Attendance at consultation meetings and for the governors' annual general meeting is good. Links with the community are well developed. There is an active parents' association that supports the school by organising a full programme of fundraising and social events, some of which attract participation from the wider village community. A significant number of parents assist in school and with sports coaching and other extra-curricular activities. There is an established link with both the village church of St Hugh's and the mother church. The school choir gives regular performances at a number of venues in and around the village.
28. There are good links with other primary schools. The school has an extensive sports fixtures programme with a group of rural schools and there are regular meetings between the teachers of the local cluster of primary schools. The links with receiving secondary schools are not as well established. Pupils transfer to as many as twelve different secondary schools, which makes it difficult for the development of close relationships. At the current time there is no specialist secondary school that can provide additional expertise to support and develop the curriculum resources at Cockernhoe. The curriculum is enhanced by a programme of visits to museums and other places of historic and cultural interest and the local vicar and other visitors contribute to assemblies and other school activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The staff share common aims and values and work closely together under the headteacher's very good leadership. The leadership of other key staff is good. The school's management and its governance are good. However, the race equality policy is only recently approved and its impact requires monitoring to meet statutory requirements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very clear direction for school improvement that all the staff understand and are working effectively towards.
- School self-review is well developed, especially the use of assessment, but the monitoring role of inexperienced subject co-ordinators needs developing.
- Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are influential in shaping its direction with the headteacher.
- Governors' monitoring of progress in school priorities is not yet systematic and structured.

Commentary

29. The school's success owes much to its very encouraging ethos that promotes a commitment to good behaviour and high achievement amongst all pupils. The headteacher has created a culture of hard work and respect for others throughout the school which is strongly supported by all the staff and governors. She has a very clear vision for the school's development that is well understood. Teachers and support staff work hard and effectively under her leadership to uphold the school's aims and values in a strong partnership with parents. Management is well developed; the school's management team consults and involves all staff in the school's development. It has established a systematic three year cycle of monitoring and review involving all subjects that is mostly in place, and is currently working towards its full implementation. One important priority is to help the new and inexperienced subject co-ordinators play a full role within it in monitoring and developing teaching and the curriculum in their subjects. The school can draw on the expertise of other very experienced teachers who provide very good leadership and management of their subjects in science and literacy.
30. The management team focuses its work on monitoring and supporting teaching, pupils' progress and priorities in its development plan. Very good assessment procedures are in place that enable staff to monitor closely every pupil's progress towards both short and longer-term targets in reading, writing, mathematics and science. As a result, additional support is focussed where it is most needed on the basis of these analyses; for example, through the work of learning support assistants and booster classes. Boys no longer underachieve compared to girls in Year 2 as a result of the school's prompt action following its analysis of the 2002 school test results. The school also spends substantially more on pupils with special educational needs than its income for them; the provision for these pupils is very well managed and some come off the register while at the school. Overall, there is a very strong commitment to ensuring every pupil succeeds that pervades the school. Staff performance management arrangements are helping to drive up standards further through training and support to improve teaching quality. They include support staff and are linked this year more closely to school priorities; for example, to improve staff ICT skills and pupils' writing standards. Very good arrangements were made for the induction and development of staff new to the school over the past two years.

31. Governors are strongly committed to the school. Through detailed headteacher and local education authority reviews and updates from staff with specific responsibilities, they monitor the school's work and have a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. However, their role in monitoring progress in school priorities such as the recent major spending to improve ICT facilities needs making more systematic and structured. The headteacher is currently working with governors to ensure their monitoring role meshes well with the school's developing self-review cycle, particularly focussed governor visits. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well in almost all respects. However, in 2003, they were late in identifying the need to update their policies to encompass race equality requirements but have since consulted widely on a new policy and its implications. The impact of the recently approved policy now requires monitoring. The very effective assessment systems in place ensure that no individual or group of pupils achieve less well than others.
32. Governors are involved in shaping the school's direction. The Chairs of committees, in particular, plan strategically with the headteacher to help develop the school. For example, some very good staff appointments have been made that addressed weaknesses in specialist expertise and which have since resulted in substantial improvements in the Foundation Stage and physical education provision. Recent improvements in the school's accommodation and ICT facilities are also having a positive impact on standards.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	348205
Total expenditure	355132
Expenditure per pupil	3414

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	56223
Balance carried forward to the next	49296

33. Financial controls are good and the school seeks good value for money in its purchases. The relatively large carry-forwards in the school's budget over the past two years were planned to fund building projects and a new ICT suite and governors are currently planning for further improvements in ICT resources and accommodation for Reception Year pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

In Cockernhoe school, the Foundation Stage is the time that children spend in the Reception class. Children start full-time in the autumn term and when they start, their experiences and knowledge vary. On the whole they are similar to or slightly better than those expected for children of the same age. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and has improved considerably since the last inspection. The relatively new co-ordinator provides good leadership and management and has achieved much in a short time and put in place a carefully planned and imaginative curriculum. This offers a wide range of interesting, practical activities that are well matched to children's individual needs. All children achieve well in all areas of learning, because the teaching is consistently good, and there are some very good features. The teacher and classroom assistant work closely together to ensure children experience a well-organised and productive day. They share the same high expectations of the children and lead by example, ensuring all children have a very good start to their school life. A notable feature of the teaching is the very high quality of the teacher's planning and record keeping, which ensures that children's progress in learning is monitored very carefully. The classrooms are appropriately resourced but the accommodation is barely adequate. The children do not have continuous access to a separate, secure covered area outside the classroom and this limits what teachers can plan for them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because staff have high expectations and make them clear from the start.
- Supportive relationships ensure children feel secure and confident.

Commentary

34. Very good teaching ensures that, during their time in the Reception class, children develop confidence and independence in this area of learning. Many are likely to exceed the standards expected for them by the time they leave. The teacher's expectations of what children can do for themselves and how they should behave are very high. From the time they start children are expected to settle down quickly in the morning, make choices about their work, get what they need for a task, play sensibly and put equipment and toys away at the end of the session. A notable example of this was seen when children changed independently for their physical education lesson and left their clothes in tidy piles as they had been taught. The teacher and support assistant share the same high expectations and provide very good role models for children. They are calm, well organised and approachable and treat children with respect and courtesy. They explain clearly in a way that children understand exactly what is required and children feel safe and happy in the school. They enter the hall confidently for whole school assembly and lead quietly and sensibly back to their classroom at the end. School and classroom rules

are made very clear from the start and children know why it is important to observe them. This leads to warm and trusting relationships and helps the children to behave in a friendly manner to one another.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Meticulous planning ensures that children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their language skills.
- The basic skills of reading and writing are taught systematically.

Commentary

35. Teaching is good and all children achieve well. The majority are well on course to reach and some to exceed the standards expected in this area of learning. Staff promote the development of speaking and listening very well by widening children's vocabulary in a variety of ways. They insist on careful listening at all times and ensure that children listen to each other courteously and take turns to speak. The very good relationships that exist between adults and children mean that children are confident to ask questions and talk about their work.
36. Children are taught their letter sounds systematically and adults make good use of games, clues, mnemonics and actions to help children learn them. Learning is particularly effective because the teacher uses visual aids like puppets and toys, and teaches children to exaggerate the sound of the letters to help them learn. As a result, all children are familiar with some letter sounds and higher attaining children can already identify letter blends at the start of a word. Children quickly develop an appreciation of books and recognise the links between letter sounds and words. Staff take every opportunity to foster a love of reading, and children have access to an appropriate range of reading material. They often choose to sit in the reading corner and share a book with a friend, discussing the pictures together. From the start children are taught the skills of writing and given many opportunities to write independently, when taking orders in the role play café, for example. They practise letter shapes regularly and soon develop the confidence to begin to write independently. Work seen from last year demonstrated that by the time they leave all children can attempt words for themselves and higher attaining children can write simple sentences correctly punctuated. At the time of this inspection early on in the year, the classroom did not have resources such as labels and banks of words on display to help children with their reading and writing, or to help the teacher reinforce learning at every opportunity.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are regular, planned opportunities for children's mathematical development.
- Mathematical concepts are taught well through practical activity.

Commentary

37. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well because the teacher makes learning fun. The teacher makes very good use of visual aids and activities such as toys, music and games to promote counting skills and help children learn language such as longer and shorter. The 'Cookie Monster' puppet proved a very successful helper in a lesson in which the children compared coloured paper strips. The teacher gives very clear explanations to children and maintains a good balance between direct teaching of mathematical skills and helping children learn through play. Children are given daily

opportunities to develop their number skills and learn the language of mathematics. However, opportunities for incidental counting practice in other classroom activities are sometimes missed and number lines to help children with their counting are not displayed clearly enough in the classroom. Although it is early in the year, children have already become familiar with numbers. Many can count beyond five and some higher attaining children count well beyond that. By the time they leave the majority should meet or exceed the standards expected in this area of learning.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning in this area links well with work in other areas of the curriculum.
- Play is used well to promote learning.

Commentary

38. Children achieve well in this area because teaching is good and there are many well planned opportunities for children to discover the world around them. Evidence from last year's work showed that children had carried out careful studies of the natural and man made world linked to a half-termly theme. In a topic on materials, for example, they searched for materials around the school, found out about magnets and investigated the suitability of the building materials used by the Three Little Pigs. Children use the computer regularly and know how to manipulate the mouse to draw and colour their pictures. Good opportunities for role play help children learn, and link learning with other areas. Children in the classroom café had been taught how to place a telephone order, how to use a menu and how to serve customers politely. They approached their tasks in a business-like manner as a result, writing orders, speaking clearly to their customers and becoming familiar with money. The teacher makes very good use of the outdoor area to support learning whenever she can, but the lack of a covered area restricts what can be done.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Physical education is well taught in formal lessons and children achieve well.
- Children have regular opportunities to practise fine movements.
- The outdoor play area is not secure or protected from the weather and children can only use the space when closely supervised.

Commentary

39. Children achieve well and most are on course to reach or exceed the standards expected by the end of the year. Teaching is good. Children are taught from the start the importance of exercise to maintain healthy bodies, and they carry out simple warm-up exercises with control and vigour. Very clear instructions and constant reinforcement ensure children's

movements are precise and controlled for their age. Children are particularly aware of space and take great care when running around to move safely. They are equally well controlled in their movements around the classroom, and are at the stage of development expected for their age in their use of pencils, paints, scissors and tools because they have many opportunities to use them. Children use the school's new climbing apparatus but do not have regular access to a secure outdoor area and appropriately sized climbing equipment to support their physical development. This limits the development of their gross motor skills. When they can they use the wheeled toys in a coned off section of the playground and control them sensibly.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music is well taught by a specialist teacher.
- There are daily opportunities for children to engage in creative activities.
- Resources for some activities are unimaginative.

Commentary

40. Good teaching based on detailed planning and assessment ensures children achieve well in this area and are likely to reach or exceed the standards expected. Children can select from activities such as the 'make and do' table to make models and pictures of their choice and have a wide range of materials to work with. They soon learn to work independently, trying out their own ideas, and their products are valued by the teacher and classroom assistant. Examples of last year's work included paintings, dyeing, printing, collage and model making. Work is usually linked to a classroom theme, such as making vegetable prints in connection with the topic on harvest, and this helps children make links with other work. Music is a strength of the school and is introduced early on. Children already recognise and play simple percussion instruments and stop and start playing in response to the teacher's conducting. They join in action songs confidently and listen carefully for the change in the music that signifies a new verse. Role play is used well to foster children's imagination but some of the resources are basic and do little to stimulate children's interest.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has maintained high standards in the subject since the previous inspection and pupils continue to achieve very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school.
- Rigorous procedures for marking and assessment give pupils a clear idea of how they can improve.
- The school uses a very good range of strategies to teach reading and writing.
- Pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not have enough opportunities for speaking in lessons.
- ICT is not used enough.
- The subject has been very well led and managed for some time.

Commentary

41. Standards in English were judged to be high at the previous inspection and the school has worked hard and successfully to maintain and improve them. Results in the national tests at Year 6 have been consistently high and results in 2003, the last published year, were no exception. When national comparative data for 2004 tests is available, it is likely

that results will continue to be well above average, representing very good achievement. Care has to be taken when interpreting national data as there are small numbers of pupils in the year group. Standards reached by the current Year 6 pupils are average and not as good as in previous years. Nevertheless, this still represents very good achievement for these pupils as many had lower starting points, and a relatively large proportion has special educational needs. Standards in Year 2 are currently well above average.

42. Pupils from minority ethnic groups, those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils all achieve as well as their classmates. The school has been working to raise the achievements of boys, who have not done as well as girls in the past, and has been successful.
43. Standards in speaking and listening are above the levels expected throughout the school except in Year 6, where they are broadly average. Most pupils speak clearly when answering questions and higher attaining pupils in all classes are confident to ask questions themselves, and speak aloud to their class and, in assemblies, to the whole school. Teachers work hard to increase their confidence and in the best lessons, pupils are given opportunities to discuss their ideas in pairs and small groups before reporting back to the class or writing them down. This was a very successful feature of a lesson in Year 2 when pupils discussed their experiences of losing something precious with a partner before writing three sentences about it independently. In Years 5 and 6, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to speak about their work, or work in small groups to prepare presentations to the rest of the class, and their vocabulary is not extended as much as it could be.
44. Pupils achieve very well in reading and develop an enjoyment of books as a result. Standards are well above average in all year groups except Year 6, where they are lower because of the lower starting point of these pupils. Teachers use a wide range of strategies for teaching and practising reading. There is a structured reading programme with pupils reading through a published scheme. They are heard often by adults at school and most read to adults at home also. Teachers also plan regular opportunities for group guided reading when more advanced reading skills are taught. Phonics are well taught from the start. Almost all pupils heard reading made good use of their knowledge of phonics to help them read new words, but fewer pupils used contextual clues to work out more difficult words. All pupils make regular use of the school library for study and for pleasure. They know how to use the Dewey system and many use the local libraries as well.
45. Pupils achieve very well in writing because teaching is very good. Pupils are taught a fluent, joined handwriting style and by the time they reach the end of Year 4 their writing is of a very good standard. Teachers plan many opportunities for writing both within English lessons and in other subjects such as history and religious education. By the time they reach Year 4, standards of writing are particularly high. Pupils write across a range of genres and for a variety of purposes. The work of higher attaining pupils is lively and imaginative. Vocabulary is well chosen for effect and pupils demonstrate an awareness of their target audience. In this year's Year 6, standards are likely to be lower in the national tests than they have been previously. Pupils give less attention to handwriting and presentation and some are poor spellers, in spite of much hard work to improve.
46. Teaching is very good overall. Teachers plan work in line with national guidelines for the subject and have very high expectations of their pupils. They establish a hardworking and business-like approach to lessons and no time is wasted. A feature of all lessons, and

particularly in the Year 5/6 class, is the very clear explanations which teachers give to pupils, to ensure the task is explained and expectations are clear. All teachers give very good feedback to pupils about their work, both through marking and orally, so that they know what they need to do to improve. Pupils have individual and group targets to work towards and this generates positive attitudes toward the subject. Teaching of the subject would be further improved by more consistent use of ICT for drafting and presenting work.

47. The subject has been very well led for some time, and teachers are constantly reviewing the school's results and looking at how to improve them further. Additional support is given for some groups of pupils in the form of booster classes and pupils with special educational needs receive extra help in most lessons from well qualified and experienced classroom assistants.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects, particularly history, where pupils write for a range of purposes. Speaking and listening skills are not planned as effectively as reading and writing skills, however.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils work hard and are very productive in lessons and at home. Pupils of all abilities achieve well, particularly in Years 1 to 4.
- Pupils' application of mathematics to solve problems is not emphasised enough in later Years 5 and 6.
- Lessons are challenging and well planned for the range of pupils' abilities and learning support assistants work very effectively to help pupils with special educational needs.
- Marking is very good. Teachers and pupils are well aware of their curriculum targets and progress towards them.
- Teachers provide very clear explanations and encourage pupils to explain and reason, but sometimes whole class teaching extends for too long.

Commentary

49. Standards by the end of Year 6 in 2003 were in line with both the national and similar schools' averages and were lower than in previous years. However, the results for 2004 show a considerable improvement in standards compared to 2003. Taking account of these pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2, they achieved well, with almost all reaching at least the expected level and about half above it. Pupils in the current Year 6 seen during the inspection are also achieving well. Their attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average; it is now about average.
50. Standards in Year 2 have been rising in recent years and were above those of similar schools. The results for 2004 continued this pattern of improvement with a high proportion of more able pupils achieving above the expected level. Inspection evidence shows these well above average standards are also being sustained in the current Year 2 where pupils of all abilities are achieving very well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported in lessons throughout the school so that they progress very well.
51. There are several reasons for the good achievements amongst pupils in mathematics. Pupils receive a very good grounding from Reception and in Years 1 and 2 through often very well planned lessons which are challenging and matched well to their abilities. Year 2 pupils learned efficient ways of adding and subtracting 9 or 11 from two-digit numbers and compared their methods with other strategies during a very challenging and successful sequence with their teacher. Their understanding of place value is developing very well. Learning support assistants are very well briefed and effective; for example, Year 1 pupils quickly learned to take away a penny from a range of items in the shop to make a 'sale price' as a result of lively activities with the teacher's assistant. Teachers throughout the school set high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and this shows in the high volume of work covered in pupils' books. Pupils consolidate their knowledge

and skills through practice and varied approaches that capture their interest and enthusiasm. Mental and oral mathematics sessions are particularly effective because a good pace is maintained and teachers use questioning skilfully to encourage pupils to explain and compare their mental strategies. Teachers raise the level of difficulty quite rapidly as pupils gain in confidence; for example, in Year 4 where pupils were able to check sums such as $39 + 25$ mentally by carrying out the inverse operation (subtraction) following whole class discussion of simpler examples. By Year 6, most pupils use formal written methods confidently to calculate using all four operations and they can order and compare decimal numbers and fractions. However, there is not enough emphasis placed in Years 5 and 6 on applying such mathematical skills to solve problems where pupils decide on the key steps and operations they need to use, and as a result they are not as confident in making decisions for themselves.

52. Teaching and learning are good. Some are very good, particularly in Years 1 to 4. Teachers have good subject knowledge and choose examples and activities carefully to bring out key learning points. Technical vocabulary features prominently in all classrooms so that pupils quickly assimilate new terms; for example, in identifying and describing features of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Teachers provide very clear explanations during class discussions, although sometimes, whole class teaching can extend for too long a period with insufficient time being given to individual and group work. A particular strength is teachers' use of assessment. All pupils have curriculum targets that they use with teachers to review their progress and consequently they understand how well they are doing. Homework is used effectively to extend the learning in lessons and pupils also receive a lot of feedback and guidance through teachers' marking.
53. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards in Year 2 have improved considerably as a result of the impact of additional booster classes for targeted pupils. Assessment information is used very well to monitor pupils and to identify those requiring additional support. The subject has been led well, particularly curriculum planning. The current co-ordinator is new and his management role is developing this term through some planned monitoring of teaching and reviews of pupils' work; the subject is a school focus for further development this year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Pupils' use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils estimate, measure and display data in several subjects, including science and physical education. They plot bar and line graphs by hand and with the aid of ICT, choosing appropriate representations. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show increasing awareness of shape, space and direction; for example, when sequencing instructions for a floor robot.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all abilities achieve very well throughout the school.
- Scientific enquiry skills are taught in a systematic and structured way and as a result, pupils quickly learn to think and work scientifically and their skills develop very well.

- Teachers provide clear explanations and encourage pupils to use appropriate technical vocabulary but sometimes class discussions are too long.
- Too little use is made of ICT, particularly in using sensors and data-loggers within science investigations to gather and present data.
- The subject is very well led by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator.

Commentary

55. Standards in Year 6 have been consistently high since the last inspection. In 2003, pupils' standards were well above similar schools and their achievements very good. The results for 2004 show an improvement over the previous year; all pupils achieved at least the expected level and a very large majority achieved above it. Taking account of their attainment in Year 2, these pupils also achieved very well. Inspection findings confirm the pattern of very good achievement is continuing throughout the school. Pupils' standards are a little above average in the current Year 6 but this year group were considerably below average on entry and when tested at the end of Year 2. Standards in Year 2 are well above average. The more able, gifted and talented pupils achieve very well as a result of the challenging work they do, particularly in their investigative work. Overall, the high standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been sustained.
56. The curriculum is very well planned and structured so that pupils build on their knowledge, understanding and skills systematically as they move through the school. Pupils' scientific enquiry skills in particular develop very well because teachers guide pupils in the key decisions they need to make through well chosen questioning and structured guides to planning and recording their investigations. Consequently, pupils quickly learn to think and work scientifically. They are encouraged to speculate and predict, observe and record accurately. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 investigating the make-up of soil carefully observed the layers formed when water was added to it and left for several days. They speculated about the nature of the components they observed and how they were formed, learning about the organic elements and mineral content during a very well conducted class discussion. Pupils learn to write in a structured way about their experiments and show very good reasoning when drawing conclusions from their evidence. By Year 6, most pupils show a very good understanding of scientific facts and principles such as plant reproduction through pollination and seed formation and dispersal and how various animals are adapted to living in their habitats. They use symbols to denote the components of electrical circuits and investigate what affects the brightness of bulbs in both series and parallel circuits. Overall, pupils are very productive in their work and write extensively about it, showing a good grasp of scientific vocabulary. The school also uses visits such as those to a butterfly farm and to Duxford air museum, where pupils took part in activities about forces, to encourage pupils' interest and enthusiasm for science.
57. Teaching and learning are very good. Lessons are planned very well to ensure the level of challenge is high and appropriate for the mixed ages of each class. Learning support assistants are very well briefed by teachers and provide very good guidance to pupils with special educational needs through a very good balance of questioning, prompting and encouragement. Teachers provide very clear explanations of key ideas and their questioning encourages pupils to speculate and explain. Technical vocabulary is introduced well and its use is emphasised to help pupils assimilate it quickly. For example, pupils in Year 2 learned about carbohydrates and proteins when choosing healthy options for a balanced diet. However, class discussions can sometimes extend for too long where group activities would better encourage pupils' speaking, listening and

presentation skills. Teachers sometimes use ICT with pupils to research and present information but access to resources such as computer projectors are limited and this affects the quality of discussion and illustration in lessons. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their investigative work, particularly sensors and data-loggers for gathering and presenting data.

58. The subject is very well led and managed by a very experienced specialist in science who is an excellent role-model to staff in her teaching. This is a key reason for the consistently high standards achieved over several years. Assessment arrangements are well developed and the curriculum regularly reviewed and adapted in the light of experience. Pupils' progress is assessed and recorded centrally and teaching monitored and supported effectively through training; for example, in teaching scientific enquiry skills and effective revision activities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils acquire good skills in researching and communicating information but their skills in using sensors to monitor and control events and in investigations are under-developed.
- Most lessons are well structured to demonstrate and practise new skills but sometimes the tasks provided do not challenge the more able pupils enough.
- Teachers' competence in their own ICT skills varies considerably; most have good skills but others need additional training to help raise standards further.
- ICT is not used enough to help raise standards in some subjects.

Commentary

59. Standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are about average overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their basic skills but their application of these skills within some subjects needs extending further. Pupils' progress as they move through the school is better in their ability to research information and to present it, often combining text with graphics and pictures, and with due regard for their intended audience. However, their skills in control technology and in using sensors to monitor and control events, for example in science and in design and technology in Years 5 and 6, are not developed enough because the school lacks sufficient resources for this area of pupils' learning.
60. The school has acquired a new ICT suite, in operation for about nine months, which is having a very positive impact on pupils in helping them acquire and practise their skills. By Year 2, most pupils are able to open documents and applications and to save files on the school's network. They learn to sequence instructions to make a floor robot follow a prescribed route and successfully extend these skills further in Years 3 and 4 using a control program. Pupils in Year 2 also learn to modify text for font size and colour and build on these skills in Year 3 and 4 to shape the text and combine it with graphics to convey key messages more clearly. These skills were demonstrated well in reports that Year 3 and 4 pupils wrote in the style of a newspaper based on their experiences with visitors who were dressed in Roman costumes. These presentations effectively combined pictures with appropriate text and in styles which were well suited for their readers.

61. By Year 6, pupils learn to create simple slide presentations to accompany their talks, often linked to their topic work in history; for example, life in World War 2 during the blitz. Those seen are clearly presented and of a satisfactory standard. However, the use of databases and spreadsheets as a tool for exploring and presenting data is less well developed. While pupils use them to sort and present information graphically in bar charts, such skills are not extended enough in Years 5 and 6; for example, in modelling the effect of changing values in the data or using simple formulae to derive information.
62. Teaching is mainly good, especially in Years 3 and 4 where the teacher's ICT skills are good. However, teachers' and learning support assistants' ICT skills vary across the school; some need additional training in specific applications to increase their confidence and competence. In the better lessons, new skills are demonstrated and practised well and problems solved quickly as they arise when pupils are working independently; this helps maintain a good pace to the work. Good use is made of the relatively small ICT suite of nine computers through careful planning of sequences of work to ensure all pupils have good access to computers. However, the tasks provided tend to be the same for all pupils so that the more able and experienced are sometimes not challenged enough. A framework for assessing pupils' skills as they progress is being developed.
63. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the role; she is very competent in her own ICT skills, understands what needs to be done and is leading the subject well. Management of the subject is satisfactory. All staff have been consulted on their training needs and a detailed action plan is in place to develop the provision further. There are signs of recent improvement in consequence. Pupils' work is reviewed but as yet, lessons have not been monitored, although plans are in place for the co-ordinator to work alongside other teachers to develop their skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. While ICT is used appropriately in some subjects, its use needs extending further in others. The lack of computer projectors and whiteboards in classrooms adversely affects the quality of presentation and extent of use of ICT across the curriculum. Pupils use the Internet to research and present information in several subjects, particularly history and geography. They develop their literacy skills in editing and refining their work and some communicate with former pupils through e-mail. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 create a pattern suitable for a duvet cover or curtain material in their art and design. However, not enough use is made of ICT in subjects such as mathematics, science and design and technology, especially in later years. For example, spreadsheets and sensors are not used enough to gather process and present data or to monitor and control events and the school at present does not have data-loggers for use in science investigations.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was not part of this inspection. History and geography were sampled.

65. Evidence from a review of pupils' work from last year and discussions held with them show that both **history** and **geography** have been taught systematically in line with the school's schemes of work. Pupils' work was of an appropriate standard for their age and ability and some particularly high quality work was noted in the books of pupils who were

in Year 2 and Year 4 last year. Discussions with pupils demonstrated that history is particularly well taught. Pupils gain information about the period they are studying from a range of historical sources including old documents such as the school's log books, artefacts and visits, and the Internet. Pupils in Year 6 who studied British history since the 1930s had been fascinated by the account of life during the period as described to them by a local resident, and this was clearly demonstrated in their detailed accounts of the lesson.

66. There was less evidence in older pupils' work of geographical skills being taught through relevant, practical activity. Year 6 pupils could recall using the local environment as a resource for learning further down the school, but apart from a river study, had made only limited use of the immediate area for field work. However, a residential visit for these pupils is being developed to cover field studies and map work more fully. Work in Year 2 books showed that a good deal of investigational work had been carried out based on the local village, weather studies over time and pupils' holiday experiences.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music was inspected in full and is reported below. Physical education and art and design were both sampled. A discussion was held with the co-ordinator for physical education, three lessons or part-lessons were observed and samples of after-school sports were seen. No lessons were seen in art and design but samples of pupils' work on display and in their sketchbooks were reviewed. Design and technology was not inspected.

67. The standards seen in **physical education** are about average by Year 2 but above average by Year 6. Pupils achieve well in the subject and it is much improved since the last inspection when key weaknesses were reported. Many of these improvements are due to the appointment of a teacher with specialist expertise who has been very innovative in his role as co-ordinator. The school has expanded the range of sporting activities it offers, especially competitive sports such as cross-country running, football and tag-rugby for both boys and girls, and netball. There has also been much success in competitive sporting events with other schools in the last two years. Training has been provided for staff that has increased their subject knowledge and pupils benefit from expert coaching through the school's link with a professional football club. Teaching and learning in the lessons observed were at least good. In one excellent lesson, Year 5 and 6 pupils developed and practised their gymnastic skills with excellent guidance from their teacher. Pupils were totally absorbed in their work and demonstrated high standards of control and movement. The lesson was very well planned to make the best use of the hall space, accommodating half the class while the very well briefed learning support assistant led a very productive training session in football skills with others in the class. The school has recently been awarded the FA Charter Standard for its involvement in promoting football.
68. No lessons were seen in **art and design** and there was very little evidence of work from last year, as pupils had taken most of it home. The small amount of work on display in classrooms from last year was of appropriate quality and some high quality work was seen in the Year 3 and 4 class. Of particular note were the willow pattern plates that pupils had designed, some in intricate detail, and all carefully drawn and coloured. Pupils' sketchbooks demonstrate that time is given appropriately to planning and designing, and indicate that the scheme of work for the subject is followed as intended.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well taught by specialist teachers throughout the school.
- A wide range of clubs and musical opportunities within and out of school contribute to very good achievement.

Commentary

69. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection but discussions with adults and pupils about the school's provision showed that the high standards and very good quality provision seen at the previous inspection have been maintained. Standards at Year 2 and Year 6 are high. All classes are taught weekly by the headteacher, who has considerable experience and a secure understanding of how the subject should be taught to each age group. Consequently teaching quality is very good. The subject is well resourced with a good range of tuned and untuned instruments and pupils have frequent opportunities to compose and perform in lessons. The youngest pupils know how to handle instruments appropriately and respond to simple conducting signals by the teacher, listening carefully for their turn to join in. By the time they start Year 6, most pupils can maintain four-part playing and follow a simple score reasonably well for an extended period. The teacher moves the lesson on at a fast pace, ensuring that all pupils have a turn to play and all are actively engaged in music making throughout.
70. The school offers a good range of instrumental lessons and the visiting music teacher provides very good support to the headteacher. This enables the school to offer recorder clubs and a school choir, and to give music a high profile in school productions and outside musical events. The quality of the music makes a very positive contribution to assemblies, in which pupils sing with confidence, often in parts, and recorder players add descants.
71. The subject has been very well led and managed for some time, and the scheme of work ensures that teaching is systematic from year to year. Pupils enjoy their music and the school is rightly proud of its success in this area.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education was sampled. One lesson was seen and elements of this area of learning observed in other lessons. Displays of pupils' involvement in activities such as residential visits and other events were also reviewed.

72. The school's climate strongly encourages all pupils to work hard and show high standards of behaviour and a respect for others; this makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development and self-esteem.
73. The school's personal, social and health education programme is planned mainly as an integral part of the curriculum. There is a strong emphasis placed on health education, particularly through physical education, sporting activities and science. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the key features of a healthy diet in science and

suggest ways of ensuring meals are balanced for their needs. Pupils also learn about the dangers associated with the mis-use of drugs and medicines and of smoking within their science curriculum. The great majority of pupils are involved in the after-school sporting activities available. The school is currently working towards achieving a Healthy Schools Award this year.

74. Pupils are encouraged to think about their own lives and their impact on others in many ways. For example, in a very effective sequence, Year 3 and 4 pupils discussed and proposed their own class rules of behaviour and courtesy that would help them work productively together, both at school and at home. Through its sponsorship of children in the Philippines, the school also helps pupils reflect on the lives of others less fortunate and how to help them. Residential and other visits also make a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development.

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	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	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	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	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).

