

INSPECTION REPORT

FLITWICK LOWER SCHOOL

Flitwick, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109452

Headteacher: Mr S Morrow

Lead inspector: Graham Bate

Dates of inspection: 29th November - 1st December 2004

Inspection number: 266834

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: 4 - 9
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 261
School address: Temple Way
Flitwick
Bedford
Bedfordshire
Postcode: MK45 1LU
Telephone number: (01525) 755 444
Fax number: (01525) 755 446
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mrs M Wilsmore
governors:
Date of previous December 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This lower school is situated in the small town of Flitwick, which is about eight miles south of Bedford. About 60 per cent of the pupils live in the immediate area. The remaining pupils attend the school by choice from a number of surrounding communities. The school is about the average national size, having 261 pupils on roll aged from four to eight years, of whom 19 attend part time. Many of the pupils attend some form of pre-school provision before entry. Children are admitted into the Reception classes on three occasions per year. The rest of the school is organised into two single age classes per year. Almost all the pupils are of white British heritage. There are seven pupils of mixed heritage backgrounds. The standard of attainment on entry into the school covers a wide range but is generally just above the levels expected nationally. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about four per cent, which is below the national average. About 14 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. There are, however, wide variations across the school in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs; in the current Year 4 the number is approximately twice the national average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. All the pupils have English as their first language. There is a relatively low incidence of pupil mobility, with 19 pupils joining and seven leaving at other than the usual times in the school year. The school was given the Basic Skills and Investor in People awards in 2003 and the Healthy Schools award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20926	Mr G Bate	Lead inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Music Special educational needs
9942	Mrs S Stevens	Lay inspector	
21858	Revd J Pryor	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Foundation Stage
22990	Mr C Furniss	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
1 - 4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school that provides good value for money. The school provides an interesting and enriched curriculum which, together with the good quality of teaching, helps to ensure that pupils, overall, achieve well. The importance of the individual pupil is clear in all aspects of school life, resulting in good levels of personal confidence and self-esteem. The very effective leadership ensures that there is a sharp focus on well-evaluated future initiatives and a good understanding of where further development is needed.

THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- The pupils' attitudes are good and they take a positive interest in school life.
- The school is very well led and governed. The headteacher is a very good leader.
- The pupils' good learning is supported very effectively by the very good partnership with parents and other local schools and the care for their personal wellbeing.
- Whilst some assessment of pupils' progress is good, practice through the school is inconsistent.
- The role of the subject co-ordinator is underdeveloped, especially in relation to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.
- The expectations for pupils' behaviour lack consistency.

There has been a satisfactory overall improvement since the last inspection in December 1998. Raising the standards of reading, which was the only key issue identified, has been dealt with very effectively. Most of the other minor weaknesses, noted in the last report, have been addressed well, for example school development planning, the teaching of personal and social education and the completion of a marking policy. Since the last inspection, significant staff changes led to a temporary halt in the development of the role of the subject co-ordinators. This issue is now being actively addressed.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils of all capabilities do, overall, achieve well, including those with special educational needs. Achievement is good in Years 1 to 3, resulting in standards, where it is possible to make a firm judgement, that are above national expectations in all subjects. Whilst never less than satisfactory, achievement in Year 4 is more variable resulting in average standards in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Standards in the other subjects are, however, above national expectations. Children in the

Reception classes make very good progress and are very well on the way to attaining the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage; a good proportion are on course to attain them earlier.

The quality of the pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils show positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. Whilst the overall standard of behaviour is good, it is excellent in the Reception classes and satisfactory in Year 4. Inconsistent expectations result in a considerable contrast between the generally good behaviour in class and, for example, movement around the school at lunchtime. Pupils are invariably polite and considerate, confident and pleased to share in the success of others. Very good principles are established that help pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Both attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. As a result of the overall good quality of teaching, the pupils learn well. Their learning is greatly assisted by the varied and stimulating curriculum that is being developed by the school. The teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, based upon a good command of their areas of learning and subjects. Occasionally, where tasks are not matched closely to the pupils' capabilities or behaviour expectations are inconsistent, learning is satisfactory rather than good. The increasing use of shared strategies for learning between teachers and pupils has a positive impact on learning. The teachers challenge their pupils very effectively to extend the pupils' vocabularies.

The provision for the pupils' care and welfare is very good, as are the arrangements for seeking and valuing their views and the induction of new pupils. The pupils are personally well known to most adults in the school and they are able to form trusting relationships. The monitoring of pupils' progress is variable and lacks a consistent approach through the school and across the curriculum. The school works extremely hard and successfully to develop its very good links with parents and other schools, much to the benefit of pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher is a very good leader with a very well developed appreciation of the direction the school needs to take. The governing body also has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, forming a formidable team with the headteacher and challenging him in a constructive and appropriate way. The governing body ensures that the school complies fully with statutory requirements. Work remains to be done on strengthening the roles of subject co-ordinators.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The great majority of parents are very happy with most aspects of school life. They are pleased with the progress their children make and the good foundations laid in basic skills. The parents are also particularly pleased that their children like school and with the good range of activities it offers. A very small minority of parents expressed concerns about the inappropriate behaviour of some children towards their child, but virtually all were of the

view that they felt able to approach the school about any matter and they would be listened to. Overwhelmingly the pupils like their school, feel well cared for and have teachers who will listen to them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THE SCHOOL SHOULD DO TO IMPROVE ARE:

- build on the good, existing assessment procedures to ensure consistency through the school and within all subjects;
- provide regular opportunities for subject co-ordinators to monitor standards and evaluate practice in their subjects; and
- ensure that there are consistent and appropriate expectations for pupils' behaviour in all aspects of their daily activities in school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

The standard of pupils' attainment on entry covers a broad range. It is generally just above the levels expected nationally. As a result of the good overall quality of teaching, most pupils achieve well in relation to their individual capabilities, including those pupils with special educational needs. Evidence from the inspection indicates that there is no subject where overall performance is below national expectations in Year 2 or Year 4.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good levels of achievement in most years and subjects.
- Standards in Year 2 are above national expectations in all subjects.
- The children's progress in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The pupils use their literacy and mathematical skills well in other subjects.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.0 (17.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.2 (16.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.9 (18.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 58 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. In the 2004 Year 2 tests, pupils' performance was well above average in reading, writing and mathematics in comparison with all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools, that is by the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school

meals, performance was above average in writing and well above average in mathematics and reading.

2. Further analysis of the 2004 results shows that a greater percentage of pupils attained the higher Level 3 (Year 2) in reading, writing and mathematics than the national figure. This is an indicator that the higher attaining pupils are being extended in their learning. The trend over time, in the Year 2 results in the national tests in these core areas of learning, is above the national trend. The previous report indicated concerns over the standards in reading. As a result of a series of measures, including better use of the library and the introduction of a wider range of readers, the problem has been overcome successfully. Inspection evidence indicates there are good levels of achievement in Years 1 and 2 and, consequently, attainment is, at least, above national expectations in all subjects where it is possible to make a firm judgement.
3. The good level of achievement continues into Year 3 and all subjects, where it is possible to make a firm judgement, indicate performance that is above national expectations. However, achievement in Year 4 is currently inconsistent, resulting in attainment that is average in mathematics, science and ICT. This flattening of performance is, in part, due to the significantly higher number of pupils in the year, about double the national average, with special educational needs. It is also compounded by the immature attitudes of a significant number of boys.
4. Children in the Reception classes are already making very good progress in all the areas of learning. Consequently, most are well on course to achieve the national early learning goals before the end of the Foundation Stage. As a result of the very good teaching, children who enter the school with low social awareness skills soon learn appropriate modes of behaviour and acceptable classroom routines.
5. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early, given very realistic, but challenging, targets in their individual education plans and make good progress towards them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour, for the majority, are good. Attendance is well above the national average and punctuality is very good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Behaviour in lessons is generally good and excellent in Reception.
- Most pupils are very interested in their work and the life of the school, but a significant minority of boys in one year show immature, selfish, attention-seeking attitudes.
- The good provision for pupils' moral and social development contributes well to pupils' personal development, including their self-confidence.

Commentary

6. Attitudes to school are good overall for the majority of pupils. In lessons, they vary from very good to, on occasions, unsatisfactory. Where teaching motivates and inspires them, for example in the reception unit, children respond with great enthusiasm and maturity. They listen well, respond to questions and learn to follow instructions sensibly. Pupils make suggestions of their own and are confident in making observations because they know that teachers will listen to them and respect and value their contributions. Most pupils work hard, with task-related chatter matching growing levels of excitement in many lessons. In some lessons, however, a significant minority of older boys are selfish and attention-seeking in their actions, disrupting the flow of the lesson and the concentration of others in the class. Such immature behaviour shows a disinclination to think for themselves and a lack of interest in their own and others' learning.
7. Children in the reception unit develop excellent attitudes to school from their earliest entry into classroom activities. They grow quickly in confidence, are keen to talk about their new experiences and listen well to their teachers. Pupils' behaviour around the school, in the dining hall and in the playground is generally good, if noisy and, at times, boisterous. Pupils are polite and friendly showing good levels of concentration in lessons and a willingness to share and take turns. Pupils are confident that, should a bullying incident occur, staff will deal with it quickly and effectively. Lunchtimes are organised and supervised well although noise levels become excessive over time. Praise is used well by staff to encourage and motivate pupils and most pupils were friendly and outgoing and happy to discuss their work. There has been one exclusion in the past year.
8. Pupils with responsibilities, such as school councillors and monitors, carry out their duties with confidence and pride, for example school councillors are sensible and committed in their expectations and reward for the correct use of magnetic tokens for games in the playground. When pupils threw the tokens about, the councillors removed them until a sensible strategy could be worked out for their correct use. Relationships are good in the school, with the majority of pupils treating each other with respect and kindness. Pupils are thoughtful and helpful to their classmates, including those with special educational needs. The pupil questionnaire prior to the inspection, revealed that many pupils were concerned about behaviour in the playground. Observations during the inspection showed that the majority of pupils enjoyed their breaktimes and, despite play being often noisy and boisterous, there was no bullying or unpleasant behaviour seen. Many older pupils help to mediate in minor disputes and help organise play activities with younger pupils, encouraging co-operative games at breaktimes. Movement in and around the main school, however, is often noisy with running in the corridors, accompanied by shouting and childish squealing, particularly when there is little or no direct adult supervision at breaktimes.
9. Throughout the school, staff work very hard to build pupils' self-esteem and their self-confidence, with clear results. Spiritual development is promoted well across the curriculum and through assemblies. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and this is promoted particularly well through 'circle time', when pupils are encouraged to express their views and feelings. Pupils are strongly encouraged to work and play together well and, through the school council, they learn to express their opinions and to listen to others when they express theirs. Cultural development is fostered very well in subjects such as art and design, religious

education and the work of visiting groups, such as African dancers, multicultural exhibitions and groups from a number of different religious denominations. Music is a feature of the school, with pupils clearly enjoying singing in assembly, and opportunities for Year 3 pupils to explore a range of percussion instruments during a music lesson preparing for an imminent Christmas performance for parents and visitors.

- Attendance continues to be well above average and most pupils arrive punctually in the mornings. The importance of good attendance is stressed to parents, who support the school's efforts in promoting punctual, regular attendance. Registration is prompt and efficient twice daily, promoting a pleasant start to the morning and afternoon sessions.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.0
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.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
250	1	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
5	0	0
2	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a **good** quality of education. The majority of the pupils achieve and learn well as a result of the overall good quality of teaching. The quality of the pupils' learning is also assisted by a good, varied and interesting curriculum. The school ensures that all pupils are included in all activities and that they are very well cared for, including those with special educational needs. The very good quality of links with the parents also helps to ensure the pupils learn well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning are good overall. Over 70 per cent of the teaching is at least good and more than a quarter is either very good or better. One lesson was judged unsatisfactory. This broadly maintains the position noted in the previous report. As a result,

most pupils make good progress and learn well. Regular assessments of the pupils' achievements are made but the framework for assessment lacks consistency. Assessment is satisfactory overall, but very good in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is good. It is very good in the Foundation Stage.
- The teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and how pupils learn.
- Lessons are generally well and imaginatively planned.
- Good relationships in the class stimulate learning. The teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants work well together.
- Pupils are keen to acquire new skills and understanding and they work productively.
- There is an inconsistency in the assessment practices through the school.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	10 (23%)	20 (47%)	11 (26%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

11. As a result of the teachers' good knowledge and understanding of their subjects, the planning is full and systematic. This subject awareness ensures, for example, that the teachers take every opportunity to develop and extend the pupils' technical and subject vocabularies. It also ensures that the appropriate resources are available and used well to extend the pupils' learning. The planning has clearly stated objectives for what the teachers want the pupils to learn using an effective range of teaching styles and imaginative curriculum; for example the effective use of 'theme' days in history. In the best lessons, the teachers share these objectives with the pupils and evaluate, together, their progress towards them. However, not all planning fully identifies opportunities for assessing pupils' progress towards the stated learning outcomes. The confidence the teachers have in their subjects helps to ensure that most lessons are conducted at a good pace, which contributes considerably to maintaining the pupils' motivation and, hence, their application and productivity. In some lessons, however, the pace of learning for some pupils suffers as the work planned is not matched closely enough to the pupils' capabilities, leading to lack of challenge for some and frustration for others.
12. The pupils' learning is supported effectively by the good relationships and classroom management that exist in virtually all lessons. Consequently, no time is lost to learning in the maintenance of discipline, although in many classes the exuberance of some pupils, rather than bad behaviour, leads to noise levels that are a distraction to other pupils' learning. The pupils' positive attitudes are of great benefit to their learning and their ability to concentrate on the task in hand. In a small number of lessons observed, the time allocated to the subject was too long and the pupils' normally positive attitudes deteriorated with a consequent loss in the pace of learning. The good relationships are also very positively affected in good levels of co-operation between the teachers, nursery nurses and the teaching assistants. The nursery nurses

and teaching assistants are very proactive in their support for both the teachers and the effective help given to pupils.

13. When required, the pupils work well in a spirit of co-operation and collaboration. This was clearly shown, for example, in a number of science and design and technology lessons, where the sharing of resources was most considerate.
14. Learning support staff are used very well to enable pupils with special educational needs to learn effectively. This is a significant aspect of the school's good practice in promoting equality of opportunity. As a result of the very effective management of special educational needs, all teachers are involved in the creation of the pupils' individual education plans and are, therefore, very well placed to give their support to these pupils' learning.
15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. The teachers' and nursery nurses' understanding of how children of this age learn is excellent. The planning is extremely imaginative and focused well on moving the children's learning forward within their 'play' activities. The assessment of their progress is very good and informs the teachers very well of the next steps needed in the children's learning.
16. A marking policy has been agreed since the last inspection. The teachers mark the pupils' work regularly and conscientiously. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent. In some areas it gives necessary and important praise but, except where the marking is at least good, few indications of how the pupils may improve and a target set for this improvement. Although the teachers carry out a range of assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, practice through the school lacks consistency, sometimes within a year but most significantly through the school. The school is aware of this deficiency and has begun to take steps to improve the situation.

THE CURRICULUM

The school provides a **good** curriculum, which is broad, balanced and stimulating and meets the needs of all pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum and the local agreed syllabus for religious education. There are **very good** opportunities for pupils to enrich their experiences through well-planned visits and visitors and a broad range of clubs and activities. Overall the accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum provision is excellent for Reception and good overall.
- Accommodation and resources are good overall and very good for Reception and for ICT.
- The outdoor facilities are very good.
- Out of lesson enrichment is very good.
- Curriculum plans still do not show how assessment is to be used.

Commentary

17. The curriculum overall is broad, balanced, stimulating and relevant and effectively meets the needs of pupils in all areas of the National Curriculum and religious education. Policies are in place for all subjects and for sex education and drugs awareness. Learning opportunities in Reception are excellent and prepare children very well for the later stages of their education. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is good and helps to prepare pupils for life in the broader community. There is very good provision designed to raise pupils' awareness of living in a multicultural society. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are given good support by teachers and learning support assistants so that they make good progress towards the targets set for them.
18. Curriculum planning is effective on the whole and ensures that all subjects are covered and that there is progress through the school. However, teachers do not always plan as closely together as they could and medium-term plans do not always identify opportunities for assessment. This is one of the reasons why assessment and recording of how well pupils do lacks consistency.
19. There is a range of well-planned visits and visitors which help make the learning more interesting and relevant to the pupils: links with the toy museum, a multicultural book week, visits to the parish church, Viking, Roman and Aztec days and performances by visiting musicians etc. are just a few examples. Older pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential visit. The range of clubs is very good, especially for a lower school and as well as the breakfast club they include the beehive after-school club, French club, tag rugby, computers, short tennis, dance, drama, design and technology and art. These clubs are popular and are well attended.
20. All staff are fully committed to making sure that this is an inclusive school and that all pupils have equal access to all opportunities. The teachers are well matched to the needs of the curriculum and are effectively supported by well-trained nursery nurses and learning support assistants who make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. In the Reception class the balance and teamwork of teachers, nursery nurses and support assistants is very good.
21. Resources are very good in the Reception class and for information and communication technology. They are good in all other subjects except geography and design technology, where they are satisfactory. The overall good resources enable teachers to deliver the curriculum effectively. Accommodation is good overall. Some classrooms are a little on the small side but there are plenty of areas for working with groups of pupils. Outdoor facilities are very good, with plenty of areas for playing and for physical education, quiet areas with seating, a well-used trim trail and gardens. Reception accommodation is very good, as are the facilities for information and communication technology and the well-organised library provides a very valuable resource, which has helped to raise standards in reading. The school is well maintained and attractive displays help to provide a rich working environment.
22. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory overall.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, and safety are very good. The school provides satisfactory support and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. Pupils are consulted about what they would like to see improved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very safe environment in which pupils can work and develop in maturity.
- The school has established strong and trusting relationships between pupils and staff.
- There are very good procedures for health, safety and care.
- The monitoring of pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, with some inconsistency in the use of information to inform teaching.
- The school values the views of pupils.

Commentary

23. Induction arrangements for new pupils, whatever their age, are very good. These arrangements set the scene for the care and personal support pupils receive throughout the school. New pupils are made to feel 'at home' and settle quickly, especially the very young in the reception unit. Parents feel reassured by the information they receive and the manner in which they are welcomed into the school.
24. The school is a happy, secure place where pupils feel confident and able to learn. Most pupils agree that there is an adult they can turn to if they have any concerns. Conversations with pupils confirmed that they can rely on staff to resolve any conflicts and help with personal worries. Staff know the pupils very well and support them individually. Teachers take time to discuss with the whole class any issues that arise, either during class time, at registration or in personal, social and health education lessons at 'circle time'. This encourages pupils to co-operate in understanding others' points of view and resolving conflicts. Nursery nurses and teaching assistants complement the work of the class teachers well and, with lunchtime supervisors, play an important role in forming a pastoral care team with the teachers. Staff work as a team, using known rewards and sanctions but a significant minority of older pupils challenge the application of fairness for all with some selfish and disruptive behaviour. The school is trying a number of strategies to deal with this issue.
25. The school council successfully brings about improvements to school life. The school values its views on issues such as playground equipment and the behaviour of pupils at breaktimes. It handles its budget with care and considers closely any suggestions put forward by pupils for its consideration. Adult supervision is good and members of the school council are known to all pupils, with representatives from all classes except Reception. Staff ensure that pupils work in a healthy and secure environment and effective risk assessments are carried out regularly. The arrangements for first aid and child protection are very good and staff are trained appropriately.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants have very high levels of understanding of their pupils' individual needs and are caring and sensitive in their relationships. Links with outside agencies enhance the provision available for these pupils and there is effective and

close communication between home and school, with parents fully involved in all areas of their child's learning and development.

27. Teachers track the progress of their pupils' personal, social and emotional development through listening to pupils during circle time and through the personal, social and health education curriculum. Monitoring of achievement and academic progress is satisfactory, overall. The use of the data, collected to inform teaching and learning, is inconsistent, however. The school is taking steps to address this.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS, OTHER SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school has very good links with parents and good, supportive links with the community. There are very effective links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school works hard and successfully to maintain very good links with parents. Parents confirm these home/school links are very good and they feel welcome.
- Parents provide good support at home and to the school, working closely with staff in their children's learning.
- The school enjoys good links with the local community including support from local businesses.

Commentary

28. The majority of parents are very satisfied with the education and care their children receive at school. The school works hard to build and maintain its very good partnership with parents. As a result of the quality of the induction arrangements, children settle quickly and happily into Reception. Home visits ensure that even the youngest child knows their teacher from day one and parents appreciate the care taken to involve them fully in their child's early learning. Parents receive very good information from the school's prospectus, through weekly newsletters and daily contact with staff. Annual reports are issued in the summer term. These have improved considerably since the last inspection and now provide good detailed information on achievement, the work pupils have covered and targets set for areas requiring more application. Individual strengths and weaknesses, both academic and in personal development, such as behaviour, are stated clearly. All pupils complete their own personal report, with their views of ways they could improve or areas of particular enjoyment in their learning. The reports are easy to understand and use a good combination of narrative and grades for older pupils in order to inform parents fully. Parents are pleased with the way in which the school responds to their approaches. All complaints are treated seriously or acted upon quickly and fairly. Reasons are explained to parents for decisions taken and parents generally feel they have had a fair hearing.
29. Parents know they are expected to help with their child's learning at home and most parents help with reading at home or number tables. There is a daily reading diary to maintain contact and regular change of reading books. The school works closely with parents of children with special educational needs and they are fully involved in agreeing new learning and behaviour targets.

30. The Parent, Teacher Association is very active in organising events which contribute towards making the school a full member of the community. Social and fund-raising events provide a useful meeting venue for governors, parents and staff to exchange ideas and gather parental opinions. Monies raised provide valued extra resources for the work of the school and directly benefit pupils' learning. The high profile of the headteacher before and after school hours contributes to the regard that the majority of parents have for the school and accessibility of the staff. The school has been successful in gaining sponsorship from local businesses, for example in the design and production of the school prospectus. The school calls on local people to broaden pupils' experiences and bring lessons to life, such as a talk about Pakistan by a local resident from that country. There are close links with local churches and facilities, such as museums, for educational visits. Strong links with other schools extend the curriculum and benefit the transition of older pupils through the very good exchange of information. Sporting opportunities, such as inter-school football tournaments and coaching opportunities, all enhance the pupils' learning and enjoyment of school. The school's involvement in the local middle schools' technology exhibition is a good example of the valued links with the receiving school and enriches the school's curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the recently appointed headteacher **is very good**. He has managed very quickly to enthuse the staff with his vision and passion for improving the school and this is having a positive impact on its ethos. The governance of the school is **very good**; the governors are fully engaged in planning and supporting its strategic development. The management of the school in most respects is **good** while that of the Foundation Stage is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher, governors and senior staff share a very clear strategic vision, supported by the staff and parents.
- Teachers and support staff are being built up into effective collegiate teams to promote even better teaching and learning.
- Within the governing body, senior management team and staff teams, the principle of using and building on individuals' talents and strengths is being effectively developed; however, the role of the subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped especially in relation to monitoring of standards and teaching.
- The creation of a common coherent pattern of behaviour management practice operating in all parts of the school has not yet been developed.

Commentary

31. The headteacher leads the school very effectively. He has quickly developed a very comprehensive understanding of the school's needs and its potential. He is aware of the necessity to prioritise the needs that have been identified. He has wisely concentrated on building a cohesive and self-confident teaching force, including both

teachers and support staff, on which all other developments in the management of teaching, learning and the curriculum can be built. He has planned to use this strategy to support the development of a common and coherent pattern of behaviour management effective both in classrooms and around the school, which is currently lacking.

32. The very knowledgeable and involved governing body provides very good critical support to the school and the initiatives taking place. There is a commitment to support and encourage individual talent, such as the excellent leadership of the Foundation Stage. This ensures that very good management practices lead to improved teaching and learning and higher pupil achievement. Where needs for improvement are identified the governors challenge the headteacher and senior staff very effectively from a basis of their good knowledge of the school. The governors also ensure full statutory requirements are met.
33. The headteacher successfully communicates his enthusiasm for the school to the staff and parents to which they respond with increasing confidence, as trust is built. These shared aspirations and enthusiasms also lead to the building up of effective teams within the year groups and stages of the school, as well as to the high level of support in classrooms from parents and volunteers. The day-to-day management of subjects and classes throughout the school is currently effective in maintaining standards both of learning and behaving. As managerial roles become more clearly defined improvements in pupils' achievement follow.
34. The criticism of the lack of governor involvement in development planning raised in the previous inspection has been thoroughly addressed, the governors are now involved from the beginning and the development plans are much improved. The financial consequences of aspects of planning are carefully considered as part of the very good management of the school's finances. The school follows suggestions for best practice and buys in appropriate advice and management to ensure that this takes place. The procedures and practices for the day-to-day management of the school's finances are clear and effective and all of the very minor suggestions in the auditors' report have been followed.
35. The use of some subject co-ordinators is currently underdeveloped. Plans for the enhancement of their roles and the provision of time for them to engage in the monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning are being developed as opportunities arise. These are related to current performance management and workforce remodelling initiatives which are at an early stage of implementation. Generally subject co-ordinators and senior managers provide good support for colleagues, but some express the need for further external support and training.
36. The management and use of the assessment of pupils' work for their future work is not consistent from class to class and this hampers its value as a tool for further development. There has been an improvement in school development planning so that criteria for success are included. It is clearer now which plans to improve aspects of school life have been successful and which have not.
37. The staff play a prominent part in initial teacher training through the school's involvement with the local university training department and through its links with

other schools with which it is associated. It provides a good placement for students on a variety of courses and staff are adept at mentoring them effectively. Procedures for the induction of new staff are satisfactory and ensure that newly qualified staff have proper support and time for developing their skills.

38. The school is in a period of change so that a number of new initiatives have not yet had a chance of coming to fruition. The evidence of recent improvements suggests it is maintaining its momentum and is well poised for further improvements.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	669,104
Total expenditure	692,374
Expenditure per pupil	2,379

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	24,469
Balance carried forward to the next year	22,778

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

39. The children enter the Foundation Stage at the beginning of the term following their fourth birthday, mostly on a part-time basis. Most of them have attended one of the pre-school groups with which the school has close contact. There is a very good exchange of information about the children, so that the staff in the reception unit can, from the beginning, plan work that meets the children's needs very well.
40. The school provides varied opportunities for parents to visit the school before choosing it for their children. It produces an excellent information pack for parents when the children join the school and subsequently very full information about what the children are doing each week as part of the very good communication that is developed between school and home.
41. The school has a realistic open-door policy for parents to visit so that the move from home to school can be effected very positively. This ensures that the children enjoy coming to school and can profit extremely well from the experiences they are offered.
42. There are many volunteers who help in the school as a result of the warm welcome parents receive. This ensures that there is a very clear and positive understanding of the school's way of doing things on the part of the parents and of the parents' values and aspirations for their children on the part of the staff.
43. There are four core staff, two teachers and two nursery nurses. Other staff, often with previous experience in the school, are employed as the numbers of children in the two classes increase during the year. This maintains the very good ratio of staff to children.
44. The vision and leadership of the co-ordinator of the Foundation Stage is excellent. The management of the staff is strongly collegiate in character so that they work very closely as a team sharing her vision and using each other's various strengths very well for the benefit of the children.
45. The Foundation Stage is housed in a specially designed unit with a very good range of classroom and other spaces. Role-play areas and quiet spaces for children to sit with a book, or play very quietly are available. The resources and the display in the rooms provide a very rich and inspiring environment in which the children are encouraged to experiment and learn. The same is true of the very well planned and equipped outdoor space to which the children have very ready access. They have a very good range of large apparatus, opportunities for balancing and scrambling, running and jumping as well as plots in which they can grow flowers and vegetables. There are interesting spaces which encourage imaginative imitative role-play outside as well as indoors. The Foundation Stage children make use of the school hall for indoor, physical activities and the computer suite for learning information and communication technology skills. The resources provided for all six areas of learning are very well chosen, very good in quality and ample for the numbers and needs of the children.

46. All the teaching is very good. It is very well and imaginatively planned, with the children's 'play' activities carefully selected, focused and monitored. The work the children do is clearly directed towards the rapid acquisition of the national early learning goals, which almost all of them gain in all areas of learning before they join Year 1 and start the National Curriculum. This represents very good progress and achievement on the part of the children.
47. The assessment of the children's progress during each lesson and throughout the year is carefully made so that they can be led towards activities that will enhance their development where it is most needed. The staff confer regularly about how each child is developing. This well informed and careful support ensures the steady progress and good achievement which is the norm in the unit.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some of the children arrive with lower than average levels of social awareness and skills but all make, at least, good progress.
- Staff are excellent role models showing co-operation with, and respect for, everyone.

Commentary

48. As a result of the very good teaching and the strongly held common vision of all the staff the children very quickly learn very good patterns of behaviour, skills in sharing toys and equipment and how to relate positively to one another. The reception unit is a welcoming community for the introduction to learning, allowing the children to develop well personally and in their relationships with others.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children make good progress in reading skills as a result of the very good provision of books and very good teaching.
- The staff motivate the children to talk fluently and to convey information clearly, very well indeed.

Commentary

49. The staff provide excellent models of speaking and listening throughout each session. They motivate the children very well to initiate and maintain conversations, to explain clearly and carefully what they are doing, or what they want to do. They provide, through role-play, opportunities for children to explore the best way of speaking to each other, learning the best way to communicate their wishes, feelings and ideas in co-operation with parents. Through the very effective use of very good reading

resources they instil a love of reading in the children by promoting a love of books. They are also led to explore writing skills as a way of expressing themselves alongside drawing and painting. In the unit there is a wealth of words and images on the walls and on 'washing lines' across the rooms to promote a feeling for the written word and that it has meaning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- From a generally lower than average level of development on entry to the school pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Imaginative planning and high quality teaching ensure that the children make good progress in mathematical understanding.

Commentary

50. The children quickly develop an understanding of numbers and quantities as a result of their frequent and regular involvement in activities and songs, that include counting, matching objects to numbers, objects by weight or size and playing with water, sand and collections of objects. They enjoy working with bigger numbers so that by the time they leave the unit many of them have not only reached the early learning goals in mathematical development but exceeded them. This is laying the foundations for the later above average results achieved by pupils aged seven.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are introduced to a wide range of experiences of the outside world as well as finding out how more familiar things work.
- They are introduced to fresh ideas as opportunities and occasions arise.

Commentary

51. Among other activities the children engage in, they start drawing plans or maps of places and routes, explore how plants grow, learn about animals in the stories they hear and talk about them to each other as well as adults. Very good use is made of the ICT suite and the children make very good progress in learning the initial skills. In their role-plays they explore the adult world in order to make sense of it. All these activities and opportunities give them an insight into the world in which they live. It is part of the vision that informs the work of the unit that this experience should be as broad as it can be made.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of the indoor and outdoor facilities to provide a very wide range of physical activities.
- Physical activities are well designed to be attractive to all the children, to challenge some to be more adventurous and others to practise skills are planned.

Commentary

52. The reception unit makes very good use of the school hall as well as its own outdoor area for vigorous and adventurous physical activities and for the use of apparatus such as tricycles and other large wheeled equipment. They are used imaginatively and creatively and provide opportunities for co-operation between pupils. The use of a large multicoloured parachute made a very exciting and challenging activity as

children ran underneath it to change places as it slowly settled. They were enthralled and excited by the activity and worked extremely well together.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In every session there is a good range of creative activities to stimulate the children's imagination.
- There are good links made between stories told, imaginative games played and pictures created.

Commentary

53. The sessions planned for each day include activities to promote the children's creative development. The staff make sure that the children engage in a wide range of activities so that their development is very well rounded and includes all the areas of learning. The children enjoy singing traditional as well as number songs.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are consistently higher than the expected level.
- The well-stocked and used library is now a very valuable resource and is contributing to raising standards in reading.
- Overall quality of teaching is good and pupils learn and achieve well.
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work.
- Although assessment is generally sound there are inconsistencies in the way it is used and applied to set work designed to challenge each pupil.
- Not all teachers are consistently setting targets and using them in marking to show pupils how to improve.

Commentary

54. The results of the 2004 national tests for seven-year-olds were well above the national average for both reading and writing. Compared with similar schools results in reading were well above average and in writing were above average. Trends over the last five years show that standards in reading have risen at a rate significantly higher than the national rise and the rate of rise in writing is about in line with the national average. The improvement in reading standards is particularly good, as this was a key issue in the last inspection in 1998. In the 2004 tests a much higher than average percentage of pupils attained the higher level 3 in reading and this was also an improvement since the last inspection. The present inspection confirmed that standards in English are at least above the expected level throughout the school. Well-focused teaching and effective support from class teachers and learning support

assistants allows all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to learn well and make good progress.

55. Most pupils enter the school with above average speaking and listening skills and these are well developed by teachers. Pupils are encouraged to listen to each other and discuss as a class or in pairs. Year 1, for example were seen talking about what they had done during the weekend and they are encouraged and helped to express themselves clearly. By Year 2 they are confident and have a varied vocabulary. In an enjoyable discussion about Winnie the Witch, for example, as well as the more common colours pupils suggested turquoise, burgundy, beige and indigo. In discussing and comparing poems, Year 4 pupils are confident and expressive and use words such as 'luscious' and expressions like, '... the sun glinting and reflecting off the leaves.'
56. Much attention and thought have been given to improving the standard of reading. The library has been improved and is well stocked and now used very well. All pupils use it at least weekly and borrow books regularly. During the library sessions they are taught how to use the library effectively both for pleasure and for research. All pupils spoken to had very positive attitudes and enjoyed reading. As early as Year 2 they talk about contents pages, how to use an index, the difference between fiction and non-fiction and can find a book on a given topic. Year 4 pupils can explain clearly how the library works and there are library monitors who help run and organise it. In lessons teachers develop good reading skills in a variety of ways, such as effective use of big books and guided reading.
57. Writing is generally good and all pupils are given many opportunities to use a range of writing forms. Handwriting is regularly taught and presentation is generally good through the school. Standards of writing in Year 4 are less well developed than speaking and listening and reading and are at nationally expected levels, whereas in the rest of the school they are higher than expected.
58. The overall quality of English teaching in the school is good. There was nothing less than satisfactory seen and some teaching was very good. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and stimulate and encourage them so that they want to do well. In the best lessons the pace is brisk and teachers use a variety of activities that focuses pupils well. As the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good, effective use is made of question and answer sessions, with teachers targeting questions to individual pupils well and extending and motivating them. Teachers generally manage pupils well and have high expectations of behaviour. However, there is often a tendency to allow the noise to rise to a level that is distracting to some pupils. Planning is satisfactory and in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy but teachers do not always plan together as effectively as they might. This means that pupils in the same year group are not always covering the same ground. Some teachers are setting targets for individual pupils and pupils spoken to find that this helps them to know how to improve, especially when their work is marked with reference to their targets. However, this is not done consistently in the school and a significant amount of marking is limited to rather vague comments, such as 'well done' which, whilst encouraging, are not specific enough to help the pupil. Assessment is satisfactory, teachers know the pupils well and track how well they are doing in English effectively. However, there are inconsistencies in

the way that teachers are assessing and work set is not always targeted towards the needs of different individuals and groups as well as it might be. This means that some pupils, especially the more able, are not always challenged as well as they might be.

59. The subject co-ordinator has been in post less than a term but has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The action plan is clear and appropriate and there have already been staff meetings focusing on both reading and writing, with a view to moving the school on further. Improvements to the teaching of phonics, extended writing and setting of targets are just three of the areas being discussed. There has been insufficient monitoring of teaching and of pupils' work to ensure that standards are consistent across the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

60. These are well supported across the curriculum, with pupils being given opportunities for independent and extended writing in a range of subjects. In science, for example they are given good opportunities to write their science observations. Pupils regularly visit the computer suite and have opportunities to produce writing and posters on computer. They also use CDs and Internet Websites for research but there is little evidence of classroom computers being regularly used to support the development of English.
61. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall quality of teaching is good and there is very good co-operation between the teachers and learning support assistants.
- Most pupils are well motivated, enjoy the work and achieve well.
- In Years 1 to 3 standards are above those expected nationally.
- In some classes over-exuberant behaviour adversely affects the overall quality of work.
- There is a lack of consistency in assessment and its use to improve learning in some classes.

Commentary

62. Following a very good mathematical experience in the Foundation Stage, most pupils enter Year 1 confident in the subject and ready for the National Curriculum. By the time they leave Year 2 most pupils are achieving above the national average in numeracy, shape and measurement and the use of mathematics. There is a particular strength in understanding shapes and measurement. The work in Year 1 builds well on the good beginning provided in the early years of schooling and the different style of teaching and learning recommended by the National Numeracy Strategy, which the school follows, is introduced gradually and most effectively. The pupils make good

progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and achieve well. This is the result of the very competent teaching of lessons, which are imaginatively planned and taught with verve and enjoyment, such as a very enjoyable lesson in which Year 2 pupils explored ways of adding and subtracting 9, 10 and 11 quickly and accurately. Generally, there is a high expectation placed on the pupils to do well, to which most respond very positively.

63. Steady progress and good achievement is maintained through Year 3 because of the continuing good teaching and motivation for the pupils to succeed, for example in a well-structured and sharply paced lesson on telling the time. Currently, however, this progress slows down in Year 4. Most of the pupils are keen to work hard and to learn, but the behaviour of a significant minority of them slows down the pace of lessons and learning. This affects the standards attained and the overall achievement. The proportion of pupils with special educational and behavioural needs in this year group, especially in one of the classes, is much higher than the national average. The teachers and support staff try a variety of methods of support and encouragement, but have not yet identified the most effective and consistent strategy for motivating these pupils while at the same time challenging their higher attaining colleagues to achieve well. As a result, in this year, overall standards and achievement are satisfactory.
64. In most of the classes pupils work hard, enjoy what they are doing and co-operate well with each other. This is the result of the very good model of co-operation which they see between the teachers and learning support staff and helpers. Support staff are well briefed and make a significant contribution to the effective running of the classes and the good progress the pupils make. The resources provided for mathematics are of good quality and amply support the planned curriculum.
65. The provision made for supporting pupils with special educational needs is good and for most of them it is successful in ensuring that they achieve as well as they can. The school is very careful to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to benefit from the good provision for this subject.
66. The subject is generally well managed by an experienced co-ordinator, though provision made for the monitoring of teaching and learning to support the development and improvement of the subject has lacked continuity. The provision of professional training and development in the subject has also been spasmodic and this has had an effect on maintaining coherence in the teaching and learning of the subject. The work is planned on the basis of the National Curriculum and the advice of the National Numeracy Strategy. The teachers in each year group undertake good detailed planning for the pair of classes co-operatively. This successfully ensures that pupils in parallel classes receive a common curriculum.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Numeracy skills and mathematical understanding are used effectively to support other subjects appropriately across the curriculum, especially in science where they are used to record results and develop an understanding of them through, for example, graphs. Information and communication technology is also used to support and extend mathematical skills and understanding in most classes.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a broad, relevant and stimulating curriculum.
- Standards are above the level expected nationally in Years 1 to 3.
- The majority of the teaching is good and the subject is well led.
- Work is not always matched to the capabilities of the pupils.
- Assessment of progress lacks consistency.

Commentary

68. It is clear, in conversations with the pupils, that the very great majority enjoy their science work. As a result, overall achievement is good and standards in the first three years are above average. Currently, standards in Year 4 are in line with national expectations. Teacher assessments, in the national tests at age seven, show performance that is at least average. As a consequence of the good support they receive, pupils with special educational needs progress well.
69. Scrutiny of previous work undertaken in all years of the school, shows a curriculum that is interesting and relevant. The work is firmly based within the principles of investigation and experimentation, resulting in the pupils' evident enjoyment of the subject. Consequently, the vast majority of the pupils achieve well and have a good understanding, appropriate to their age, of the principles of prediction and fair testing. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, the pupils engaged in a very thoughtful discussion about how it would be possible to measure the comparative strengths of a range of magnets fairly. The previous work, contained within a very well-presented portfolio, also indicates a broad science curriculum that covers, very well, an interesting range of topics. In all classes, the pupils' mathematical skills are used well in the recording of tabulated and graphically represented results, for example in some Year 4 work on forces and gravity. Although there was no evidence of the use of ICT in the observed science lessons, the scrutiny of current work revealed some interesting use of the technology to create scatter graphs on an investigation of the relationships between size of feet and length of jumps.
70. The good standards and learning observed in lessons, and in the scrutiny of this year's work in Years 1 to 3, is currently not matched in Year 4. This year has a much above average number of pupils with special educational needs and a significant proportion of over-exuberant pupils. This has resulted in a smaller amount of work than normal being covered and standards, achievement and learning that are, overall, satisfactory.
71. The overall quality of teaching is good. The teachers' planning is full and thorough as most teachers have a good command of the subject. However, on occasions, the planned work for pupils does not always match the range of capabilities within the class. This results in less effective learning for higher and lower attaining pupils. However, all the teachers challenge the pupils in extending their scientific language, to which the pupils respond with enthusiasm. The teachers and teaching assistants

work well together as a team. The teaching assistants are able, therefore, to give effective, well-focused support to pupils and help to maintain good levels of learning. The pupils' learning, especially in the practical aspects of the work, is supported well by their ability, in most classes, to collaborate and co-operate effectively in the use of resources. For example in a good Year 3 lesson, the pupils examined dental moulds in their work on dentition but contained their understandable excitement until their partner had finished with them. Most lessons are brisk with a pace that makes very effective use of time. However, the overall quality of learning in the two oldest classes suffered because the lessons were a little too long to maintain the interest of many of the pupils. Consequently, the application and productivity of the pupils fell. In all classes the resources required were readily and efficiently available resulting in no loss of time to learning. There are good, positive relationships between the pupils and the teachers, who are committed to the raising of standards. The standard of marking lacks consistency through the school. It is undertaken regularly by all teachers but frequently gives no indication of how pupils may improve. The quality of marking in one of the Year 4 classes is very good, often with clear targets.

72. The subject is well led by the fairly recently appointed co-ordinator. She has carried out a thorough and effective audit of the subject. The findings of this audit are being addressed in an effective and systematic way; for example the curriculum framework is being modified to ensure continuity in the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding and to reduce unwarranted repetition. Assessment in the subject is undertaken but its application lacks a whole-school consistency. The subject co-ordinator has recognised this deficiency and is currently in the advanced stages of installing a new ICT based scheme, with which the pupils can also interact. To date, the co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped as she has had no opportunities for the monitoring of teaching. Her views on standards were supported well by a scrutiny of work across the school. This is good practice.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Full and effective use is made of both the computer suite and the skills of the technician.
- The very good use of ICT in the Foundation Stage provides a good and improving basis for work throughout the school.
- ICT is used effectively by most teachers to support other subjects.
- The management of the subject is very good.
- Assessment of the subject is variable in quality and regularity.
- In a few classes too much dependence is placed upon the technician for teaching the subject.

COMMENTARY

73. The standards achieved throughout the school are at least in line with national expectations. Those of the younger pupils are, in most cases, higher than those expected. This is because the improvements in the teaching and learning of the

subject are of recent origin and have not yet had time to develop the skills of the older pupils to the same extent.

74. The creation of a computer suite with sufficient computers for half-classes to work with a computer apiece and the employment of a talented technician full-time have led to an improvement in the standards attained by most of the classes since the previous inspection. This is the result of many of the teachers having increased confidence in their abilities following a programme of information and skills training, in which the technician played a considerable role. In a few cases the teaching of the subject as well as general support for the pupils, while engaged in the computer suite, has been delegated and the teacher is less involved than should be the case. This occasionally produces situations when behaviour deteriorates and the pupils achieve less well than they could. Where a proper co-operation exists between teacher and support staff, then the benefit to the pupils is clearly apparent and they achieve well.
75. A very positive feature of the provision in the subject is the very good start provided in the Foundation Stage, where the children achieve a higher degree of competence in using computers and other ICT machines, such as directing the 'Pixie floor turtle', than is normally the case. This provides a very good basis of skills and understanding on which subsequent work in the subject can be built. This is affecting the later development of, for example, keyboard and mouse-handling skills and, over time, is having a gradual beneficial effect on standards and pupil achievement throughout the school.
76. The teaching of ICT is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The contribution of the learning support staff and the technician is in most cases good. The provision made for those pupils with special educational needs is good so that most achieve standards that are similar to their peers'. In a few cases the use of, for example word-processing, enables pupils to achieve higher standards than usual.
77. Assessment of ICT lacks consistency. Where it is carried out effectively the progress pupils make is easy to chart and the support they receive is more securely targeted. Where it is lacking or more intermittent progress is less certain, achievement is less secure. Where there is clear co-operative planning of lessons involving teachers, learning support assistant and the ICT technician, the benefits seen in improved achievement on the part of the pupils is clear. Where communication between them is less full and clear, progress and achievement are lower.
78. The headteacher is a most enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator of the subject. He has a clear vision of its future in the school and of the important role it could play as a powerful tool of learning and of teaching. The resources, which have been recently acquired, are gradually introduced wisely. When staff can see the advantages they are eager to make use of the new technology. Digital projectors are being introduced throughout the school and are being used with increasing confidence by the staff. The next purchase, already in the pipeline, is the acquisition of interactive whiteboards to improve the ease of teaching and the quality of its results as teachers become confident in its use.
79. The development of the subject in the school is enhanced by the two computer clubs which are held each week and which are very popular among the pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. In a number of classes, good use is made of ICT programs to support mathematics, in reinforcing work already learned by providing further self-directed experience for particular pupils. The subject is also used to support science especially for recording results in a variety of formats. In art, drawing and painting programs are used with good effect, as well as to support work in design and technology. Good use is made of digital photography for recording what the pupils have made in design and technology topics.

HUMANITIES

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

81. No lessons were observed in geography and only two in history so it is not possible to make an overall judgement on provision or on the quality of the teaching and learning in these subjects. A review of the curriculum map and planning shows that all areas of the National Curriculum are being covered. Geography and history are often taught in blocks of several weeks and for this reason there was only a very small sample of work available to review. It is not possible, therefore, to make any judgement on the standard of work being produced.
82. The work seen was at the appropriate level for the age of the pupils and there is some good work being done. In geography the pupils in Year 2 have done some bar graphs about different types of holidays, linking well with information and communication technology and numeracy. Pupils are also given opportunities to develop language and literacy, for example in the work on Katie Morag and the Isle of Struay. A discussion with Year 4 pupils showed very positive attitudes to geography. They were able to talk about various places in Britain with Roman links, such as Bath, St Albans, Chester and Colchester. They also spoke of other work linked with history, such as Vikings and Aztecs, and were able to talk about the parts of Britain the Vikings came to and places such as Norway and Denmark where they came from. They remembered looking at life in Mexico today. They spoke of other work which included the rainforests in Asia, Africa and South America and they have a sound knowledge of the world in general. They spoke about work on maps, keys and co-ordinates and recalled using a computer program using co-ordinates.
83. The history curriculum is covered effectively and the work seen was at least satisfactory. The quality of teaching in the two lessons seen was at least satisfactory. Year 1 pupils were learning about the games played in Victorian and Edwardian times and this was done well in a well-planned and organised lesson that gave them first hand experience of playing the kind of playground games that their grandparents might well have played. They clearly enjoyed the lesson and have a good overall understanding of life in Victorian times. Year 4 pupils were looking at life in Roman Britain, and in particular at Roman baths. The lesson was well resourced and organised and was designed to develop pupils' research skills. Effective use was made of video, a range of books, a CD-Rom, Internet research and a computer program and this was good use of information and communication technology to support history.
84. The geography and history co-ordinators work well together, though their monitoring roles are not yet well developed. Both have developed good action plans and are working closely to link the two subjects even more closely, whilst still developing the skills specific to each. This will help develop both areas of knowledge and make the subjects more relevant to pupils. The work in history is already supported well by the use of visits and visitors, such as to the toy museum. Activities such as Roman, Viking and Aztec days stimulate pupils and bring the subject to life for them. The geography co-ordinator is rightly keen to make more use of the local area as a resource, to help pupils to understand their own environment better and to be able to make comparisons with other areas. Teachers make an assessment of how well pupils are

doing after each unit of work but there is a lack of consistency about how these assessments are carried out and recorded.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the subject.
- Religious education develops awareness of different faiths and cultures very well.
- Most of the marking does not show pupils how to improve.

Commentary

85. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, with improved standards. It was only possible to observe one lesson but pupils were accompanied on a trip to a local church, a review of workbooks, the religious education portfolio of work and discussions with pupils, show that they achieve well and make good progress. Standards are above expectations.
86. Planning files and the work seen shows that pupils are covering a wide range of work and that coverage of the locally agreed syllabus is good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and the work is consistent through the school. The actual amount of written work is significantly less in Year 4 than in the rest of the school and it was not possible to make a secure judgement about standards in that year group. All of Year 1 were observed on a visit to the local parish church as part of the work on celebrations and naming ceremonies. There was very good support from parents, with 12 of them accompanying teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils show very positive attitudes to religious education. They obviously enjoyed the visit and their behaviour in the church was very good, though they were rather noisy in getting ready and on the walk. Twins (dolls) had been brought in to be christened and the pupils were interested and engaged as six of them acted out the roles of parents and godparents. They showed good knowledge of Christian celebrations such as weddings and christenings and responded well as the priest led them through the ceremony, explaining the symbols of water and oil.
87. Year 3 pupils also demonstrated a good understanding as they were observed learning about Ramadan. They have a clear respect for beliefs of different people and were able to talk about other things they have learned about Islam, such as the reverence Muslims have for the Qur'an. As one boy said, "...you're not allowed to cover it [the Qur'an] up with any other book 'cos it's so special". They were also able to think about and reflect on other people's experiences and compare them with their own.
88. It is not possible to make a judgement about the teaching, though it was good in the one lesson seen and the visit observed was well planned and organised and led to good learning. Marking lacks consistency. Books are regularly marked but the comments made tend to be bland and do not show pupils how to improve. Where encouraging comments are made they tend to be vague ones, such as 'well done' instead of showing the pupils specifically what they have done well, which would

encourage and reinforce good practice. Religious education supports literacy and language well, with good use being made of class discussions, drama and role-play to develop speaking and vocabulary and good opportunities to develop extended writing.

89. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has managed to observe a small number of lessons and has reviewed the planning and pupils' work. She has a very clear view of the strengths and needs of the subject and a well thought out action plan. Religious education is already effective in raising pupils' awareness about and knowledge of different faiths and cultures and the co-ordinator is keen to extend this and make more use of visitors where possible. Resources are good but the co-ordinator is aware of the need for more resources and to make more consistent use of information and communication technology to support the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There were limited opportunities to observe lessons in this curriculum area. Where possible, previous work was examined and conversations held with staff and pupils. In only one subject, physical education, was there sufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision. On the basis of this limited evidence, pupils' standards in all these subjects are above national expectations for pupils in both Year 2 and Year 4.

ART AND DESIGN

90. As no lessons were seen, these observations of provision are based on a scrutiny of a portfolio of previous work, observation of artwork around the school and discussions with pupils and staff. On the basis of this evidence, it indicates that good progress is made in the development of the subject through the school and that standards are above those expected for primary schools. This maintains the position found in the last inspection.
91. The curriculum provided by the school is wide and stimulating. Painting skills are well developed through the school, culminating in some good, evocative pictures using shadowy buildings set against effectively colour-washed skies produced by Year 4 pupils. The pupils show a good appreciation of colour and form, particularly, for example, in some Year 2 pictures in the style of primitive Australian art. Opportunities are provided regularly to use a good range of printing techniques and to develop the pupils' observational skills.
92. The use of ICT in art and design is being developed and there were good examples of creating pictures in the style of Mondrian and some very effective 'stained glass' windows. Whilst there was evidence of the use of textiles and three-dimensional work in, for example clay, this is an area for development which has been identified by the two very recently appointed co-ordinators.
93. The co-ordinators, who were appointed in September 2004, are reworking the current curriculum framework. They have identified concerns about the repetition of work and wish to put the systematic development of skills at the heart of the programme of work. To date, however, their role is underdeveloped with, as yet, no opportunities to monitor teaching of specific skills in the subject. Assessment is carried out but is, currently, at the discretion of individual teachers. This undermines progress towards a

more structured development of skills. The use of sketchbooks in art and design is an important development and supports well pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. It was possible to observe only one design and technology lesson. However, the school maintains a detailed portfolio of previous work in the subject. This evidence was supplemented by previous work on display and conversations with staff and pupils. On the basis of this evidence, it is clear that standards in design and technology are above national expectations throughout the school, maintaining the school's previously strong position. The majority of the work is based on a series of themes, with a very clear and appropriate focus on a specific design and technological skill. There is a clear progression to these skills which include, for example, moving mechanisms, working with machines, disassembling structures, sewing, designing a recreational area and using the pupils' specific knowledge and understanding to make an electric quiz board. The work seen showed good manipulative cutting and joining skills. The pupils are highly motivated by the work and, as a result, learning is good.
95. Not only does the school offer a wide, varied and stimulating curriculum, using a good range of materials, it ensures that the design and evaluation elements of the subject are not neglected. The pupils have design and technology sketchbooks and use them effectively to evaluate their work; they were very happy to discuss their work and compare outcomes with the original design. In the observed lesson, the pupils used their small tools effectively and were well aware of safety issues. They also collaborated and co-operated extremely well in the sharing of available resources.
96. The pupils' achievement and learning are greatly assisted by the very good support given by parents. This helps to ensure very favourable adult/pupil ratios during lessons. Pupils' interest in the subject is also stimulated by the availability of a design and technology club and co-operation with other local schools in setting up an annual technology exhibition. A new co-ordinator has just been appointed and she is aware of the need to develop a whole-school approach to assessment procedures.

MUSIC

97. The evidence from a hymn practice and two lessons where singing was the focus indicates that standards in this aspect of the music curriculum are above national expectations. The pupils showed appreciation of the music played before and after assembly and were very interested when a teacher spoke about the composer and the style of his music.
98. Further evidence from a good subject portfolio indicated a good range of other musical activities, including pictures from a number of concert performances by the pupils. The portfolio also provided evidence of good work on various forms of graphical notation and a composition for voices and body sounds, based upon a 'Blitz night'; the composition showed a good appreciation of a number of various stimuli and sound sources.
99. Music is used well in other subjects, for example in art, pictures in response to Gustav Holst's music and poems reflecting 'war' music, as well as opportunities for pupils to

make their own percussion instruments. The technical aspects of the subject are appropriately covered and there is evidence of the development of simple musical notation into an introduction of the pentatonic scale and simple rhythms using crotchets and quavers. The pupils are given good opportunities to appreciate a range of music by visitors to the school, for example a peripatetic teachers' band, an upper school orchestra and a brass ensemble. A number of pupils also have access to violin, keyboard, drums and guitar lessons.

100. In both the observed lessons, the pupils showed extremely positive attitudes and were keen to improve their performance. In an excellent Year 3 lesson, achievement was very good as the pupils demonstrated a very good appreciation of pitch, duration, dynamics and tempo in their two-part singing, which they clearly enjoyed. Enjoyment was also evident in a Year 1 lesson as pupils practised their songs for the Christmas concert. As a result of the systematic approach by the teacher, the pupils, for their age, improved their appreciation of pitch and tempo. They also had a good knowledge of the names of a number of percussion instruments.
101. The subject co-ordinator is currently modifying the music curriculum, particularly to include more elements of composition. It is to be introduced in the summer term. This is an appropriate development. Her role is currently underdeveloped as she has no formal opportunities to monitor standards and teaching other than with her parallel class; this is unsatisfactory. Assessment in the subject is carried out but it is inconsistent and has no whole-school approach which undermines the systematic development of skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching, based on good planning, is good.
- The well-informed leadership of the subject is good.
- All the areas of physical education identified in the National Curriculum are covered effectively.
- The subject builds effectively on the enthusiasm of pupils both in class and in after-school clubs.

Commentary

102. The good standards in physical education identified in the previous inspection have been maintained as a result of imaginative and enthusiastic leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator has not only a particular interest and enthusiasm for the subject, but it was one of the main subject specialisms in her training. This has enabled her to assess the needs of the school and the pupils effectively and set up a well thought out programme of study. This is clearly in line with the requirements of the National Curriculum and is based on a well respected published scheme of work which has been adapted to the needs of the school. The staff have found the programme and the way in which it is prepared and presented for their use very helpful. As a result standards across the range of subjects have been at least maintained and in some instances improved.
103. Good quality help is also given to the school from the Upper School to which most pupils eventually go. This has been awarded specialist 'Sports College' status and as a result has offered support to the school for the development of physical education. In particular, help has been sought, and offered, in the development of dance throughout the school. This was an area of physical education that some of the staff found particularly challenging. The staff have responded well to the support offered both from within and outside the school.
104. The good quality teaching found in the school provides good examples of demonstration skills, as well as the encouragement of pupils to help each other to succeed. The pupils enjoy the subject and are willing to support one another well. Teachers make good use of pupils to demonstrate their skills to their peers. This motivates the pupils strongly to do well and results in higher standards in movement and physical skills.
105. The learning support assistants provide good quality support for pupils in lessons. This is especially true of those engaged in the support of pupils with special educational needs who are enabled to achieve well.
106. The teaching of dance is well prepared. It is usually related to topics that are being explored in other areas of the curriculum, such as 'The Sea', which provided the stimulus for an interesting dance created by a Year 3 class. An equally good lesson was provided for a Year 2 class for developing their ball skills. In both cases the pupils were co-operative with one another, were prepared to demonstrate good quality skills to stimulate their peers and took an informed interest in what other pupils were achieving. Discussing their performances involves the pupils in developing a broad vocabulary of physical education terms which they use accurately.
107. The lessons are conducted at a good pace and it is a notable feature of the physical education lessons in the school that the ratio of talk to physical activity is heavily biased towards activity. This is in spite of the tendency among the pupils to break into conversation when they have completed an activity. Teachers are generally able to bring the pupils' attention back to the task in hand quite quickly. The teachers support a good range of activities after school ends; these include tennis, two sorts of rugby, netball and football for girls. These are run by members of staff as well as parent volunteers who are sports coaches. As a result of these activities the school

participates in matches with other schools. The school has aspirations to take part in tournaments to broaden the pupils' experience.

108. The school provides a well-balanced programme of physical activity. Games, gymnastics and dance are provided in each year, with swimming and outdoor activities with athletics appearing in Years 3 and 4. Most of the pupils achieve the national minimum requirements in swimming before they leave the school. The standards of dance and ball control, which were observed, are good; the co-ordinator reports that the standards in other areas of physical education are similar. This information is based on a satisfactory scheme of assessment using half-termly evaluations of the pupils' performance, which is recorded and checked by the co-ordinator.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

109. Personal, social and health education is well planned and themed across the school curriculum. This reflects the importance the school places on the development of pupils' personal qualities and the efforts of all staff to encourage self-confidence and foster a positive attitude to learning. 'Circle time' is used well to benefit pupils' feelings of security in their surroundings and to promote good relationships and co-operative group work throughout the school. The good range of extra-curricular activities, and school visits, is an effective support to the pupils' social education and growing independence.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
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	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).