

INSPECTION REPORT

GRAVENHURST LOWER SCHOOL

Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109453

Headteacher: Mrs N Tinker

Lead inspector: Mrs E Pickford

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 23rd November 2004

Inspection number: 266907

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: 40
School address: High Street
Gravenhurst
Bedford
Bedfordshire
Postcode: MK45 4HY
Telephone number: (01462) 711 257
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of David Alderman
governors:
Date of previous 5th July 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Gravenhurst Lower School is a very small community school, which admits pupils between the age of four and nine. Almost all the pupils live in Gravenhurst village. The 40 pupils are taught in two small mixed age classes. There are more boys than girls. The school is currently staffed by a part-time headteacher and two full-time teachers. The children come from a wide range of backgrounds in this rural community. Children over four are admitted to the Reception class on a part-time basis in September, January or March, depending on their birthday. At the time of the inspection, six children were attending part-time in the Reception class and two full-time. Most children have attended a playgroup or nursery class in other villages before starting school. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but is average overall.

The majority of pupils live in privately owned houses and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin and speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils currently on the register of Special Educational Need is below average and none of these pupils has a statement.

Since the last inspection, there have been changes in teaching staff and a new headteacher, who was appointed from within the school. Recently the accommodation has been upgraded and extended. The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2003 and a School's Grounds Award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23128	Esme Pickford	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
9588	Anthony West	Lay inspector	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Gravenhurst Lower School provides **satisfactorily** for its pupils, who are happy learning in a caring environment. It gives **satisfactory value for money**. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Teaching and learning are good in English and mathematics and pupils achieve well in these subjects. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in other areas of the curriculum. Leadership is satisfactory overall. Governors, the headteacher and staff are committed to including and supporting all pupils in the life and work of the school.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils attain above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There is good provision for children in the Reception class, enabling them to achieve well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and personal development are good.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are well cared for and there is a good partnership with parents and the community.
- Attendance is very good and well above the national average.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.
- Pupils do not always listen well enough nor take sufficient care with the presentation of their work.
- Pupils have insufficient knowledge of how they can improve their work.
- Subject leaders do not have enough opportunities to observe lessons to monitor teaching and raise standards.
- The school does not provide well enough for the professional development of the staff.

Since the last inspection five years ago, there has been a **satisfactory improvement** in the schools effectiveness. It has responded well to the two issues that were raised regarding the accommodation for the Reception children and developing a secure outdoor play area for them. These are now in place and having a good impact on their learning. Above average standards in the national tests have been maintained. The progress pupils make between Years 2 and 4 has improved. Resources have improved, there is a higher ratio of computers to pupils and the school now has a library and improved classroom facilities. Science work is more accurately assessed. However, the presentation of pupils' work is still untidy and lacks care. The school has the capacity and the desire to improve and is planning appropriately for this.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics and satisfactorily in other subjects. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is variable because of the small numbers of pupils involved, but is average overall. In the Reception Year, children achieve well to reach the expected goals by the end of the year, as a result of good teaching and assessment. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain above average standards in reading,

writing, mathematics and science. Standards in national tests vary considerably from year to year because of the small numbers of pupils tested and the varying numbers of pupils with special educational needs in a year group, all of which impact on the results. In Years 3 and 4, pupils continue to progress well and reach the standards above those expected for their age in English and mathematics. In other subjects, standards are as expected for age at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their capabilities. Regular challenge is provided for the most able pupils in English and mathematics but less so in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are **good**, as is their behaviour both in class and around school. Pupils' attendance is **very good** and punctuality is **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory** overall. Levels of care and welfare are good. Teaching for the part-time pupils in the Reception class is consistently good. Good teaching in English and mathematics means that all pupils achieve well. In these lessons, planning meets the needs of the different ages and abilities within the class and ensures that pupils learn well. The most able are challenged and pupils with SEN are supported effectively by teaching assistants. Teaching in other subject areas is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad, but recent changes to planning are not yet providing enough opportunities for older pupils to study topics in sufficient depth and for skills to be applied. There is a satisfactory range of additional activities to enrich pupils' learning. Assessment systems are satisfactory and track pupils' progress but both target-setting and the involvement of pupils in assessing their own learning are at an early stage of development. Pupils are not always clear enough about what they need to do to improve. The partnership between parents and the school is **good**. Parents support their children's learning and the school seeks their views and acts on them. There are **strong** links with the local community which have benefits for all.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school is **satisfactory**. Governance is satisfactory and ensures that the school meets all its legal responsibilities. Many of the governors are new and keen to learn but are not yet involved in development planning. There is a strong partnership between governors and the headteacher in leading and supporting the school. Governors use their expertise well for the benefit of the school, especially in the areas of finance and premises management. The school is efficiently led by the headteacher, who works well with the staff team to maintain the above average standards in the core subjects. The teaching staff have demanding workloads, managing all the curriculum areas and subjects between the three of them. Good leadership is developing and showing benefits for pupils in the Foundation Stage and for those with special educational needs. Staff have little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility because the school is so small and funding is tight. Opportunities for professional development in the non-core subjects are limited. This is restricting the development of teachers' leadership roles and the raising of standards in these areas.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school and feel well informed about school matters and their children's progress. They would like more regular information about what is being taught so that they can help at home. Pupils are happy with the school and enjoy their involvement in decision making through the School Council. They feel that they are well cared for and can ask adults for help if they need it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Make better use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to raise standards in other subjects.
- Ensure that standards of listening and the presentation of work improve.
- Use assessment to set individual targets against which pupils can measure their learning.
- Develop staff leadership roles through monitoring and improving training.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Standards are above the national averages at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science and in English and mathematics in Year 4. Pupils of all capabilities achieve well in these areas. In other subjects, standards are as expected for age. The Foundation Stage pupils achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school in relation to their prior learning in English and mathematics.
- Children in Reception make good progress and achieve the expected goals for pupils of their age by the end of the year.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) achieve well, due to the good levels of support they are given.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the standards achieved by pupils of all capabilities.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Standards of handwriting and the presentation of work are below those expected.
- Pupils do not always listen to what others have to say.

COMMENTARY

1. When children start school in the Reception Year, assessment data shows that their knowledge, skills and understanding are wide-ranging, but average overall. Most children have attended playgroups and nurseries in other villages because Gravenhurst no longer has its own pre-school provision. Last year, almost all of the Foundation Stage children reached the goals they were expected to achieve by the end of the year. Inspection evidence shows that all the current group of Reception children are making good progress and are on track to reach the expected levels for their age by the end of the year in all six areas of learning. Some are likely to exceed these in their personal and social development.
2. Overall standards in national tests in Year 2 have varied from year to year but are currently similar to the above average standards found in the last inspection. The main reasons for these variations are the small cohorts of pupils who attend the school. The small numbers of pupils in each year group, often less than ten, affect comparisons of the school's performance, both with all schools nationally and with similar schools. It is difficult to identify any trends from analysis of test data because each year group is unique. There are significant variations in the ratio of boys to girls in some year groups; for example, in the current Year 4, there are eight boys and one girl. In other year groups this is reversed. This can also affect results, for example, in writing where boys often do less well than girls. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs within each intake varies. Although SEN pupils make good progress

in relation to their capabilities most do not reach the expected standards by the age of seven and this also affects the overall results.

3. Results in the 2004 national tests for the five pupils in the year group were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics compared all schools nationally and to similar schools. In science, where work is teacher-assessed, standards were well above average, with some pupils reaching the higher Level 3.
4. At the time of the inspection there were six children attending part-time and two full-time in the Foundation Stage in the mixed age Reception/Year 1/Year 2 class. There is every indication that all these children will reach the goals expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year because of the good provision for their learning. Staff provide well for children's development in all six areas of learning in a mixed age environment. Good use was made of the new outdoor area as a learning resource. Children are encouraged to make choices and take responsibility. They soon show a good level of independence. Assessment is good and children who are not making the expected progress in a particular area are quickly identified and given additional support.
5. In Years 1 and 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to achieve well. Standards in the current Year 2 were found to be above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Most pupils read fluently with good understanding and many attain above average standards. The majority of pupils do not take enough pride in their written work, which is often untidy and careless and does not reflect what they are capable of. Higher-attaining pupils often write at length, and use interesting vocabulary but spelling is careless. In mathematics, there is improving challenge for the most able and more opportunities for problem-solving. In science, pupils have good knowledge and understanding and use scientific language well. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to investigate for themselves. The end of Year 4 assessments show that pupils are progressing well in relation to their attainment in Year 2. Standards were found to be above those expected for age by the end of Year 4 in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards of handwriting and presentation are below those expected. Standards in other curriculum subjects are average.
6. Pupils do not make enough use of their good literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects because opportunities are not identified in the planning. Pupils have good ICT skills but again, these are not used purposefully across the curriculum. There was very little evidence that the skills of research and investigation were being developed by older pupils. Pupils do not always listen as attentively as they should do, both to the teacher and their classmates when they are working in larger groups.
7. No significant differences were seen between the attainment of boys and girls. Higher-attaining boys and girls achieve equally well, although more regular challenge needs to be provided, especially in Year 3 and 4 in non-core subjects. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive good support in class in most subjects. Some are given extra support in small groups to develop their literacy and numeracy skills and this has raised standards in Year 4 where, at the end of Year 2, they were much lower than usual.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **good**. Pupils' attendance is **very good** and their punctuality is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance is very good.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good.
- Pupils' personal qualities are well developed.
- Pupils are aware of the responsibilities of living within a community and their role in it.
- Pupils do not listen well enough.

COMMENTARY

8. The pupils want to come to school and as a result, attendance is very good, which is similar to the previous inspection. Attendance and punctuality are recorded and monitored well by the school and with the support of parents, attendance is well above the national average. Unauthorised absences in the reporting period are below the national average. Punctuality is good in the school. Pupil lateness is not usually an issue; however, on the second morning of the inspection, at least five pupils arrived after the bell for the start of the school day. All statutory requirements are met for the recording of attendance and the school liaises well with the Education Welfare Service.

Attendance in the last complete reporting year

Authorised Absence		Unauthorised Absence	
School Data	3.9	School Data	0.0
National Data	5.1	National Data	0.4

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

9. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good overall. There have been no exclusions because the school makes good provision for any pupils who have behavioural problems. The Reception children, who have only been attending school for a few weeks, are already listening well to their teacher and are keen to contribute to discussion. They also show good levels of independence when choosing activities and resources for themselves. Older pupils do not always listen well enough to the teacher nor to the opinions of their classmates, when they work in larger groups. They are confident to answer questions and ask for help when needed. Most, but not all, have a good understanding of appropriate behaviour for the occasion when teacher's expectations are clear. Usually pupils settle quickly to their work and concentrate appropriately on the tasks set. Standards of behaviour and attitudes are slightly lower than those found in the last inspection, although weaknesses in listening to others remains an issue. Children play and move around the school sensibly and are aware of safety issues. Most pupils enjoy school and parents say that their children are happy. The great majority of parents confirmed in the questionnaires that behaviour is good. Although pupils and parents are happy with standards of behaviour, a small number of parents raised concerns about bullying. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment during the inspection and the school has good procedures for dealing with any occurrences quickly and effectively.
10. The development of pupils' personal qualities is good overall and findings are similar to those noted in the last inspection. The school promotes moral values well through its assemblies and all aspects of its life. Staff act as good role models. Pupils have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong and are involved in drawing up class rules. Most pupils show respect for people and property.
11. There are good opportunities for taking on additional responsibilities, such as recycling paper and operating technical equipment and preparing the hall for assembly. A rota of children act as monitors in each class and, amongst other tasks, look after the pets. They respond well to these duties. The elected school council has

considerable influence on the school's affairs and raises money for charity and for playground equipment. The officers take their responsibilities very seriously.

12. Pupils have satisfactory self-knowledge and are given some time to reflect on their learning and any targets they have. In religious education and discussion time, they have opportunities to express their feelings and consider how the beliefs of others affect the way they live their lives. Pupils choose to help others less fortunate than themselves both at home and abroad. Recently they raised money for a local children's hospice and sent seeds to Africa.
13. Most pupils have a good understanding of their own culture as well as life within a multi-cultural society through a variety of curriculum experiences, including music, dance, historical experiences, museum visits and visits to a number of places of worship.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are enhanced by a broad and balanced curriculum, with satisfactory provision for additional activities to enrich pupils' experience and good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Good levels of care and guidance and a good partnership with parents strengthen the ethos and climate for learning in which pupils learn and achieve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is consistently good for children of Reception age and good in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 4. Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory elsewhere.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good for Reception children across all areas of learning.
- Teaching is good overall in Years 1 to 4 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Work is planned to meet the needs of all abilities in the mixed age classes in English and mathematics.
- Teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics is satisfactory but does not always meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed-age classes.
- Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning in the classroom.
- Pupils are not clear about how well they are doing or how to improve because of inconsistent marking and varying use of individual targets.

Commentary

14. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Consistently good teaching means Reception age children learn well and make good progress in all areas of the curriculum. Lessons are lively and capture the children's interest. Good account is taken of assessments to tailor activities to individual needs. Children benefit considerably from working in such a small group.

15. In Years 1 to 4, teaching remains good in English and mathematics, where staff have secure background knowledge and can plan lessons which meet the needs of the different ages and capabilities within the class. This enables all pupils to learn effectively, and achieve well. The school has maintained good quality teaching in these areas since the last inspection despite changes of staff. In most other subjects, teaching is satisfactory, because the background knowledge of staff varies and has not been updated through training for some time. Planning for these subjects is satisfactory but lessons do not always meet the needs of the different age groups and they lack excitement. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional adult help but there is often a lack of challenge for the most able in these subjects. Opportunities for pupils to apply their good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are missed. Older pupils are not given enough opportunities for independent research and investigation.
16. Teachers create a supportive climate in lessons to encourage pupils to contribute. They make good use of questioning to focus and direct pupils' thinking. However, in some lessons, there is insufficient insistence that all pupils are listening attentively both to the teacher and other pupils' responses. Expectations of how well pupils present their work and the care they take are not always high enough. Classroom assistants are involved in planning and give appropriate support to pupils, knowing exactly when to intervene. Teachers make good use of resources, the locality and the school's environs to support learning and encourage pupils' interest. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what is expected of them. They make good use of demonstrations and practical activities to reinforce and support learning.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 16 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	4	6	4	1	0	0

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

17. Excellent teaching was observed in a music lesson taught by a visiting local authority teacher. The pupils responded enthusiastically to his lively approach and fully involved themselves in the variety of activities provided. The pupils were very well managed and a range of excellent strategies ensured that all pupils were listening. Most of the good and very good lessons seen in both classes were in literacy and numeracy. Teaching seen for children in the Reception Year was consistently good. In these better lessons, the planning and teaching met the needs of all the pupils in the group, learning was good and all pupils achieved well. There was an insistence that pupils listened attentively and behaved well. The small group and individual teaching of ICT skills is good. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils were not engaged at the start of the lesson, learning time was wasted and pupils took some time to settle down to individual tasks. The overall quality of teaching is lower than at the time of the last inspection.
18. Homework is set for reading, spelling and sometimes number work. Pupils are sometimes asked to research topics at home and pupils in Class 1 are challenged to bring in something connected to their work to 'show and tell'. Class 1 pupils rated this as their favourite activity on the questionnaire. Most parents feel that the amount

and type of work children have to do at home is satisfactory for their age and inspectors agree.

19. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers have good knowledge of their pupils. In the Reception group, the teaching assistant's good observations are used well to chart children's progress. Regular assessments have been introduced in Years 1 to 4. The recording of pupils' progress is at varying stages of development in different subjects. Assessment has improved in science since the last inspection and good evidence is collected to inform teacher assessment at the end of Year 2. Assessment information is used well to plan for the next stages of learning in the Foundation Stage. The use of assessment is satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 4, but it is used better in English than in other subjects. Individual targets are in place in English and help pupils understand how well they are doing. In other subjects, pupils are not clear what the next stages in their learning are. The marking of pupils' work is variable. It does not often indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve and rarely comments on poor presentation. In information and communication technology, pupils are being encouraged to give their own verdict on their learning. At the end of other lessons, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to evaluate their success in the lesson.

The curriculum

The curriculum in Years 1 to 4 is broad and balanced and there are a **satisfactory** range of learning opportunities. The curriculum provided for children in the part-time Reception class is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Planning for the mixed age classes in English and mathematics is good.
- The provision and use of resources to support teaching and learning is good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to make good progress.
- Opportunities to extend literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects are missed.
- Linked subject planning is not yet catering well enough for the needs of the mixed age classes.
- There is limited disabled access to some parts of the building.

Commentary

20. In Years 1 to 4, the school provides a broad curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It is firmly based on the National Curriculum and locally-agreed syllabus for religious education. There is a suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. National strategies are used well as the basis for planning in these areas to ensure progressive development of skills in the mixed age classes. However, teachers do not make enough use of opportunities that occur to employ these skills in other subjects and there is no overview of possible links to ensure a consistent approach. The curriculum provision for the other subjects is satisfactory. Planning avoids repetition but currently does not always cater for the different ages and capabilities within the classes in non-core subjects. The school has recently adopted a

themed approach to establish links between subjects and enliven the curriculum. There was little evidence yet of this showing benefits. Discussion time, work in science, health topics and relationship issues all make a significant contribution to pupils' social and personal development. Planning for the consistent use of ICT skills in other subjects needs to be developed. Older pupils have insufficient opportunities to research and investigate independently.

21. The provision made to meet the needs of children in the Reception group is lively and varied and these children make good progress. At the time of the last inspection, the school was failing to provide the Foundation Stage pupils with a designated and secure play area. This aspect has been fully addressed and a pleasant secure area has been provided and equipped well for these young children. In addition, governors have made provision for an additional classroom and a library. Together these major improvements have made a good impact on teaching and learning especially in the Foundation Stage.
22. There is good access and equality of opportunity for all pupils to all aspects of the provision made by the school for their learning. Visits, visitors, the grounds and locality and sporting activities are used satisfactorily to enrich pupils' learning. These include activities in sport and the arts in which pupils participate fully and enthusiastically. Pupils also benefit from the contribution made by visitors from the local community who share their talents and by opportunities to take part in educational visits linked with the topics covered. There is a limited programme of regular extra-curricular activities, in part because the school is so small that there are few teachers to lead such activities, or pupils to attend.
23. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of all pupils and particularly to those with special educational needs. These pupils' learning requirements are set out in teachers' planning and they are supported well in all aspects of their learning. Their individual education plans are regularly reviewed and pupils' as well as parents' views are taken into account.
24. The accommodation is good and very well cared for to a high standard by the school premises manager. The school makes best use of the space available and ensures that time is not wasted when pupils cross the road to the village hall for physical education lessons. The school has a very pleasant and well-maintained outside environment which is sometimes used as a resource for subjects such as science. Access to the headteacher's office on the first floor is limited for people with disabilities; however, the rest of the building presents no difficulties.
25. The school is generously staffed with two class teachers and a part-time headteacher who teaches some groups on a regular basis and provides some release time for the class teachers. The nursery nurse, who works with the Reception children under the direction of the class teacher, has considerable expertise with children of this age.

Care, guidance and support

The provisions for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **good**. There is **good** involvement of pupils in school issues through seeking and acting on their views. The arrangements for the provision of support, advice and guidance are **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Child protection, health and safety and welfare arrangements for pupils are well organised throughout the school.
- Members of staff know the pupils and their needs well.
- Induction arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage and for the transfers of pupils to middle school are good.
- Pupils have good relationships with adults in the school.
- Pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work.

Commentary

26. Pupils have good and trusting relationships with adults. Teachers and support staff know pupils and their individual welfare needs well. Members of staff are caring and supportive and the intimate nature of the school enables staff to nurture pupils well. The headteacher and staff have all received up-to-date training in child protection measures and enjoy good links with the support agencies.
27. Pupil care and welfare arrangements are managed well; pupils, if ill or injured, are well cared for by the school. Health and safety arrangements are well organised and address any hazards identified. The school ensures that risk assessments and appropriate checks and tests are all undertaken and the governors' involvement in these are good. Pupils are appropriately supervised during play and lunchtimes and pupils confirm that they feel safe in the school. In this area, inspection findings are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
28. Induction arrangements for pupils are good. These are supported well by the school's relationships and liaison with pre-schools who bring the children into school on visits before they start. There are new arrangements with another local school that enables pupils to exchange electronic mail and to widen their circle of friends before they move into their middle school.
29. Pupils are involved well in the work and management of the school. The School Council represents all pupils in the school and they are able to make suggestions for school improvement. The pupils are trained for their roles and they act very maturely in council meetings. An example of a suggestion from the council that has reached fruition has been the pupils' recent request for pets in the classrooms. The pets are now in place and on the school roll, although stick insects in one class have been replaced by fish. Pupils are encouraged to raise money for a range of local and national charities, as well as for school resources such as playground equipment. There has been matched funding for some projects from the school's Friends' Association.

30. The school provides satisfactory academic support and guidance for pupils. There are inconsistencies in the level of curriculum support and guidance provided. Many pupils are not clear how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Pupils are only aware of their targets in English. This was evident in work and assessments examined during the inspection. However, pupils with special educational needs have better support because they have clear targets on their education plans and know when these have been achieved.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Good links are made with parents and the community. Links with other lower schools are **satisfactory**, but **good** links have been established with the middle school. Parents receive **good** information about the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel that they are involved well and get good information.
- Links with the community are good.
- Good links are made with the receiving middle school.

COMMENTARY

31. As in the previous inspection, the parents think highly of the school and support it well. There are good links with the community, where the school is perceived as an integral part of village life. There are good links with the receiving middle school. The links with local school cluster groups are satisfactory as are the links with the pre-school groups in the area.
32. Parents have their views regularly sought by the school through the use of questionnaires and they feel that the school is an "open" institution, where the staff are very willing to discuss their concerns. Their views were sought recently on the school initiative of making fresh fruit available to pupils before breaktimes. They appreciate the good quality informative newsletters and the amount of information that the school provides about school activities. Curriculum information is satisfactory, although parents would like more detail of what is being taught on a termly basis and suggestions as to how they can help at home. Curriculum events organised to help parents understand teaching methods have not been well attended. In pupils' annual reports, the quality of information on progress is satisfactory and provides information on how pupils can improve. All parents meet the teacher to discuss their children and confirm that they are given good information about progress. General information for parents is communicated by a useful notice board displaying a wide range of information on school and village events.
33. The school is well supported by the school Friends' Association that has raised significant amounts of money for the school and organises several social events for parents and pupils. It appears to be an integral part of village life. Parents are encouraged to help in school by listening to pupils read, helping with sporting fixtures and visits out of school, accompanying swimming sessions and by working on a variety of improvement projects. There were few parent helpers in school during the inspection. Members of the school staff encourage parents, especially those they do not see on a daily basis, to use the home/school "link" booklets to communicate. These parents say how much this is appreciated. Parents confirm that arrangements to deal with any complaint or concern are good.
34. Links with the local community are strong and the school is supported well by visiting clergy who talk to children at assemblies and in religious education. Parents involved in local business have made significant contributions to the school fabric, for example the recent alteration of the perimeter fence and addition of a new entrance and path.

35. The school uses the village hall for physical education lessons and the parish church and chapel for assemblies at festival times. The school regularly contributes to the local parish magazine with articles and information on forthcoming school events. The school organises performances in the community in either the local chapel or church, and these are very well attended.
36. The school links with pre-school groups are satisfactory and these provide for the induction of children into the Foundation Stage. The receiving middle school enjoys strong links with the school and this liaison supports pupils' transfer well. Parents of pupils who have recently transferred to the receiving middle school confirm that this transition is also well organised, with good information and arrangements for pupils to visit their new school before term starts. The links with the school's cluster group are being developed but do not yet significantly enrich the curriculum by supporting staff development and sharing expertise. The many visitors and visits that the children make locally and further afield, considerably enrich the pupils' experience.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and other staff are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body has made very good improvements to the premises and in particular to the areas used by the youngest children.
- Finances are very well managed by the governors' finance committee.
- The school improvement plan sets clear priorities for raising standards.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are committed to including and fully supporting all pupils in the life and work of the school.
- The school operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis.
- Many governors are new and not yet sufficiently involved in long term planning and holding the school to account.
- A programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the curriculum is not fully established.
- Governors do not have a clear overview of the curriculum.
- The school does not provide well enough for the development of its staff.

Commentary

37. Several governors have only been appointed recently when some long-standing governors stepped down. They are attending training and wish to become a well-informed team but are not yet fully involved in development planning and acting as a 'critical friend'. Most already know each other well, living in such a small community, and have some knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through their regular visits to monitor particular subjects. They fulfil all their statutory duties. Governors have a committee structure and the experienced finance committee provides good support and leadership. There is no curriculum committee to provide an overview and to consider and report on standards, although most governors have links with particular subjects. The expertise within the governing body is used well.

Governors are keen to secure the future of the school and work hard to support and present the school in a positive light within their community. Numbers are falling and because of location, the school is not expected to significantly expand its pupil numbers from outside the area in the foreseeable future.

38. The governors responded well to the previous report concerning the shortcomings in the school's accommodation, which is now greatly improved and effectively contributes to improved teaching and learning for the youngest children.
39. The headteacher was appointed four years ago and before that she held the post of full-time teacher within the school. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in teaching personnel and the allocation of staff working hours. Both classes now have a full-time teacher and the headteacher works four days each week when she teaches particular year groups, releasing other staff, as well as fulfilling her management duties. She works closely with the governing body, keeping them informed on general day-to-day matters and providing good analysis of test data. There is a clear, shared educational vision, but there are some weaknesses in the decisions and actions taken which do not maintain the focus on the priorities in the school improvement plan, in particular to meet the training needs of staff for more effective subject management. Monitoring and evaluation currently tends to be informal. The headteacher is committed to achieving high standards in the school's work but there is a need for rigour and in-depth assessment of teaching and learning to raise average standards in other curriculum areas to the above average standards in English and mathematics. Planning is not monitored regularly and different formats are used by each of the staff. At present, insufficient attention is given to evaluating through sampling the depth and breadth of pupils' work, the application of skills, and marking and presentation.
40. Although improvements can be seen, as a result of the changes made to the Foundation stage provision since the last report, as yet these are not fully impacting on standards further up the school, apart from in reading, writing and mathematics. The headteacher is involved in cluster links with other schools, but there have been fewer opportunities for the teachers and teaching assistants to benefit from this local pool of expertise to widen their experience. The headteacher seeks the views of others and values the support of staff, parents and governors.
41. Both teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection and have been delegated subject responsibility in several areas. Subject co-ordinators have multiple roles because the school is small. The expertise of the staff is used for the benefit of the pupils. Staff have made a satisfactory start to subject management and are eager to improve their knowledge and skills. As yet this is not influencing teaching and learning standards because there has been a lack of release time to monitor and evaluate each other's teaching, or to discuss how the provision of subject content may be broadened, enlivened and linked in relevant ways. The headteacher co-ordinates several curriculum areas, including religious education and special educational needs, and provides a lead in these areas. Learning support assistants are involved in planning and contribute well to pupils' achievements. The headteacher provides effective data analysis in English and mathematics, which enables governors and staff to know how well the school is meeting its targets and the value added to pupils learning while they are in the school.

42. There is a professional bond between teachers and their assistants which positively influences the planning of future lesson content for individual pupils in both classes. Staff are receptive to new ideas but do not have enough opportunities to make observational visits to other schools to widen their experience. Most staff have benefited from some training related to the school's priorities but this is currently having little impact across the school.
43. Finances are very well managed and spending is carefully monitored by the governors. The school seeks best value for money on its purchases but has not fully considered this aspect when related to the staffing, now that numbers are falling. Funds are carefully allocated to ensure that the school's priorities can be met. There is a larger than usual underspend but this is clearly earmarked for future needs related to maintaining staffing levels with the intention of raising standards. Costs per pupil are very high because the school is so small; overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
44. The part-time secretary manages the office efficiently. She provides a warm welcome to the school and has to manage a variety of situations on those occasions when the head is teaching. The systems for keeping track of the school's spending, filing systems and other office practices are good. She provides good support for the head and the governors for whom she acts as clerk. The premises manager works very hard to ensure the school is always very clean and well maintained.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	194,219	Balance from previous year	2,271
Total expenditure	180,686	Balance carried forward to the next year	17,566
Expenditure per pupil	4,107		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is **good**.

In the Reception Year, standards in all areas of learning show children are on target to meet, and some to exceed, the expectations for their age by the end of the Reception Year. When they enter the school, some children have had pre-school experience in playgroups and standards of attainment are generally in line with the nationally-expected level, particularly in the area of communication, language and literacy. The Reception Year comprises a small cohort of children some of whom are taught full-time in a mixed-age class with Year 1-2 pupils, with the younger children in the cohort attending part-time for mornings. The overall provision is good because both the teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is broad, exciting and appealing to young children, and is well planned. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and the three staff work together very closely as a team. Accommodation is now very good for this age range; the school has provided greatly improved accommodation and resources since the last inspection when the outdoor facilities and accommodation were a key issue. The impact of this good quality provision is that the children thoroughly enjoy their lessons and they achieve well,

particularly when they can work together as a Reception age group. This shows the generally good standards noted at the last inspection have been maintained, and the significantly improved accommodation is making a very positive impact on children's learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and children are guided sensitively to consider the impact of their actions on others.
- The relationships between adults and children are very good; adults provide good role models.
- There is an appropriate balance between teacher-directed lessons and opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves.

Commentary

45. Many of the children enter the Reception class with good social skills. They are taught well and they make good progress in their learning so that by the time that they enter Year 1, children are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area and some exceed them.
46. Most children are sociable and confident and interact well with other children and adults. A few are more confident and are ready to voice their ideas and opinions. Less confident children are given individual time and attention to help them feel secure and develop confidence. There is feeling for, and awareness of, others around them and the very positive and supportive ethos of the Reception class enhances this.
47. The quality of teaching and learning in this area are good. The staff provide very good role-models. The practitioners are working very well together as a team to provide a calm, well-ordered and secure learning environment. This helps children to settle into the Reception class quickly and helps build their confidence and ability to adapt to others around them. The teacher and teaching assistants provide a variety of interesting lessons and follow-on activities to engage children's concentration and imagination. They successfully gain children's confidence to respond to them and to other children. The Reception teacher and the assistants intervene well with groups of children at play, talking to them and posing thoughtful questions designed to make children think and consider. When they introduce new ideas, this often sparks off more talking between the children themselves.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching and classroom support for the children, including those with special educational needs.
- Children enjoy looking at books and handle them with care. They show a love of books and enjoy listening to stories which are presented in innovative ways.
- They are encouraged to speak clearly and listen attentively.

Commentary

48. Children start school with speaking skills and attainment in listening, reading and writing slightly in advance of those expected for this age group. The teacher and teaching assistant provide a very good range of interesting opportunities for the children to develop their communication skills. As a result, progress is good, the children achieve well and almost all exceed the early learning goals in this area when working in very small groups. Some of the full-time Reception children find it difficult to listen both to the teacher and others and to sustain concentration when they are working in the mixed age class.
49. Many children arrive at school able to communicate in some way using pencil and paper. They are encouraged to make marks and write from the first day in the Reception class. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Initial letter sounds are taught methodically and letter recognition games played. Letter formation is being taught in preparation for work in Year 1. Few children confuse capital and lower-case letters because they are well taught. Children are able to copy words written by the teacher and teaching assistants. Their independent writing skills are also encouraged and the resulting 'writing' praised.
50. Most children are making a good start with reading skills and say they enjoy reading their books at school and at home.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching successfully and skilfully engages children's curiosity about numbers and good use is made of opportunities to develop this area of learning across the Foundation Stage curriculum. Teachers capitalise very well on opportunities for counting and recognising shapes and coinage.
- Most children start school with an interest in numbers, shapes and sizes.
- Children are well prepared for mathematics by the time they transfer to Year 1.

Commentary

51. Many children enter school with mathematical skills that are in line with those expected nationally. Most children can count objects accurately up to 20. Most children can accurately identify basic shapes such as squares and triangles. Some children can accurately write the numbers 0 to 10. Good teaching ensures children make at least good progress in this area of learning and they achieve well to reach the goals expected at the end of the Reception Year. The teacher plans interesting

activities that encourage children to achieve well and develop their mathematical skills by using appealing child-centred themes. Children reinforce their recognition of numbers and size by modelling, completing jigsaw puzzles and playing with shapes and forming repeat patterns. The adults use questions well to encourage, extend and reinforce learning.

52. Knowledge of mathematical terms is increasing. Children know that a square has four sides and a triangle three. The children enjoy the regular sessions of singing number action rhymes. These have a positive effect on achievement.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The outside play area is well used well to develop children's understanding of the world through structured and free play.
- Opportunities to use ICT are an important part of the daily programme.
- The teacher's planning involves the use of a wide range of resources to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Children are very enthusiastic and enjoy the activities provided for them.
- The school grounds and the adjacent village provide an excellent teaching and learning resource.

Commentary

53. Children enter the Reception class with varying levels of general knowledge. The school's attractive learning environment, together with the good quality of lesson planning and very good support provided by the teaching assistants, helps them to build successfully on their knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result of this good provision, including the good teaching and learning, all children will at least meet, and some exceed, the required learning goals in this area by the time that they enter Year 1.
54. The children achieve well. For example, in one good lesson, they shared their ideas predicting 'What might happen if I use this material instead of that one....' when making a rocket. One child knew that sellotape was an appropriate fixative for part of her model but said that "it is sticky stuff" and that she "needed help" in cutting a strip. The teaching assistant had collected together a range of materials so that children could make their own selections and when a child asked to use paint, she was told it was available and directed where to collect it from a cupboard. Such good teaching successfully develops children's self-reliance and confidence. They notice the properties of materials and adhesives and can explain why they have made their particular choices.
55. Children are also developing a good knowledge of basic computer skills. They are learning to use a mouse and some can use the 'drag and drop' facility. The other children are also developing these skills and say they love using the computers. The Foundation Stage practitioners provide many stimulating activities and topics for investigation by the children.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their movement skills indoors and outdoors.
- The key issue from the previous inspection relating to the need for a secure outdoor play area has been fully addressed; the new area is very attractive and there is a good range of quality large outdoors toys.

Commentary

56. Children enter Reception with physical skills as expected for their age. The teaching observed was good and the children achieve well. For example, most hold pencils and crayons with confidence, using an appropriate grip. The children are encouraged to develop their physical skills because the teacher plans a very good range of activities. Children are able to select and place shapes and jigsaw pieces in the correct spaces and they develop their hand strength and control by cutting, squeezing, rolling, pressing and shaping play dough. Children reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the year.
57. The equipment for use outside provides very good opportunities for children to develop their confidence. In the new safe outdoor area, there is scope for them to run, skip, pedal and interact socially with each other, and to explore. In addition, there are appropriate opportunities for children to develop their co-ordination and control. Children develop running, skipping, balancing, and turning skills well.
58. They develop their skills using a range of small apparatus including ropes, bats and balls. On the slightly sloping ground, their control of the equipment is good. They are sad when the outdoors session ends and they have to go in but they co-operate fully and help to clear away the toys and other resources they have used.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good opportunities to experience a range of good quality resources and materials.
- Teaching and teaching support are good.
- All creative work is valued within the Foundation Stage.

Commentary

59. Provision in this area is good because the teaching and learning are good and the curriculum to support the children's creative development is broad. As a result, the children achieve well. They demonstrate appropriately developing skills in their artwork and they paint models carefully, using a range of paint colours. Inspection and photographic evidence shows the good range of opportunities for children to develop their design and creative skills using modelling materials and adhesives.

60. Children enjoy singing and most know the words of several songs and nursery rhymes. Teaching in the musical aspects of the children's creative development is good. The children are learning how to handle percussion instruments correctly with care and self-control. The teacher and the teaching assistants use every opportunity to reinforce learning with simple songs and actions linked to the focus of the activities and to develop stories through dramatic re-enactment and 'props'. Children enjoy taking part in these activities and achieve well, reaching the expected standards by the end of the year.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Years 2 and 4, standards are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Standards in writing are above average.
- The management and leadership of the subject are satisfactory.
- Pupils do not take enough care with the presentation of their work.

Commentary

61. Pupils achieve well in English. There are only a small number of pupils in each year group, consequently, standards as shown by national test results should be treated with caution. However, in the 2004 national tests for the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing were well above average. Inspection findings show that standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading and writing. Standards in English for the end of Year 4 are above average and the attainment of this group of pupils has improved considerably since they were tested at the end of Year 2. This is because of the additional support that has been given. In both classes, good teaching and support engages pupils in their lessons. They are taught the sounds made by letters and combinations of letters, which improves their reading and spelling. However, some older pupils do not always take sufficient care to spell previously learned words correctly or consult dictionaries. This weakness, together with some unsatisfactory presentation of work, diminishes the overall quality of some pupils' work in the subject. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and they achieve well.
62. Standards in speaking and listening are broadly average. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to speak and listen. A significant number of pupils find listening, both to the teacher and each other, very difficult in larger group situations. Teachers provide pupils with good advice about how to improve their speaking and most are orally confident by the end of Year 4. Pupils are encouraged to discuss with a partner and to plan carefully how they intend to answer questions. They do this well. Some older pupils answer questions thoughtfully and often in great detail, demonstrating good general knowledge.
63. Pupils in all years read fluently and correctly. They achieve well and standards are above average. The strategies employed to teach sounds and help pupils to blend these together is good and is very effective in giving pupils the confidence to tackle new words. Most pupils are enthusiastic readers who read daily. In addition to reading the stories they enjoy, pupils also use the school library and other sources to locate and read non-fictional texts to support their learning in a range of subjects.
64. Standards in writing are above average as a result of whole-school development over the last year-and-a-half. There has been a particular emphasis on raising standards of

boys' writing in the current Year 4, where there is an unusual gender imbalance. Teachers provide pupils with frequent structured opportunities for writing in a range of styles. These opportunities include writing poetry, writing their own fictional stories, and writing factual information. The strategies used by the school to teach letter sounds are good and help pupils to write well. They learn the conventions of spelling and punctuate correctly. They are using an increasingly interesting range of words to make their writing more exciting. Younger pupils read what they have written to the rest of the class. This confidence is based on the supportive guidance they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. A weakness is that pupils do not always have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This is because teachers do not always share marking with pupils and marking does not sufficiently inform pupils how they can further improve their work. Pupils' self-evaluation of their work is not yet developed sufficiently and older pupils are not encouraged to be critical markers of their own work. Computers are not used well enough for writing and older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to apply their word-processing skills to write and edit their work.

65. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leader ensures that the national strategy for teaching literacy is used and this, together with the use of resources, has helped to maintain the good standards achieved by pupils. She has insufficient time to monitor teaching and learning in the other class and to widen her experience by observations in other schools. Good strategies have enabled pupils to maintain good standards for reading and writing; these are planned for and are used well by teachers and by teaching assistants.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

66. Language and literacy are not yet used as well as they could be to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, and there are few opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they learn in literacy lessons in other subjects. Opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening are evident in a range of subjects, for example when a small group of pupils fully participated in a discussion during a geography lesson. Pupils are also encouraged to use subject specific language in subjects such as mathematics and science. There are opportunities for pupils to write in subjects such as history, but their application of literacy skills and presentation is unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and 4.
- Teaching and learning are good overall.
- Planning and organisation for the teaching of the mixed-age classes is good.
- Mathematics has been a recent focus of staff training and is improving challenge for the most able and developing problem-solving skills.
- Good support for learning is provided by the teaching assistants.
- Pupils do not take enough pride in the presentation of their work.
- Target-setting is not sufficiently established.

- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning lack rigour.

COMMENTARY

67. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average. Pupils in Year 4 are currently working at the levels above those expected for their age, which shows improvement on the average levels they achieved in the 2003 tests. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The majority of pupils in the current Year 1 are working at levels expected for their age. The focus on further improving standards through staff training and developing resources is beginning to develop pupils' problem-solving skills and provide greater challenge for the most able. Pupils who have difficulties in mathematics are given good support in all parts of the lesson, often by teaching assistants who check understanding in the oral work and support effectively in group sessions.
68. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach well-structured numeracy lessons. All aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered in appropriate depth, but lessons often lack excitement. For most of the week, Class 1 are taught as two separate year groups. This enables tasks to be closely matched to pupils' age and capabilities and extension work provided for the most able. Pupils have a good knowledge of number and can use this to solve problems. Opportunities are missed in some lessons to move the most able straight into challenging work, when it is clear from oral sessions that they have grasped the basics. Years 3 and 4 are taught as one class and the teacher skilfully provides work to challenge and support the needs of the different ages and capabilities, using a commercial scheme as a resource. The most able pupils in Year 4 say that they enjoy the regular challenges that are given which make them think. There are effective daily sessions in all groups to develop and speed up pupils' mental calculation and recall of number facts. As a result of these, speed tests standards are high. Pupils also have a good understanding of shape and measures. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 3 and very good in Year 4. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are questioned well and all are encouraged to answer and explain their thinking strategies. This they do very well and show good use of mathematical vocabulary. Pupils in the current Year 2 do not always concentrate and listen sufficiently during introductory whole-class sessions and warm-up activities and take some time to settle to individual tasks. Despite this, standards for the majority in Year 2 are above average.
69. Resources are used well but there is insufficient emphasis on practical activities to make lessons more exciting. Mathematical games are starting to be being introduced but mainly as a reward at the end of some lessons. Computers are used well to consolidate learning and improve skills. The programs used are matched well to the lesson focus and pupils enjoy these.
70. It is not always made clear to pupils at the start of the lesson what they are learning about so that they are able to evaluate their learning at the end of lessons. Subject vocabulary linked to the topics being studied is emphasised in lessons but not displayed in classrooms. Work is regularly marked but there are very few comments which tell pupils how to improve. The presentation of work in exercise books is poor and insufficient care is taken when completing workbooks; this goes unchecked. The use of rulers for drawing mathematical shapes and accuracy is not insisted upon.

Assessment is not used to set individual targets, as it is in literacy, and consequently pupils are not involved in evaluating their own learning. Assessment at the time of the last inspection was very good and is currently satisfactory.

71. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and the above average standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The most recent curriculum focus on problem-solving and improving challenge for the most able, identified by data analysis, is showing results. Monitoring of planning, pupils' work samples, teaching and learning are not rigorous enough to identify areas for action and to provide a more consistent quality of teaching across the school. A governor has responsibility for numeracy and monitors on a regular basis. Parents have been given the opportunity to learn about the way mathematics is taught but this event was not well supported. Homework is not provided on a regular basis, but most pupils work productively in lessons and complete what is required. Work is sent home if it is considered necessary. A bank of mathematical games is being collected for home use.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Very few examples were found of mathematics being used in other subjects. A visiting music teacher helped pupils understand and remember dates relating to famous composers and their styles of music by setting number challenges, which the pupils enjoyed. Revised topics and new cross-curricular plans need to identify more opportunities to apply mathematical skills. This is an area for development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' investigational skills are well developed in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils' subject vocabulary is well developed.
- Lessons are not always planned to meet the needs of a mixed-age class.
- Older pupils make less progress because topics are not studied in enough depth.
- The presentation and quality of written work is unsatisfactory.
- The co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities to influence teaching and learning across the school.

Commentary

73. Teacher-assessed standards at the end of Year 2 were well above average in 2004. However, the group of pupils tested was much smaller than usual and some pupils attained the higher Level 3. This shows good improvement since the last inspection

where no pupils were assessed as being above average. Systems for assessing pupils' knowledge, understanding and investigative skills have been revised and pupils' progress is tracked in Years 1 and 2. End-of-topic assessments are now used to check retention of knowledge. All this data is used well to inform teacher assessment at the end of Year 2. This also shows improvement since the last inspection when assessment was not found to be accurate enough at the end of Year 2. Currently, there are no links with the middle school as regards the science curriculum.

74. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection in Year 1 and 2 and this was good for Year 2 but only satisfactory for Year 1. Year 2 pupils can investigate, predict, observe carefully, collect results, record these and look for patterns. They use subject vocabulary well to discuss the results of experiments and how these could be interpreted. There is some understanding of a fair test. This indicates that most Year 2 pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. However, many of the younger members in the class find it difficult to contribute and follow the discussion because the task was not pitched at an appropriate level for them. When looking at pupils' work, it was evident that the same activities are usually planned for the whole class. Recording expected of all pupils is very basic. Not enough detail and written explanation is expected of Year 2 pupils. Science work is mixed in with other subjects in a general book which makes it difficult to see the progress pupils are making over time and check their coverage of topics. The work in books and the poor presentation does not reflect the good levels of knowledge and understanding pupils show in lessons and in discussion.
75. No lessons were seen in Class 2. Work samples show that the programmes of study are covered in a two-year cycle, but not in enough depth to enable pupils to work at levels above those expected for age. Work samples, again in a general subject book, show that some investigations take place, for example when making solutions. Elements of investigational work such as fair testing are taught. There is no evidence that older children are encouraged to investigate and devise their own experiments. Pupils are not encouraged to draw clear neat diagrams and label them correctly. Again, presentation of written work is poor and not sufficiently demanding for most of the pupils to apply their good literacy and numeracy skills. There is no evidence that different activities are planned to take learning forward to the next level. Work samples and discussion suggest that pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 4 and they are working at levels expected for age.
76. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic. She is given some time for monitoring teaching in the other class, but as yet is not able to influence teaching and improve organisation. Resources are good but teaching assistants are not used well enough to help pupils work at different levels within the same topic. Good use is made of the school grounds for investigation and the school has received an award for its work. There was no evidence that computers were used for research, nor to display data from experiments.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching of basic skills.
- Above average number of computers in each class.
- Insufficient opportunities to use ICT skills in a range of subjects.
- Lack of challenge for the most able.

Commentary

77. Since the last inspection, resources have been improved and staff have received training, increasing their confidence and expertise. During the inspection, one ICT lesson was seen and the use of ICT by groups in mathematics and literacy lessons was observed. Standards were found to be average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils are working at the expected levels for their age, similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Achievement is satisfactory for pupils of all capabilities.
78. Pupils' work folders and teachers' planning show that pupils are being introduced sequentially to all the expected strands of the National Curriculum. An ICT assistant teaches key skills to each year group on a weekly basis. Pupils benefit from her expertise and often get individual attention. Teachers are careful to ensure that tasks are appropriate for the different age groups within the class, although there is little evidence of additional challenge for the most able. From Reception, pupils learn to program floor robots and by Year 4, pupils give commands to make complex moves. Pupils operate tape recorders but it is mainly adults who use the digital camera. Pupils are keen and confident in their use of computers. They can assemble, amend, check and print text. They can change the letter style, colour, size and direction of text and print their work. Year 2 pupils are able to draw a plan of their favourite meal on a plate and show good mouse control. Pupils enjoy using programs to develop numeracy and literacy skills as part of daily lessons.
79. The Internet is sometimes used for research, although there have been problems accessing the service used. Year 3 and 4 pupils have the opportunity to send e-mails to pupils in another local school to increase their circle of friends when they move to the middle school. Screen savers are frequently changed to display the current assembly theme, for example honesty. The school has its own website.
80. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator ensures that an appropriate range of software is available to provide support for the planned curriculum. There are plans to install new equipment to support the use of ICT in whole-class teaching. Monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator is currently informal. Pupils are involved in the assessment of their own learning within the different areas of the curriculum but there is no annotation of work by teachers to indicate levels of success or difficulties found. The school has an above average number of computers in relation to the number of pupils and the equipment is well maintained.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

81. Some use is made of computers in literacy and numeracy lessons. There are many missed opportunities to develop and extend pupils' basic skills, for example using computers to write stories and poems and design posters. There was very limited

evidence of data handling or graphs in science and geography. In order to develop independent learning, pupils need to have more opportunities to put their good skills to better use.

HUMANITIES

82. Work was sampled in **history** and **geography**, with only one class lesson and one focus group short session seen in geography in Years 3-4. No lessons were observed in history in either class. The subjects are taught separately in blocks as part of a rolling programme to meet the needs of mixed-age classes. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision in these subjects but there are indications from the pupils' work and displays that standards of attainment in Years 3-4 are at the nationally-expected levels in both subjects; it is not possible to form a judgement of pupils' levels of attainment in these subjects in Years 1-2. These conclusions are broadly similar to those formed at the previous inspection.
83. In both subjects, the curriculum is enriched by a range of visits and visitors, and good use is made of the local village, and on occasion other adjacent villages. Pupils visit the Chiltern Open Air Museum, Letchworth Museum for an 'Ancient Egyptian experience'; a 'Victorian Washday' and 'Roman Feast' were enjoyed at the Hitchin Museum. These play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed learning about the ancient Egyptians. This is reflected in their work and they can identify the main reasons why this was so. From discussions with pupils, many obviously find history and geography interesting and speak enthusiastically about their current topic. They can explain that their own village school has been in existence since Victorian times and that this is part of their heritage as pupils of the village school in 2004.
84. Artefacts loaned to support the ancient Egyptians history topic, together with carefully selected reference resources, encourage independent learning. Good use is made of the village and of the school site for practical work. Visits to the museums help pupils to understand some of the physical and human features of a seaside environment, and life in Victorian times for some poorer members of society as well as providing an enjoyable social activity time. Teachers carefully mount displays containing original artefacts, large and small, to support learning in the subjects. These successfully enthuse children and bring the subjects alive. Most pupils' written work is poorly presented and does not reflect their good levels of understanding. In Years 3 and 4, opportunities are missed to develop literacy, and numeracy and to use ICT in these subjects. The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily.
85. In **religious education**, only one lesson was taught during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make an overall evaluation of provision. However, evidence from displays, the scrutiny of the pupils' work in the subject and discussions with pupils shows that standards throughout the school are broadly satisfactory. This is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils have some knowledge and understanding of the different beliefs of major world faiths from Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Pupils are interested in the subject and benefit greatly from the use of good resources, well-informed visitors to the school, and making educational visits to, for example, the Buddhist Peace Pagoda at Milton Keynes and a Sikh Gurdwara in Luton. Pupils in Year 4 have a mature and well-

balanced way of discussing similarities and differences. The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally-agreed syllabus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

As very few lessons were observed during the inspection, no judgements on the overall quality of provision can be made in these subjects.

86. No **art and design** lessons were timetabled on the inspection days. Wall displays and photographic evidence show that pupils work in a range of media and that work is often linked to the topics pupils are covering, for example colour mixing to match leaf colours and firework collages linking with work on Autumn Festivals in Years 1 and 2. Year 2 pupils show good techniques when painting in the style of Renoir. A group of pupils were winding different shades and textures of wool to create a background for a seaside or winter farming scene to be made into a calendar. They selected their colours appropriately and took greater care with their winding. In Years 3 and 4, art and design are linked to history topics such as the Ancient Egyptians. The overall evidence indicates that standards are as expected for age at the end of Year 2 and 4. Younger pupils use a wider range of materials and they were found to take more care with their work. The skills of observational drawing were found to be below those expected at the end of Year 4. The responsibility of subject leadership is split between the two full-time teachers and is given a different emphasis in each class depending on the teacher's knowledge of skill development.
87. In **design and technology**, a group of pupils in Year 1 and 2 pupils were seen decorating their diva lamps. They had drawn careful designs and looked at some authentic lamps to inspire their decoration. Teaching was good and encouraged a good level of independence. Considerable care and attention to detail was shown and the finished products were of good quality and displayed a range of original ideas. Pupils were proud of their achievements and could explain what changes they had made to their designs and why. From the evidence provided, there appears to be a less structured approach in Years 3 and 4 and the design, make and evaluate process was not apparent. Written evaluation was rarely used. The leadership of the subject is split between the two full-time staff and this prevents the raising of standards across the school. Skills are not being progressively developed across the school.
88. One **music** lesson was seen during the inspection and pupils were observed in hymn practice and assembly. The singing is tuneful, rhythmical and of good volume from such a small number of pupils. They are taught well, follow the words and listen carefully when learning new songs. Pupils have good opportunities to perform to a variety of audiences throughout the year. An excellent lesson was provided by a visiting musician from a local authority outreach programme. Pupils were motivated by his exciting delivery and skilful combination of all aspects of the music curriculum. They had acquired a good knowledge of different musical styles and composers from Bach to The Beatles. Pupils showed that they could listen and respond well by singing and moving to the music. Pupils have the opportunity to play the recorder and some take advantage of additional lessons for violin. There are good opportunities to learn about different styles of music in a samba workshop, and opera experience and from a local percussionist who shares expertise with pupils. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

89. One lesson of **physical education** took place during the inspection. Currently indoor lessons take place in the nearby village hall because the school hall is too small. Although this hall is bigger, facilities are limited by the large pillars that could be dangerous if large apparatus was used. The dance lesson observed was good and pupils were sensible and aware of each other and safe working space. They worked hard to improve their skills and were able to demonstrate their ideas to others. There are opportunities for climbing and balancing on large outdoor apparatus in the playground. Pupils are generally well co-ordinated and do not appear to suffer from the lack of larger gymnastics equipment. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 make use of a local swimming pool in the Spring Term, where they achieve above average standards. Some opportunities are provided to compete in sports days and team games against other schools. Occasionally short courses for football and cricket are held after school. Several sporting activities are available out of school hours in the village hall, which are well attended.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

No lessons in this area of the school's work took place during the inspection. The programme of personal, social and health education is taught on a regular basis and pupils benefit from the opportunities to share their ideas and feelings during lessons. The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2003 and has worked hard to develop a 'Walking Bus' and safe pedestrian routes through the village. Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about citizenship at a local level and to be involved in a variety of community events.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
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	4

Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	2
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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