

INSPECTION REPORT

ELMS FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sheldon

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103381

Headteacher: Mrs M I Smith

Lead inspector: Don Gwinnett

Dates of inspection: 4 - 6 July 2005

Inspection number: 266792

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	305
School address:	Dorncliffe Avenue Sheldon Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B33 0PJ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Brian Moseley
Date of previous inspection:	1/6/2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Elms Farm is an above average sized school serving part of the Sheldon ward of Birmingham. The socio-economic circumstances of the pupils are below average. Children's attainments on entry to the nursery are below average but cover the full range of attainment. Whilst most pupils are of white British ethnicity, two speak English as an additional language. At the time of the inspection there were 305 pupils on roll. There were 36 pupils with special educational needs, ranging from moderate learning difficulties to autism. The proportion with special educational needs is average, and the proportion with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is average. The number of pupils leaving and joining the school other than at the usual times is above average. The school has Excellence in City status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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9942	Susanna Stevens	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's **effectiveness** is **good**, and it gives good value for money. Children enter the nursery with standards that are below average, but cover the full range of attainment. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, standards are average. The quality of teaching is good overall and all pupils achieve well. The school is well led and managed and the headteacher continually seeks ways to improve standards still further.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The achievement of most pupils is good and for those who have been in school since reception it is very good.
- The overall good quality of teaching promotes good achievement, but in weaker lessons, teaching is less imaginative and pupils' behaviour deteriorates.
- Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour help them to learn well.
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy.
- Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics but not as good as in English and science.
- The attendance of some pupils is poor.

Improvement since the school's last inspection has been very good. Standards by Year 6 have risen in English, mathematics and science as a result of better teaching. The better monitoring of teaching and learning means that barriers to progress are quickly identified and rectified. Assessment information is better used to set targets. However, the poor rate of attendance has been largely unaffected by the considerable efforts to improve it.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

Achievement is **good** overall. Results in the 2004 national tests for Year 2 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. During the inspection, standards in Year 2 were above average in reading, writing and science and were average in mathematics. Achievement is good in reading, writing and science and satisfactory in mathematics. Standards seen in Year 6 were average in English and science and below average in mathematics. This current Year 6 group contains a large number of pupils with special educational needs and this is why there is a difference between current standards and the 2004 results. Achievement is good in English and science and satisfactory in mathematics. Achievement is not as good in mathematics because pupils find some lessons dull and do not apply their knowledge well enough to new situations. In reception, children achieve well and standards are average in relation to the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception in all the areas of learning except physical

development, where they are above average. Overall, all groups of pupils make good progress during their time in school, including those with special educational needs and the gifted and talented. Achievement is better the longer pupils have been in the school.

Pupils' personal qualities are **good** overall. Their attitudes and behaviour are good overall, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attendance is well below average, despite the school's good efforts to improve it, but their punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Strengths across most years include logical and thoughtful planning of lessons with clear learning objectives and good management of pupils' behaviour. In most lessons learning is productive because pupils know what they have to do to improve. Whilst there are no common weaknesses, some teaching is unimaginative and fails to inspire pupils. This is particularly the case for some pupils in Years 4 and 5, and here management of behaviour is occasionally unsatisfactory. The curriculum is satisfactory, as is extra-curricular provision. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils are well challenged. Links with parents, the community and other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides very good leadership. She has a very clear vision, knows the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and acts decisively to bring about improvement. The budget is carefully managed so that there are sufficient resources for new developments. Other key staff provide good overall leadership and management, although some middle managers are not quick enough to see new and exciting ways of doing things, so pupils' performance fluctuates from subject to subject. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored and weak practice is quickly identified and corrected. The work of the governing body is good. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and the weaknesses of the school and provide good support with strategic planning. Statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are satisfied with the work of the school in most areas. They particularly like the good arrangements for settling children into the school and the overall good quality of teaching, which means that pupils work hard. They feel that the new headteacher is approachable and listens well to their views. The inspection team agrees with them.

Pupils like most things about the school, but some think that some of the lessons could be more interesting and fun and that some pupils could behave better. The inspection team agrees that learning could sometimes be more fun but feels that pupils behave well in most classes.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve teaching in Years 4 and 5.
- Raise achievement in mathematics by improving the way pupils apply their mathematical knowledge to everyday situations.

- Continue to strive to improve attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good for both boys and girls in the Foundation Stage, and is good by Year 2 and Year 6. Although standards are average in English and science in Year 6, achievement is good. In mathematics, standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of overall good teaching; those pupils who have been in school since reception achieve very well.
- Pupils have a good start in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards have risen noticeably in English and science since the previous inspection.
- Standards in mathematics are below those in English and science.
- There is variation in achievement between different classes in Years 3 to 6 because of variability in the quality of teaching.

Commentary

1. Most pupils start school with below average skills. Teachers in the nursery and reception provide thoughtfully planned activities that prepare pupils well for formal learning. Teachers pay particular attention to the development of social skills so that pupils relate well to each other and to adults. The majority of pupils reach the early learning goals in the six areas of learning by the end of reception, and have achieved well.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.6 (15.4)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.8 (14.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.4 (16.0)	16.3 (16.2)

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

2. Test results in Year 2 in 2004 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools, results were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The results followed an upward trend that was evident in the results for the previous two years. Improvement results from a steady focus on the quality of teaching and better systems for measuring individual pupils' progress whereby specific targets can be set, against which their rate of improvement can be measured. The provisional results from 2005 are broadly similar to those of 2004. These show that pupils have improved in reading and mathematics but have slipped back a little in writing. This is because a higher proportion of pupils arrived with lower standards of speaking and listening skills, which has held back the development of their writing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
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English	27.7 (24.8)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.5 (25.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	30.1 (26.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Year 6 results in 2004 were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. When compared to similar schools, results were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. However, the 2004 year group were highly motivated pupils who were all eager to learn. The results of 2005 are not likely to be as good (see next paragraph) and this is why inspectors feel that pupils' achievement is overall good rather than very good. Nevertheless, the 2004 results were a significant improvement over the previous year, when results were well below average in each subject. The improving results show the impact of improved teaching, which was unsatisfactory in the last inspection, and better systems for tracking pupils' progress. Decisive actions taken over the previous year to improve performance have worked: deficiencies in pupils' learning are identified earlier and corrective action is taken to ensure that their achievement doesn't suffer.

4. The provisional results for 2005 are lower than in 2004, particularly in mathematics. There are three main reasons for this:
 - The current Year 6 contains almost double the proportion of pupils with special educational needs compared to other classes.
 - A large number of pupils entered the school after the normal entry age.
 - A small group of boys are reluctant learners. Although they have received good compensatory support, these boys show pronounced behaviour problems that disadvantage their learning.

Pupils did less well in mathematics than in English and science because pupils are not sufficiently skilled at applying their mathematical understanding to new situations. The school has focused very heavily on English and this has paid off. Lessons are engaging and all pupils make good progress. Teachers use assessment well in English and pupils are clear about what they have to do to improve. The school knows that efforts have to be made to improve the mathematics curriculum and planning is underway.

5. Improvements in English and science are particularly noticeable in Years 3 to 6. In each subject, pupils were well below average in 2003. In 2004, test scores were above average in English and well above average in science. The previous inspection report noted weaknesses in the older classes as a result of weak teaching and inconsistent use of assessment. This has now changed. The improved teaching and sharper evaluation of pupils' progress has resulted in more stimulating teaching and higher levels of challenge. Where there are weaknesses in teaching, there has been good support to initiate improvement. Pupils enjoy their work more and perform well as a result. Other actions that have resulted in a higher rate of improvement include teachers' focus on pupils' individual needs, which means that pupils who have special educational needs or who are higher attainers have their specific learning needs increasingly well met. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, which enables them to meet the well focused targets on their individual education plans. Many pupils are taken off the special needs register during their school life due to this effective support. Previous reviews of the school indicated that the lower and higher attainers were not progressing as well as they should. The school targeted these pupils and this is a significant contributory factor in the improved value added scores.

6. Whilst progress is good overall, this flattens out for some pupils in Years 4 and 5 before picking up again in Year 6. This is because some teaching, whilst satisfactory, does not stimulate

enough curiosity or sense of adventure in pupils. Whilst there is clear evidence of some pedestrian work in other classes, it is most noticeable for some pupils in Years 4 and 5. This has been recognised by the senior leaders, who have taken action to improve matters. However, the results of this action are not yet fully apparent in pupils' performance in these year groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good with personal development a strong feature. Attendance is well below average but punctuality for the majority is satisfactory with most pupils eager to attend promptly.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to learning and generally good behaviour help them to achieve well.
- Relationships between pupils and staff, and amongst pupils themselves, are good as a result of the caring ethos of the school.
- Pupils develop confidence and self-esteem and are willing to take responsibility when opportunities are presented.
- In a few lessons, if pupils lose interest behaviour deteriorates.
- Attendance remains poor despite the good efforts of the school.

Commentary

7. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' attitudes are very good; they listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. Throughout the school, the majority of pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous, responding well to the caring ethos of the school. Where teaching is less secure, there is a lack of pace and pupils lose interest, becoming noisy and inattentive with some displaying immature or challenging behaviour. Some children enter school with underdeveloped social skills, but they learn the rules quickly, responding to the stimulating atmosphere and learning the routines with enthusiasm. They enjoy the range of activities provided for them and are eager to learn and work together, and so standards are average in relation to the goals expected for pupils at the end of the reception year in personal development. Pupils show a pride in being members of their school community and the many sports trophies result from their achievements in the activities the school provides. All pupils discuss and agree class rules and are aware of the high standards for behaviour set by the school; they clearly understand right from wrong. Staff deal quickly and effectively with any incidents of bullying and pupils are confident they will receive help from staff if needed. No pupils have been excluded from school and the school deals effectively with all forms of harassment.
8. When pupils are given opportunities to work independently or in groups, they co-operate in sharing ideas and concentrating on the task. From their earliest days in the nursery, children are encouraged to become independent and take on tasks and responsibilities, such as finding their own photograph and self-registering. As they move through the school, pupils take on responsibilities such as being school council members, class monitors or, in Year 6, a prefect. Pupils show increasing maturity in their personal development, carrying out tasks seriously and showing pride in their achievements. Staff praise and encourage pupils whenever they excel and act as good role models, happily sharing a pupil's pride when reaching a target, for example.
9. Pupils from ethnic minority groups bring an experience of other cultures to the school, and relevant visits to museums or various places of worship ensure that pupils experience the traditions of other countries. Pupils study religions and cultures of other countries in religious

education and geography lessons and many of them holiday abroad, returning with interesting artefacts to show their peers.

10. The good ethos of the school, with attractive posters and displays of, amongst other subjects, history and art, helps to promote spiritual development. Personal, social and health education and assemblies successfully contribute to the pupils' achievements, providing useful opportunities for reflection and thoughtfulness.
11. Attendance continues to be well below average, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The school works hard to improve the low figure and attendance is satisfactory for most pupils. However, there remains a persistent minority who do not attend school often enough. Some parents do not contact the school about absence and, despite requests, a number of families take holidays in term time, many beyond the number of days sanctioned by the school. There are good measures and routines in the school to monitor and improve attendance, which have recently been improved further.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.5
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. Overall good teaching enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning and achieve well. A sound curriculum, a good quality of care and good links with parents, the community and other schools each contribute to good achievement.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are broadly good. Teaching and learning are good in all subjects where judgements could be made except in mathematics, ICT and religious education, where they are satisfactory. Assessment of pupils' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' detailed planning and clear learning outcomes promote systematic learning.
- Teachers manage their pupils well and, as a result, pupils work very well both independently and collaboratively.
- Most teachers match tasks very closely to the needs of all pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning for some pupils in Years 4 and 5 is not as good as in the rest of the school.
- Some unimaginative teaching fails to inspire pupils, and occasionally deteriorating behaviour is not checked well enough.
- The good assessment procedures give pupils a good understanding of what they need to do to improve.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 40 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	12 (30%)	14 (35%)	13 (32.5%)	1 (2.5%)	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.

12. Teachers' detailed and methodical planning provides a good breadth and depth to learning that helps all pupils make good progress. Most teachers list the learning outcomes for pupils in their planning, and often share these by writing them up or telling the pupils at the beginning of each lesson. For example, in a very good music lesson for Year 2, the teacher had not only planned exactly what she wanted the pupils to do by the end of the lesson that they couldn't do at the beginning, but also set three success criteria by which pupils could judge their learning:
- I can sing a new song
 - I can recognise high and low notes
 - I can think about how our music can be made better.
- As a result, pupils were very clear about their learning and made very good progress. Where lessons are satisfactory rather than good, there is not always as tight a match between targets and work set as in other lessons. However, pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers, are usually given tasks that are well matched to their needs and this means that lessons are inclusive, with all being challenged to learn well. Support staff work well with pupils with special educational needs so that they meet their targets.
13. Teachers' high expectations of behaviour result in lessons that are orderly, calm and busy with a positive impact on learning. Teachers manage pupils in a purposeful but welcoming way that encourages them to be mature, considerate and attentive to what is happening. As a result, the ethos for learning in nearly all rooms promotes good achievement with little disturbance or interruption. Whilst the quality of teaching and learning is good overall, weaker teaching was evident in Years 4 and 5. This was why the overall quality of teaching in mathematics, religious education and ICT was judged to be satisfactory overall rather than good. Parents identified problems in Years 4 and 5 in the meeting before the inspection. Inspectors appreciate their concerns, but note that the school is aware of the issue and is taking steps to make improvements.
14. In the pupils' survey, done before the inspection, pupils felt that some lessons could be more fun, and this was reflected in some lessons seen during the inspection. Where teaching is weaker, pupils are sometimes given repetitive tasks which fail to stimulate. Pupils do as they are told, but don't excel in their work because they are not sufficiently involved and engaged. There was only one lesson where the management of behaviour was poor. Here the teacher spoke over the children without insisting on quiet. As a result, many pupils didn't listen to what was being said, became bored and made little progress. The over-effusive praise for pupils was undeserved.
15. Some of the best lessons, for example those in Year 1 and 2, were close to excellent. In a PSHE Year 1 lesson for example, the teacher blindfolded pupils so that they could appreciate what it was like to be blind. This was followed by a range of practical and written activities that fired their imagination and enthusiasm. In mathematics, some lessons are prescriptive with a lack of adventure. Overall, teachers do not give enough attention to helping pupils use mathematics in new situations. Basic skills are there, and are consolidated methodically, but interesting opportunities for pupils to apply those skills are not sought out and used. This results in achievement in mathematics not being as good as in English and science.

16. Assessment has improved since the last inspection, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Most teachers give pupils small personal targets to work towards to give them an understanding of what they need to do to improve. This is particularly evident in English books and in Year 1 mathematics books. Marking is generally well done, although some books in Year 4 and 5 classes are marked in a hurry with few comments to take pupils forward. By contrast, Year 2 books were very well marked with helpful suggestions for improvement and lots of positive comments.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and provides a good start for children.
- Pupils of all abilities and needs are well catered for.
- Some planning lacks excitement and purpose.

Commentary

17. The curriculum adequately covers all subjects of the National Curriculum. Sufficient time is now allocated to all subjects; some subjects are taught in blocks so that pupils can more readily complete units of study and recognise the progress in their learning and skills development. PSHE is well planned; all classes have timetabled lessons and a programme of study is followed throughout the school.
18. The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception is good overall. Teachers make good use of national guidelines and this has helped children to attain overall average standards by the end of the current reception year. The school has correctly identified the need to develop even stronger links between the nursery and the reception classes so that there is a smooth continuity from one to the other.
19. The weakness in writing skills and opportunities to use them, reported at the last inspection, has been largely remedied. Writing standards have improved but opportunities to apply these skills appropriately in other subjects are still developing. Much of the planning for subjects appropriately follows national guidelines. Nevertheless, one result of following national planning has been that teachers have been cautious about doing new things that are radically different or innovative. This has contributed to some lessons being prescriptive, with a lack of excitement and adventure. The school is now beginning to adapt national plans and guidance to make relevant and purposeful links between subjects. For example, in literacy, non-fiction texts and big books are used to make the links, and in history pupils write diary entries of past events. However, the school recognises that further developments need to be made in order to make the curriculum more exciting and enjoyable as a whole. To this end, the range of visits and visitors is being extended and careful checks made of the relevance of them to the topics being studied. The school recognises the need to promote the arts further in order to add greater creativity to pupils' learning experiences. The range of extra-curricular clubs and activities sufficiently enhances classroom learning, although the lack of provision in music adversely affects pupils' achievement.
20. Lessons are generally planned to take account of the range of ability within classes. This helps to ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and the opportunities provided. The work for higher attaining pupils is now more challenging and the support for lower attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language enables them to be fully included in lessons and the life of the school. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs; their learning and behavioural needs are well identified and supported so that they have full access to the curriculum.
21. There is an adequate match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. Overall the accommodation and resources are sufficient for the needs of the curriculum. The library has been relocated and the stock of books improved; resources for topics are stored centrally and are readily accessible; reading materials have been improved and good storage provided for them, which has contributed to rising standards in reading.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for ensuring the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils and provides them with good support and guidance. Pupils are involved well in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good relationships with adults help pupils to feel secure, enabling them to concentrate on their learning.
- Pupils are protected by efficient procedures for health and safety.
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

22. There is a consistently good awareness of health and safety issues. Regular checks of the premises ensure that the school is clean, healthy and safe. Risk assessments are completed and recorded as required. Fire drills are carried out regularly and there is good provision for first aid. Child protection arrangements, including Internet security, are fully implemented and known to all staff.
23. The school has a good level of personal care for all its pupils, based on trust and good relationships between pupils and staff. The quality of relationships is less strong in classes where there has been a large turnover of staff. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a very good relationship with their teachers and other adults working with them. There is much mutual respect and good humour throughout the school, which gives pupils the confidence to ask for help and to respond well to praise or criticism when appropriate. This ensures that pupils are supported and guided well, both personally and academically. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress. The systems for assessing pupils' attainment and checking their progress now make better use of data collected more effectively to support pupils' learning in all classes.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are identified through the careful monitoring of teachers' initial concerns. Individual education plans are generally well written and are regularly reviewed. Clear learning targets related to literacy and numeracy enable support to be well focused. Good support for pupils with behavioural needs, particularly the support given by the learning mentor, helps to diffuse difficult situations and to maintain a calm learning environment. Their individual behaviour plans are thoughtfully constructed to meet individual needs. Pupils with statements receive their full entitlement of support.
25. Staff are very keen to seek and respond to pupils' views. Members of the school council are known to pupils and staff. Although they do not meet regularly, as yet, pupils do discuss suggestions and concerns and take pride in helping to run their school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with the majority of parents and good links with the community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents have positive views about the work of the school.
- Parents receive good information about their children's progress and feel able to approach staff with any concerns.
- Good links with the community are used to broaden the curriculum, and links with other schools ensure effective transfer arrangements for Year 6 leavers.
- Some parents do not send their children to school regularly enough and often fail to advise the school of reasons for absence.

Commentary

26. The response from parents, in both the questionnaire issued before the inspection and a pre-inspection meeting with them, indicates that most parents feel the school is doing a good job. Parents find the headteacher and staff welcoming, feel the teaching is good and appreciate the fact that staff expect

pupils to work hard. However, parents feel that more activities could be provided out of lessons. Inspectors agree with these views.

27. Parents receive good information on general matters through regular newsletters and personal contact with staff. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report are written clearly and informatively. Consultation meetings provide parents with clear guidance about their child's progress, and the use of target setting helps parents to support their children's learning at home. Annual reports give satisfactory summaries of pupils' progress and their specific strengths and weaknesses in learning. Targets for improvement are set for all pupils. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend reviews; they receive copies of individual education plans. Parents help with visits and a few help in school. Fund raising activities by the Parent Teacher Association are very well supported and provide additional sums to subsidise resources, such as playground equipment. The headteacher, who is very well regarded by pupils and parents, makes time to speak to any parents who have concerns. Pupils say 'she is very nice'. Parents' views are valued by the school and any problems are dealt with swiftly, or suggestions analysed and action taken as appropriate.
28. The school has well-established links with the community, using visits to provide a stimulus for topic work and to make learning more interesting. Visitors from the community are invited into school, and the community group uses the school house for meetings and after-school activities. Links with the cluster group of primary schools are good and sound links with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer further enhance pupils' learning.
29. Despite regular reminders, a small group of parents condone regular absence. This makes it difficult for the school to fully support their child's learning and makes it look as though the school's absence figures are worse than they are. However, the school is persistent in its attempts to share its concerns with parents, most of whom respond very well and have a positive relationship with the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides very good leadership. The leadership of the senior staff is good. Management is good, and the governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's very good leadership and management have a pervasive impact on the school and promote continual improvement.
- Structures set up to monitor and evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses are resulting in improved standards.
- Some managers are too cautious in their approaches to school improvement.
- The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and use their own skills well.
- Finances are well managed and the school evaluates its spending carefully.

Commentary

30. The headteacher provides strong leadership and a commitment to raising standards still further in all areas of the school's work. As a result, the school has improved its standards considerably in the last 18 months, following a period when results were too low. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff, who share her vision and work well as a team to improve standards and provision. Following a period of uncertainty, during which a large number of staff left and new staff were appointed, the school staffing is now more stable. Support by the local education authority, advice from Her Majesty's Inspectors and hard efforts by the staff have helped the school to see a significant upturn in pupils' performance.

31. Following the last inspection, when the school had serious weaknesses, there has been an improvement in the way that the school measures and refines its performance. One of the most crucial measures is improved monitoring of teaching. As a result of regular monitoring, weaknesses in teaching have been identified and largely rectified. Consequently, the quality of pupils' learning has improved and this has had a direct impact on overall standards. The quality of the curriculum was reviewed in order to provide all pupils, including the most and least able, with a suitable range of activities. This has meant that a larger proportion of higher attaining pupils are now reaching the higher levels and this has added to more inclusive learning and improvements in results.
32. Senior managers and staff now have a better understanding of how to use test data, which they are beginning to use in a predictive way to target pupils' learning. In Year 6, this has meant that pupils who might originally have just missed getting the grade expected of them now reach these grades, with a positive impact on overall standards. However, staff are still not sufficiently adroit at using assessment information to target small sequential improvements to individual pupils' learning. Where this happens, for instance in Year 1, it is effective in improving pupils' performance, but not all teachers do this incisively.
33. The school has had to be very systematic in the way that it has approached school improvement. As a result, middle managers have not been as innovative or forward looking as they could have been. They have tended to follow predictable and agreed routines that result in incremental improvement rather than exploring more radical and ambitious ways of driving up standards. The results of this restraint are evident, for example, in mathematics lessons where some learning lacks a fun element. Pupils in Year 6 shared such sentiments in a discussion with an inspector, and this was further confirmed in the pupils' survey undertaken before the inspection. Special educational needs provision is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of the needs within the school and how they are being supported. She has identified the need to provide further training for teaching assistants in their support role, particularly in numeracy and literacy, and to develop closer links with secondary schools to aid transfer.
34. Governors play a stronger role in the development of the school. At the time of the last inspection, governors did not have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are now much better informed and take a keen interest in ensuring that inadequacies are identified and strategic developments followed through. Governors question the headteacher about what is working and what has to be done and support her well when decisions are made. Governors visit the school regularly to help in classes and most governors attend the regular school functions, which helps to provide a firmer steer to the work of the school. Governors comply with all legal requirements.
35. The school manages its income well, ensuring that spending is directed to raising standards and retaining the level of staffing. The end-of-year deficit was judiciously planned in consultation with the local authority to ensure a more advantageous pupil-teacher ratio. As a result, it was possible to target the learning of all groups more successfully. There are sufficient resources for learning, and now a suitable number of computers that are used across subjects. The principles of best value are satisfactorily applied; the school compares its results and achievements with other schools, consults with others who can provide improvement support and ensures that it procures good service and the best possible price from suppliers.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	929,891
Total expenditure	949,546
Expenditure per pupil	3,113

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	5,384
Balance carried forward to the next	-14,271

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. The good provision in both the nursery and reception classes has been maintained well since the last inspection, despite a high teacher turnover.
37. Children enter the nursery class in the September after their third birthday and normally attend part time for the year prior to entering the reception classes. This year, reduced numbers have enabled these children to attend full time. Children's skills and knowledge on entry to the school are below average in all areas of learning except physical development. Particular weaknesses in speaking and listening, and also social skills, have been identified by the school. Consistently good and sometimes very good teaching and very good support from support staff ensure that children achieve well and the majority will reach the goals they are expected to meet by the time they enter Year 1. This is a broadly similar picture to the last report.
38. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. In the absence of a Foundation Stage co-ordinator, monitoring of teaching and learning by both the headteacher and deputy head has helped ensure that the legacy of good planning has been implemented well and children's needs met. Daily assessment routines are securely established but the outcomes of these assessments, particularly at the end of the year, are not interpreted accurately. The school has recognised that links between the nursery and reception classes need to develop further and a good start has been made with joint trips and visits recently taking place.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All adults present very good role models and as a result children behave well and show consideration for others.
- Routines are clearly established that help create a secure working environment in which children learn to become independent and to work and play together well.

Commentary

39. Very good teaching in this area ensures that children achieve very well in all classes and this is reflected in good and often very good attitudes and behaviour by the time they enter Year 1. Standards are average in relation to the goals expected for pupils at the end of the reception year. Teachers and support staff have very high expectations and are very good role models, guiding, praising and thanking children as appropriate. This consistency of approach in all classes encourages children to co-operate well with each other, sharing equipment and taking turns when necessary. In all classes they move quietly from activity to activity, use equipment sensibly and clear it away carefully. The support assistant in the nursery moves around the class, encouraging children to work together and to gain the most from their chosen activity. Teachers expect children to accept responsibilities such as taking the register to the office and all children have the opportunity to choose activities and whether to work alone or with a friend. Children with special educational needs are included very well in activities as all staff are aware of their needs and are at hand to guide and support as necessary.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good focus on speaking and listening helps this area develop well
- Children's reading develops well because they share books at school, visit the local library regularly and take books home to share with their parents and carers

Commentary

40. Teaching is good and children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Standards are average in relation to the goals expected for pupils at the end of the reception year. All adults are skilled at asking questions that encourage the children to reflect and explain themselves, thereby successfully improving their speaking and reasoning skills. Children's speaking and listening skills are further developed by often being encouraged to discuss the possible answers to questions with a friend during class discussions. There is an emphasis on teaching the children the sounds that letters make and one child was praised for correctly predicting that the word 'naughty' ended in a 'y.' Children develop a positive attitude to books and reading. They visit the local library once a fortnight to browse and borrow books and are encouraged to take books home to share with parents and carers. They often settle comfortably in the book corners and share a book with a friend. Children in a reception class successfully read out loud the story of the Three Little Pigs, well supported by parents and support staff. Opportunities to write are available in every class and children were proud to show their cards and letters written for their parents and friends. An appropriate emphasis on writing for a purpose is developed by the end of the reception year.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are deployed well to engage children in a wide range of activities that encourage them to develop positive attitudes toward mathematics.
- Most children can count and recognise numbers to ten, and a significant minority to twenty and beyond.

Commentary

41. An exciting range of activities that complement and support good teaching ensure that children, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and reach average standards in relation to the goals expected for pupils at the end of the reception year. In all classes children are developing very positive attitudes to mathematics. In the nursery they could identify a variety of shapes and some confidently described a cube and a cylinder. Understanding was further consolidated as they made patterns with gummed squares and triangles, built houses with cubes and drew shapes using stencils. In reception classes some children identified numbers up to a hundred and most could count confidently to ten and many to twenty and beyond. In one reception class most children understood that if you had eight then you needed two more to make ten, and in the other a child stated that 'there are a hundred pennies in a

pound.’ Most are beginning to record numbers accurately and the more able are recording simple addition and subtraction facts.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The local environment and visits further afield are used well to extend children’s learning.
- Children in reception classes have direct access to a rich learning environment in the school grounds.

Commentary

42. Teaching is good, most children achieve well and standards are average in relation to the goals expected for pupils at the end of the reception year. Computers are used effectively to support and consolidate learning and children, including those with special educational needs, manipulate the controls well. Classrooms provide a rich and exciting environment, with magnifying glasses to hand to observe fish and snails in the reception classes and displays that encourage the children to use their senses. Outside, children plant and grow a variety of plants, some carefully selected to attract insects and others, such as tomatoes, to provide food. The local area is used well to extend children’s learning beyond the school environment. They walk the local area and visit the church. A visit to a local farm park brings them into contact with a variety of animals. Staff have high expectations of children’s personal hygiene and the need to wash hands and keep clean is addressed well. This work is supported by the annual visit of the ‘Life Education Bus,’ which encourages children to discover how their bodies work.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children have access to a large range of resources, both in school and outside, that encourage physical play.
- Staff continually challenge and encourage children to explore opportunities and to explore the full potential of the equipment available.

Commentary

43. As a result of good teaching, children achieve well and standards are above average in relation to the goals expected for pupils at the end of the reception year. Children in the nursery class have direct access to a wide range of equipment that encourages them to climb, balance, crawl and jump. A variety of wheeled vehicles is available and markings on the playground encourage them to steer appropriately. Children in the reception classes have access to this equipment two or three times a week and have the opportunity to use a variety of small apparatus such as bats and balls on a very large playground that is shared with the nursery children every morning. In class children show good control as they use scissors, thread beads, paste shapes and draw round stencils, with most holding brushes and pencils correctly.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Displays reflect the wide range of creative activities organised for the children.
- Children use a wide range of materials confidently.

Commentary

44. Teaching and achievement are good and standards are average in relation to the goals expected for pupils at the end of the reception year. Classrooms are attractive, with displays reflecting a wide variety of work that is valued by adults and displayed to good effect. Children have daily access to glue, paints and crayons and enjoy making symmetrical patterns in mathematics and painting pictures of the 'Three Pigs' to accompany writing in English. Teachers' planning indicates that a wide variety of materials is made available for the children to use and one child proudly described a crocodile that had been made with clay. All adults show a keen interest in the children's creative work and encourage and challenge children through observation, suggestions and questions.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well due to good teaching.
- The subject is well led and there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Assessment is good and pupils are given clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- More opportunities could be provided for pupils to talk about their work.

Commentary

45. In Year 2, standards are above average overall. Pupils have achieved well due to good teaching and their very positive attitudes to learning. In Year 6 standards are average overall. Pupils have achieved well, especially those who were at the school in Year 2, who have achieved very well. A number of pupils in the current Year 6 have behavioural needs, and the significant number who have joined the school since Year 2 have caused standards to slip back since the previous year. Strong teaching in Year 6, however, with well managed behaviour has boosted the achievement of all pupils. The good support given to pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language enables them to achieve well. The inspection showed little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards and achievement have risen since the last inspection.
46. Standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils generally listen well and are keen to speak. In better lessons, careful questioning, with expected reasoned responses, helps pupils to further their understanding and teachers and assistants to assess this. However, where teaching is weaker, there are insufficient opportunities for all pupils to be involved in questioning and discussion, both with adults and amongst themselves. As a result, spoken language skills are not fully encouraged and developed, and limited use is made of subject vocabulary. The school recognises the need to develop questioning skills to help inform assessment and future planning.

47. Reading standards have risen since the last inspection due to a more consistent approach to teaching and assessment. Phonic skills are taught progressively from an early age and guided reading is timetabled for all classes, enabling progress to be carefully monitored. A greater awareness of different styles and authors is being encouraged. Year 6 pupils, for example, have looked at books by Michael Morpurgo, written reviews and added their comments to a web site. In discussion with pupils, most appeared to be keen readers and read regularly to parents and carers at home, who are becoming more aware of how they can support their children. The library facilities have been improved since the last inspection and more is planned to make access easier for pupils in the lower school. The range and quality of books have improved both for the library and guided reading; sets of non-fiction books have been introduced for guided reading to provide greater interest and enjoyment.
48. Assessment was a key issue at the last inspection. The school now carefully monitors progress in writing. Information is used to set targets for teachers to plan and for pupils to work towards. Where teaching is more successful, there is a good understanding of the small steps that pupils need to take in their learning on the road to meeting their targets. These steps are carefully planned and are evident in the success criteria set for groups within classes. These criteria are shared with pupils so that they know what is expected of them, and are reflected in the constructive marking that informs pupils how well they have done and how they could improve further. Pupils also have individual targets to work on, which act as a further reminder for improvement. These are attractively set out on 'pencil' cards, which also provide spelling lists and other words that pupils have tried to use. Showing pupils how they can improve their writing has both helped to raise standards and achievement and create more positive attitudes to learning. A consistent approach to teaching spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting has also helped to bring about improvement.
49. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and has significantly improved since the last inspection. In Years 4 and 5 it is satisfactory and results in satisfactory rather than good achievement. Lessons are generally well planned and prepared so that a good pace for learning is maintained; management is effective and pupils behave well and are keen to learn. Where teaching is more effective, all pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning and there are higher expectations of both the quantity and quality of work produced; introductions are effective and to the point; adult support is well focused so that lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in learning.
50. Co-ordination is good. It has brought about significant improvement since the last inspection, and clearly identifies further areas for development. Monitoring has been successful in raising the quality of teaching and learning and raising standards and achievement. However, the school recognises that further training is required to improve the consistency of teaching and learning in literacy.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Satisfactory use is made of language and literacy in other subjects. Within literacy lessons non-fiction texts are starting to be used to add interest and relevance to learning. For example, Year 2, pupils, following a trip, looked at the vocabulary contained in a booklet from Cadbury World. Other lessons do not always reflect the level of skills that pupils have acquired so that they are not challenged sufficiently to use and develop them. Increasing use is made of ICT. Some use is made of word processing skills to present work and in one lesson pupils used a computer dictionary.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is good as a result of consistently good teaching.

- Achievement and teaching are not as good in Years 3 to 6 as in Years 1 and 2.
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Learning is not sufficiently engaging for many pupils because there is a lack of imaginative application of mathematics to everyday situations.

Commentary

52. Standards seen during the inspection were average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. However, the Year 6 group contains considerably more pupils with special educational needs than is usual. The previous Year 6, for example, reached above average standards in the national tests. There is therefore fluctuation in standards depending on the particular year group. Achievement across the school is satisfactory overall. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 because there is more consistently good teaching in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6.
53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Across classes, teachers plan carefully to ensure that all pupils progress well. Most monitor pupils' performance carefully and mark their work in a way that helps them to know what they have to do to improve. In Year 1, teachers plan how to move pupils on by using incremental targets and regularly assess pupils' progress against these, although this detailed tracking is not used in all other years. The marking of pupils' books in Year 2 is very good; it is regular, positive and contains very clearly written suggestions about how pupils can improve. Expectations of presentation and layout are high so that pupils learn to be neat and orderly in a way that promotes logical thinking.
54. Whilst there is regular good teaching in Years 3 to 6, there is not such consistency as that found in younger classes and so pupils' performance is less assured. In Year 6, the teacher managed potentially disruptive pupils very well keeping them on task and challenging them all to work hard. However, in one Year 4/5 mixed group, the teacher allowed pupils to chat whilst she was teaching and this caused the learning atmosphere to deteriorate. Many pupils were off task and some made little progress. In this lesson, the teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. In one Year 3 lesson the pupils made good progress because they were very clear about what was expected, whilst in a Year 4 lesson the pupils had to solve problems, but didn't have sufficient initial help in how to do this. These examples show the variable quality of teaching and this, alongside significant differences in pupils' natural capability, explains why there have been fluctuations in test results.
55. Despite some fluctuations in Years 3 to 6, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. This is because teachers are more skilled at applying national guidance. They plan lessons bearing the specific needs of individual pupils in mind, particularly the higher attainers, who were not sufficiently challenged at the time of the last inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has some good ideas for how to improve performance but has not been in post long and so hasn't had time for these ideas to impact. Nevertheless, she is fully aware of the barriers to progress, and wants to iron out variability in the quality of teaching.
56. There is recognition by the subject leader that teaching needs to focus on applying mathematical knowledge to new situations. Too much teaching is based on repetitive exercises to instil the principles of mathematics and too little work is based on interesting problems that intrigue pupils. When pupils are given problems, as happened in some older classes during the inspection, the problems are not based on real life situations. A scrutiny of pupils' books across years confirmed this. An exception was in Year 2, where pupils had to measure their room and

the playground in order to work out area, and later had to measure the length of each other's hair in order to draw graphs. However, these were relatively isolated examples and books tended to contain too many repetitive calculations.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Numeracy is satisfactorily developed in other subjects. For example, in design and technology, pupils estimate and measure lengths when planning projects and in science there is use of graphs to record experiments. In music, pupils count the beats as they play percussion instruments and clap. Data handling skills are satisfactorily developed in ICT. However, whilst numeracy skills are developed in other subjects, there is not enough planned use of this and this is one of the reasons why pupils sometimes tire of mathematics. More imaginative use of cross-curricular numeracy could lift learning in the subject, helping pupils to enjoy mathematics more.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school.
- Teaching is good and teachers have high expectations in most classes.
- Investigative skills are developed well and pupils have positive attitudes toward this aspect of their work.
- Assessment procedures need to develop further.
- The co-ordinator leads well by example.

Commentary

58. Current standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. These judgements show an improvement in standards at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection. The current Year 6 class has a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and they have achieved well. Encouraged by the co-ordinator, there has been an appropriate focus on investigative science and interviews with pupils confirm that they enjoy this aspect of their work, but were less convinced of the importance of recording the outcomes of their experiments. Practical work is well supported by a good range of resources; however, opportunities to use ICT to support learning are not always seized. Planning is securely based on a national scheme and this has ensured that pupils have a continuity of experience throughout the school.
59. Teaching is good overall but there are inconsistencies and expectations are not high enough in some classes in Years 3 to 6. In the good and very good lessons seen, pupils were absorbed in their work, they used scientific vocabulary well, teachers had a very good scientific understanding and all had very high expectations of both practical and recorded work. In a very good lesson observed in Year 3, pupils were totally absorbed and used appropriate scientific language as they investigated the impact that different liquids had on eggs that had been immersed over time. One boy commented that when you looked through a magnifying glass you could see cavities on the shell 'like the ones you get in your teeth when you eat too many sweets.' In a good lesson in Year 6 the teacher questioned very well, encouraging the pupils to reflect and justify their answers, with one pupil stating that 'of course mains electricity has a

much higher voltage.' Where teachers' expectations are lower, recorded work is not presented clearly and marking rarely informs pupils how to improve the quality of their work.

60. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the future development of the subject and has interviewed pupils from all year groups in order to gain an overview of standards throughout the school and to set clear targets for pupils to achieve. She understands that high expectations are not consistent throughout Years 3 to 6 and has plans to address this. She leads well by example and fully involves pupils in Year 6 in evaluating their own work. On-going assessment procedures to support assessment during lessons and when work is marked are not established throughout the school, but tracking sheets have been trialled in Year 2 and plans exist to introduce them throughout the school next term. The outcomes of formal assessments are monitored well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improved resources have placed the school in a strong position to raise standards further.
- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- Pupils are keen to use the new computers.
- Teachers do not seize every opportunity to use ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum.

Commentary

61. Timetabling arrangements meant that few lessons were observed, however interviews with pupils and detailed scrutiny of books indicate that by Year 2 and Year 6 standards are in line with the national average, an outcome similar to the last inspection. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. The last report highlighted the need to improve the ICT suite and to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Both issues have been addressed. The ICT suite has been replaced by 15 laptop computers that are all linked to one larger computer and training for staff has been undertaken and is ongoing. The recent deployment of the laptop computers has already had a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and also their access to reliable computers.
62. Teaching is satisfactory. Since the last inspection the introduction of textbooks throughout the school has helped increase teachers' confidence and ensured that teachers plan to build well on what the pupils can already do and understand. In Year 4, pupils were excited as they logged on quickly to the new computers to create a variety of shapes by entering instructions in the correct order. In Year 1, computers have been used to support a history lesson on the seaside entitled 'then and now.' Pupils in Year 6 discuss how they have:
- presented their work to an audience using a computer linked to a projector
 - used computers to control traffic lights
 - researched the Internet for information to support learning in history and geography
 - published a newspaper
 - applied formulas on spreadsheets to help them solve problems in mathematics.
63. Leadership and management are good. In the two years since the last inspection the co-ordinator, very well supported by the headteacher, senior staff and governors, has transformed the quality of resources and set up an ongoing programme of training to improve the subject

knowledge of both teaching and non-teaching staff. This has placed the school in a very strong position to improve standards further and the excitement witnessed when younger pupils were using the new computers confirms the impact they have had on pupils' attitudes.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. ICT is used satisfactorily to support learning across the curriculum. There are a few examples in science and mathematics books of calculators being used in mathematics and sensors to measure the temperature of liquids in science. Pupils in Year 2 produce bar charts to show the outcome of a holiday survey and research the Internet to find out more about Sikhism in religious education. Computers support writing (word-processing) in all year groups. Nevertheless the co-ordinator acknowledges that opportunities to use ICT to support learning across the curriculum are not always fully exploited.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. Geography and history were sampled.

65. The co-ordinator for both **geography** and **history** has recently looked at pupils' work in books and produced an analysis of the work covered. This has successfully identified areas for development and is a clear improvement on the previous inspection, when monitoring was a particular weakness. Schemes of work, based on national guidelines, are in place for both subjects, and sufficient time is allocated to them.
66. Three lessons were seen in history. Two of them were satisfactory and one very good. In the very good lesson in Year 1, effective use was made of resources, including a video. Challenging questions and discussions, which included all pupils, gave pupils a clear picture of the Victorian seaside, which they were able to compare with their own holiday experiences.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are good and as a result pupils achieve well.
- The co-ordinator has taken a strong lead in developing the subject.
- Some teaching lacks enthusiasm and expectations are not always high enough.

Commentary

67. By Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average and reflect those expected by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well due to effective teaching and learning; in Years 3 to 6, where teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, achievement is variable but also satisfactory overall. Similar standards and achievement were reported at the last inspection.
68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although the work seen in pupils' books indicates some variation in the quality of teaching and learning. For example, better teaching is evident in Year 6, where the work produced shows clear learning objectives, good opportunities for research and high expectations of content. Lessons seen in Years 4 and 5 were satisfactory. The pace of these lessons was at times too slow and some pupils, although generally behaving well, showed little enthusiasm for learning. In the Year 5 lesson on the month of fasting in Islam, Ramadan, questioning and discussion did not enable pupils to fully understand what happens and why, and the textbook activity did little to stimulate their desire to learn. In the Year 4 lesson, pupils heard the Egyptian creation story and were

asked to illustrate it. Higher attaining pupils were expected to add their own writing but were very unsure of the sequence of events; lower attaining pupils were asked just to illustrate one part of the story. Their pictures were produced with little care and more could have been provided to help them recall the story more fully. In contrast, a very good lesson was seen in Year 2. Pupils had studied the Jewish festival of Hannukah, and a children's game played at that time. In small groups they played with the dreidels (spinning tops) that they had made, and entered into the spirit of the festival. Their recall of the festival showed that previous learning had been very effective; their enthusiasm for the activity and their ability to follow instructions and to take turns made this a memorable lesson for them.

69. The subject is well led. Although it has not been a main focus for development, much has been planned and put into place to improve provision. A scheme of work is now in place that reflects the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus; medium term plans have been written and made available to all staff, with an assessment focus for each unit of work; resources have been improved and relevant computer programs and links identified for each topic. Visits are now arranged, for example to a local church and mosque, and the co-ordinator is keen to increase these, along with visitors to the school to talk about aspects of their faith. These developments are fairly recent and there has been insufficient time for them to fully influence teaching, learning or achievement. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Music was inspected individually and is reported in full below. Art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled.

70. Scrutiny of work in **art and design** shows consistently satisfactory achievement. In reception, pupils have produced colourful and imaginative rainbow fish and by Year 2 pupils have produced paintings of ships at sea using effective washes of colour. In Year 3 examples of figure drawings show good skin tones and by Year 6 pupils have produced landscapes that replicate the styles of well-known artists. They have also produced environmental sculptures in the style of the well-known sculptor Andy Goldsworthy. However, the teaching of three-dimensional and more imaginative two-dimensional art is dependent on the enterprise and imagination of individual teachers. The new co-ordinator is aware that there is insufficient three-dimensional work, particularly large scale work, and is hoping to introduce some new ideas and themes in order to inject more creativity into projects.
71. In **design and technology** there was evidence of interesting and well-presented projects based on national guidelines. In Year 2, for instance, pupils have produced paintings with moving parts, such as boats and people, and made cars with moving wheels and axles. Year 4 pupils have made some novel mathematical board games using balsa wood and glue. By Year 6, pupils have designed and made their own decorative felt slippers. Some of the most enterprising work is done by Year 5 pupils, who have made various creatures with moving parts, one of which, an alligator, has jaws that realistically open and close. The co-ordinator, who has been in post for two years, has appraised the quality of work throughout the school by visiting classrooms and scrutinizing teachers' planning. She is introducing new curriculum materials to provide even more scope for imagination and enterprise. To do this she is arranging training for all staff.
72. Teachers' planning for **physical education** is based on recently revised schemes of work that ensure there is sufficient time allowed for pupils in Years 1 and 2, an improvement since the last inspection. A good range of clubs is available, including regular sessions from a professional football coach. All pupils between Year 2 and Year 6 swim for one term a year and a majority of pupils can swim 75 metres by the time they leave the school. A satisfactory lesson in Year 6 was planned as part of an overall approach to behaviour management, using exercise to help Year 6 pupils settle and focus at the beginning of the day. This objective was achieved

and pupils co-operated well, moving about the hall sensibly, displaying average throwing and catching skills and responding immediately to the teachers' instructions. In a very good lesson in Year 1 pupils linked different movements together, guided and supported very well by the teacher. In this lesson, pupils achieved very well. .

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers try hard to make the learning fun and provide a wide range of interesting activities.
- The lack of extra-curricular opportunities and visiting instrumental teachers holds back pupils' progress.

Commentary

73. Standards in music are average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory as a result of regular class lessons that develop skills in performance, composition and listening. The quality of music making has significantly improved since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory.
74. The quality of teaching is good overall. Although none of the staff are music specialists, many teachers try hard to provide interesting music lessons that effectively cultivate the basic skills of music making. A Year 2 class used percussion instruments and singing very successfully to develop a better sense of pitch. The teacher planned the session very well, holding the pupils' attention through a variety of practical activities to develop their discrimination. In a very good Year 3 lesson, the pupils improvised a variety of vocal and instrumental sounds to the theme 'Horror Hotel'. The session was fun, focusing well on the musical content by helping pupils to explore combinations of sounds in their groups. The session provided good social education, as pupils had to relate sensitively to each other, and a sense of pride when each group performed their efforts to the rest of the class.
75. Enthusiasm for music was obvious during assemblies, where pupils joined in rhythmically swaying, clapping, clicking their fingers and singing to music on CD (with teachers enthusiastically joining in the fun). In two assemblies seen, the musical element was closely integrated into the worship element so that the moral message 'Being a Good Ambassador for the School' was reinforced through the 'Together Song'. In this way, pupils understand that music is a special way of communicating feelings.
76. Whilst there are regular well-planned music lessons, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to make music together in clubs. This is why overall provision and pupils' achievement are satisfactory rather than good. At present there is no school choir or band, and there is only one visiting teacher of instruments; a keyboard teacher who only teaches about a dozen pupils. As a result, pupils don't have sufficient opportunities to develop performance skills through music. This holds back their musical development, particularly for higher attainers, who need opportunities to nurture emerging skills through practice and performance. The regular lessons, which are well taught, do not make up for this.
77. The leadership and management of the subject are now good. The co-ordinator, who was only appointed in April, is aware of the limitations imposed through lack of corporate musical opportunities and is starting a choir in September. She has organised resources more efficiently so that all teachers have immediate access to the things they need for lessons. She has introduced a lively commercial scheme for music and has taken advice from music education

experts from the local authority. The lively class music sessions show that there has been very good improvement since the last inspection, when music provision was unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

This area of the curriculum was sampled.

78. A scheme of work is in place that makes good use of published materials. Drugs awareness and sex and relationships education are covered appropriately. The school council is being revived in order to give pupils greater opportunity to express and act on their views, as an introduction to the responsibilities of citizenship. The success of the school's provision can be seen in the pupils' good behaviour, attitudes and relationships. Displays around the school - for example on 'My best friend' and 'Don't be a bully' - also reflect this provision.
79. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning were very good. Both lessons demonstrated very positive relationships and the way in which staff manage personal issues with great sensitivity. Pupils are therefore able to express and share their ideas and opinions confidently. This was shown in the Year 1 lesson, where pupils looked at the similarities and differences between people, and in the Year 3 lesson, where the qualities of friendship were considered.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	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).