

INSPECTION REPORT

Higham Primary School

Rochester

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118262

Headteacher: Mrs S A Greenfield

Lead inspector: Paul Missin 19227

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th September 2004

Inspection number: 267011

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	239
School address:	School Lane Higham Rochester Kent
Postcode:	ME3 7JL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body Higham Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Tony Sear
Date of previous inspection:	December 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Higham Primary School is about the same size as most other schools. The school serves a mixed rural area on the edge of the Kent marshes. There has been a continuous drop in the number on roll since 1999. Currently, there are 17 more boys than girls in the school. The imbalance between boys and girls is most marked in Year 6. Twenty-nine children attend the Reception classes for mornings only. All pupils are taught in classes with more than one age group. Most pupils are from the white British ethnic group, but the most numerous other ethnic group is mixed white and black Caribbean. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) and are at an early stage of learning the language. There are 49 pupils on the school's special educational needs (SEN) register which is broadly average. Three pupils have statements of SEN. This is also broadly average. The most common areas of need are speech or communication difficulties and specific and moderate learning difficulties. The school received an Achievement Award in 2001 and a Healthy Schools Award in 2004. The school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the OFSTED inspection in December 2002. There were further HMI monitoring visits in October 2003 and May 2004. When they enter the school, most pupils are achieving average standards.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19227	Paul Missin	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, art and design, physical education. English as an additional language.
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, history, geography, music. Children in the Foundation Stage.
16492	Robert Lever	Team inspector	English, religious education, design and technology. Pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Special educational needs.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Higham Primary School is an improving school that now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. As a result of the effective, focused leadership of the Headteacher, the school has made good progress since the very recent OFSTED inspection. The satisfactory teaching and learning enable pupils to reach average standards and to make sound progress as they move through the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school's strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good leadership and management of the Headteacher have enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection.
- By the time they leave the school most pupils attain standards in mathematics that are above those expected for their age.
- Across the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are above those expected for their age.
- The proportion of very effective teaching is not high enough to accelerate the progress that pupils make.
- The very good relationships and pupils' good attitudes and behaviour are important strengths of the school.
- The school has worked hard to develop an effective partnership with its parents.
- The school provides a very good range of curricular activities.
- The Foundation Stage co-ordinator leads and manages her team well.
- Raising standards is not a sufficiently clear priority in the draft school improvement plan.
- Procedures for involving governors in devising, monitoring and evaluating school improvement planning and in monitoring the standards that pupils attain are not sufficiently formalised.
- Procedures to identify and support pupils with particular gifts and talents are not sufficiently developed.

The school has made good improvement in the relatively short time since the last inspection in December 2002. The most significant progress has been made in improving the collection and use of assessment data, improving the quality of teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, and in improving communication with parents. Standards have been raised in mathematics and ICT across the school and in RE in Year 6. Good improvement has been made in the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' overall achievement had been unsatisfactory in Year 6. Now it is sound.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	C	C	A	A
Mathematics	C	C	A	A
Science	C	C	A	A

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

Standards in 2003 in Year 6 were well above average in all tested subjects. The provisional results for 2004 are lower with standards which are closer to average. The pupils in the current Year 6 are on line to attain above average standards in mathematics and average standards in English, science and in all other subjects where judgements could be made. Pupils also attain average standards across all inspected subjects in Year 2. Across the school, pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening. There was insufficient evidence in this very early part of the school year for judgements to be made about current standards in the Foundation Stage, but evidence provided by examples of work indicates that standards and achievement are average.

Achievement across the school is satisfactory but it is good in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with SEN also achieve satisfactorily.

Pupils' personal qualities including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in class and around the school are good. Relationships are very good. Pupils work and play well together and help to provide a strong sense of community. Attendance and punctuality are also good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and good assessment systems have recently been introduced. Strengths in teaching are the very effective way in which pupils are managed and the consistent sharing of the learning focus with pupils at the beginning of lessons. However, there are some shortcomings in teaching which reduce the proportion of good and very good teaching across the school. The curriculum is sound and it is enlivened very well through visits, visitors and very good sporting opportunities. The good levels of care and welfare provide a safe and secure learning environment. Links established with the local community and the partnership with parents are now good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership and management of the Headteacher are good. She has a caring and sensitive approach to staff and pupils and has ensured that the focus of the school's work has been clearly on addressing the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. She is soundly supported by other senior staff. The previous OFSTED Action Plan was detailed and clear but processes for devising and monitoring the new, draft school improvement plan and ensuring that explicit reference is made to raising standards are not fully established. Management systems are good. Staff are fully informed about, and involved in, the school's work. Governance of the school is sound. Governors are committed and enthusiastic. Some are new to their posts and monitoring and evaluation procedures are not fully secure. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents now have a positive view of the school's work and its achievements and appreciate how the school has worked successfully to re-build its home/school partnership. Pupils also have positive views of the school. Most think that they have to work hard and are confident that there is an adult they can go to if they are worried.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise the standards that pupils attain across the school and further accelerate the progress they make.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching across the school.
- Ensure that raising the standards that pupils achieve is a main priority in the new school improvement plan and consolidate further the governors' role in devising, monitoring and evaluating its implementation.
- Improve procedures for the identification and support and development of pupils with particular gifts and talents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Across the school, most pupils attain average standards and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with SEN also achieve satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above average standards in mathematics and achieve well.
- Across the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed well.
- The needs of higher attaining pupils are met soundly but procedures to identify and develop the particular gifts and talents of some pupils are not sufficiently developed.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' work in ICT has made good improvement.

Commentary

1. There was insufficient evidence for valid judgements to be made about standards currently being reached in the Foundation Stage. At the time of the inspection, children were only in their second full week of part-time schooling. However, analysis of work indicated that previous children had achieved average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage and had made sound progress in their learning.
2. Trends in the results of the national tests for seven-year-olds between 1999 and 2003 show that standards in reading and mathematics were on a downward curve but those in writing had been improving at a rate similar to that nationally. The preliminary results for 2004 show that standards in most areas are closer to average and this includes the proportion of higher attaining pupils. Comparison with similar schools tends to be unfavourable because of the school's relatively low free school meals uptake.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (15.2)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	14.7 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.3 (15.9)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. The findings of this inspection are that, in Year 2, standards are average in all subjects where judgements have been made. These judgements are broadly in line with the school's own targets for reading, writing and mathematics. Since the last inspection the above average standards in speaking and listening have been maintained, they have been improved in mathematics and ICT and have remained the same in all other subjects where judgements could be made.
4. The trends of the results of the national tests for eleven-year-olds between 1999 and 2003 show that standards have risen broadly in line with the national average but with an all-round improvement in 2003. The preliminary results of the 2004 tests show that standards are not as high as in 2003 but that above average standards were still being maintained. Results in mathematics were particularly strong. Indications are that the current Year 6 group has a higher proportion of SEN pupils than previous groups and the school's most recent targets for the likely attainment of this group in the 2005 tests is lower.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (27.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.6 (27.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.3 (28.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. The current inspection findings are that pupils in Year 6 are attaining average standards in all subjects where it was possible to make valid judgements except in mathematics where standards are above average. Since the last inspection, standards have been improved in mathematics, ICT, history, RE and PE and have remained the same in English and science.
6. Across the school, the high standard of pupils' speaking and listening skills has been maintained well since the last inspection. Teachers consistently provide good opportunities for pupils to talk about what they know and to explain their reasoning and thinking. As a result, pupils listen attentively and speak confidently in a range of different contexts.
7. Across the school, pupils achieve soundly and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Although there is some variation in the spread of ability in most year groups in the school, most children are attaining broadly average standards when they enter the school. Most children make at least satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, but some who had entered the school part way through the school year, made good progress. Pupils generally made satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. The progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6 has been variable. Analysis of national test data shows that Year 6 pupils in 2003 made very good progress from the Year 2 tests. Indications for 2004 are that the progress made will be less. Pupils make the best progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.
8. The school meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily. Since the last inspection, the use of target setting has given teachers and pupils a clearer view of what they need to learn to improve and teachers' planning now shows more clearly how activities are matched to the different levels of ability in each class. Analysis of recent test data for Year 6 and Year 2 shows that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels is at least average. The inspection found no significant variation between the attainment of boys and girls across the school. The school does not have procedures for the identification and support of pupils with particular gifts and talents. In some lessons observed during the inspection, pupils make good gains in their learning. For example, in a PE lesson to pupils in Year 5/6, boys and girls made good gains in their throwing, catching and general rugby skills as a result of the knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm of their teacher. Pupils with SEN make steady progress against specific targets and goals. They do well when receiving extra support and teaching which is appropriately matched to their needs.
9. Since the last inspection, in several important areas, standards have been improved and the rate of progress has been increased. Standards are higher in mathematics because of the more effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, an overall improvement in the teaching of basic number skills and the positive impact of the grouping of pupils by ability in Years 3 to 6. Standards in ICT are higher because of the increase in teachers' confidence and expertise and the effective use of the new computer suite.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality to school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attendance at school is good and most are punctual.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their learning.
- Behaviour is good in and around school.
- Strengths in pupils' attitudes and behaviour have been maintained well since the last inspection.
- Pupils form very supportive relationships with each other.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Commentary

10. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. In lessons, they are motivated, want to learn, are interested in their work and concentrate on their activities. As a result there is a positive atmosphere in the classroom, which enhances their learning. Pupils collaborate well, listen to each other and take account of what each has to say. Pupils with SEN form good relationships with teachers, support staff and each other. When they are supported, their confidence and self-esteem are increased.
11. Very good relationships between pupils and with staff ensure that there is a harmonious atmosphere throughout the school. Behaviour is good at all times. At lunch times, there is plenty for the pupils to do within the spacious play areas, and pupils play well together. In the dining hall, lunch times are pleasant social occasions. In the best lessons, brisk pace and imaginative teaching ensure that behaviour is good, so that little time is spent referring to behaviour and pupils learn. Pupils are confident that little bullying takes place and that any issues are always dealt with quickly by any member of staff.
12. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Assemblies, RE and personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the wide range of extra curricular activities all contribute to pupils' development. Spiritual development is satisfactory, it is not planned for in the curriculum, but pupils show respect for moments of reflection in assembly. During the inspection, the school held an assembly as a mark of respect for those who lost their lives in the Beslan school tragedy. This was done very simply and effectively and gave pupils the opportunity to reflect on the impact of this tragedy on the lives of the whole community. This aspect was unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Pupils develop a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They are aware of the needs of others and regularly raise funds for a number of charities. This fund raising, together with educational outings, contribute well to their social development. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and other cultures. This enables them to consider the feelings and values of others, and to respect individual and cultural differences. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection when pupils' cultural development was judged to have been poor.
13. There are opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibility and these are taken seriously. Pupils take on jobs about the school and are invited to become members of the school council. They act as buddies to new pupils and look after the 'friendship stops' on the school playground. All of these help with their confidence and level of self-esteem.
14. The table below shows attendance figures for the school. Attendance at the school is above the national median and is, therefore, good. The majority of pupils are eager to come to school and punctuality to school is also good. There were no exclusions in the school year before the inspection.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	200	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is sound. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Assessment is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in other subjects. The overall curriculum is now satisfactory but provision is enriched very well through several imaginative ideas. Extracurricular sporting opportunities are very good. The school's partnership with parents is now good. These are important achievements since the last inspection. The school's good, caring approach is recognised by parents.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but with several good features. Assessment procedures are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- There are several good features in the teaching in the Foundation Stage.
- Teachers plan well for the different ability groups in their classes.
- Assessment procedures and the quality of marking in English and mathematics are good.
- Several procedures established since the last inspection are beginning to improve the quality of teaching.
- There is insufficient very effective teaching to significantly improve the rate of progress which pupils make.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 38 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	1 (3%)	17 (44%)	19 (50%)	1 (3%)	0	0

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

15. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with several good features. Good progress has been made in improving the quality of the teaching since the last inspection. In 2002, teaching was unsatisfactory overall because of significant weaknesses in teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Since then, there has been improvement all round. The high proportion of

unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced and, across the school, almost half of the lessons observed are good or better. The highest proportion of very effective teaching is in the Foundation Stage, with most good teaching in Years 1/2 and 5/6. A peripatetic teacher taught the single unsatisfactory lesson.

16. Improvements since the last inspection have been achieved as a result of the positive input of effective leadership and management procedures to address fully the key issue relating to teaching quality. Since the last inspection, several experienced teachers have been appointed who have been trained in the United Kingdom. The single overseas trained teacher on the staff is currently applying to have his qualifications recognised in this country. He has received good levels of support and now contributes very positively to the work of the school and gives an important cross-cultural perspective to pupils' development. Improvements have also been made in the quality of teachers' marking and planning, in the collection and use of assessment data and in procedures to support and develop teaching and learning in the classroom.
17. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall with some good features. Strengths of the teaching include the good quality activities planned to facilitate children's personal, social and emotional development. This helps children to settle very quickly into school and to develop their self-confidence and independence. The teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together to meet the needs of these young children. Careful attention is paid to finding suitable activities for children in more formal lessons with older pupils in the class. However, there are times when too much is planned for them during the direct teaching time and explanations are overlong. As a result, some children lose interest and become restless.
18. The teaching of pupils with SEN is satisfactory. Teachers generally use appropriate methods, which enable pupils to learn effectively. Teachers are aware of the targets set out in individual education plans but do not always plan against these for lessons across the curriculum. Teaching assistants provide effective support, which helps pupils to achieve well in learning basic skills.
19. The quality of teaching and learning is good in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Across the school, in all other subjects where valid judgements could be made, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The effectiveness of teaching in mathematics is enhanced well by the use of grouping by ability in Years 3 to 6. This helps to provide a clearer focus for teachers' work. In this subject, planning is clear and lessons follow the format recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and now basic numeracy skills are taught and reinforced well. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
20. Across the school, the most important strength in teaching is the positive way that pupils are managed and the way in which teachers encourage pupils' interest and commitment to their learning. Teachers consistently respect the pupils and value their responses. They make learning fun and pupils respond well by showing enthusiasm for their work and a willingness to try and to do their best. Pupils' personal development and sense of belonging are promoted well. Regular opportunities are provided for 'circle time', where pupils sit in a circle and discuss sensitive issues. Good attention is also given to providing opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. This was clearly seen during the inspection in a Year 1/2 RE lesson where pupils were considering the theme 'belonging' and were talking about the different groups and organisations to which they belonged.
21. Several other current strengths in teaching and learning were identified as areas for development at the last inspection. Lesson planning is now detailed and clear. A strength is the way in which the separate activities for the three main ability groups in each class are identified. The focus of learning is consistently shared with the pupils at the beginning of each lesson. The use of clear targets for pupils' learning in English and mathematics has helped to improve the effectiveness of basic skills teaching across the school. This approach also helps the pupils to understand what they must do to improve and when shared with parents, helps their involvement with their children's education. The support provided for teachers through Performance Management procedures and the introduction of more rigorous monitoring of classroom practice have also helped to improve the quality of teaching and the impact on pupils' learning.

22. A science lesson to pupils in Year 1/2 illustrated several other features of good, effective teaching. The focus was on sound and the pupils were investigating the sound made by different shakers. Throughout the lesson, the teacher emphasised the importance of the scientific approach and encouraged the pupils to be 'good scientists'. Good opportunities were provided for the groups to explore and discuss the different sounds that could be made and they were well supported and encouraged by appropriate intervention by adults as they worked. As a result, pupils had good fun with their investigating and gained good knowledge of the process of sound and the ability to work with others in their investigations.
23. However, the procedures adopted recently by the school have not succeeded fully in raising the overall quality of teaching above the satisfactory level. Some shortcomings in teaching and learning which were evident during the inspection prevented satisfactory teaching from being good. In some parts of lessons, the pace of pupils' learning was allowed to drop too far. This was often as pupils were changing from one activity to another or when equipment was being given out. In some lessons, the management of resources was not effective. The effectiveness of a literacy lesson was limited by a poorly presented resource sheet, and a teacher in a PE lesson used too many different resources which muddled the pupils. Occasionally, introductory activities last too long and important parts of lessons are not fully explained. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not establish an effective learning partnership with pupils in the class and there were insufficient opportunities for them to contribute significantly to their own learning.
24. Assessment procedures, especially in English and mathematics, are good. At the last inspection they were satisfactory. Since the recent appointment of the Deputy Headteacher as assessment co-ordinator, the assessment practices in the school have been a focus of development. The collection of assessment data has been regularised. Data are now collected from the results of national tests and individual unit tests which teachers devise in several subjects. The results of the national tests in English and mathematics have been carefully analysed for areas of strength and weakness. A further area of improvement since the last inspection is that data are now being used more clearly to raise standards. The setting of group targets in reading, writing and mathematics involves both parents and pupils in their learning. Data are also used to form the ability groups in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and for further booster and support groups in mathematics and literacy.
25. Good assessment procedures form a vital part of the practice in the Reception classes. Observations are carried out on a lesson-by-lesson basis as teachers and assistants observe and note the children's progress. These observations are suitably used to plan the next stage in learning for each child. Another strong feature is the effective teamwork between teachers and assistants, which helps all lessons to run smoothly and provides good support and encouragement for all children. Teachers and assistants communicate regularly with parents, who are welcomed into the school and are involved productively in their children's learning.
26. Assessment arrangements for pupils with SEN are effective and records are thorough and well maintained. The school uses assessment data from teachers and from a range of tests to inform target-setting procedures in individual education plans. Assessments made on entry to school enable early identification of pupils needing extra support.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are very good opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular provision. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources at the school are satisfactory overall and adequately meet the needs of the curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum covers all subjects adequately and is greatly improved since the previous inspection.

- The school provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education.
- There are very good opportunities to extend the curriculum in a range of clubs and visits.
- Outdoor facilities are good for sport and play.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is sound but pupils with particular gifts and talents are not identified.
- The school's accommodation is good overall. The ICT suite is attractive, well resourced and well used.

Commentary

27. The curriculum is now appropriately planned to provide breadth and continuity in learning across the full range of subjects. All subjects now have schemes of work and time allocations are now appropriate. The numeracy and literacy strategies are in place and all staff have received training. Work is soundly matched to pupils' needs and all pupils are challenged to achieve higher levels. The whole school curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle and opportunities for cross-curricular work have been identified. A visiting music teacher supplements the provision of music and French is taught across the school in line with an approved scheme. In the Year 5/6 classes, Dutch is also taught.
28. The school follows a Local Education Authority recommended French curriculum for pupils in Years 5/6. Using existing staff strengths and expertise, the school's modern language approach is usefully supplemented by an introduction to Dutch as well. Although short activities relating to the teaching of both languages were observed during the inspection, there was not sufficient evidence for valid judgements to be made about the quality of teaching and learning or overall provision. In both sessions observed, the teaching and learning were satisfactory. In the French session, the teacher provided a range of games and activities for pupils to use their knowledge of numbers and animal names in both speech and writing. In the Dutch session the teacher, whose second language is Afrikaans, concentrated on pupils' pronunciation in games involving greetings and colours. Pupils were attentive and enjoyed the sessions. Most were confident to show what they had learned.
29. The good provision for pupils' personal development leads to pupils' good attitudes and positive relationships. 'Circle times', where pupils sit in a circle and discuss a range of sensitive topics, are regularly undertaken and pupils are able to talk about a range of issues. They also express their views through the School Council. There have been visitors to talk about healthy eating and healthy teeth and there are valuable links with the police, the fire service, the school nurse and even the elephant keeper from a local zoo.
30. Opportunities for sporting activities are very good and the school offers clubs and teams for football, netball, rugby, cricket, athletics and tennis. There are also clubs for gardening, learning sign language, maypole dancing, reading, homework and a bat and ball club for the younger children. A very good range of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. These support most areas of the curriculum.
31. The accommodation is good overall. Most rooms are of a good size and are attractive. There are extra rooms for other activities. A large classroom has been converted to provide an attractive library and a new ICT suite. The outdoor facilities are very good for sporting and other curricular activities.
32. The provision for pupils with SEN is satisfactory. The curriculum is appropriately organised and no pupils are disapplied. Pupils' individual learning plans are specific and targets are realistic but teachers rarely refer to them in their daily planning. This was also found at the previous inspection. The teaching assistants are experienced and receive training within and outside school. The Assistant SENCO gives valuable support to groups of pupils experiencing difficulties. There are shared areas and rooms where pupils can be withdrawn to be taught individually or in groups but most support takes place in classrooms. The building could easily enable disabled access but there are no disabled toilet facilities. The school has not compiled a register of pupils with identified gifts and talents so is unable to plan for their higher needs.

33. Overall, the school has secured good curricular improvements since the last inspection, when provision was unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6. There is now a better and more effective balance in the subjects which are taught and planning in all subjects inspected is now secure. Good improvement has also been made in extending extracurricular provision.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on the monitoring of pupils' achievement and the involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good levels of care for all pupils.
- There are good procedures for child protection, health and safety and first aid.
- All adults in the school know the pupils well and provide good levels of care.
- Good induction arrangements help children to make a confident start in the school.
- The school has good systems in place to monitor pupil's personal development as they progress through the school.

Commentary

34. The school has good health and safety procedures in place. Governors are involved in termly reviews of health and safety matters. Regular checks are made to grounds, buildings and equipment to ensure that the school environment remains safe. The Headteacher is the nominated person for the protection of children and has received appropriate training. She has ensured that all staff are aware of the need to inform her should they have any concerns. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and for the care of pupils feeling unwell are very thorough and ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents had positive views of the level of care given to pupils.
35. Good, informal procedures to monitor pupils' personal progress as they proceed through the school ensure that pupils are well cared for. Pupils spoken to confirmed that they feel comfortable with staff and that there is always someone they can turn to for support and advice. The good induction arrangements for pupils as they enter the school, both in the Reception and later in the school, assist in helping them to settle and to feel secure.
36. Pupils' views are taken into account through membership of the School Council. Pupils feel that their views are taken account of and can cite examples of the impact of their suggestions, for example, the introduction of the 'Friendship Stops' on the playground. They have also asked about introducing a House system in the school, which is currently under discussion. Most pupils in their questionnaire were confident that teachers listened to their ideas.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and the local community are good. There are good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides good information for parents.
- The school has good links with the local community.
- Curricular links with other schools support the curriculum and benefit pupils.
- The school works hard to liaise and work with parents. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

37. A good range of information is available for parents to let them know what is happening in school as well as informing them of events. Each half term, curricular information is sent to all parents so that they are aware of what is happening in their children's class during the following period and how they can help their children at home. Parents confirm that they are happy with the quality of information provided. There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff informally at the end of the school day to discuss their children's progress, as well as regular formal parent consultation meetings. Written annual reports for parents are satisfactory: they tell parents what their children know, understand and can do, and most give areas for further development. The active Parents' Association is very supportive of the school and raises significant funds for the school as well as organising social events. Many parents help in the classroom on a regular basis as well as on school trips.
38. Overall, the school has made a very good improvement in dealing with the relationship with its parents which had been key issues in the two previous OFSTED reports. At the last inspection, the relationship with parents and the quality of information provided for them were unsatisfactory. Now they are good.
39. Good links with the local community, including a number of visits within the local area, support and enhance these connections well. A good range of visitors come into school and work with the pupils including the local Fire Brigade and the Community Policeman who talk to the children about safety. The school takes part in a range of sporting activities with the local primary schools. Curricular links with other schools are also good and support the curriculum well. A programme of visits before transfer assists pupils at the end of Year 6 when moving to secondary school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement has been made in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection.
- The Headteacher provides the school with sensitive and effective leadership.
- Procedures for monitoring progress through the recent OFSTED Action Plan have been good.
- Effective management procedures inform and encourage all staff well.
- The draft school improvement plan is not sufficiently focused on raising the standards that pupils achieve.
- Governors' oversight of the new school improvement planning process is not sufficiently rigorous.

Commentary

39. The Headteacher's leadership of the school is good. This confirms the positive view of most parents. At the time of the last inspection, both the leadership and management of the school were unsatisfactory. The Headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development. This is a strength which was also recognised at the last inspection. The Headteacher's commitment and drive for improvement are major reasons for the good improvement made by the school since 2002. Since then she has acted decisively to deal with some of the staffing weaknesses that were identified and has ensured that the school's work has been clearly focused on the key areas of development. Her leadership approach has been sensitive but effective. It has succeeded in maintaining high staff morale and a shared commitment to improve during the period when the school was in serious weaknesses.
40. School improvement planning has been clearly focused on the important priorities for the development of the school. The Action Plan which was produced following the last OFSTED

inspection was comprehensive and set out clear lines of responsibility, timescales and success and evaluation criteria for each issue. This plan has been at the heart of the school's work and governors and staff have worked well together to ensure its effective implementation. Work on this plan ended at the end of the last academic year and the school is in the process of re-drafting its development plan. A relative weakness is that the first draft of the new plan does not sufficiently emphasise the importance of the impact of raising the standards that pupils achieve.

41. Several good procedures are in place to ensure the school's work is now more rigorously monitored. These are being further developed and consolidated. This represents a good response to a key issue from the previous inspection. The procedures for analysing the data from national tests in English and mathematics are now good and data are used well to set learning targets for groups of pupils. This improves the school's ability to judge the effectiveness of curriculum provision and also involves the pupils well in evaluating their own work. Co-ordinators are beginning to be more involved in monitoring the standards of work and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. This expertise is being developed well with paired observations being undertaken with LEA advisers. A programme of more regular monitoring has been agreed for the coming term.
42. The management systems in the school are good. Procedures for involving and informing the staff through staff meetings are effective and the creation of the middle management team has recognised the contribution that year group leaders make to the school's work. This has helped to increase their professional commitment to their roles and to the school. The role of the Deputy Headteacher, who has just been released from whole class teaching responsibility was not sufficiently clearly determined from the beginning of term, but a new rationale for the use of his time has very recently been provided. Teachers' involvement in the overall development of the school is secured well through the sound implementation of the Performance Management programme. This is an improvement since the last inspection when procedures had not been introduced satisfactorily. Co-ordinators also produce individual subject action plans which become a formal part of the school improvement plan.
43. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides good leadership and management and she has developed a strong sense of teamwork within the department. She has a good understanding of how young children learn and provides effective support and guidance for all staff, and clear direction for the future development of the provision.
44. Management of SEN is good. There are accurate records of pupils' progress and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) keeps the required documentation in good order. She is experienced and skilled. She gives good support to colleagues and oversees the writing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs). She has identified the need to match lessons to IEP targets more closely in teachers' planning.
45. Governance of the school is sound. Governors have taken their responsibilities to secure the improvement of the school very seriously and have worked hard with the headteacher during the time the school was in serious weaknesses. A scrutiny of the minutes of recent full and committee meetings shows that a good range of school issues are discussed and that governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Relationships between the school and governors are good. Useful links have been set up between individual governors and subject co-ordinators and class teachers. Several governors visit the school regularly and are becoming increasingly knowledgeable about its work. The governing body has been through a time of change recently with the appointment of a new chair and chairs of some committees. A relative weakness in their work is that procedures for reviewing and evaluating the school improvement plan are not sufficiently clear. This makes it more difficult for them to evaluate critically the school's work and to judge its effectiveness. This was also noted as a weakness at the last inspection.
46. The school's finances are managed soundly. Procedures for managing the day to day finances of the school are secure and the most recent office audit only recommended minor changes to the systems. The school's financial assistant works closely with the Headteacher to monitor spending patterns and these are relayed appropriately to the governors' finance team. Careful consideration

has been given to the application to move to a deficit budget situation. The budget package which was agreed involved a drop from ten to eight classes but the loss of only one teacher. Procedures for assessing and monitoring best value are sound.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	596,582	Balance from previous year	31,273
Total expenditure	647,161	Balance carried forward to the next	-19,307
Expenditure per pupil	2,610		

47. Overall, the school has made good improvement in the relatively short time since the last inspection. The Headteacher's leadership is good and she has established some effective management procedures. Several new initiatives have been introduced which have not yet had time to impact significantly on raising standards. The school is well placed for this improvement to be maintained.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

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

48. At the time of the inspection, there were 29 pupils in the Foundation Stage. These children were being taught in two mixed-age classes with pupils from Year 1. The Reception children were attending school in the morning and most had only been in school for seven days. As a result, there was insufficient evidence to judge these children's attainment in the areas of learning or to make valid judgements about the progress which they are making. However, assessments carried out at the end of the previous school year indicate that the children who had been in school for the full year and who are now in Year 1 achieved the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception year. This represents satisfactory achievement overall, although several younger children made good progress considering that they had been in school for only two terms.
49. The overall provision was also judged to have been satisfactory at the time of the last inspection but there has been a significant improvement in the quality of outdoor provision since then.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good induction procedures and attention to children's personal, social and emotional development.
- Good teamwork between teachers and assistants.
- Good leadership provides clear direction for the continuing improvement of the provision.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with several good features.
- Good quality activities are planned to facilitate the development of children's personal, social and emotional development.

Commentary

50. Procedures for admitting children to school are good; the process is handled sensitively and parents are involved well. Useful information about starting school is provided and children are introduced gradually to their new class. The way that they join an established class with older pupils helps them to settle quickly and to learn school routines. This helps to encourage their personal, social and emotional development.
51. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but several good features were observed during the inspection. At this early stage of the school year, children were being settled very effectively into school routines and the sensitive way that they were being managed ensured that they were quickly ready for new learning. Teachers' planning is thorough and detailed and a good range of appropriate activities is provided. Strengths are in the positive way in which children's interest and enthusiasm are harnessed and the effective liaison with teaching assistants. Effective interactions by all adults in the class were evident in an inside/outside activity observed during the inspection.
52. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator leads her team well. She has a very good understanding of the needs of these young children and succeeds in sharing her vision and enthusiasm with other staff. She ensures that effective planning and assessment procedures are followed and has successfully raised the profile of Foundation Stage work across the school.
53. The school has good induction procedures for children and parents, which go a long way towards ensuring that children settle in quickly and happily. A strong feature of the teaching is the emphasis on pupils' **personal, social and emotional development**, which capitalises very effectively on this well structured start. This was evident in the way in which children had settled quickly into the school and were already forming good relationships with all of the adults and with each other. Snack time is used well to help the children develop their social skills as the teachers

and other adults sit and talk with them. The children are happy and seem confident in the classroom setting. They are given many good opportunities to work and play together in small groups. A very good feature is that children are given the opportunity to develop their independence by making choices about what activities they undertake at the beginning of each day. Their behaviour in and out of the classroom is good and they are developing a suitable understanding of what is right and wrong. At the same time, adults set clear expectations of behaviour and give praise and encouragement to reinforce them.

54. Most children start school with the expected levels for their age in **communication, language and literacy**. There is a good combination of activities that are led and directed by an adult, such as the daily phonic sessions and activities initiated by children, such as role-play. Adults are involved well in the role-play activities, such as in the 'baby clinic' to extend the children's vocabulary and speaking skills. The teaching of phonics is satisfactory overall. In the one lesson seen, the children were asked to find their name card by listening for the initial sound of their name. This meant the children were introduced to a wide variety of letter sounds and several needed help with linking the initial sounds with the written letters. The promotion of early writing skills is satisfactory and by the time children enter Year 1, most are beginning to write independently in a variety of contexts.
55. In terms of their **mathematical development** the children achieve satisfactorily. On entry to Year 1, most children have gained sufficient knowledge to count and add two numbers when solving problems that involve ten objects. Higher attaining children recognise numerals and count up to and beyond 20 with good levels of confidence. In the lesson observed where the teacher worked directly with the Reception children their learning was enhanced by the good range of methods used that helped them to count reliably up to nine and understand vocabulary such as 'after' and 'before'.
56. The children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** are secure by the time they transfer to Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory overall with strengths in the organisation of appropriate topics to stimulate further learning. For example, through the theme, 'All About Me', the children had the opportunity to feel and discuss a variety of different items. This involved them not only in describing how the object felt but also when feeling the objects in a 'feely bag' having to explain how they knew which item it was. While this was taking place, the teacher constantly engaged the children in conversation and this contributed well to improving their **language and communication skills**. This theme was developed well during the 'child initiated activities' time, when children moved freely between indoor and outdoor classroom and had the opportunity to explore a range of materials of different textures that included cold custard and jelly. The children enjoy using the computer and use the mouse confidently to move things around the screen. Children's awareness of cultural differences is appropriately enhanced through stories and looking at the life of people in other countries such as India. Children also learn about their own religious traditions and recognise how they can help others, such as helping Mum to tidy up.
57. It was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards, teaching or learning for children's **physical development**. The children receive weekly physical education (PE) lessons and the opportunity to experience outdoor activities with the wheeled toys and climbing equipment on a regular basis, but these were not observed during the inspection. The children show good control of brushes and pencils, and manipulate small objects well.
58. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of standards or the quality of teaching in the **creative** area of learning. On the evidence of children's previous work, they are provided with a suitable range of art and craft activities and they achieve satisfactorily. They explore a range of different media, such as playdough and paint self-portraits. During the time of the inspection, they really enjoyed 'spray painting' onto large sheets of paper attached to the fence outdoors. In terms of their creative role-play, however, the children are provided with many worthwhile opportunities to use their imagination. Play areas are changed regularly to keep children's interest and, during the inspection, the children were engaged in role-play with the teacher in the 'baby clinic'. This was particularly moving as the teacher taught the children to sing lullabies as she rocked the 'baby' in her arms.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening are above average across all subjects.
- Teachers manage lessons well and pupils show good attitudes.
- Marking is good and informs pupils how to improve.
- Assessment is thorough and informs the setting of targets well.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection.

Commentary

59. Standards found in Year 2 in reading and writing are average. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Results of the 2004 tests are likely to show average standards for reading but well average for the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level for writing. There has been good improvement in reading but the strategies put in place for writing are only now beginning to bear fruit. Standards in Year 6 are also judged to be average for English overall. This is likely to be similar to the results of last year's test for the previous class. Achievement is satisfactory and pupils make steady progress from the time they enter the school. Pupils in Year 6 are making good progress from their results when they were in Year 2.
60. Across the school, standards of speaking and listening remain above average. Pupils listen well and are confident speakers in a range of settings across all subjects. Teachers give good opportunities for speaking and use a range of strategies. Paired discussion is encouraged in all classes. In a successful Year 5/6 lesson pupils showed different interpretations of *The Jabberwocky* through intonation and pace when performing. In a Year 3/4 lesson pupils used role-play to show understanding of the text, make predictions and show characterisation.
61. Reading standards remain average but a higher percentage of pupils exceed the national expectation by the time they leave the school. There are regular group reading sessions and all pupils are expected to read at home. Regular practice leads to steady progress and sound achievement. The Reading Records show that pupils change their books regularly and their success is conscientiously annotated. The average reader heard in Year 6 already showed that she was at an above average level. She could retrieve information from a variety of sources, including the Internet, and read with fluency and confidence.
62. Although standards in writing are lower than those in reading by Year 6, they are showing improvement. There has been a real drive to improve writing, particularly for boys. A boys' writing club clearly shows awareness of this. In all subjects, teachers are aware of the need to extend subject specific vocabulary and use it in both their speaking and writing. Pupils make steady progress, use more imaginative language and show increased accuracy as they go through the school. In a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils wrote about events from their own experience and thought about the use of full stops and capital letters. In a Year 3/4 lesson, they made good use of similes as they wrote about trees: "*Dead lonely trees creak as brave children climb them like scuttling tarantulas*" and "*The leaves shake violently in the breeze like a train coming to a sudden halt.*"
63. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to good, but is overall satisfactory. This shows a good improvement from the previous inspection when teaching and learning were unsatisfactory because pupils were not sufficiently challenged. Teachers manage lessons well and insist on good behaviour. Pupils are attentive and concentrate well on their tasks. They enjoy their work and behave well. Some shortcomings in otherwise satisfactory lessons were where reproduction of shared texts were not clear enough for all pupils to read easily and where the pace of teaching was allowed to drop. Marking of work is now good. It encourages pupils and tells them

what they need to do to improve and relates well to the clear learning objectives. Teaching assistants provide effective support, which helps pupils to achieve in line with their peers in learning basic skills. Assessment clearly shows what standards pupils have reached, informs the setting of targets and tracks their progress.

64. The subject is soundly managed by an experienced co-ordinator. She monitors planning and pupils' work but has limited opportunity to watch lessons and give feedback to teachers. The use of computers is limited and is not seen as an integral part of learning. Resources are now adequate and the library has been re-sited. It is now an attractive room where pupils can enjoy books and teachers can give library lessons. The book stock has been reviewed and is much improved.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

65. There are appropriate opportunities to develop literacy across the curriculum. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening are evident in most subjects. Teachers give time for talking to partners and group discussions. There are good examples of extended writing in RE and history. In science, pupils write up their findings from investigations clearly. Pupils extend their technical vocabulary in science and ICT. In PE, they listen carefully and follow instructions sensibly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good progress has been made in this subject since the last inspection.
- The new co-ordinator has made a good start to her work and ensures that the subject has a high profile around the school.
- By the time they leave the school pupils reach above average standards.
- Pupils are encouraged well to talk about their work and to explain their reasoning and the strategies used.
- The grouping of pupils by ability in Years 3/4 and 5/6 is an important reason why pupils make good progress in this subject.
- Assessment is good.

Commentary

66. By the end of Year 6, most pupils are attaining standards that are above those expected for their age. Standards in Year 2 are average. These judgements are broadly similar to the most recent targets set by the school but are lower than the previously published targets for the end of Year 6. The trend of results in Year 6 shows a continuous rise between 1999 and 2004 at a rate that exceeds that nationally. The preliminary results of the 2004 tests show very high levels of attainment. Indications are that the present group, while achieving well, will not reach the very high standards of the previous group. The trend of results in Year 2 between 1999 and 2003 shows a steady drop in standards. The preliminary results of the 2004 tests show that overall standards are likely to be closer to the average, especially in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Indications from the school's own assessment records are that pupils are on line to achieve average standards in the 2005 tests. All pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve well while those in Years 1 and 2 achieve satisfactorily. Pupils with SEN achieve at a similar rate to their mainstream colleagues.
67. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The standards being attained have been improved. At the last inspection standards were judged to have been below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Good improvement has also been made in the progress that pupils are making. Progress in Years 3 to 6 had been unsatisfactory, now it is good. The grouping of pupils by ability in Years 5/6 and 3/4 helps to reduce the age and ability span in each group and helps teachers to focus their teaching. This organisation is an important reason for the good provision in

the subject and the high standards pupils attain in Year 6.

68. A scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that pupils in Year 6 have good opportunities to extend their understanding of number skills as far as possible. For example, pupils understand the use of brackets in computations, investigate percentage of quantities and simplify fractions, which take their understanding into higher levels than most pupils. Pupils work very productively and the good pace to lessons ensures that a lot of work is covered. In Year 2, some pupils are confident with using numbers up to 100 and beyond and work out accurately change given in money problems up to £1. An important strength in pupils' achievement across the school is in their ability to talk about what they have done and to explain their mathematical reasoning.
69. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. This is an important improvement since the last inspection, especially in Years 3 to 6 where teaching had been unsatisfactory. At the previous inspection, teachers had not been confident in the teaching of basic mathematical skills and there were weaknesses in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. These weaknesses have been addressed well. Teachers' planning is now detailed and clear. Lessons now successfully follow the format recommended in the National Numeracy Strategy with an oral starter, a main activity and a summary at the end. In the lessons observed during the inspection, the oral starter was not always used to develop effectively the speed and accuracy of pupils' mental skills. Strengths in teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, are the ways in which the good relationships which teachers create in their class and the sense of fun in the subject which they generate, help to encourage pupils and improve their learning. For example, pupils in Year 5/6 were very excited to compete with each other over the speed at which they could recall multiplication tables. Some shortcomings in otherwise satisfactory lessons are where the pace of the lesson drops when pupils change activities or when equipment is given out. Teachers' marking is regular and accurate and is often related to the specific learning intended in the lesson.
70. The new co-ordinator has made a good start to her management of the subject. She is enthusiastic and committed and has succeeded in giving the subject a high profile in the school. This also represents an important area of improvement since the last inspection when leadership and management were judged to have been unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is building up a clear view of work across the school and progress being made in this subject through regular monitoring of teaching and learning, sometimes done with the support of an LEA specialist, and through regular sampling of pupils' work. Assessment is good. Units of work are regularly assessed and the results of national tests are carefully analysed to show areas where further work is required. Data are used well. They are used to determine the ability groups in Years 3 to 6 and to set group learning targets. These targets are prominently displayed in each class and are helping to improve pupils' understanding of how they can improve. These are helpfully shared with parents. Further specific intervention groups are planned for later in the school year.

Mathematics across the curriculum

71. The subject is used satisfactorily across the curriculum. There are good links with literacy where the subject is often used to encourage pupils' speaking, listening and recording skills. Data are used well in ICT, as pupils make tally charts to record the number and variety of types of holiday transport and then they generate different graphs to show the results. In science, younger pupils measure the distance their cars travel down a ramp. In history, older pupils sequence the order of events in Ancient Rome.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on learning through investigation.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent between classes and does not always show them clearly how they can improve.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support science.

Commentary

72. Standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement is similar to the findings of the school's last inspection. However, it is higher than the assessments made by teachers at the end of Year 2 in 2003 when standards were judged to be well below average and lower than the results of the Year 6 national tests when standards were well above average. The findings of the inspection however, are similar to the standards indicated by the provisional analysis of the 2004 assessments made by teachers in Year 2 and the provisional results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils. Differences in attainment are partly due to the changes in the nature of the school's intake and a more rigorous approach to assessing work. For these reasons, improvement since the last inspection is judged to be satisfactory. Additionally, the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning overall is judged to be promoting satisfactory achievement. This includes pupils who have SEN and also the higher attaining pupils.
73. The evidence shows that the pupils are taught all elements of the subject as they move through the school. By Year 2, pupils know that humans need different types of food and are beginning to develop an awareness of how nutrition contributes to good health. They have a satisfactory understanding of how electricity flows through a circuit and know that pushes and pulls are examples of forces.
74. During Year 1 and 2, pupils are taught the skills to carry out simple experiments and use first-hand experience to answer questions. In the lessons observed, pupils showed good achievement when they investigated ways of changing the sounds made by a shaker. Pupils used their ideas well to look at the impact of changing the filling and the number of objects inside the container and comparing the size and material the containers were made of. The most impressive aspect of this learning was the way that pupils discussed their findings and showed that they are developing an increasing scientific vocabulary to explain their observations as they undertake investigations. The previous work undertaken by Year 6 pupils showed that pupils had been given opportunities to carry a wide range of investigative work such as on electricity and within the topic 'Earth and Beyond'.
75. Across the school, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. In a good lesson observed in Year 3/4 based on an investigation into the strength of materials, the pupils were challenged well and were encouraged to think scientifically. This lesson linked well with their DT work as pupils had to plan a fair test to see which material would best make a carrier bag strong enough to carry a tin can. The work was made interesting for pupils and presented in a way that helped to develop their capacity to work collaboratively as each group was provided with a secret main material to consider as they planned a test together. A useful science investigation sheet helped them to plan and carry out their investigation in a methodical way. However, in a Year 5/6 class where the teaching was satisfactory, the sheet provided for pupils to write up their work was very basic and did not provide sufficient challenge to extend pupils' scientific thinking. Throughout the school, marking offers pupils little guidance on how they can improve their work.
76. In the absence of a curriculum co-ordinator, the Deputy Headteacher has enabled the pupils' learning to be sustained satisfactorily overall. The newly appointed co-ordinator has only been in post for seven days but is well qualified to take on the role. Much of pupils' recorded work made a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. However, apart from research work, ICT is rarely used in this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The resources in the computer suite are now used well.
- Pupils are taught an appropriate range of skills and use these well in some other curriculum areas.
- The new assessment procedures are clear and helpful.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and consistently apply themselves and are keen to do their best.

Commentary

77. Across the school all pupils, including those with SEN, attain average standards and achieve satisfactorily. Most make sound progress in their learning. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to have been below average across the school and progress was unsatisfactory.
78. Across the school pupils, develop a satisfactory range of skills. A scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have used word processing skills to investigate and write information pamphlets about the formation of caves and the life of bats. Others have used a spreadsheet to record the spending on different items for a Christmas party and have investigated how formulae can be used in spreadsheets to analyse data. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 write descriptions of what they can see in their class and illustrate them with clip-art pictures. Other pupils construct simple databases of the hair and eye colour of pupils in the class and control the movement of a robotic toy to move and turn over a pre-determined course.
79. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is sound, with several good features. At the last inspection, teaching was judged to have been unsatisfactory. The new resources in the computer suite are used well. Teachers are now more confident with the use of the projector and the interactive whiteboard and several show good subject knowledge. This was shown during the inspection in a Year 5/6 lesson where pupils were designing a PowerPoint presentation to show younger pupils a story they had written. The teacher introduced the activities clearly and confidently and pupils were stopped appropriately to reinforce and re-focus their learning. By the end of the lesson pupils were able to set out the text of their story and add pictures and colourful backgrounds. Some were beginning to use animations to add interest. Across the school, teachers are well supported by the technician and support assistants. The way that lessons are organised with whole class introductions to explain new learning followed by supported work on pupils' own computers works well. Teachers encourage and sustain pupils' interest in the subject and pupils are keen to do their best.
80. The co-ordinator manages the subject soundly. Aspects of her work, such as the introduction of the computer suite and the trialling of assessment sheets, have been good. A relative weakness is that she is insufficiently aware of the work and standards achieved in Years 3 to 6. The subject is planned well and pupils now have appropriate access to computers. Resources are good and they are used well. The newly introduced assessment procedures are also good. They involve teachers and pupils making assessments of the success of their work in each taught unit using the statement, 'I can' to record their achievements. This is beginning to give a clearer view of the standards achieved across the school. The Action Plan for the previous year was ambitious and not all targets were achieved. Digital cameras are used well in other subjects to record what pupils have been doing. These are often displayed attractively around the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Across the school, pupils use ICT skills well in some other areas. For example, older pupils used computers to design and publish posters for their Christmas Fayre. ICT skills were used well to design a programme, print tickets and write review of the school performance of the 'Rocky Monster Show'. However, the use of ICT is not yet fully embedded in all the school's cross-curricular work.

HUMANITIES

82. There was insufficient evidence for overall judgements to be made about standards or provision in history or geography.

83. In the **history** lesson observed in Year 5/6, pupils were learning about Greek myths and legends. The lesson began with a review of what the pupils thought they already knew. The teacher explored the suggestions made by the pupils and asked the pupils to consider why the myths and legends were important to the Greeks and if any part of them was true. For most pupils, this was a new idea, which was further explored by the teacher as she showed a video clip that focused on the legend 'Theseus and the Minotaur'. The pupils showed great interest in the video, which helped them to establish their ideas that myths and legends can often contain elements of historical truth and should not be dismissed as just stories.

84. History is planned and linked to a cycle of topics that maximises the use of visits and visitors invited into the school and helps to address the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. In the evidence available, pupils' understanding of social and cultural differences is suitably developed through their history work. Older pupils make good use of ICT for research in their work. The co-ordinator has a clear overview of the subject.

85. In the lessons seen in **geography**, teaching and learning were satisfactory. In Year 1/2, the teacher made good use of 'Barnaby Bear' to introduce pupils to features of foreign places such as Spain. The pupils were generally interested and attentive because of the way the teacher conducted the lesson and responded eagerly when asked to choose the clothes and items Barnaby might need on his holiday. The pupils made satisfactory progress during the lesson and developed a greater understanding of what Spain was like in terms of the weather. In the Year 3/4 lesson, pupils were reviewing their experiences from the previous day's walk around the village. During the walk, the pupils had plotted landmarks on a prepared map of the area using their own symbols and this provided the teacher with a good basis for discussion. As a result, the pupils extended their understanding of what the land around Higham is mostly used for. In both lessons, the subject made an effective contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills. The recording tasks set were, in general, satisfactory with appropriate consideration given to the ability range within the class.

86. Analysis of pupils' work indicates that pupils develop a satisfactory range of skills and knowledge in geography. In the absence of a co-ordinator over the last year, the Headteacher took on the responsibility. This was satisfactory in the short term. A new co-ordinator has now been appointed. Geography is planned on a two-year cycle to ensure the entitlement of pupils in the mixed year group classes.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject.
- There are good opportunities to extend the curriculum.

- In the two lessons seen, teaching and learning were good.
- Leadership of the subject is good.

Commentary

87. Standards are in line with the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus by the age of both seven and eleven. Pupils make steady progress and achieve soundly across the school in both learning from religion and about religion. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when standards were unsatisfactory by Year 6. Previous work shows that, in Year 2, pupils were able to recall the main features of significant stories. In their studies of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism they identify and describe some special times of celebration, special people and stories associated with them. They learn about special objects, places, events and symbols. They become aware of their own characteristics and that they are special. Pupils have built on this and have learnt more about Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism in Years 3/4 and have studied Islam in depth in Years 5/6. They are able to name and describe the significance of key figures, places, events and artefacts. They can explain some of the interpretations of symbols, stories and language associated with specific religions.
88. Although the quality of teaching and learning were good in the two lessons seen, other evidence, including previous work, indicates that they are satisfactory overall. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when they were unsatisfactory. In the lessons seen teachers managed lessons well. Pupils listened attentively to their teachers and were interested in what was taught. They responded thoughtfully to others' views on religious and moral issues and were able to reflect on their own feelings and views.
89. In the Year 1/2 lesson, pupils learnt what it means to belong and were keen to show and talk about some of the things they had brought to show "belonging". These included sports kits and Rainbow uniforms. In the plenary, the teacher introduced the idea that people who believe in God belong to a religious family and how they show they belong. In the Year 5/6 lesson, pupils recalled the story of St. George and what he represents to Christians. They learnt to understand the symbolism of the story and the teacher used a good range of strategies to make the lesson interesting. The class discussion was managed sensitively so that all pupils were able to express their views and develop their thinking.
90. Leadership of the subject is good. Previously, it was found to be unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the subject and has successfully introduced a new policy and guidelines. She has encouraged more active learning through the good range of visits and visitors. There are good opportunities to gain first hand experience of other religions. Pupils have links with the local Anglican and Methodist churches and have visited a synagogue. There have been visits from the Sikh community and a parent has taught meditation. The subject supports speaking and listening well. There are times for discussion and pupils enjoy role-play. There are sound opportunities for pupils to write in a range of styles. There is only limited use of ICT to support the subject.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

91. There was insufficient evidence for an overall judgement to be made about standards and provision in **art and design**. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that appropriate concepts, skills and techniques are covered across the school. A detailed scheme of work is available for teachers but the most recently introduced guidelines encourage them to use the plans selectively and 'be creative'. There was insufficient evidence of completed work or work on display at this early point in the school year to enable judgements to be made on the success of this approach. In the single activity observed during the inspection, pupils in Year 5/6 were beginning to design and collect materials for a collage to illustrate the poem 'The Owl and the Pussy Cat'.
92. **Design and technology** is planned in line with national guidelines and at appropriate levels. It covers all required aspects and ensures skills are systematically developed. Resources are now adequate. This shows an improvement from the previous inspection when they were

unsatisfactory. In the Year 1/2 lesson observed the teaching and learning in DT were good. The teacher made good links with both their work in literacy and science. Before planning and making their musical instrument, pupils looked at a range of instruments and extended their use of descriptive language. They had good opportunities for both listening and speaking. The task supported well their work on sound and increased their scientific understanding. All made a simple shaker or rain-stick and chose from a range of materials and fixing methods. They worked safely and sensibly with great enthusiasm and were proud of their finished products. Pupils worked at a level in line with expectations for their age. They concentrated well and made good progress. The level of challenge was realistic and boys and girls achieved well.

93. In the single **music** lesson seen, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. The lesson began with a satisfactory reinforcement of previous learning based on playing patterns. However, only five percussion instruments were available to use and, as a result, only a few pupils were sufficiently involved in the lesson. Although the teacher's expectations of what pupils in Year 5 and 6 can achieve are high, the lesson lacked direction and, in general, was insufficiently broken down into teaching points. As a result, the pupils' performance lacked control and they found it difficult to follow the contours of the melody. In a Year 4 choir practice activity, pupils were able to sing 'Shalom' in two parts with each group maintaining the melody line satisfactorily. Most pupils participated with enjoyment, during this session, especially when singing the song 'Zip A Dee Doo Dah'.
94. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences, such as school productions and the opportunity to perform at a number of different venues. Visiting specialists and workshops also enrich the curriculum. Pupils also have the opportunity to receive musical tuition, which allows individual pupils to learn the guitar, cornet and the keyboard. The co-ordinator has worked hard to raise the profile of music in the school.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good progress has been made in this subject since the last inspection.
- Pupils show good attitudes to the subject and try hard to improve.
- In the best lessons, teachers show pupils clearly how they can improve their performance.
- Teachers make good use of the spacious grassed areas for outdoor activities.
- Interest is encouraged very well by a very good range of extracurricular sports clubs and teams.

Commentary

95. Across the school, pupils attain average standards in this subject. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to have been unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. All pupils, including those with SEN achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress as they move through the school.
96. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that appropriate attention is given to all elements of the subject. In the previous academic year, swimming was taught in Years 4 and 5 and the school indicates that most pupils attain average standards in the subject. In the elements of the subject observed during the inspection, pupils attained satisfactory standards in gymnastics, dance and games activities. In games, pupils demonstrate sound catching and passing skills as older pupils in Years 3 to 6 use rugby balls and younger pupils use small balls. In dance, older pupils produce a movement sequence reflecting a piece of popular music while younger pupils devise and perform a bubble dance. Across the school, a strength in pupils' achievement is the positive attitudes that they show. Most try hard with the activities, compete keenly when required and are concerned to do their best.

97. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with several good features. At the last inspection, teaching was also judged to have been satisfactory. Currently, teachers ensure that lessons begin and end with an appropriate warm-up and cool down activity. However, several do not explain the purpose of this and the effect of exercise and rest on the body. Teachers encourage pupils to have a go and are sympathetic to those who find activities difficult. All pupils are encouraged sensitively. This adds to pupils' enjoyment and improves their capacity and willingness to learn. Occasionally, teachers introduce too many resources and do not explain their use sufficiently clearly. Where teaching is good, teachers are enthusiastic, they interact well with the pupils and they show good subject knowledge. This was shown in the inspection in a rugby skills lesson for pupils in Years 5/6.
98. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were unsatisfactory. Planning in the subject is secure and teachers' work follows a curriculum plan which covers a two-year cycle. The co-ordinator works hard to encourage the staff and to raise the profile of the subject across the school. This is partly done by introducing a wide range of extracurricular sports and games clubs, some of which involve competition with other local schools. Clubs and school teams are organised for hockey, football, netball, tag rugby, kwik cricket and athletics. The school ensures well that these are open to pupils of both genders as appropriate. A bat and ball club is organised for pupils in Year R and 1 and 2. During the inspection, pupils were taking part enthusiastically in maypole dancing. Some useful assessment sheets have been collected but these have not yet been introduced. The outside and inside accommodation are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

99. Only two short sessions were observed in PSHCE so it is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching and learning. In a 'circle time' in a Year 3/4 class, the teacher reminded pupils of the rules and they talked sensibly about things that are special to them. One boy whose family is emigrating showed pictures of his horse and his cat, which are special but would have to be left behind. In the other Year 3/4 class, pupils considered personal honesty. The scenario of finding a purse led to good discussion, where pupils openly expressed their views. In both classes, the quality of teaching and learning were sound and pupils showed satisfactory achievement.
100. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has put a lot of time and effort into devising a comprehensive programme. A commercial scheme has been carefully adapted to take account of the mixed age classes. In this subject and in science lessons, pupils learn about health issues. Drugs and sex education are covered at an appropriate level for pupils' ages. New members are being voted onto the School Council, which gives pupils a good grounding in citizenship. There are close links with the police, school nurse and community warden, which make pupils more socially aware. The subject supports pupils' speaking and listening well.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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