

INSPECTION REPORT

HERON HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kendal

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112190

Headteacher: Mr P Gardner

Lead inspector: Mr R F Spinks

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 May 2005

Inspection number: 266999

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	465
School address:	Hayfell Avenue Kendal Cumbria
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Bonsall
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in large grounds in the area of Heron Hill, to the south of the centre of Kendal. The school building has had a number of extensions to accommodate increasing numbers and to provide a Nursery. Further building is planned to enhance provision.

There are 465 pupils on roll, which makes the school larger than average. Approximately 50 younger pupils attend the Nursery part-time, in either the morning or afternoon. The pupils come from mainly white heritage backgrounds and the number from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average. Pupils come from the full range of social and economic background and overall there is neither advantage nor disadvantage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. Overall, pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average, and at 13 per cent the number of pupils on the special educational needs register is below the national average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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11685	Joy Bristow	<i>Team inspector</i>	English English as an additional language Design and technology Religious education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Heron Hill Primary school is a sound school with several good and very good features. Overall good teaching ensures that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils' personal development is very good and attendance levels are very high. The rich curriculum is enhanced by a wealth of extra-curricular opportunities. Overall management is satisfactory. The budget is managed well but managers have not ensured that the assessment of pupils' progress is effective in promoting improved standards. Governance is good, ensuring that the school is well resourced. Overall the school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and attendance levels are very high.
- Rich curricular experiences make a strong contribution to pupils' very good personal development.
- The care and welfare of pupils is very good and the provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.
- The assessment of pupils' progress is not effective enough in promoting improved standards, especially for a small number of lower attaining pupils.
- Managers have not monitored the assessment of standards and the progress of pupils with enough rigour.
- Standards in English, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, music and physical education are above average.
- The quality of singing and the presentation of pupils' work are very good.
- The school has developed a very strong partnership with parents.

The school has maintained standards similar to those reported in the last inspection. The strengths of the school identified then have been maintained and enhanced. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. All the issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed well.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	A	B	C
mathematics	B	A	C	D
science	B	C	C	E

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

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter the Nursery with broadly average attainment and by the end of the Reception year achievement is satisfactory, with most pupils reaching the national goals for five-year-olds. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is at least satisfactory, with overall attainment being just above the national average for reading and mathematics and average in writing. In Years 3 to 6, achievement is satisfactory overall, with pupils attaining above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science in 2004. Current pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain standards above those of 2004. Higher-attaining pupils do well, but a small number of pupils who just attain the nationally expected standards in Year 2 do not make enough progress to attain the nationally expected level by the end of Year 6. Standards in ICT, English, geography, history, music, physical education and singing are above average. Pupils with SEN make good progress in response to the very good support they receive.

Pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They have very positive attitudes, and behaviour is very good, both in class and around the school. Attendance levels are very high.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall the quality of education is good. Teaching is good but there is too much variation between years and between parallel classes, which leads to variations in the learning and progress made by a few pupils. Teachers mostly provide lively and challenging lessons to which pupils respond well, and learning is good. However, the assessment of pupils' work to promote high standards is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is very rich, providing many and varied learning opportunities, and good use is made of information and communication technology skills to promote learning in many subjects. **The care of pupils is very good. Guidance of pupils is satisfactory.** However, the monitoring of pupils' progress is not as effective as it should be in promoting high standards for all. The very good links with parents and the good links with the community enhance pupils' learning experiences. The good links with other schools ensure a very smooth transfer to secondary education for pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school, and along with other managers has been particularly effective in ensuring the very good personal development of pupils through the provision of a rich and balanced curriculum. They have managed the budget well to ensure that resources and accommodation enhance learning. However, they have not monitored the work of the school rigorously enough to ensure that all pupils make good progress in all parts of the school. The governing body is well organised and has a strong vision for the future development of the school. It has ensured that statutory requirements are fully met and is fully involved in all aspects, but has lacked accurate information regarding the variable progress of some pupils.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied. They believe their children make good progress in response to good teaching and the good behaviour of pupils. They consider the school well managed and fair. They feel that the school is very approachable but a few do not always feel consulted. They also like the wide range of activities provided for pupils and the induction arrangements for new pupils.

Pupils are positive about their learning experiences and expect to work hard. They have good relationships with adults, whom they consider to be fair. They do not always feel that lessons are exciting or that fellow pupils behave well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- The accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils linked to National Curriculum criteria.
- The monitoring of pupils' progress, using assessment information from teachers.
- The rigorous monitoring of standards and progress across the whole school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, achievement and standards are satisfactory. Pupils enter the Nursery with broadly average standards of attainment and on leaving the school in Year 6, in 2004, their standards were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. However, achievement is variable across the school and across subjects in response to varying teaching quality. Boys and girls achieve similarly but a small group of pupils of just below average ability do not achieve as well as they should. Higher-attaining pupils and those with SEN achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by a small number of pupils should be higher by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in ICT, geography, history, music and physical education are above average.
- Standards in singing across the school are high.
- Literacy standards are above average.
- Higher-attaining pupils and those with SEN achieve well.

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the Nursery with average standards of attainment. They achieve well in the Nursery, making good progress in all areas of learning. In the Reception year achievement is satisfactory and by the end of this year standards are above average in personal, social and physical development and in line with those expected in the other areas of learning.

2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2, in 2004, standards in reading and mathematics were above average and standards in writing were average. Higher-attaining pupils achieved well, with a larger proportion gaining the higher levels in reading and mathematics than normally found. Pupils' progress in reading and mathematics has been enhanced by a productive partnership with parents. A programme of parents' meetings has informed parents how to support their children. Although standards have varied over the last four years they have generally been in line with or above national averages and reflect the small changes in the numbers of pupils who have SEN. Pupils with SEN consistently achieve well against the targets set for them because of the very good support they receive. Standards in ICT are good and in religious education are broadly average. Pupils' physical development is good and they are healthier and fitter than normally found. Standards in geography, history, music and physical education are above average. Pupils sing very well. Standards in all other subjects are typical of those normally found.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (16.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.7 (14.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.9 (17.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. In Years 3 to 6 achievement is satisfactory. In 2004 standards in English were above average, and standards in mathematics and science were average. Higher-attaining pupils achieved well in English and mathematics, with an above average proportion attaining the higher levels, but fewer pupils attained the higher levels in science. These standards represent satisfactory progress overall. In comparison with similar schools, standards in 2004 were average for English and below average for mathematics and science. This resulted from a very small number of pupils who just attained the national average at the end of Year 2 not achieving the national average at the end of Year 6. The variation in progress is directly related to the variation in

the quality of teaching pupils receive. Assessment processes do not identify pupils' progress accurately enough to enable focused learning to promote better achievement for this small group of pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that current standards are at least satisfactory in English, mathematics and science. Standards are improving in science as a result of the whole-school focus on practical and investigative science over the last few years.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.3 (29.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.7 (28.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	28.7 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

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

4. Standards in ICT are good, reflecting good achievement. Pupils have very good opportunities to use these skills within the other subjects of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, pupils used their word-processing skills to support their learning of letter writing structures.
5. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory and standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have opportunities to study a number of different religions and respond well, showing respect for others' beliefs.
6. Standards in geography and history are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well in music and attain above average standards. Pupils' singing is significantly better than normally found. They sing harmoniously and with expression. Standards in physical education are above average, with pupils showing good body control and hand/eye co-ordination.
7. Standards in all other subjects are average, although the rich curriculum affords them a broader range of learning experiences than normally found, for example, the wide range of visits which extend learning in history and geography, as well as enhancing personal development.
8. Pupils with SEN are very well supported by well qualified and experienced teaching assistants and as a result achieve well. Individual education plans (IEPs) identify appropriate targets and are reviewed regularly to evaluate progress. Most pupils are successful in achieving the goals they are set.
9. Standards are similar to those found at the last inspection and represent satisfactory progress since then.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Their behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. Pupils' personal development is very good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is very good; cultural development is good. Attendance is well above that typically found in primary schools nationally. Pupils are very punctual.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school enjoy learning and have very positive attitudes to school.
- Pupils behave very well, work very well together and make very good relationships with one another and with the adults in school.
- The school is very committed to the personal development of its pupils: their spiritual, moral and social development is very good.
- Attendance levels are very high and punctuality is very good.

Commentary

10. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the wide range of trips and other activities planned for them. Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate very well and listen attentively to others. Pupils with SEN share the positive attitudes because they are supported very well and take a full part in school life. Pupils work hard even on the occasions when the work does not engage their interest. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are encouraged to develop positive attitudes through the wide range of interesting activities. Pupils appreciate the very good opportunities they have to go on trips, including residential experiences, and they look forward to these. Pupils' attitudes make a significant contribution to the standards they achieve.

11. The personal development of pupils has a very high priority within the school and very high expectations are set for their behaviour. Almost all pupils behave very well. When one or two pupils do not meet the school's expectations they are dealt with sensitively so that their behaviour is not allowed to disrupt the learning of others. The school is very orderly. Pupils of all ages are polite to one another, to staff and to visitors. They work very well together in pairs or small groups, sharing equipment sensibly. Pupils form very good, respectful relationships with one another, and with teachers and other staff. Year 6 pupils have a responsibility to take care of the younger ones: they do this in a very mature way, which helps to foster a sense of community. Behaviour out of lessons is very good, helped by the use of the same systems in and outside the classroom so that pupils understand what is expected of them. Pupils take a pride in their school and look after its environment carefully. One pupil was excluded for a fixed period last year.

12. Pupils with SEN enjoy their work. Pupils are confident to contribute to lessons and groups, and are proud of the progress they make. There are frequent opportunities for pupils with SEN to work collaboratively with their peers. They enjoy good relationships and are valued members of the school community.

13. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Teachers set high expectations and encourage pupils of all ages to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong very clearly and look after one another and the environment very well. They work very well together and develop the skills of working independently of the teacher to a very high degree. Pupils of all ages listen carefully to others' ideas and show increasing tolerance of differences in views as they move through the school. However, opportunities for pupils to make personal responses and to reflect on what they are learning are limited in some subjects. Pupils show very high levels of respect for the views and feelings of others and are very accepting of them. Pupils have very mature, sensible attitudes towards taking responsibility. They are very willing to help others and play a full part in the life of the school community. Pupils show a pride in their school and in their work. The school offers all pupils in Years 4 to 6 the opportunity to go on a residential trip annually, which makes a very significant contribution to their very good social development. Pupils' cultural development is good. Although they gain a very good appreciation of their own cultural traditions, the opportunities they have to learn about the way of life of people from other cultures are less well developed. The very good attention given to children's personal, social and emotional development in the Nursery and Reception classes means that children exceed the expected goals in that area.

14. The school has successfully maintained the very high standards of pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development noted in the previous inspection report.

15. Attendance is consistently well above the level typically found in primary schools nationally, and the level of unauthorised absence is low. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils want to be at school because they enjoy the lessons and other activities. Parents support the school by reporting absences promptly. The school has very good procedures in place to monitor absence, and the educational welfare officer is involved appropriately on the rare occasions when attendance becomes a cause for concern. Pupils almost always arrive promptly in the morning and lessons begin on time.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	3.4
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0
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 Black Caribbean
Mixed – any other mixed background
Chinese
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
337	1	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
6	0	0
1	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

Overall, the quality of education is good.

Teaching and learning

Overall the quality of teaching is good. Pupils respond well and are interested in their work. However, some variability in the effectiveness and impact of the teaching results in standards that are only satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic, work hard and are committed to providing productive learning experiences.
- Teachers have high expectations in terms of pupils' behaviour and application to learning.
- Pupils are given good opportunities to develop their independent learning skills.
- Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory and does not provide the information which will enable more focused teaching to bring about higher standards.
- The lack of systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is an obstacle to consistently good teaching and hinders the achievement of high standards.

Commentary

16. Observations of lessons and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that many pupils are making good progress. However, current standards at the end of Year 6 suggest that previous learning experiences did not consistently reflect the present good teaching. There is still some evidence of variability in the quality of teaching across the school. Consequently, not all pupils receive consistently good teaching as they move through the school, and this is reflected in their levels of achievement.

17. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan effective lessons. The developing practice of sharing the intended learning outcomes and success criteria with pupils is having a positive

impact on rates of progress. Teachers are successful in creating meaningful links between learning in different areas of the curriculum and base much of the learning on first-hand experiences.

18. Within lessons, teachers are good role models and provide pupils with clear explanations. A wide range of resources is available to support learning, and they are well used. Where teaching is most effective, teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils to extend their skills and understanding. Since the time of the last inspection, there has been an increased emphasis on planning a range of opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills. Pupils made good progress when challenged to undertake problem-solving activities and to carry out investigations.

19. In the less effective lessons teachers have lower expectations, are unclear about the next steps of learning and plan less challenging activities. This is reflected in the unnecessary consolidation of previous learning. In a few lessons the pace is too slow and pupils lose concentration.

20. Relationships in the classroom are strong, and teachers sustain a good learning atmosphere. Pupils are confident and feel able to ask for clarification or attempt something new. Praise is used well and pupils respond positively. There are high expectations in terms of behaviour and application to learning, and this creates an environment in which learning can thrive.

21. The very good partnerships between the class teachers and the teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the effectiveness of teaching and learning and to the progress pupils make. Pupils with SEN are well supported and make very good progress.

22. Assessment is weak. Policies and procedures are not applied systematically across the school and, consequently, assessment does not provide the information necessary to secure improved progress. The recently introduced pupil-tracking system has the potential to support teachers in evaluating progress at the end of each year but it is not as yet underpinned by accurate assessment of ongoing work. Existing assessment procedures are not focused clearly enough on National Curriculum levels of attainment and, as a result, teachers are unable to target teaching to meet the needs of all pupils.

23. The diagnostic assessment of pupils with SEN is effective. Progress in relation to the targets identified on IEPs is reviewed regularly, and pupils are aware of their achievements and of what they need to do to improve.

24. Practice in other key areas of assessment for learning, such as marking and involving pupils in self-assessment, is variable. The good practice in evidence in some classrooms is not applied consistently across the school. Consequently, many pupils are unsure about their targets for improvement.

25. The school has recently identified two members of the staff team to lead the planned improvement in assessment. They have a clear understanding of the developments necessary in order to raise standards.

26. The good quality teaching noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained, but there is a lack of the systematic monitoring of teaching and learning necessary to bring about consistency and further improvement. There are also insufficient opportunities for teachers with specific areas of expertise to influence the quality of teaching and learning across the school.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 57 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (3.5%)	12 (21%)	27 (47%)	15 (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.

The curriculum

The very good curriculum is greatly enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities available to all pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a very rich curriculum for all pupils regardless of age or ability.
- There is an exciting range of extra-curricular activities in addition to those planned for the normal school day.
- The provision for pupils with SEN is very good.
- The provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good.
- The induction programmes for new pupils, and for pupils who will be attending the secondary schools, are good.
- The resources, including staffing and accommodation, are very good.
- Homework is used inconsistently across the school.

Commentary

27. Foundation Stage pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which has improved since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are met. Accommodation has improved and there is now a specially designed classroom and play area for the Nursery pupils. The number of teaching and non-teaching staff is average but they are well supported by students and parent volunteers.

28. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 receive a rich curriculum. The school provides a very rich curriculum for all pupils regardless of gender or background. The curriculum is broad and balanced and often provides opportunities for pupils to increase their experiences through attendance at residential centres or through visiting places of interest. For example, pupils in Year 4 have recently visited Arnside, Year 5 pupils will visit Bradford, and Year 6 pupils are about to visit the hostel near Windermere. These visits have raised the interest level of the pupils and have had an impact on achievement in subjects such as geography and English, as well as on their personal development. Artists and poets often visit the school to share their skills with pupils. A visiting teacher of German has enabled one class of Year 4 pupils to enjoy learning a different language.

29. Statutory requirements are met and national guidelines are followed. Many of the published programmes of work have been adapted by the staff in order to enhance pupils' experiences, including that for religious education. The school has a daily act of collective worship. The influence of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and ICT has had a positive effect on teaching and learning in other subjects.

30. Support for gifted and talented pupils is at an early stage of development. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award. Health, sex and drugs education is taught from Year 2 through to Year 6. The 'Philosophy for Children' programme enables pupils to improve their thinking skills and make their own decisions.

31. The provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Where necessary, the school adapts the curriculum to ensure equality of access for all pupils. The governing body increased the level of classroom support in Years 3 to 6, and this has had a positive impact on standards. Intervention strategies focused on pupils who require a 'catch up' programme have had considerable impact on the progress made by many of them. Individual education plans (IEPs) are reviewed regularly by

teachers, parents, pupils and the co-ordinator. Pupils are grouped according to prior attainment in mathematics, and the higher- and lower-attaining pupils achieve well. However, this is not always the case for a small number of pupils in the middle who, in some year groups, are not achieving as well as they could. In Year 6, a few pupils are underachieving because they have not previously had the opportunity of the 'catch up' programmes.

32. The curriculum is enriched by a range of activities during the lunch hour and at the end of the school day. Pupils are also encouraged to take part in community events such as singing at a local home for the elderly. Activities held after school include 'Quest', linked to the Christian Union, dancing, science, cricket, 'non sketch club', and choir. Visits to places of interest include the Quaker Meeting House, Kendal Museum and Holker Hall. All the visits are linked to the curriculum and make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.

33. Teachers from two local secondary schools visit Year 5 and 6 pupils, and pupils visit the high schools for taster days. Year 6 higher-attaining pupils are involved in a mathematics project at a local high school with Business Enterprise status. There are also good opportunities through the Sports programme.

34. The involvement of Initial Teacher Training students in the school's 'Theme Weeks' such as the Creative Arts week and the English week, has enabled the school to plan some very exciting collaborative work, enhancing pupils' curriculum experiences.

35. Since the last inspection accommodation has improved and is now very good: it includes a purpose built music room, two learning support rooms and an ICT suite. Some rooms have interactive whiteboards. Future plans include a new adventure playground. Resources are very good and they are used well.

36. Teaching and support staff are very well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Additional teachers provide support for curriculum development and for small groups of pupils. Teaching assistants are also used well to support the intervention programmes.

Care, guidance and support

Overall, care, guidance and support are good. The school takes very good care of its pupils' welfare, health and safety. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff build up very good relationships with pupils, all of whom have a trusting relationship with one or more adults.
- Very good induction arrangements give pupils a flying start to their life at Heron Hill Nursery.
- Pupils' views are taken fully into consideration and they are very actively involved in improving their school. Pupils' views are valued and acted upon.
- Pupils with SEN are very well supported.
- Every child is valued.
- Teachers do not use effective assessment to plan for pupils' future learning.

Commentary

37. This is a happy, caring community where pupils trust staff and take pleasure in friendships with each other. The welfare, support and guidance of pupils are very effective and are built on the very good relationships between staff and children. This mutual respect helps to create a clean, safe and secure atmosphere.

38. Teachers are very sensitive to the needs of all pupils and ensure that they are fully involved in class activities. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils very well and there are very good contacts with parents. Effective systems relating to health and diet are in place. The headteacher has had relevant training in child protection. He and his staff are watchful, know the procedures and are ready to implement them if necessary.

39. The very good arrangements for children joining the Nursery and Reception help them to settle in quickly and happily. Those children who join Heron Hill at other times are befriended and swiftly made to feel valued members of the school community by all staff and pupils. Pupils take pride in welcoming others into the school, helping them to feel happy and settled.

40. The school has well-developed procedures for the diagnostic assessment of pupils with SEN. This is reflected in the early identification of need and the appropriate support provided for individuals.

41. Arrangements for health and safety are very good; first aid is administered effectively; accidents and their outcomes are carefully recorded; safe practices are underlined in lessons and equipment is regularly checked and maintained. Particular care is taken with the arrangements for the many visits children make outside the school, to ensure safety and well being.

42. Achievement is rewarded with praise and celebrated in class. Staff monitor and support the personal development of pupils, using such means as formal and informal discussions and questionnaires. However, the very good pastoral care is not focused sufficiently on removing barriers to learning in order to raise standards. Pupils with SEN receive very good support and consequently achieve very well throughout the school. Parents and external agencies are involved appropriately.

43. The views of pupils are highly valued within the school. Class councils involve all pupils in Years 1 to 6 in discussions about issues that concern them, and their views feed into the infant and junior council meetings. Pupils are actively engaged in improving school life for everyone. Members of the councils take a very significant and responsible role in this. For example, when it was decided to back the council's plan for an adventure playground, councillors approached the Friends of Heron Hill for financial help. They also took on the task of raising a quarter of the money themselves through cake sales and other activities. Councillors are justifiably proud of the work they do and the significant changes they help to bring about.

44. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school benefits from a very good partnership with parents. It has good links with the local community and with other schools. The school has successfully maintained the high standards noted in the previous inspection report.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has developed a very strong partnership with parents, who are very well informed and very supportive.
- Links with the community provide pupils with a range of experiences that enrich the curriculum.
- The school works well in partnership with other local schools and colleges to support children as they move to the next stage of their education, and to train student teachers.

Commentary

45. The school is committed to working in partnership with parents. To this end, parents are very well informed about the school's expectations and routines. The prospectus and governors' report for parents are comprehensive, and the information they contain is very well supplemented by

regular newsletters. Pupils' reports are of good quality overall: those for children in the Nursery are very good. Reports provide clear information about progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses very clearly and provide targets for improvement. However, there is some variation in the quality of the targets, some being imprecise. The reports indicate that teachers know their pupils very well. Parents have a good range of opportunities to consult with their child's class teacher, and attendance at these meetings is extremely high. Parents appreciate the open-door policy that enables them to discuss their child's progress or any concerns as soon as they arise. Meetings about aspects of the curriculum are also very well attended. These meetings and the regular involvement of parents at home, for example, with reading, help parents to make a good contribution to their child's learning. A good number of parents help regularly in school and many others help on trips and other special occasions. The school provides training so that parent helpers make a very positive contribution. Questionnaires are used to gain the views of parents, and parent governors make a significant contribution to the work of the school. The school benefits from a very active and extremely well supported Friends association.

46. A strong partnership is developed with parents of pupils who have SEN. Communication is very good and parents regularly attend review meetings. The school has formed positive links with appropriate outside agencies such as specialist organisations. The quality of these partnerships is reflected in the good progress made by pupils with specific needs.

47. The school has established a wide range of links with the local community, including the parish church. Pupils have many opportunities to study the local area, for example, in history and geography, and the school makes good use of the locality for visits. Considerable charity fund-raising supports local, national and international charities. Pupils perform in the local music festival and in local venues.

48. Links with other schools are good. The school works with local nurseries and play schools to support children as they enter full-time education. Close liaison with the two local high schools ensures that transfer to secondary education is very well managed. The school is a joint training school and works very closely with its two partner schools and the college to develop a common approach to the training of Nursery nurses, teaching assistants and trainee teachers. Further afield, the school is twinned with a primary school in Germany and has links with a school in the Ukraine.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and seeks to provide a good quality education for its pupils. Senior managers share this vision and have ensured there is a good learning environment and very good resources for learning. However, managers at all levels have not monitored the work of the school rigorously enough to ensure the highest level of achievement of all pupils. The management of the budget is very good and resources are generally used well. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, have a strategic vision and plan for the future, and have ensured that best value principles have been applied. Given the satisfactory progress pupils make, the good quality of education, the very good personal development of pupils and the average income levels, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Governance is good.
- The management of SEN is very good.
- Financial management is very good.
- The monitoring and evaluation of pupils' progress is not sufficiently rigorous.
- The leadership and innovation within the curriculum are good.
- The school makes a very good contribution to initial teacher training.

Commentary

49. The positive leadership of the school has ensured a shared vision and purpose amongst all staff. It is strong in regard to the quality and breadth of provision but less so in regard to a relentless drive to improve standards. Management is satisfactory; it is most effective in providing a caring and supportive atmosphere in which pupils develop well personally. Resources are well managed to provide a very good learning environment and higher than average staffing levels. However, weaknesses in assessment have not been addressed with sufficient rigour.

50. Day-to-day management is good, and often very good, with secure systems which ensure high attendance levels, good maintenance of the buildings and the very effective care of pupils.

51. Governors are well organised, and through their committee structure monitor the work of the school. They have not monitored sufficiently rigorously the impact of decisions on the standards pupils attain. For example, they have not measured the impact of long-term training opportunities for individual teachers on the progress made by pupils in that teacher's class. They set the budget against the clear priorities in the school's development plan but do not focus sufficiently on the standards pupils attain at the end of Reception, Year 2 and Year 6. They understand and use the principles of 'best value' when setting the budget.

52. The governors have ensured that all statutory requirements are met. They have established a performance management policy and procedures for teaching staff, and are developing one for non-teaching staff. The governors are well trained, making use of programmes provided by the local education authority (LEA), and new governors become effective quickly. Individual governors are linked to classes and subjects but do not always challenge staff sufficiently to explain the data relating to pupils' attainment.

53. Senior managers evaluate the effectiveness of the school by reviewing data, but they have focused strongly on the quality of education and now need to focus on the achievement and attainment of all pupils. The issues relating to management, identified in the previous inspection, have been addressed and managers have been successful in bringing about improvements in pupils' independent learning skills. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

54. General administration and financial administration are very good. Staff make very good use of information technology to support all administration, providing clear, relevant and accurate information for teachers, managers and governors.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,003,962.00	Balance from previous year	79,222.00
Total expenditure	978,833.00	Balance carried forward to the next	104,351.00*
Expenditure per pupil	2,105.00		

* A large proportion of this figure is committed to the school's building programme.

55. Finances are managed well to ensure that decisions on spending are planned over a three-year period, so that income and expenditure balance closely.

56. The provision for pupils with SEN is well managed. The school has had a commitment to supporting pupils and has increased the number of teaching assistants accordingly. The headteacher, special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and named governor work closely in partnership. The progress of pupils with SEN is monitored regularly. Appropriate training and guidance is provided for the staff team.

57. The school is a major partner in programmes for the initial training of teachers and this benefits the school with innovative curriculum ideas, but the impact of trainees on the standards pupils attain is not monitored closely enough. Generally, teachers have good professional development opportunities linked to school priorities. Senior managers have not monitored closely enough the impact of longer-term training opportunities on standards.

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 is **good** overall. Children are prepared well for transfer to Reception. Children are admitted to the Nursery class the term after their third birthday. They enter school with average attainment. At the time of the inspection there were 52 children on roll in Nursery and 54 children in Reception. There were five children with SEN.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction arrangements, together with very good links with parents, enable children to settle quickly and happily into this very secure environment.
- The records the parents receive at the end of Nursery are very good.
- The classrooms, inside and outside, celebrate all areas of learning. They are bright and welcoming, stimulating and spacious. They have been used well to support learning.
- The use of visits out of school and visitors to the school enhances the curriculum well.
- There are many opportunities for children to engage in activities that they plan or initiate themselves. However, there are fewer opportunities for well planned, purposeful, structured play activities. This is an area to develop.
- Teaching is good in Nursery but variable in Reception.
- Support staff are well informed and are very effective in their role of supporting the learning of all children.
- Teachers' assessment is not sufficiently effective to enable teachers to plan what individual pupils should learn next, particularly in reading, writing and mathematical development.
- The Nursery teacher manages the Foundation Stage satisfactorily. However, Foundation Stage provision is not monitored effectively enough across all areas of learning.
- There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, with the establishment of an effective Nursery.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because of the very good teaching and high expectations of the staff.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's confidence and independence, including for those children with SEN.
- Relationships are very good with both adults and peers.
- Behaviour is very good at all times.

Commentary

58. Teaching is always very good and as a result children make very good progress and achieve very well in their social development. All children are on course to achieve far beyond the requirements of the Early Learning Goals. This reflects the emphasis the school places on developing the whole child. All the adults have established good routines, so that children feel safe and confident. Children have many opportunities to work alone and in small groups. Staff use every opportunity to praise children, constantly reinforcing the very good relationships and rewarding them with stickers. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. They set clear boundaries, and the consistent role models provided by adults ensure that children are clear about

what is expected of them. Assessment and record keeping for this area of learning are good. All children have developed their independence in dressing and undressing and in taking care with their personal hygiene.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the Nursery because teaching and learning are focused on developing skills through an interesting curriculum, in an environment that celebrates language.
- Children enjoy handling books, and make good progress in starting to read.
- Achievement is satisfactory in Reception; teachers do not build well enough on what children already know and can do.

Commentary

59. Teaching is good in Nursery but variable in Reception. Indications are that the majority of children are on course to exceed expectations in respect of speaking and listening. Children have made good progress as a result of the many opportunities they are given to talk and listen since starting the Nursery. Children enjoy books and listen attentively when a story is read to them. A quarter of the children in Nursery are already reading early words in their books; they are able to talk about what they have read and why they like the story. Parents make a significant contribution in helping their children to read. However, by the end of Reception few children are reading fluently. Children change their books weekly but the books some children choose are not always relevant and appropriate to their needs, which impedes their progress.

60. Initial sounds are developed well in the Nursery and children are given many opportunities to write for a purpose, for instance writing a letter to the zoo or writing postcards to recall their address. A few children can write their first name well. The *Jolly Phonics* scheme is taught well during the autumn term in Reception, ensuring that all children are aware of initial sounds. However, there is often a lack of challenge for some children because their teachers do not build well enough on what they can already do. Some children make good progress with their writing, with good progression evident from tracing over words to copy writing, but higher-attaining children are not working well enough because insufficient account is taken of what they can already do. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is not good enough to allow them to plan work matched to the needs of individual children. Children do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills. Achievement is satisfactory in Reception.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision of mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good in the Nursery because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's skills in mathematics.
- Not enough is done to reinforce and extend children's mathematical skills and language in Reception.

Commentary

61. Most children enter Nursery with the levels expected for their age. Mathematical skills are well taught, with a focus on first-hand practical activities. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's mathematical skills and language. For example, children daily take an active role in counting to 10 and beyond, playing number games in the classroom or outside, and posting letters in the correct post bag. They have plenty of opportunities to develop mathematical language. For instance they use *more, less, empty, full*, as they prepare buckets of water for 'Baa Baa Black Sheep', and *big, little, larger and smaller* when comparing handprints. Most children are achieving well when they enter Reception. The analysis of the children's work in Reception shows that most children are likely to achieve their learning goals by the end of the year, but that too few will exceed them because teachers' expectations are too low. Learning objectives are not made clear enough; work is not matched to the needs of individual children; and higher-attaining children do not make as much progress as they might, through lack of challenge. Achievement over time is satisfactory.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because of good teaching which is focused on developing children's skills through a practical, imaginative curriculum.
- Children have many opportunities to use computers.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors into school.

Commentary

62. When the children enter Nursery they have good experiences to draw upon. Teaching and learning are good and children achieve well. There is a good variety of appropriate interesting activities planned to stimulate children's curiosity and enhance their understanding, for example, baking leopard cakes. They have had opportunities to explore and observe plants and plant their own seeds. Reception children have been involved in science investigations, including experiments to identify things that float and sink. All children predicted what might happen as they observed caterpillars, which grew and emerged as butterflies. To consolidate this learning children visited a Butterfly House. Children are on course to exceed the learning goals in ICT. These skills are well taught on a daily basis. Staff build up children's confidence in using tape and video recorders, the interactive whiteboard and computers. As a result, children have good attitudes and display equally good skills. Children and teachers make very good use of the digital cameras to capture the children's learning. Children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals when they leave Reception.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**. Outdoor facilities are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan well for learning inside and outside the classroom.
- Children enjoy their indoor dance and physical education lessons.

Commentary

63. The standards the children achieve are higher than they were at the last inspection. Children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals by July. Teaching and learning are good. The children in Nursery begin to be aware of space as they respond to music with gestures and movement, for example, pretending to be a lamb following Mary. Reception children enjoy the well-taught lessons based on speed, agility and quickness, as they learn to move with control and co-ordination. Using a very good range of large apparatus, children experiment with different ways of moving; they are aware of their bodies and watch and copy what others have done well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they are taught well and experience a wide range of creative activities.
- Children enjoy their music sessions.
- The imaginative play areas are used well to encourage children's creative response.

Commentary

64. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills inside and outside the classrooms. They have access to a good range of materials and have many opportunities to paint, draw and make models. Teaching is good. The children are on course to achieve their learning goals by the end of the year. The attractive displays in the classrooms reflect the broader range of their work, showing how far these children have progressed towards the expected goals. Children enjoy their music lessons. In Nursery, children are learning a good range of songs to sing from memory. Children showed high levels of participation and enjoyment in Reception when they successfully generated drumming circles to '*Tanka, Tanka, Skunk*' and composed a piece a music to, '*Come to the Beach*', using buckets and different lengths of copper piping.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good and improving.
- Teaching is good.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is very good.
- Higher-attaining pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6.
- Handwriting and presentation are often very good.
- Literacy skills are used well across the curriculum.
- End-of-year assessment is good, although ongoing assessment does not inform pupils how to improve.

Commentary

65. Standards in English are good overall. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, though handwriting, spelling, presentation and independent learning skills have improved.

66. In 2004, standards by the end of Year 2 were above average when compared to those of all schools nationally and those of similar schools, though too few pupils gain the higher levels in writing. Standards in Year 6 were good when compared to those of all schools but were not good enough when compared to those of similar schools. The progress made by many pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good. Current standards in Year 6 do not reflect the good teaching observed during the inspection, and this reflects less satisfactory experiences lower down the school. The standards achieved by pupils with SEN are good.

67. Pupils in the infant classes achieve well in reading, speaking and listening but progress in writing is too slow. This is because too few pupils have reached the expected level by the time they join Year 1. Pupils in the junior classes achieve well in reading, speaking and listening but many pupils in Year 6 do not achieve as well as they could in writing. The pupils who have received additional support achieve very well.

68. In all classes pupils speak confidently both to each other and to adults. By the time they are in Year 6 they are able to take part confidently in debates and put forward persuasive arguments. Pupils achieve well in their reading, and all pupils are engaged in daily reading sessions with opportunities to read for a range of purposes. Pupils write in a range of styles in all years and standards are improving.

69. The teaching of English is good overall and in some classes it is very good. Activities are well planned and match the needs and interests of the pupils. The work of the support staff is very effective in helping individuals or groups of pupils. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning, and behaviour in lessons is very good. Writing assessments are used, and targets are set for the pupils. Marking is generally good and often indicates how pupils can improve their work. However, this practice is fairly recent and has not yet had much impact on improving standards. The variations in teaching quality within year groups have an adverse effect on the progress made by some pupils. The very good range of resources and accommodation is used very well.

70. Pupils in most classes collaborate well. They enjoy their work and decide how improvements can be made. Pupils in Year 6 are able to plan an argument and debate issues. Pupils take a pride in their work and their work is consistently a pleasure to see because of the well formed script and the high expectations of most teachers. Joined script is taught regularly and pupils use this in all their books. Certificates are awarded for beautiful writing.

71. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She is a leading teacher of the subject, has attended relevant courses, and has disseminated information to other staff. She has, however, had too few opportunities to monitor the impact of the training in parallel classes and monitor the work of pupils to ensure that they all make the progress that can be expected. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

72. Literacy skills are well used in almost all classes and in almost every subject throughout the school. Pupils use beautiful handwriting in a range of genres appropriate to the subject and the requirements of the task. For example, pupils write paragraphs to describe their work in design and technology, describing their scene about James and The Giant Peach. They write competently about their field trips and when writing up science investigations about creatures underground. In their notebooks, pupils make relevant notes about their topics, and they write key points in religious education. This shows good progress in the development of literacy skills since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of mathematics is good.
- Assessment is underdeveloped.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and to apply their knowledge.
- The co-ordinator brings subject expertise to the role and provides clear strategic direction.
- Monitoring of the subject is not consistent and lacks the rigour to promote improvement.

Commentary

73. In 2004, standards at the end of Year 2 were above the national average but below those found in similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was well above the national average. By the end of Year 6 in 2004, standards were in line with the national average and below the average for similar schools.

74. Evidence collected during the inspection indicates that the majority of pupils are achieving at the expected levels. Standards in problem solving are good by the end of Year 6. However, standards could be higher if progress across the school were more consistent. There is a direct link between the lack of effective assessment procedures and the standards achieved. Not all teachers have high enough expectations when setting targets for achievement, particularly for pupils towards the lower end of the ability range. Pupils identified as having SEN receive good support and achieve well.

75. Overall, the quality of teaching is good throughout the school, although there is some variation within and across year groups. Particular strengths are the emphasis given to the use of correct mathematical vocabulary, the clarity of teachers' explanations and the use of carefully sequenced questions to consolidate and extend understanding.

76. Teaching is less effective when planned learning is not linked closely to national curriculum levels of achievement. Teachers do not always use the assessment of pupils' achievement within the lesson to identify and address misconceptions. In a few lessons the pace of teaching is too slow and, as a result, pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration.

77. Pupils have frequent opportunities to work collaboratively and to apply problem-solving approaches. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils respond well and are able to work with a good degree of independence. Year 6 pupils engaged in a problem-solving activity used their knowledge of measures and probability to work out the ingredients required to provide a choice of flapjacks. They showed high-level thinking skills, a good selection of methodology and the ability to co-operate under pressure. The subject co-ordinator, in a lesson in Year 2, modelled how to tackle simple word problems, and pupils worked in pairs to find the important information needed to solve the problem. The teacher provided constructive oral feedback to help pupils to achieve the task. Through a range of parent workshops in the subjects, parents are increasingly able to support their child's learning in mathematics.

78. Assessment is underdeveloped and practice is inconsistent throughout the school. It is recognised as a priority in the subject action plan. The school has analysed pupils' performance in statutory and non-statutory tests and has used this information to identify whole-school areas for development. The recent project on measures is an example of this, and the early evidence suggests that it will prove successful in raising standards. Tracking of individual pupil progress has been introduced but is not as yet influencing teaching and learning. Marking of pupils' work is variable in quality and does not provide a clear enough view of what pupils need to do in order to improve.

79. The leadership of mathematics is good. The subject plan shows a commitment to raising standards. The co-ordinators bring subject expertise and enthusiasm to the role. Some aspects of management are less secure. Although there has been some monitoring of planning, and of pupils' work and classroom practice, it has not formed part of a sustainable programme and, as a result, the impact has been limited. The school has a comprehensive range of resources to support teaching and learning in mathematics. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

80. Planning identifies frequent opportunities for using mathematical skills in other subjects. This enhances learning in design and technology and science in particular.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in science is satisfactory.
- Current standards in Year 6 are better than those of the previous year.
- Standards in investigative and experimental science are good.
- Teaching is good.
- Assessment processes are not as good as they should be.

Commentary

81. As this inspection took place during the week after the National Curriculum tests it was not possible to observe directly any teaching in Year 6. However, discussions were held with a group of Year 6 pupils about their work and to evaluate standards.

82. In 2004, standards at the end of Year 2 were above the national average in terms of the number attaining the nationally expected level, whilst the proportion attaining the higher level was average. At the end of Year 6, standards were in line with the national average overall, but fewer pupils attained the higher level than found nationally. Progress from Year 3 to Year 6 was well below average. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been falling over recent years but inspection evidence shows that current standards are at least satisfactory overall, and above average for those attaining the higher levels. Standards at the end of Year 2 are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection, whilst standards have fallen at the end of Year 6.

83. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6, but a small group of pupils who just attain Level 2 at the end of Year 2 do not progress to Level 4 at the end of Year 6. This is because teachers' assessment processes are not sufficiently linked to National Curriculum assessment criteria to provide accurate information as to what pupils need to do to improve.

84. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and the recent focus on developing investigative skills is having a positive impact on standards. Lessons are well planned and resourced but learning objectives and success criteria are not linked closely enough to National Curriculum achievement criteria. In response to lively and experimentally based lessons, pupils collaborate very well, enjoy their science and are making good progress. For example, in a well-prepared Year 3 lesson on sound, pupils investigated the effect of the length of strings and pipes on the pitch of the sound, using six different types of musical instrument. They enjoyed the activity and most were achieving above the level expected.

85. The management of the subject is good. The previous and current subject leaders have fully addressed the issue of independent learning identified in the last inspection. A strong focus in recent years on investigative science, in all year groups, is improving standards. Information and

communication technology (ICT) skills are used effectively to support learning in science; for example, a Year 6 class gathered information on the planets from the internet. The co-ordinator monitors work in science for the quality of provision but has not focused sufficiently on assessment as a tool to improve standards. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils use their ICT skills well to support learning in other subjects.
- A good range of hardware and software is available for teachers and pupils to use.
- Overall, standards are good, and at least in line with those expected by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

86. Overall, standards in ICT are good and nearly all pupils currently in Year 6 demonstrate the knowledge and understanding expected for the age group. For example, all pupils in a Year 2 class were able to set up a 'binary tree' database supporting their identification of animals in science. Similarly, all pupils in a Year 6 class were able to use an internet search engine to gather information about the planets.

87. Overall, teaching in ICT is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and show a good range of personal ICT skills. They use their knowledge to plan lessons which ensure the progressive development of pupils' skills and knowledge. Teachers have access to a good range of software which enables them to support learning in many subjects. Lessons have a good balance of teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise their skills. Resources are good, the computer suite has enough work stations for pupils to work at individual computers, and all classrooms are equipped with computers.

88. The subject is managed effectively, so that resources are available when required. The curriculum has been monitored to ensure that the National Curriculum programmes are covered fully, including 'control technology'. However, teachers do not use the National Curriculum attainment criteria when planning lessons or marking work, and this is preventing the attainment of even higher standards. The standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

89. The use of ICT to support learning in other subjects is very good. Teachers use ICT regularly in other subjects. During the inspection, teachers used ICT to support mathematics, science and literacy. Pupils' work over the past year indicates regular and consistent use of ICT. This level of use has resulted in a rise in ICT standards amongst almost all pupils.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is broad and rich.
- Provision is enhanced by a range of visits and residential experiences.
- There are good resources to support learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes and enjoy history.
- Assessment procedures are underdeveloped.

Commentary

90. Scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils indicate that by the age of 11 most pupils achieve standards that are above those normally expected. They make good progress as they move through the school. This broadly reflects the position at the time of the last inspection.

91. In the two lessons observed, teaching was at least satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils, including those with SEN, were making good progress. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were challenged to devise a series of questions in order to find out about Roman artefacts. Adults were skilful in probing to extend learning and understanding. A comprehensive list of appropriate questions was offered by the pupils. In Year 5, pupils showed good chronological understanding when required to place significant events and people on to a timeline.

92. The history curriculum is planned through a series of topics and provides pupils with a broad and rich experience. It is significantly enhanced through a range of visits and access to high quality resources in school. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic and eager to learn and this is reflected in their good progress. Year 2 pupils have created a class museum following their visit to Kendal museum. They have taken part in an archaeology workshop and have been stimulated to extend their knowledge and understanding.

93. Cross-curricular links are strong. Work in history makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Skills learnt in literacy and numeracy are applied and extended. Pupils in Year 5 were observed writing a diary entry from the point of view of Jane Eyre, and were inspired by the appearance of a teacher dressed in period costume. The work produced as a result was of high quality. The same pupils will have the opportunity to visit the Howarth Parsonage museum as part of a residential experience in the near future.

94. Leadership and management of history are good overall. The co-ordinator demonstrates subject expertise and enthusiasm. However, assessment is underdeveloped and is identified as a focus for improvement in the subject action plan.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is enhanced by fieldwork and visits.
- Planning promotes the systematic development of geographical enquiry and skills.
- Cross-curricular links are strong.
- Assessment is underdeveloped.

Commentary

95. Three lessons were seen during the inspection. Further evidence was collected by looking at pupils' work, by studying displays and planning, and by talking to pupils about their learning. Discussions were held with the subject co-ordinator.

96. Overall, the school has sustained the above-average standards seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils show the ability to use a wide range of geographical vocabulary. They are able to debate environmental issues in some depth and are competent in the use of four-figure grid references and keys.

97. There is an appropriate emphasis on the progressive development of geographical skills. The co-ordinator is in the process of providing teachers with checklists which detail the skills and standards expected in each year throughout the school.

98. The teaching of geography is generally, but not consistently, good and pupils achieve well. The school has conducted an audit of staff training needs, and the co-ordinator has had the opportunity to work alongside colleagues where support was requested. Assessment in geography is underdeveloped and is identified as a priority for improvement on the subject action plan.

99. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and this contributes to the good levels of achievement. They are eager to talk about their first-hand experiences and are highly motivated to learn. Pupils with SEN are supported well and, where necessary, activities are adapted to enable them to achieve.

100. The curriculum is planned around a series of topics and is enhanced through a range of opportunities for fieldwork and visits. The school makes good use of the local environment. Provision is made for three residential experiences. Year 5 pupils, for example, undertake a comparative study of Kendal and a small village community. In a visit to Arnside, Year 4 pupils study the use of land and explore the implications of the development of the railway in the area.

101. Strong links have been developed between learning in different areas of the curriculum, and this provides a coherent and meaningful programme of work. For example, modern Egypt is studied alongside ancient Egypt. Teaching and learning in geography is making a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a literacy lesson, pupils were debating the issues surrounding the introduction of speed limits on Lake Windermere, and they showed good understanding of the moral, social and economic implications.

102. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The newly appointed co-ordinator is currently working alongside the previous co-ordinator, and together they are having a positive impact on raising standards. They have subject expertise and are committed to raising the profile of the subject in the school. Resources for learning are good. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning is good.
- Effective use is made of ICT.
- The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors to school.
- Pupils use a range of methods to record their work.
- Resources are very good.
- Assessment and marking require further development.

Commentary

103. Discussion with the co-ordinators, observation in a small number of lessons, and evidence from pupils' work indicate that standards in religious education are in line with those in the locally Agreed Syllabus. All pupils make satisfactory progress, including those pupils with SEN.

104. The programmes of study used by the school are well matched to the locally Agreed Syllabus, and, where appropriate, good use is made of the national guidelines.

105. The teaching observed was good overall. In the three lessons seen and in the work analysed, there is evidence that pupils have a developing understanding of Christianity and other religions. In one lesson, pupils used a video to understand more about the Qu'ran and the meaning of Wudu (washing). In another lesson, pupils increased their understanding of what God means to people of other faiths. Pupils in a Year 2 class discussed religious leaders, with specific reference to Buddhism. The use of ICT is very effective in supporting learning. For example, video programmes are used to demonstrate acts of worship and religious celebrations that pupils otherwise would not have the opportunity to observe. In Year 4, there are good examples in pupils' books of a clear understanding of the Hindu symbol for birth and of research on the internet connected to this.

106. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Marking is inconsistent and does not provide pupils with sufficient information about what they need to do to improve. Some teachers keep a record of how well pupils have completed a piece of work but this is inconsistent across the school.

107. Religious education contributes effectively to pupils' cultural and spiritual understanding and to their personal development. For example, local studies and residential visits further pupils' understanding both of their own life and of the day-to-day life of other people; the pupils study famous artists, poets and musicians and art from different cultures. Pupils in Year 2 are given opportunities to reflect on very kind and special people, and pupils in Year 6 are encouraged to develop their own understanding of God.

108. Resources are very good. Good quality artefacts, together with video recordings, support learning. The curriculum is enriched by visits to other places of worship and by visits from speakers for other religions. For example, very good use was made of a visit to the school by a member of the Muslim faith, a visit to the local Quaker Meeting House, and visits during a residential activity to a mosque in Bradford. Links with the local church are strong and younger pupils in particular make specific use of this resource.

109. Since the last inspection, resources and planning have greatly improved and curriculum planning has been revised, ensuring that there is continuity and progression across the age range. The Quest club is run successfully by parents and is well attended. Pupils speak enthusiastically about belonging to the club.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good planning reflects the national programmes of study.
- Pupils apply skills effectively.
- Resources are very good.

Commentary

110. At the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in design and technology is broadly in line with national expectations. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection, so no judgements on teaching and learning could be made.

111. Evidence from a variety of sources, including medium-term planning and in particular examples of pupils' work displayed around the school, demonstrates that pupils make satisfactory progress.

112. A close scrutiny of pupils' work showed that they increase their knowledge and use of skills as they move through the school.

113. There was evidence in Years 3 to 6 to show that pupils are able to plan and evaluate their work, use skills such as scoring and sticking, and use a light bulb to light up their models of lighthouses. They are also able to use a variety of media to make models of imaginary planets and toys that move. During their English week some pupils studied 'James and the Giant Peach'. They made a theatre from various materials and used ICT skills to write a paragraph about the scene. In Year 5, pupils made coil pots and evaluated their finished efforts, as well as designing and making a musical instrument that could be used in a class band. In Year 6 pupils linked design and technology with their history topic on the Egyptians and made collars, using a variety of materials. In Years 1 and 2 pupils design and make models of houses.

Art and design

114. No lessons were seen in art and design. However, the scrutiny of work and of teachers' planning indicates that art and design standards are likely to be average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and that achievement is satisfactory. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by an art and design club. There are also planned opportunities for art and design to be linked closely to other curriculum topics, various outside visits and visiting artists, and the use of ICT for research. The 'Enjoying English Week' provided some very good three-dimensional work across the school, especially the work based on the books 'The Bad Tempered Ladybird', 'The Iron Man' and 'James and the Giant Peach.'

115. The recently appointed co-ordinator is working hard to raise standards across the school. Greater emphasis is being placed on the direct teaching of skills and techniques in order to raise standards further. The displays around the school linked to other subjects in the curriculum value and celebrate pupils' work. Assessment systems are underdeveloped and this is identified in the subject development plan. Resources for art and design are very good.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in singing are very good.
- The co-ordinator provides very clear educational direction for the subject.
- The quality of the curriculum is very good, and the subject makes an effective contribution to personal and social development, science, history, health, and topics about the environment.
- Formal assessment procedures are being trialled in the co-ordinator's class, and the need to develop these across the school has been recognised.
- Pupils enjoy having the opportunities to play musical instruments and feel encouraged to give of their best at all times.

Commentary

116. It is clear from the extent of music making activities that music is valued throughout the school. Lessons were observed only in Years 1 and 3, although the whole of the school was seen singing enthusiastically either in assemblies or in infant singing sessions.

117. The choir was heard singing songs in unison and two parts, with clear diction, control of pitch, a sense of phrase, and musical expression. The teacher has very high expectations of posture, speaking, and articulation. The standard of singing achieved throughout the school is well above national expectations.

118. The DVD produced to celebrate music at the school, its music successes, and the recent production for the Mary Wakefield Westmorland Festival is delightful both to watch and to listen to, and it shows the high standards some pupils attain in all aspects of music making. It also demonstrates that all children's contributions are highly valued, from the youngest to the oldest pupils. In the excellent infant singing session, the enormous enthusiasm from the co-ordinator led to enthusiastic participants eager to please and attentive to instructions. Pupils showed real enjoyment and high skills in singing. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with SEN. Thus all pupils are fully included in all musical activities and are making equally good progress.

119. Teachers are aware of the needs of the musically gifted and ensure that they are met.

120. Leadership of the subject is very good. Since her appointment the co-ordinator has quickly reviewed music across the school, particularly in Year 3, where standards in music are above average. She organises and generates a real sense of fun and enjoyment in lessons, in assemblies and in many enrichment events, including choir, orchestra and recorder tuition. Pupils have the opportunity to play a variety of woodwind, string and brass instruments. The numbers of pupils learning instruments has also increased this year. All Year 3 pupils play the recorder. All these musical experiences make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural experiences. Resources are very good, with a dedicated music room, which is well used in the afternoons. Assessment procedures are being developed but as yet only in Year 3.

121. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Pupils are fitter and healthier than is normally found.
- Extra-curricular opportunities enhance pupils' learning.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and have very positive attitudes to physical activity.

Commentary

122. Pupils of all ages show above average skill levels in a wide range of activities. They show good ball skills when playing cricket or practising football skills at lunchtime. When running in a lesson on athletics, Year 4 pupils showed well-above average fitness levels that enabled them to practise their hurdling skills with high levels of physical activity over a considerable period of time. Pupils in Year 1 showed good levels of body control when jumping and making shapes with their bodies. Most pupils achieve the Year 6 national target of being able to swim 25 metres. Pupils in

Year 6 showed good co-operative and thinking skills during a challenging problem-solving activity. Most pupils in Years 4 to 6 also experience activities such as abseiling when on residential experiences, which happen annually.

123. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan lessons well, using their good knowledge to ensure the progressive development of pupils' skills. The teachers' subject knowledge is enhanced by the use of coaches from local sports clubs, for example, cricket. Teachers plan effective warm-up and warm-down activities and have a good regard for health and safety.

124. The good range of extra-curricular sporting activities is popular amongst pupils. The Reception and Year 1 and 2 activity club is well attended after school, and teams such as the 'tag rugby' team take part in matches with other schools.

125. The subject is well managed. Resources are good and the school grounds provide a very good facility for all sporting activities. The physical education programmes, both in lessons and after school, strongly supports the school's Healthy School status. The subject has maintained the good standards, good teaching and wide range of activities identified in the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

126. No lessons were seen, so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school considers this aspect to be a very important aspect of its work. Parents indicated that they considered it to be a strong feature of the school. The programme, which is often included within other subjects, deals with diet, health, sex, drugs and personal safety. Pupils develop an increasing awareness of the world around them; they gain in self-confidence and develop good relationships with adults and their peers. The school council and class councils provide pupils with the opportunity to be involved in decisions about matters which affect them directly, for example, the planning and building of an adventure playground.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
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	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
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	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
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).