

INSPECTION REPORT

HERTFORD INFANT SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114368

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Thompson

Lead inspector: Mrs Carole Skinner

Dates of inspection: 8th-9th November 2004

Inspection number: 267002

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	137
School address:	Hertford Road Hollingdean Brighton East Sussex
Postcode:	BN1 7GF
Telephone number:	01273 552931
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Hertford Infant School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Eileen Ward
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hertford Infant School is smaller than average compared to other infant schools. There are 137 pupils on roll, of whom 36 were attending the Nursery class part-time during this inspection. This is expected to rise to 149 in January when all Nursery children are in school. A further 16 children were attending part-time in one of the Reception classes. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls overall. There has been a decline in the school's roll since the previous inspection. Approximately five per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is similar to the national average. There are seven pupils who speak English as an additional language, five of whom are at an early stage of learning the English language. Forty-four pupils are identified as having special educational needs (32 per cent), which is higher than in most schools. Most of these pupils have speech, language and literacy needs and some behavioural difficulties. Two pupils have statements of special educational need (1%), which is broadly average. Forty-four per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The annual turnover of pupils is similar to that seen in most schools. Attainment on entry to the school is low, especially in communication, language and literacy. Most pupils come from the local area, which includes a mixture of owner occupied, privately rented, local authority and housing association properties. The school achieved the Investors in People Award in 2002 and the Eco School Silver Award in 2003. It is involved in several initiatives, including the Family Learning Programme and the Hollingdean, Sure Start and Neighbourhood Renewal Programme. Prior to the appointment of the headteacher in 2003, the school was identified by the Local Education Authority (LEA) as requiring support. It has now been removed from this category and is recognised as an improving school which still needs support in some areas. The school has experienced a period of upheaval and uncertainty during the past two years due to changes of leadership, high turnover of staff, and a proposed merger with Hertford Junior School.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23160	Carole Skinner	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology (ICT), art, the foundation stage curriculum.
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16760	Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	English, religious education (RE), history, music, English as an additional language, personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)
11769	Jim Bishop	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology (DT), geography, physical education (PE), special educational needs (SEN)

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Hertford Infant School is an improving school which provides a good standard of education for its pupils. Although pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is below national averages, their achievement is good as many have special educational needs (SEN). The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school's leadership and management are good. Although its costs are high, the school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's very good leadership has brought about rapid improvement in the past year.
- After much upheaval in the past two years, the school now has a stable staff who provide consistently good teaching for all pupils.
- As a result, pupils' achieve well, but standards remain below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They are above average in art, which is a strength of the school.
- Good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes effectively to their good behaviour, positive attitudes and very good relationships.
- There are good levels of care for all pupils, especially those with SEN, but the monitoring of pupils' progress is not rigorous enough.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory but is steadily improving.
- The curriculum is well planned and enriched by a good range of additional activities.
- There is good provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- As a result of the high turnover of staff in the past, most subject co-ordinators are new or inexperienced in the role.
- The school works well in partnership with parents and has very good links with the community.

The school has made a satisfactory improvement since it was inspected in 1999. Changes in the school's leadership and staffing led to a decline in standards over the past few years, with the result that the Local Education Authority identified the school as needing support to improve. Since the appointment of the present headteacher in September 2003, there has been rapid improvement and this high level of external support is no longer necessary. Standards have begun to rise, although they are still lower than they were in 1999 in reading, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the provision for children in the Nursery and Reception. Good leadership and management have been restored. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress has not made sufficient improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	D	E	E	C
Writing	E	D	E	C
Mathematics	A	E	E	C

Key: A top 5% of schools; A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average*

Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals

The low standards achieved in 2004 reflect the very high percentage of pupils with SEN in the year group but also some unsatisfactory teaching in the past, as identified by the LEA. Nevertheless, the school's performance was in line with that of similar schools. However, the headteacher's vision is for this school to achieve far higher standards, and the strategies she has introduced, together with all round improvements in teaching, are already having a positive effect on pupils' **achievement, which is now good.** Standards in Year 2 are below national averages in reading, writing,

mathematics and science. They are in line with expectations in ICT and PE, and higher in art, which is a strength of the school. In Nursery and Reception, pupils achieve well and are on course to reach the goals they are expected to reach in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy, where they are below average. This is because many children enter the school with low achievement in this aspect of learning. Pupils with SEN, higher attaining pupils and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well because the school meets their needs effectively.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is below average but improving. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show interest in learning and apply themselves well to their work. Their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school because the school has consistent and effective strategies to promote it. Relationships and racial harmony are very good. Attendance in 2003/4 was well below average but is better now because of strenuous efforts to improve it.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils and plan lessons effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. They make lessons interesting, so that pupils enjoy learning and work hard. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, overall, but the use of assessment information to track pupils' progress is not rigorous enough. The curriculum links subjects together well in a way which interests and motivates pupils. Many visits and visitors add to pupils' enjoyment and learning. Children in the Nursery and Reception make a good start to their school life and learn well through planned and practical activities. The pupils are well looked after and there is a strong bond of trust between pupils and teachers. The school works closely with parents and the school makes effective use of its links with the community to enhance pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good, decisive leadership and is well supported by all staff and governors. As many teachers are new, the role of some subject co-ordinators in leading teaching and the curriculum is underdeveloped. Effective planning for school improvement is backed up with strong support for staff and good opportunities for training. These are already contributing to improvement and raised achievement. The school's ethos is good. The governors make a good contribution to the management of the school and meet all statutory requirements. Good financial management ensures that the school is well staffed and resourced.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views about the school and speak highly of the headteacher. Pupils enjoy school and feel secure and well cared for.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards further in English (especially writing), mathematics and science.
- Improve the procedures for setting targets and tracking the progress of individual pupils throughout the school.
- Continue to monitor and improve attendance.
- Further develop the role of co-ordinators in checking and evaluating the quality of provision and the standards achieved in their subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in English mathematics and science are below average in Year 2. Achievement, however, is good throughout the school, because pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding as a result of good teaching. This situation has improved significantly during the past year.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as a result of improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in the school's leadership and management.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science is good in Years 1 and 2 because the school is clearly focused on raising standards.
- Higher attaining pupils achieve well in reading, mathematics and science but fewer pupils reach above average standards in writing.
- Pupils achieve high standards in art.
- Pupils with SEN and those learning English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress.

Commentary

1. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is low, especially in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception, and are on course to reach the designated Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception, except in communication, language and literacy, where they are below the national expectations for age. Despite this, children achieve well in this area and in the other areas of learning, due to good teaching. Teachers have high expectations of the children and pay particular attention to developing their personal and social skills, and their language and communication skills. This ensures that children are able to benefit fully from all of the activities provided in all of the other areas of learning.

2. In the end of Year 2 national tests in 2004, which have not yet been validated, standards were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They were in line with the average for similar schools, based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In writing and mathematics, the proportion of pupils who attained Level 2 and above was higher than the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 was higher than that seen in similar schools in reading and mathematics. The 2004 results reflect the very high proportion of pupils with SEN in that year group (40 per cent) but also show that the school provides good challenge for more able pupils in reading and mathematics. The trend in the school's results over the past few years has been broadly in line with the national trend.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.9 (14.5)	16.0 (15.7)
writing	13.5 (13.7)	14.8 (14.6)
mathematics	15.3 (14.9)	16.4 (16.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The findings of the inspection are that standards in Year 2 are below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. They are in line with national expectations in ICT and PE, and exceed

expectations in art. These were the only other subjects where sufficient evidence was gathered to make valid judgements. Where the evidence allows comparisons to be made, these standards are the same as they were when the school was last inspected in writing and PE, and lower in reading, mathematics and ICT. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is also lower. The judgements of the inspection show an improvement on the school's results in the 2004 national tests. This reflects the rapid progress that has been made in raising standards over the past year through the introduction of a range of strategies. It is also worthy of note that the current Year 2 contains an equally high percentage of pupils with SEN as the previous one. Some of these pupils have also had their education disrupted by staff changes.

4. Achievement is good overall, as pupils make good progress in learning throughout Years 1 and 2. This is because the quality of teaching is good and teachers' expectations are high. The increasingly good provision in the Foundation Stage is having a positive impact on standards as pupils enter Year 1. Overall, standards in Year 1 are close to those expected for pupils of this age. Pupils reach high standards in art because teachers have good knowledge of the subject and teach it well. Pupils make satisfactory use of literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum and use ICT skills well to aid learning in several subjects.

5. Pupils with SEN achieve consistently well across the school and make good progress towards the targets set for them. The targets set in their individual education plans are relevant and appropriate to their needs. The pupils achieve well, largely due to the quality of care and support provided by the adults who work with them. Pupils with English as an additional language also achieve well. They make good progress in learning English, and good progress against their previous learning in general. They gain fluency in English relatively quickly, and are able to take part in all the usual activities and lessons the school offers.

6. Discussions with pupils show that they feel they are expected to work hard and are doing as well as they can. Most parents feel that their children are making good progress. The findings of the inspection are that boys and girls achieve equally well in all year groups because the school pays good attention to their varying needs. For example, teachers have identified and are addressing some shortcomings in girls' willingness to contribute to discussions and offer ideas in lessons. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils in all areas of the curriculum in order to ensure that their needs are met. The co-ordinator who oversees the provision for these pupils is very knowledgeable and helps teachers to plan appropriate activities to challenge and extend them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory, and punctuality is satisfactory. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The great majority of pupils behave well, have positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school.
- The level of attendance is well below the national average but is improving, and is line with similar schools nationally.
- The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leads to very good relationships around the school.

Commentary

7. In 2003/04, the level of attendance was well below the national average, while the rate of unauthorised absence was well above average. However, in the first half term of the current academic year it is over 95%. This improvement reflects the efforts of the school and the education welfare service to ensure parents are aware of the importance of regular attendance. They are reminded in newsletters, and telephoned on the first day of any unexplained absence. Letters to

parents are followed up by the headteacher and the education welfare officer. The very effective arrangements in the morning lead to the great majority of pupils being in school before the beginning of the day, resulting in a prompt start to lessons. A few pupils are late but usually by only a few minutes.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-2003 [%]

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.9	School data:	1.6
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

8. Parents confirm what their children told the inspectors and what was seen during the inspection; the pupils really enjoy their lessons. This includes pupils with SEN. They listen attentively and follow instructions well. They are eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute their ideas. Pupils settle quickly to group work in lessons and maintain their interest even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy the wide range of activities provided for them and are able to concentrate on them for increasingly longer periods. Pupils who have special educational needs show interest in their work. As a result of well-planned activities, teaching and support, many pupils are able to sustain their attention and concentration. These positive attitudes reflect the quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities built into the lessons.

9. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are good. As well as providing a brief time for reflection, school assemblies help pupils to develop a sense of belonging to a whole school community. Pupils are also encouraged to think about and empathise with others. Weekly "Special Achievement Assemblies" promote pupils' self-esteem as they celebrate their successes. Circle time helps pupils to start to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. The pupils from different cultures mix well with each other and it is apparent that racial harmony is one of the strengths of the school. When given the opportunity, pupils willingly demonstrate they can act responsibly, taking care when returning the registers to the office and when carrying out tasks in the classroom.

10. Pupils' moral development is good. Since the school's last inspection it has continued to raise the standards of behaviour it expects from its pupils. Pupils are regularly guided and led to an understanding of the principles of right and wrong. They are aware of how their behaviour affects others and the older ones are developing self-discipline. An example of the school's approach to the pupils' moral development is evident in the positive ethos it has created towards its pupils with special educational needs. The clear promotion of appropriate moral values is also done well during the regular sessions of Golden Time. Pupils are open, well mannered, polite to adults and welcoming to visitors. They generally move around the school in an orderly way even when not supervised. Even the youngest wait patiently for other classes to come in to assemblies. The school uses a variety of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour and these are used consistently by all the staff. Parents and pupils confirm that the school has effective and appropriate procedures to deal with the rare aggressive behaviour that may take place. Last year one pupil was excluded for extremes of behaviour as can be seen in the table below.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White - British
White - other
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean
Mixed - other
Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
Black or Black British - African
Other

Exclusions in the last school year

No. of pupils on roll	No. of fixed period exclusions	No. of permanent exclusions
116	0	
2	0	0
0	0	0
2	1	0
1	0	0
2		
2		

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

11. Pupils' social development is good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates in group work, paired discussions and monitor responsibilities within each class. The eco-council, golden time and the various clubs provide good opportunities for pupils of all ages to work together. Their awareness of the wider world is enhanced in a variety of ways. For example, the choir sings in the community, pupils make collections for charity and benefit from a number of different visitors and visits to places of interest. Pupils' very good relationships with their peers and with adults contribute to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress they make, especially by giving them the confidence to ask and to answer questions. In subjects such as mathematics, the school successfully runs courses for pupils and their families. These further improve the pupils' experiences of community life.

12. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. The school works hard to ensure that pupils share in the richness of the wide variety of cultures in our society. This is evident in the colourful and attractive displays that are prominent in the school. These result from the school seeking effective ways in which to involve cultural development in many curriculum subjects such as art. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture and opportunities are taken to widen their knowledge of other cultures and faiths. For example, by activities such as visits by the Rainbow Theatre group, who offer the pupils dramatised folk stories from around the world. Awareness of the pupils' local culture is enhanced by participation in the Brighton Festival Children's Parade and regular visits by the Community Warden and local police officers.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Assessment is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science but is underdeveloped in other subjects. The school provides a good curriculum which is enriched by a good range of additional activities. The school provides good levels of care for pupils, but the monitoring of their academic progress is unsatisfactory. The school works well in partnership with parents. Its ethos is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Assessment is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the Nursery and Reception plan a range of interesting and challenging activities for children which promote good learning.
- In Years 1 and 2, lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers have high expectations of both the pupils' behaviour and their capacity for learning.
- Pupils apply themselves well to all tasks both when working independently and in collaboration with others.
- Pupils with SEN and EAL are taught well and receive good support in lessons.

- Teaching assistants are well trained and make a significant contribution in lessons.
- In the Foundation Stage, good assessment procedures enable teachers to plan activities to meet different children’s needs.
- Although assessment is satisfactory in English, mathematics and science, it is less well developed in other subjects.

Commentary

13. The table below shows the judgements made of a sample of lessons during the inspection. In addition, inspectors examined teachers’ planning and pupils’ work and held discussions with pupils and teachers. Taking all of this evidence into account, the inspection findings show that the quality of teaching and learning is good and helps pupils to achieve well. The proportion of good teaching has increased significantly since the last inspection, although school records show that much of this improvement is very recent. In the last inspection, 11 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. This has been eradicated. Parents also have positive views of the teaching in the school and feel it helps their children make good progress.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	17	5	0	0	0

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

14. Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is consistently good. The teachers’ planning is a significant strength of the provision, providing a varied range of activities across all six areas of learning, which are linked together effectively around a central theme. This enables children to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding within a meaningful context. The strong focus on learning through play and first hand experience ensures that all children progress well at their own pace. The interesting activities and variety of colourful, good quality resources engage children effectively in learning. Teaching assistants work very well in partnership with teachers and make a very effective contribution to children’s learning. There is a consistent and effective approach to managing pupils’ behaviour, which, in many cases, requires considerable support. A particularly effective strategy is the use of picture cards, to which teachers frequently refer in order to remind children about what is expected, such as good listening. Another strong feature of the teaching is the constant questioning, discussion and modelling of good speaking, which all adults do well and which helps children to make good progress in developing their communication and language skills.

15. In Years 1 and 2, teachers build effectively on the good foundations that are laid in Nursery and Reception. Lessons have clearly defined objectives, which are matched to the needs of different groups of pupils within the class. One of the key factors is the teachers’ high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They provide challenging work for the more able pupils, which extends their learning to suitably high levels, except in writing and ICT, where there is still room for improvement. Teachers also have high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and this helps to create a calm and productive atmosphere in which pupils are keen to learn. Class rules are reinforced consistently by teachers and assistants. Consequently, pupils apply themselves well to all activities and work productively in a variety of situations. Teachers are beginning to make effective links between different subjects, as was illustrated well by a literacy lesson which used what pupils were learning in RE as its focus.

16. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN, a significant proportion of the school, is good. Most pupils make good progress because they are given work that is appropriate to their needs and their levels of attainment. They also progress well because the school identifies them early, and provides additional support for them. In the last inspection it was judged that too many pupils were being withdrawn from classes for extra help, which often led to them missing important parts of lessons. Although the school now has a far larger proportion of pupils with SEN, they are consistently taught

as individuals or in groups or classes and are rarely withdrawn elsewhere. This arrangement has largely been established by the SEN co-ordinator and has resulted in pupils making better progress.

17. Pupils with English as an additional language learn well. They are helped to feel secure in the school environment, and care is taken to aid their understanding in lessons. The special support and teaching provided to aid their acquisition of English are good and, through advice to teachers, are well integrated with their classroom learning. Class teachers take account of the pupils' stages of English acquisition when planning their work, and when involving them in activities or discussions. Particular attention is given to ensuring their understanding. Frequent and regular assessments are made of their progress, and targets are set in consultation between the specialist teacher and classroom staff following each assessment.

18. Throughout the school, teachers and assistants work well together to prepare lessons and support pupils in their learning. Teachers ensure that assistants know what the objectives of each lesson are and understand what pupils are expected to do. Assistants are well trained and knowledgeable about both the curriculum and how children learn. They play an important role in developing pupils' language and communication skills and in helping to observe and record their attainment and progress in lessons.

19. Assessment is strongest in the Foundation Stage, where teachers and assistants are all involved in observing and noting assessments of children in each session. Here, teachers' planning clearly identifies the criteria by which to judge children's progress, and simple recording sheets enable all adults to note how well individual children are doing. Language assessments at the beginning, middle and end of each year provide a clear picture of pupils' progress as well as identifying those who need additional help and support. In Years 1 and 2, the school has developed sound assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science and is concentrating on improving these further. Procedures are less well developed in other subjects, where assessment is informal and it is left to each teacher to devise their own methods for recording pupils' attainment and progress. The setting of individual targets for pupils and involving them in assessing their own learning is at a very early stage of development. Assessment information is used effectively in English in Years 1 and 2 to identify pupils who may need additional focused support in one or more areas.

The curriculum

Curricular provision is good in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of additional activities and is relevant to the ages and interests of pupils. It is further supported by a good number of staff and a good range of resources. The school's accommodation is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision in English and mathematics is good.
- The opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are good.
- Planning is good, and is done through team approaches.
- The Foundation Stage curriculum is imaginative, stimulating and well planned.
- Liaison with the junior school is good and pupils are well prepared for transition.
- While steps have been taken to improve cross-curricular provision further, these are not yet fully implemented
- Provision for pupils with SEN is good.

Commentary

20. The curriculum is well planned and provides a broad and balanced programme which meets statutory requirements in all subjects of the National Curriculum, and in RE and the school's regular

acts of worship. Provision is good in English and mathematics, where recent initiatives have improved programmes of work, while art is a strength of the school. The school places a high priority on personal and social development, and its programme for personal, social and health education, together with science, includes aspects of citizenship, drugs education and sex and relationships education which are suitable for the ages of pupils. The government's Sure Start initiative, together with the local family support scheme and the school's family literacy project, help to strengthen support for both personal development and for learning.

21. Innovations in developing comprehension in reading, and also improving spelling and writing have been started. A new cross-curricular programme for integrating subjects and linking aspects of these together in carefully planned topics has been designed and begun, and this is already showing benefits in terms of pupils' interests and their keenness to learn, although it is not yet fully implemented across the whole range of subjects. Regular reviews of all subjects contribute to the annual school improvement plan and a new curriculum overview system is currently being trialled by the school.

22. Teachers plan the curriculum together, sharing their expertise. Weekly teaching times meet requirements and time allocations to different subjects are sensible, tailored to meet the needs of the pupils. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra activities, including those to do with sport and the arts, as well as placing a strong emphasis on multi-faith and multi-cultural topics. Visiting experts and musicians provide specialist input, and visits to places of interest enhance pupils' studies. The school has a policy for pupils with special gifts and talents, and has made a register of these more able pupils to enable appropriate support and challenge to be planned for them to extend their abilities.

23. Curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. Its main strength lies in the planning which integrates activities in all six areas of learning into a central theme. Indoor and outdoor activities are carefully planned to promote a free flow between classrooms and outside areas and there is a suitably strong emphasis on learning through play and practical experience. Children are prepared well for the National Curriculum as they progress through Reception with an increasing focus on aspects of literacy and numeracy.

24. The school provides well for pupils with a range of special educational needs. This is mainly because it identifies these pupils at an early stage and provides good support and teaching for them as they progress through the school. Teachers plan work for pupils that matches their capabilities and meets their individual needs. Effective teamwork between teachers and assistants ensures that pupils receive the help they need in lessons and when withdrawn for additional help in small groups.

25. The match of both teachers and assistants to the demands of the curriculum is good, and this adds to the quality of the support the school provides for its pupils. Resources are good overall, and have improved considerably in ICT and in the library. The accommodation is satisfactory overall; the school has worked hard to ensure that some shortcomings in the premises are improved as far as possible, so as not to impinge upon the curricular provision presented to pupils. For example, the indoor accommodation for the Nursery is small and fairly cramped. The school has created a covered area which forms a valuable extension to the classroom and provides much needed additional space. It is used very well for a range of activities and pupils move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good overall and support their learning appropriately. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is unsatisfactory. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective procedures for ensuring a healthy and safe environment.

- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn.
- There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.
- The monitoring of pupils' academic progress through the school is developing soundly but currently not rigorous enough.

Commentary

26. A health and safety audit was carried out in the summer of this year and the governors reviewed what action needed to be taken. Staff have had training in risk assessments and the school obtains advice from the LEA when necessary. The governor with particular responsibility for health and safety has experience from working in this area. Teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science and DT, as well as promoting healthy living by providing free fruit and allowing the pupils to drink plenty of water. The school follows the local procedures for child protection and staff have received guidance on how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are good with several trained staff, records kept of treatment and letters for parents if children bump their heads.

27. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff show good concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. In particular, parents agree that their children are well supported when they first come to school. This is because of the visits made by the Nursery staff to see children in the home before they arrive and the opportunities for children to visit the school with their parents before they start in the Nursery or Reception classes. Pupils feel that they are supported well by the staff and know whom they would go to if they needed help. They also say that the teachers listen to their ideas. They can express their feelings in circle time and discuss improvements to the school at meetings of the Eco-Council. They have, for example, helped to decide on what should be provided in the playground. They are also invited to say what they think of the school in the questionnaires that are sent home each year.

28. The staff have a good understanding of the personal development of the pupils which helps them to provide good support. The use of praise and other rewards results in the raising of pupils' self esteem. Golden time is well liked by the pupils and helps to motivate them. In both assemblies and the classroom the staff regularly remind pupils about the rules of behaviour. A specially trained midday supervisor provides good support to groups of pupils to help them extend their social skills. An art therapist works with younger pupils who have emotional difficulties. The school supports pupils with English as an additional language well: class teachers are aware of their needs and give them encouragement and help, enabling their confidence to develop.

29. However, the setting of targets for individual pupils to achieve and the monitoring of their progress against those targets is currently not sufficiently rigorous. The school is awaiting training in a new system for tracking pupils' progress and has not put in place interim procedures to ensure that the progress of pupils currently in Year 2 is being checked carefully enough. Plans are in place to introduce individual targets for all pupils in English, mathematics and science, but these are not yet operational.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good overall. Links with the local community are very good. There are good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The parents' support at home and in school makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a wide range of information about what happens in school.

- The involvement of a range of organisations and people in the community extends experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Commentary

30. As at the time of the last inspection, parents are pleased with what the school provides. They consider that the staff are approachable and feel well informed about their children's progress. The inspectors confirm that the arrangements for providing information are very good. The school sends home regular news and other letters about general matters and, each term, outlines what is to be taught in each class and how parents can work with their children. Class meetings also provide information about what happens in the classroom together with other talks specifically about numeracy, literacy and the homework policy. Teachers are readily available to meet with parents. From the relaxed, informal conversations seen to take place at the start and end of the school day, it is apparent that parents are comfortable talking to the staff. The annual reports on pupils' progress in the summer term provide an excellent summary of what the children know and can do in each subject.

31. Some parents help in school both with general work and in the classroom; they help with visits and, for example, help to run the Eco Club each week. A parents' support group holds a coffee morning each week. Parents organise Christmas activities and fundraising activities events throughout the year, including a summer barbecue. Parents show respect for the school rules and one father was seen to remind his young child not to run in the corridor. Parents also help to formulate the school improvement plan and for the past two years have responded to questionnaires asking what changes they would like to see, as well as providing comments about what they like in the school. Parents also take advantage of the extra support provided through the Sure Start programme and other initiatives. This includes Family Learning classes to enhance their understanding of how to help their children; support for families who do not have English as their first language and family support and other workers. The school has good evidence that this has resulted in parents being able to provide better support for their children's learning.

32. The pupils make very good use of the local community. The curriculum is enhanced by trips to places of interest in the local area and further afield, including a farm, a garden centre, and a supermarket. The pupils' understanding of society is enhanced through contacts with many visitors such as the police, fire brigade, community warden, and vicar. They meet people living nearby when singing carols at an old persons' home, and local people are invited to events in the school. Harvest Festival gifts are donated to local residents. The good links with the nearby junior school ensure a smooth transfer at the end of Year 2. Local secondary schools send work experience students and more able pupils benefit from working with some secondary school students to help develop their computing skills. Pupils from local infant schools perform together at a music festival.

33. The school has established particularly effective links with outside agencies to support its provision for pupils with SEN. In addition to good support provided by the Local Education Authority, the school has arranged successful links with several agencies, such as the local Sure Start programme. Liaison between the school and the parents of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Both the members of the school staff and the specialist staff create effective links with the families of these pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good. The leadership and management of other curriculum areas are satisfactory. The management of the school is good. The school's governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's high aspirations and vision for the school have led to rapid improvement in her first year at the school.
- All staff share the headteacher's vision for the school and there is a strong sense of teamwork.
- Governors have a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and provide good support for the headteacher and staff.
- The headteacher has taken a strong lead in raising standards and improving the curriculum.
- Subject co-ordinators, many of whom are new to the role, are being supported very well in their development but their role in monitoring and evaluating standards, teaching and the curriculum is relatively underdeveloped.
- Very good leadership of the Foundation Stage ensures high quality provision for the youngest children.
- There is a strong commitment to performance management, which is linked effectively to the school improvement plan and the professional development of all staff.
- Good financial management ensures that the school achieves its educational priorities.

Commentary

34. Since the previous inspection in 1999, when the leadership and management of the school were also judged to be good, it has undergone a period of upheaval which resulted in a decline in several areas of its work. As a result, the Local Education Authority identified the school as requiring support in order to raise standards, especially in literacy and numeracy. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2003. Following a review at the end of her first year at the school, the LEA decided that the school no longer needed the same high level of support as rapid progress had been made, particularly in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher's vision for the school and her high aspirations for the pupils have driven developments in all areas of school life. She has created a strong team spirit amongst staff, who share her commitment to raising standards and providing a high quality of education for all pupils. She is supported very well by the assistant head and co-ordinator for SEN, who form the leadership team. Teachers, governors, parents and pupils speak highly of the headteacher and what she has achieved since she came to the school. The key to her success has been an ability to focus on the most important issues and to ensure that all staff receive appropriate training to deal with the challenges facing them.

35. The role of governors has also developed well as they have become more actively involved in strategic planning and in monitoring the quality of provision. Governors visit the school regularly, observe lessons, discuss progress with the headteacher and staff and contribute to the school improvement plan. Through their committees they contribute effectively to the management of the school. They have a good understanding of what is going well and what needs to be improved further and they provide effective support for the headteacher and leadership team, as well as asking challenging questions. Some governors have been involved in joint monitoring sessions with the headteacher, which have increased their understanding of this aspect of their role. Governors meet all statutory requirements.

36. The headteacher quickly identified the need to raise standards throughout the school and, because of several staff changes, successfully took the lead in improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Subject co-ordinators are mostly new to the role and the headteacher has made effective use of LEA advisers to support their development. For example, the mathematics co-ordinator carried out joint lesson observations with an LEA adviser. A particularly good initiative was the introduction of subject portfolios, which the co-ordinators have put together to illustrate the standards currently being achieved and the range of the curriculum. These are proving to be very useful in helping co-ordinators to develop a good overview of their subjects and to identify gaps in provision and where standards could be higher. For example, the ICT co-ordinator has recognised the need to plan work at a higher level for more able pupils. Although some co-ordinators have begun to analyse performance data, and check teachers' planning and pupils' work, their role in

monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision and its impact on standards is relatively underdeveloped.

37. The assistant headteacher provides very good leadership in the Foundation Stage, which is helping to create a strong team with a good understanding of how young children learn and how to plan experiences for them which promote good progress throughout Nursery and Reception. Regular meetings with other Foundation Stage staff ensure a coherent approach to the curriculum and assessment and enable teachers to track children's progress effectively. This well-informed leadership is having a positive effect on the standards children reach and the progress they make in Nursery and Reception.

38. The school improvement plan clearly identifies the main priorities for the school to address and its related action plans, prepared by the co-ordinators and headteacher, show how these will be addressed. The performance management of all staff is effectively linked to the plan, and involves the setting of measurable targets for the headteacher and class teachers. Support staff are also involved in the process, which is helping to develop their professional skills. Opportunities for staff training are planned which relate directly to the school's priorities for improvement. There is a strong emphasis on self-evaluation at all levels and monitoring the school's performance by analysing the results of tests and teachers' assessments, although this is at an early stage of development in some cases.

39. The headteacher and governors ensure that the school is able to carry out its programme of improvement through careful financial management and allocation of funds. For example, improvements in reading have been supported by significant expenditure on books, which in turn has helped to enable teachers to introduce a more effective home reading scheme. Expenditure on staffing, though high, has been influenced by the need to maintain small classes and individual attention for the high proportion of pupils with SEN. Staff and governors evaluate the impact of expenditure by checking its effect on the pupils' learning and their rate of progress. Governors ensure best value by comparing the school's performance with other similar schools, by consulting parents and pupils about their views and by challenging and discussing all decisions about expenditure.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	490263	Balance from previous year	27880
Total expenditure	482862	Balance carried forward to the next	35281
Expenditure per pupil	3323		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

40. Very good leadership and management, effective curricular planning and good teaching all combine to provide children with varied and interesting experiences which promote good learning and help them to make good progress. These aspects have all improved significantly since the last inspection. Very good provision for the high proportion of children with special educational needs, especially in language and communication skills, is reflected in their good progress. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very good leadership for teachers and assistants in the Nursery and Reception classes, who work together very effectively as a team. In both Nursery and Reception, the quality of teaching is good across all six areas of learning, which are planned very effectively to link together in order to reinforce learning and make it more relevant and meaningful for the children. The indoor Nursery accommodation is fairly small but the school has made great improvements to the outside area, providing a covered space which is in constant use when the weather permits. During the inspection, both Nursery and Reception teachers made very effective use of all available space, indoors and out, to provide children with a wide and interesting range of activities.

41. Assessments carried out at the end of the previous school year indicate that approximately two thirds of the children who are now in Year 1 achieved the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. Records show that almost all of the children have made good, and in some cases very good, progress since they joined the Nursery, particularly in communication, language and literacy, although attainment remains lower in that area than in the others. This represents good achievement in all six areas of learning, given the low starting point of many of the children. It also indicates that standards are rising as a result of the increased focus on developing language and communication skills and the much improved assessment procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good achievement results from consistently good teaching across all areas of learning.
- Very good induction procedures and attention to children's personal, social and emotional development ensure that they settle quickly into school.
- Good teaching of language and communication skills helps children to extend their vocabulary.
- There is an effective balance between activities that are led by adults and opportunities for children to select and initiate their own.
- Teachers make very effective links between all areas of learning.
- The very good teamwork between teachers and assistants ensures all children are supported well in their learning.
- Good assessment procedures are used effectively to plan the next stage of learning.
- Very effective links with parents support children's learning.
- There is good provision for children with SEN and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Very good leadership provides clear direction for the continuing improvement of the provision.

Commentary

42. The school has very good induction procedures for children and parents which help to ensure that children settle in quickly and happily. Home visits provide teachers with much useful information about children's needs and capabilities. This enables early identification of children with specific learning difficulties, who are then given additional support, especially with the development of social and communication skills. A strong feature of the teaching is the emphasis on pupils' **personal, social and emotional development**, which is built into all sessions in the Nursery and Reception

classes. As a result, children settle into school quickly and form good relationships with all of the adults and with each other. Children are given worthwhile opportunities to work and play together in small groups and to develop independence by selecting activities. Adults set clear expectations of behaviour and give praise and encouragement to reinforce these. By creating a calm atmosphere, teachers help pupils to feel secure and to enjoy learning.

43. Many children start school with poor language and communication skills and their attainment in **communication, language and literacy** is very low on entry. Improving these skills is central to the good practice seen in all lessons. Teachers and assistants model spoken language well, talk to pupils frequently, question them and encourage them to develop confidence in speaking. They are skilled at extending children's vocabulary and helping them to express their ideas. All adults constantly reinforce the need for good listening and praise those children who achieve it. Children enjoy listening to stories and joining in with repeated phrases. Teachers provide a good selection of books for children to browse and retell stories in their own way. Writing tables offer the opportunity for children to experiment with making marks and attempting to write words and, later, sentences. There is a good range of resources to support learning, including story props which help children to retell stories. For example, Reception children used models and puppets to tell the story of *The Three Little Pigs*. In the Nursery, adults joined in with the children's play as they acted out roles in the animal hospital, extending their knowledge of words and their meanings and their ability to construct sentences in order to express their thoughts. Good teaching of phonics was seen in Reception as children sorted objects into three groups on the basis of the initial sound in the name of the object.

44. Teachers have a good understanding of how young children learn and of the need to plan activities that incorporate several areas of learning. The lessons observed in the Nursery provided good examples of successful integrated planning around the theme of 'Wild Animals'. The planned activities enhanced children's **communication and language, mathematical, physical and creative development** and their **knowledge and understanding of the world**, while the opportunities for choice and learning through play enhanced children's personal and social development. In the classroom, children sorted models of wild animals and compared their size, learned number names, mixed paints, painted pictures and modelled with playdough, while outside they observed, described and drew snails, and watched and handled blocks of ice, which formed a fitting landscape for the model polar bears and penguins. Some children were engaged in role play with an adult, while others climbed up and slid down apparatus and developed their balancing skills by walking on 'stepping stones'. Some drew pictures or attempted writing on a chalkboard, others hammered nails into a board. They learned about colours from bottles of different coloured liquids hanging from a line and explored the sounds they could make using various percussion instruments.

45. The Reception curriculum is also planned very effectively to incorporate all areas of learning into an overall theme. As part of the activities around the theme of *The Three Little Pigs*, children engage in retelling the story and acting it out; they construct the 'house of bricks' from large plastic blocks, learn to read key words related to the story, write letters to the wolf, explore and sort a variety of materials, make beds for the little pigs and make collage pictures from sticks and wood shavings.

46. As children progress through Reception, there is an increasing focus on specific aspects of learning, which prepares children well for the National Curriculum in Year 1. In a good lesson that focused on children's **mathematical development**, the teacher used magnetic people to count the number of children in the class, children sang number songs and each group was given an activity that was well matched to their stage of development. Some children rolled dice and had to collect that number of objects. Less able children counted cubes up to six, while the more able added 2 more to a given number of cubes or took two away and predicted, then counted, how many this would make. Outside, children made effective use of large number tiles for reading numerals and matched the dots on large dominoes. Inside, children counted cookies into a pot, rolled out dough and cut out shapes, putting two on one plate, three on another and so on up to six. Children also used computers to help them learn how to count and recognise numbers.

47. Underpinning the good practice in the Nursery and Reception classes are good assessment procedures. These are carried out in every lesson as teachers and assistants observe and note the children's progress. These observations are used well to plan the next stage in learning for each pupil. A particularly good feature is the use of the Renfrew Expressive Language assessment which highlights children's needs and helps teachers to plan activities to meet them. This also gives teachers a good measure of children's progress throughout each year. Another very strong feature is the very effective teamwork between teachers and assistants which helps all lessons to run smoothly and provides very good support and encouragement for all children. Very good provision for children with SEN ensures that they get off to a good start and that teachers know them well and quickly assess their needs. Children who are in the early stages of learning English receive good support from both permanent staff and visiting bi-lingual assistants who help to develop and extend their vocabulary.

48. Parents are involved very well in supporting their children's learning, especially through the Family Learning Programme. Teachers and assistants communicate frequently with parents, who are welcomed in to school and involved productively in their children's learning. Informative displays about the curriculum are provided for parents to read while waiting for their children and a helpful leaflet explains how parents can help their child at home.

49. The very good leadership provided by the Foundation Stage co-ordinator is evident in the planning of the curriculum and in the quality of the teamwork which helps Nursery and Reception classes to function successfully as a unit. She provides effective support and guidance for all staff, and clear direction for the future development of the provision.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by pupils, though improving, are still below national expectations for age.
- English is well taught throughout the school and leads to good achievement.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- New initiatives in the subject are bringing about improvement in standards of reading, handwriting and spelling
- While ongoing assessment of the work of individual pupils is good, monitoring of individual and group progress for future planning lacks a long term perspective.
- Language and literacy skills are developed well through other subjects.

Commentary

50. Standards in reading and writing in Year 2 are below the national average. This represents a decline in standards in reading since the last inspection, but similar standards in writing. In the intervening years, standards in both reading and writing dropped considerably, and last year, in the 2004 national tests, were still well below national averages. However, pupils in the current Year 2 are already doing better, as a result of new initiatives for handwriting, spelling, writing and reading. Although these pupils entered Year 1 with generally low levels of literacy skill and one Year 1 class was affected adversely by staff changes during that year, they have made good progress and are now achieving well. All pupils, including those with SEN and EAL, do well for their capabilities and their previous learning. The more able pupils are well challenged, and there are no significant differences between girls and boys.

51. Standards in speaking and listening are below average in Year 2. Pupils have good attitudes to speaking and listening, however, and make good progress over time. While not always very responsive in whole class situations, they are keen to express themselves when invited to do so,

when talking to partners or in small groups. They are able to talk about their own interests and the books they read. Their vocabulary range, however, often limits their expression and their understanding. Teachers try hard to extend this by modelling appropriate language. They give clear explanations of new words, use questions skilfully, and involve pupils in paired and small group discussions. Teachers plan imaginative opportunities for speaking and listening, and monitor pupils' progress, although there is at present no school assessment scheme for evaluating speaking and listening.

52. Reading standards in Year 2 are below average. Pupils make good progress in their reading, however, and their achievement is good, given their previous attainment. Pupils in Year 1 are on track to reach expectations for age, showing that the initiatives the school has set in place to improve standards are beginning to work well. They read accurately and with confidence the texts they are given, and also use the skills they have been taught to tackle unknown and difficult words. All pupils have individual reading targets for reading at home and school, and they know what they have to do to improve their skills. They enjoy borrowing books from the library on a regular basis, and like to read both fiction and non-fiction genres.

53. Standards in writing in Year 2 are below average. Often limited vocabulary hampers pupils in expressing their ideas. However, they tackle a range of purposes for writing and make appropriate responses to these. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Both spelling and handwriting have improved due to the impetus of the school's new approaches, and pupils in Year 1 are already attaining satisfactorily in spelling and handwriting. For age, Year 1 pupils are doing better in these aspects of writing than their Year 2 counterparts.

54. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, throughout the school. Lessons seen were all good or very good. The substantial rethinking of the English curriculum, with consequent retraining of staff, is starting to show benefits in terms of improved attainment. Tasks are well matched to pupils' needs, and ongoing individual assessment is regular and thorough. The tracking of pupils' progress over time, though, is not yet well developed; consequently, target setting for individuals and groups is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge, and leads the subject well. She shares in team planning, and sometimes samples pupils' work; however, systematic monitoring of both teaching and pupils' work is not yet fully developed.

55. Resources in the subject are good. The library stock is adequate in quantity, good in quality, and the library itself is well organised and well used. Enrichment events take place and include theatre workshops and performances. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Although standards of reading appear to have declined, the standards of both reading and writing fell considerably since then and now they are improving. Teaching has improved, and resources are better. Handwriting and spelling are specific areas where very good improvement is taking place.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. There has been considerable emphasis on creating interesting content in the new English curriculum, and the integration of different subjects within it is part of this initiative. It not only interests the pupils more, but also makes good use of teaching time for the subjects involved. Good evidence of this was seen in two lessons; in one, pupils were learning literacy techniques within the context of their work in RE, and in another, history was combined effectively with English. On the other hand, some opportunities for practice in writing are missed in other subjects at present, such as science, and as writing techniques improve, making use of these would enhance skills even more. ICT is also integrated effectively as a tool for word processing and presentation.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve well due to good teaching and learning.
- Support in mathematics for pupils who have SEN is good.
- Teachers manage and control classes well, and this results in good behaviour and attitudes from pupils.
- Although standards of attainment are below average, recently employed strategies indicate that they are improving.
- The effective assessment of pupils is hampered by inadequate tracking procedures.

Commentary

57. Standards of attainment achieved in national tests have varied considerably in recent years. Whilst they are below average in the current Year 2, there is evidence that recently established strategies to raise standards are already having a positive effect. Pupils' understanding of numbers, calculations, shape and space is developing soundly, but their ability to apply and use existing knowledge in new situations is not secure. Standards are lower than at the time of the last inspection. Two factors in particular have contributed to this. The first is the increase in the proportion of pupils with SEN. The second is partly due to many pupils having several different teachers in recent years. Currently, the most important factor in raising the pupils' attainment is the good quality of teaching they are now receiving. This promotes good achievement from all pupils. The school's action plan for mathematics in 2004-2005 has promoted the use of several strategies to raise standards in the subject. Examples of this include the recent adoption of an effective process of early identification for those pupils having difficulties in learning. Additionally, the involvement of family learning projects in school has begun to have a positive influence upon the attainment of pupils, especially in Year 1. The school's provision for those pupils who have SEN is good. This is because they are supported well, either individually or in small groups, by an adult who provides help if required.

58. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and is having a direct impact on standards across the school. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, select appropriate teaching methods and seek to make learning enjoyable for their pupils. The best teaching is characterised by clear explanations of what pupils are expected to learn in each lesson, suitably differentiated tasks for pupils of all ability levels and the effective use of teaching resources. For example, in a Year 2 lesson about number bonds, the teacher used equipment known as Toolbox to extend the pupils' understanding of number patterns. There is appropriately challenging work for the higher attaining pupils, which enables them to reach higher standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

59. Teachers are also making increasingly effective use of ICT and interactive mathematics areas in their classrooms to support their teaching. Although assessment procedures are satisfactory and the teachers know their pupils well, the school's procedures for tracking and predicting the progress of individual pupils do not enable them to monitor pupils' progress effectively. Teachers are particularly effective in the way they manage and control their classes. They have established good classroom routines and they have high expectations of good behaviour from their pupils. Additionally, they actively promote the need for pupils to concentrate hard and to show interest during their lessons.

60. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although the mathematics action plan has identified relevant tasks to raise standards there have been several subject co-ordinators during the last year. This has resulted in unsettled provision that has restricted progress in some respects, such as attempts to improve the teaching of problem solving and the monitoring and evaluation of planning and the curriculum. The current co-ordinator has made a satisfactory start in the role but requires further training in order to be fully effective. The subject has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection, despite the improvement of assessment procedures

being raised as a key issue at that time. An imminent review of assessment is already a part of the subject's action plan.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Satisfactory use and development of pupils' mathematical skills is made in other areas of the curriculum. Examples observed were an attractive display of shapes showing different art paintwork techniques, and the collection of data about local transport in geography. In science, mathematics is used well to measure the outcomes of experiments. Overall, insufficient opportunities for the use of mathematics across the curriculum have been developed.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising as a result of improvements in teaching, the curriculum and leadership in the subject.
- There is a good emphasis on scientific enquiry and first hand experience.
- Improved curricular planning has created effective links with other subjects.
- Swift action by the headteacher and good support by the LEA have brought about rapid improvement in a short time.

Commentary

62. Standards in science were below average at the time of the last inspection, and fell even lower in the intervening years. Pupils' progress was unsatisfactory, teachers' assessments unreliable and leadership in the subject was not addressing its weaknesses. In Year 2, standards are still below average but have improved on the well below average standards of the previous two years. This is because teachers' expectations are higher, the curriculum is planned more effectively to ensure progression in learning and the headteacher has quickly taken steps to identify and address weaknesses. As a result pupils' achievement is good. A review of pupils' work shows that, in Year 2, they carry out scientific investigations, predict what might happen and compare this with what actually happened. Pupils find out about snails through observation and finding information in reference books. They observe and compare two different flowering plants and find out how they grow from seeds. Pupils sort materials into 'rough' and 'smooth' categories and find out what happens to some materials when they are frozen. They visit a playground to find out about pushes and pulls as forces, and explore how far toy cars travel along different surfaces and down ramps of different heights and gradients. Standards are below average overall because of the high proportion of pupils with SEN who do not reach average standards. The school has rightly identified the need to concentrate on developing scientific vocabulary in order to raise pupils' achievement.

63. The previous inspection found that a key weakness was the lack of emphasis on investigative science. This has been addressed well and is now a strong feature of the teaching, which is good overall. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to learn through enquiry, investigation and exploration. For example, pupils in Year 1 planned and carried out an investigation to find the best light source to read a message in a dark box. They predicted the outcome, discussed how to make it a fair test and recorded their results. Pupils developed their observation skills by examining a tulip through a magnifying lens and watching the effects of standing flowers in coloured water. This improved approach to teaching science is clearly having a beneficial effect on pupils' achievements, and standards in Year 1 are similar to those expected for pupils of this age. Visits to a local farm and a sea life centre provided further opportunities for pupils to learn through first hand experience and to develop skills in observation and classification.

64. At the time of the previous inspection, science was taught as 'topic' to small groups of pupils while the rest of the class were doing other things. This was an unsuccessful approach which

hindered pupils' progress. Science is still taught under 'topic' headings, but in a much more coherent way which makes effective links with other subjects. This is another strong feature of the teaching. The new two-year topic cycle for Years 1 and 2 ensures coverage of all aspects of the National Curriculum with a strong focus on active learning and scientific enquiry. Teachers plan work together to ensure that it builds effectively on previous learning. The teacher with responsibility for the most able pupils ensures that the planned work provides enough challenge for them, while the co-ordinator for SEN keeps a watchful eye on those pupils' needs. There are strong links with mathematics and ICT but too little emphasis on developing pupils' writing skills through science, where recording is often minimal, even for the most able pupils.

65. On her arrival at the school, the headteacher was very concerned about the low standards in science and immediately set about making improvements. Very good support from an LEA adviser helped to address issues concerning planning, to raise teachers' expectations and to improve their skills in teaching pupils to learn through scientific enquiry. The recently appointed co-ordinator also receives very good support from the headteacher and adviser and has made a good start on developing her role. For example, she has interviewed Year 2 pupils and discussed with them a challenge that she set. This revealed the need to focus on developing more precise scientific language and on how to set up a fair test. Improved assessment procedures have been introduced as a result of analysing teachers' assessments over the past few years, which were found to be unreliable. The new half-termly assessment tasks are designed to show the levels pupils have reached within each unit of work in order to inform future planning. Although improving achievement in science is a priority in the school improvement plan, there are no measurable success criteria in place against which to judge the success of the actions taken.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve satisfactorily but more able pupils do not reach high enough standards.
- There are effective arrangements for teaching specific skills and ensuring pupils have sufficient time to use and practise them.
- The new co-ordinator provides good leadership in the subject and has achieved a lot in a short time.
- ICT is used and developed well across the curriculum.

Commentary

66. Standards are average in Year 2 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all aspects of the subject. Pupils with SEN also achieve soundly. Pupils use simple word processing programs to write captions and explanations and know how to delete text, insert capital letters and save their work. They use a painting program to design a book cover and to create patterns and produce bar charts to show the results of a traffic survey. They plan a journey for a toy robot and program it to make certain moves. Pupils in Year 1 use a modelling program to dress Barnaby Bear for a walk to school on a chilly October morning. The co-ordinator has identified the need to plan more challenging work for higher attaining pupils in order to enable them to attain Level 3 (above average) in the National Curriculum. This reflects the fall in standards since the previous inspection, when they were above average. There was not a consistently strong focus on the subject in the intervening years in order to maintain high standards. In the previous term, a group of able pupils took part in an initiative with a local secondary school which helped to extend their ICT skills to higher than average levels.

67. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers make effective use of the two computers in each classroom and the suite of five computers in the library. Short daily sessions in the classroom are used effectively to teach and demonstrate specific skills, which are then used when the pupils spend a longer session in the library and are able to put the skills to use in a particular

context. For example, pupils in a Year 1/2 lesson learned how to type in text with capital letters and full stops, how to delete unwanted text and how to save their work in order to improve it later. The teacher gave clear explanations and demonstrations and involved pupils well, asking some to show others what to do. Skilful questioning developed pupils' understanding well and the teacher made sure that pupils understood how they would be using these skills in future lessons. Lessons are planned well to build on previous learning and present pupils with opportunities to consolidate and extend their learning on a daily basis which ensures continuity.

68. The school has received good support from the LEA in identifying areas for improvement and putting strategies in place to raise standards. Effective support and training for the co-ordinator has enabled her to make good progress in the role in her first half-term. She has put together a very good portfolio of evidence that clearly shows the school's vision for the subject and provides a clear overview of the curriculum, the standards pupils are achieving and where improvement is needed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. The co-ordinator works with the other Year 1 and 2 teachers each week to identify opportunities for pupils to use ICT skills in other subjects. This is a good feature of the school's ICT provision. There are strong links with literacy and numeracy, through word processing and making different types of graphs. Pupils make good use of the Internet to search for information; for example, pupils used a website about Divali to research Rangoli patterns and other aspects of the Hindu religion during a topic on 'Celebrations'. There are strong links with art as pupils often use computers to create pictures and patterns to compare with other methods and techniques.

HUMANITIES

70. No **geography** lessons were observed and insufficient evidence was gathered to form an overall judgement about the provision in the subject. Evidence found in pupils' topic books showed that Year 2 pupils could compare features at the seaside with those found in the school garden. There was also evidence of links with science when pupils made comparisons between man-made and natural features. From evidence contained within a portfolio of pupils' recent work it is clear that the school makes effective use of the immediate locality to enhance and enliven the curriculum. There was also evidence of pupils using geographical knowledge and experiences both to describe imaginary journeys and to plan routes, for example to Washbrooks Farm. Year 2 pupils had used mathematical skills of data handling when preparing tally charts as part of their topic on 'Journeys'. Year 1 pupils had classroom displays such as "Sparrow's Travel Agents" which had been created in support of work they had been studying on visits to other lands. The coverage of the required curriculum found in the school's scheme of work is appropriate. The library contains a wide selection of suitable books to support learning about the subject. Assessment procedures focus appropriately upon key objectives for Years 1 and 2.

71. **History** was only sampled during this inspection, and only one lesson was seen which was a literacy story time session combined with history, apart from a brief part-lesson, also a story time. Samples of pupils' work in topic books and literacy books were seen, and the school's history portfolio giving details of the programme covered, together with visits and displays, was scrutinised. Indications are that pupils are attaining standards similar to those expected nationally for their age, and that their achievement is satisfactory. Progress shown is satisfactory for all groups of pupils, including those with SEN. The quality of teaching indicated is at least satisfactory, and in the single lesson seen it was good. The details in the portfolio show that the programme of work is appropriate, and reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum in this subject. Pupils learn about holidays at the seaside in Victorian times, the contrast in domestic life between now and the days when there was no electricity, and stories about prominent people and events, such as the Great Fire of London, Guy Fawkes, and Grace Darling.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well.
- Active learning is incorporated well into the RE curriculum.
- Links with other subjects are good and planning is clear and detailed.
- Resources are good and the subject is enriched by a good range of additional activities.
- There is no whole school approach to assessment in this subject.

72. During this inspection, no RE lessons could be observed. However, a Year 1 lesson combining literacy and RE provided a good example of the integration of different subjects, a particular policy of the school which has been adopted to enhance learning. While pupils were learning how to describe things, and write descriptive captions, as part of their literacy, they were using content from previous RE lessons about the Jewish festival of Hanukkah as the focus for their activities. They were thus able to recap and review their knowledge about Hanukkah, to learn how to spell some of the Jewish terms involved, and to use their literacy skills to describe the relevant artefacts. Teaching was of good quality and imaginative, making a guessing game of the description process, which pupils very much enjoyed. In this lesson, standards attained relating to knowledge and understanding in RE were satisfactory, although pupils' attainment in English aspects was below average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with SEN, achieved well in this lesson.

73. Samples of pupils' work in topic books and in literacy books were examined, and indications from these also show attainment that is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for RE and good achievement. The scheme of work and termly planning for the subject were surveyed, and reflect appropriately the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Planning is detailed and clear. Analysis of all available evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in the subject is good. There is no whole school approach to assessment, and each teacher gathers her own evidence to form the annual statements of progress required. The co-ordinator checks teachers' planning, observes some lessons, and samples the work done by pupils.

74. Discussions with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of the RE portfolio both served to emphasize the school's drive to make learning an active and first-hand experience for the pupils. Visits to places of worship, visitors to speak about aspects of religion, celebrations for festivals such as Easter, Christmas, Diwali and Hanukkah, and role play, such as acting out a wedding ceremony or a christening with the help of the local clergy, all contribute to this enrichment. Resources are good, and the school makes effective use of the Local Education Authority's outreach services to add to its own books, posters, and artefacts. ICT is sometimes used by pupils as a word-processing facility and they also use the Internet to find information, for instance about the Hindu celebration of Divali.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. There is not enough evidence to judge the overall quality of provision in **art and design** as only one lesson could be observed during the inspection. However, a survey of pupils' work, teachers' planning, the co-ordinator's portfolio and displays around the school indicates that pupils achieve well in the subject because they are taught a good range of skills and given opportunities to use a variety of materials and techniques when creating art work. The quality of pupils' work is good. As part of their learning about Divali in RE, pupils in Years 1 and 2 drew Rangoli patterns on the playground and then made their own using paint, pastels, chalk and a mixture of seeds, rice and beans. They produced detailed fine line drawings of Indian artefacts and created pictures and patterns using a computer program. The co-ordinator is passionate about the subject and her very good leadership ensures that the subject has a very high profile throughout the school. Strong foundations are laid in the Nursery and Reception classes where this aspect of creative development receives significant emphasis.

76. In the good art lesson that was observed in Years 1 and 2, pupils made good progress in learning about the work of Andy Goldsworthy and exploring the properties of different drawing and painting media. They had previously created their own patterns in the style of Goldsworthy, outside,

using a range of natural materials. Digital photographs of their work provided an effective stimulus for recreating their patterns on paper. The teacher gave pupils the opportunity to select their own paper and a range of drawing and painting tools, which helped to extend their knowledge of how to use and combine different media to achieve particular effects. Another strong feature of the teaching was the emphasis placed on pupils discussing and evaluating each other's work and making suggestions as to how it might be improved.

77. No whole class lessons were observed in **DT** during the inspection and consequently it is not possible to make a reliable judgement about the provision in the subject. Pupils' work displayed around the school and portfolios containing recent examples of pupils' work were examined. These indicated that Year 2 pupils had generated ideas and had planned what to do next as they designed and created Easter baskets. They also revealed that these pupils had been able to work with tools, equipment and materials as they designed and constructed costumes for the Brighton Festival Children's Parade. There was further evidence of pupils using construction kits to fulfil their own designs of moving models. Additionally, ICT had been used to support designs and the making of models of Joseph's Technicolour Dreamcoat. An action plan for the subject has been created recently which includes the need to provide an up-to-date policy. The current scheme of work provides satisfactory coverage of the required curriculum, which has been designed to operate over a two-year cycle. However, the action plan has already identified that there is a need to further develop progression in learning in the subject across the whole school.

78. **Music** was only sampled during this inspection; only one lesson was seen, the school's music portfolio was surveyed, and discussions held with the teacher and one of the two music co-ordinators. The LEA's music scheme is used, which focuses on building musical skills in progression. Planning is discussed with the co-ordinators, but there is no formal monitoring of lessons, and no whole school approach to assessment. One of the co-ordinators has recently been working alongside other teachers, in a team-teaching situation, to support and aid teachers.

79. In the lesson observed, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils were making group compositions on the theme of firework music with untuned percussion instruments. They were recording these using informal notation, and using their scores to perform their sequences to each other. Pupils were enthusiastic, and did well in this lesson, reaching satisfactory standards for age, but making good progress. The quality of teaching seen was good. Resources in this subject are good, and include a variety of instruments of different ethnic sources, and a range of music from different cultures and times. Enrichment is good in this subject, with many occasions when musicians visit the school to perform or to conduct workshops with the pupils. Music enjoys a high profile throughout the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and structured but teachers' expectations are not always high enough.
- Teaching and learning have not been effectively monitored or evaluated.
- All pupils have equality of opportunity and are fully integrated into the school's provision.

Commentary

80. Pupils in Year 2 achieve standards in line with national expectations. This judgement matches the findings of the previous inspection. All pupils are encouraged to be fully integrated into the school's full range of learning opportunities, which include gymnastics, dance and games. They make satisfactory progress and the curriculum is designed to ensure pupils receive a carefully selected programme of activities that will develop them physically and personally. The school allocates an appropriate amount of time to the teaching of the subject. In lessons observed the progression of skills being taught was appropriate for the age of the pupils. However, the expectations of the teachers were not always sufficiently high for standards in the subject to be

raised. Not enough attention was placed upon both the need for the quality of control of actions, and the pupils' understanding of fitness and health.

81. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, and promote satisfactory achievement. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection where several lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The quality of lesson planning was good and lessons were well structured and developed. In good lessons the teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and were mindful to include all pupils in every aspect of their lesson. Additionally, pupils behaved well and showed interest and enthusiasm. In a good lesson observed, effective opportunities were provided for the pupils to evaluate and comment on their own and others' actions. For example, pupils viewed a digital recording of the latter part of their lesson and were then able to suggest improvements to their own performance.

82. Currently the subject is temporarily managed by the Headteacher, and in those circumstances the management of the subject can be judged as satisfactory. However, there is limited formal monitoring and evaluating of the teaching and only basic arrangements exist for assessing formally the pupils' achievement and progress. The school has adequate resources for the teaching of the subject and timetables the use of its hall effectively. However, in the hall, the storage of equipment occupies a considerable amount of valuable floor space.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

83. This subject was only sampled during the inspection. One short lesson only was seen, in Year 2. This lesson was one of the weekly sessions devoted to raising pupils' self-esteem, through the school's system of 'Star of the Week', when pupils make positive statements about the chosen child, and a display of these is made as a follow-up procedure. Each pupil takes a turn at being the 'Star'. Pupils develop the skill of making positive comments well. Teaching was of good quality in this lesson, and pupils achieved well. These sessions are separate from the regular weekly PSHE lessons, which often take the form of 'circle time', where pupils are free, if they wish, to talk about the given topic, in turn.

84. Personal, social and health education has a high profile in this school. There is an appropriate policy and scheme of work; the recently updated detailed planning, which is done as a team, follows closely the local authority's guidelines. The co-ordinator has only been in post a short time, but has drawn up an appropriate action plan for the subject and has already achieved several of the objectives detailed within it. She has improved the planning, and updated the drugs education and the sex and relationships education documents. Another initiatives completed is the revamping of the playground with new marking and equipment. 'Golden Time', is a weekly time when teachers run mixed age group clubs involving exciting activities, and pupils are able to choose which group to join in as a reward for good behaviour. More in-service training for staff is planned.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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