

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGSHOLM CofE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115607

Headteacher: Mrs Jan Buckland

Lead inspector: Ms Margot D'Arcy

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th November 2004

Inspection number: 267143

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	335
School address:	Guinea Street Gloucester Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL1 3BN
Telephone number:	01452 530777
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Elspeth King
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large primary school, with fairly equal numbers of boys and girls. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. There are small numbers from a variety of minority ethnic groups, including travellers. While eight per cent speak English as an additional language, only one per cent is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (30 per cent) is above average. The range of pupils' needs include specific and severe learning difficulties and moderate learning difficulties as well as social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties, hearing and visual impairments and physical disabilities. The school has a local authority centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties (SPLD Centre), which caters for pupils from other local schools. At the time of the inspection only two pupils were attending this unit as it is in the process of closing. The proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual admission and transfer times is generally above average. Although the area in which the school is situated suffers from some social and economic deprivation, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Children's overall attainment when they begin school is well below what is expected for their age. The school has recently been awarded a Basic Skills Quality Mark and an Investors in People Award (2004). The school is part of the Gloucester Educational Action Zone and has been in the forefront of the introduction of the City Curriculum, an initiative associated with the government's drive to ensure excellence and enjoyment in learning in primary schools.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23158	Ms Margot D'Arcy	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Science Art and design English as an additional language
11096	Mrs Margaret Davie	Lay inspector	
23276	Mrs Margaret Mann	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Religious education
11528	Mr Michael Wainwright	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography Physical education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good** and improving school. Although there has been underachievement in the past, pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in all subjects. However, standards in English and mathematics could be higher. Teaching is very good overall, but there are weaknesses in one class. There is a good curriculum and pupils' personal qualities are promoted very well. Leadership is very good and management is effective. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Very good leadership from the headteacher and key staff are underpinning improvements
- Throughout years 1 to 6 teaching and learning are very good but there are weaknesses in the teaching in the reception year
- Standards in English and mathematics are improving but are not yet high enough
- Pupils achieve very well in art and design and religious education (RE) and attain standards that are above expectations; progress in speaking and listening is also very good
- Pupils are provided with a rich and innovative curriculum that motivates them well to learn
- Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and personal development are promoted very well and excellent provision is made to seek and take account of their views
- Very good links have been established with parents, the community and other schools

Good improvements have occurred since the school's last inspection. All of the recommendations made have been successfully addressed. While standards are not as high in the core subjects¹ the decline that occurred has been halted and standards are beginning to rise. Many areas of provision, such as teaching, the curriculum, leadership and management are now much better than they were in 1999.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Although past underachievement is still evident in the standards of some subjects, pupils in years 1 to 6 are now making up lost ground. No pupils are currently underachieving in any subject. Pupils are making good progress in speaking, listening and reading and although standards in these aspects of English are below average by the end of year 2 they are broadly average by the end of year 6. Standards in writing are well below average by the end of year 2, and below by year 6, but pupils are achieving satisfactorily in relation to their starting points. A similar picture is evident in mathematics and science, with the well below average standards at the end of year 2 reflecting pupils' low attainment on entry to the school. Although the table above shows low standards in these two subjects, inspection evidence is more positive, judging standards to be below average, rather than well below by year 6. By the end of year 2,

¹ English, mathematics and science.

pupils reach the expected standards in information and communication technology (ICT) reflecting good achievement. Progress is also good in the juniors and whilst year 6 pupils are not attaining the expected standards, they are making good gains. Standards in art and design and RE are above expectations and pupils achieve very well in these subjects in response to very good teaching and learning experiences.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Those who speak English as an additional language progress as well as others and make good gains in learning to speak English. In the past, reception children have generally made at least satisfactory progress. However, recent changes have resulted in some significant variation; while some pupils are achieving well others underachieve. As a result, standards by the end of this year look set to be below expectations in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In other areas² children are on course to reach the expected goals.

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. The school has very good procedures to check on and promote attendance, but levels are well below national figures due to the high absence rate of some groups.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides pupils with a **good** education. The overall quality of teaching is **very good**, with strengths in all subjects. Overall, support staff make a good contribution, especially in helping pupils with special educational needs. A good and innovative curriculum motivates pupils very well and promotes their keenness and enjoyment in learning. Many additional activities enhance learning experiences. Pupils are given good support and advice and excellent provision is made to seek their views and involve them in the school's work. Very good links with pupils' parents and the community support learning and have helped to improve provision. The accommodation is very good and the school is well resourced.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership and management is **very good**. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and inspires a strong commitment to ensuring all pupils can achieve their potential. The headteacher receives very good support from the deputy and other key staff. Governance is good. Governors are committed and work hard to support the school. They meet all of their legal obligations.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have a very good opinion of the school and are happy with what it provides. Pupils like their school very much. They say that they enjoy lessons and get on well with teachers and other staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, particularly writing, and mathematics
- Improve the quality of teaching for reception children

² Personal, social and emotional development, physical development, and creative development.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Although the attainment by the end of years 2 and 6 is mostly below average in the core subjects, overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. In other subjects, pupils generally achieve well and reach the expected standards. Some reception children achieve well, but others underachieve in key areas.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst pupils in years 1 to 6 are achieving at least satisfactorily in English and mathematics, standards could be higher
- The rate of achievement between children in the reception year varies significantly
- Pupils achieve very well in art and design and RE and reach above average standards
- The achievement of some groups is adversely affected by extended absences

Commentary

1. Children's standards when they begin school are generally well below those expected for their age, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Reception children's work over the last year and school's records show that in the past, despite not reaching the expected goals by the end of the year, children have made at least satisfactory progress in these and other areas of learning. However, recent changes to staffing have affected the quality of provision for this year group and this is impacting on their standards and achievement. There is a significant difference in the rate of progress between children in the reception year, which is linked to the quality of teaching. For some children achievement is consistently good and frequently very good while for others it is, at best, satisfactory with instances of underachievement in a number of areas of learning.
2. In the current group of reception children there is a wide span of attainment, but overall their standards on entry were somewhat better than has been the case in previous years. Some children with low attainment will not reach the expected goals, even given good and very good teaching. There are others, however, whose progress toward the goals is being hindered because of the aforementioned weaknesses. Thus standards by the end of reception look set to remain below expectations in language, communication and literacy and mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In the other three areas, children appear to be on course to reach the expected goals. Overall, children's achievement is not as good as at the time of the last inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.6 (14.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.0 (13.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.4 (14.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. When compared to schools nationally, year 2 pupils' national test results in 2004 (as yet unvalidated) were well below average in reading and writing and below in mathematics. When compared to schools in similar contexts these results were below average in all three subjects. Over time results have not risen at the same rate as those nationally. Results in reading have declined quite significantly whilst in writing they have remained consistently well below average. This year there has been a significant improvement in mathematics results. Although the test results are not particularly favourable, the school's records show that most pupils in years 1

and 2 have made the expected progress and for those who did not there are viable reasons. Overall standards are not as good as at the time of the last inspection. The decline that has occurred is attributable to a number of factors, including past weaknesses in provision such as teaching and the curriculum. Other factors include a generally lower profile of attainment on entry, rising proportions of pupils with special educational needs, and a growing number of pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English. Inspection evidence shows that the school's management has successfully addressed weaknesses in provision and has laid good foundations for future improvement. While standards could be higher, no pupils in years 1 and 2 are currently underachieving. The assessments that teachers made in 2004 in science showed standards to be well below average. It was not possible to see any lessons in this subject, but pupils' work and other evidence suggests that they are making satisfactory progress and that standards are currently below, rather than well below, average by the end of year 2.

4. The school fully accepts that standards need to rise and is working hard to this end, implementing a number of appropriate strategies. Although standards are generally below average by the end of year 2 in speaking, listening, and reading, currently there are strengths in the teaching of these aspects, resulting in pupils making good progress. Writing is also currently being taught effectively, but pupils' limited skills mean that they are fairly slow to produce work so are not progressing as quickly in this aspect. Achievement here is only satisfactory and standards are, overall, well below average. Despite the well below average standards in mathematics, pupils are making mostly satisfactory progress. Inspectors found some weaknesses in providing opportunities for pupils to use and apply what they have learned and, until recently, recording skills have not been developed as well as they could. The school is aware of these weaknesses and is addressing them.
5. Over time, year 2 test results show that boys tend to outperform girls in all the subjects tested. The school is aware of the differences and has been able to explain these in terms of individual pupils' circumstances and attainment profiles. Records show that, overall, both girls and boys progress at the expected rate. Inspectors did not find any evidence of differences in performance between boys and girls.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.3 (25.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.0 (24.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.3 (26.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 45 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. In 2004 year 6 pupils' test results were below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. While these results reflect a similar overall picture to those achieved in 2003, in all three subjects the proportions of pupils achieving the expected levels have increased, and in English and science the proportions achieving the higher level have also risen. Over time there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in the tests.
7. Year 6 test results have not risen at as fast a rate as those nationally and a number of factors account for this. Results still reflect past weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum that led to some underachievement. Other factors include the impact of the fairly high proportions of pupils who leave and join the school during the junior years, with a significant proportion of 'new entrants' having quite low levels of attainment. Rising proportions of pupils with special needs and those speaking English as an additional language, along with the intermittent attendance of some groups, are other factors that have affected results. While a number of these features continue to have an impact on results, inspectors did not find any evidence of current

underachievement in any junior year group. The school has arrested previous underachievement by successfully addressing the weaknesses in provision.

8. Inspection evidence and the school's records show that, across the curriculum, pupils are currently learning very well. Standards in English and mathematics for the current group of year 6 pupils are below average but are improving in response to high quality teaching. Thus challenging targets that the school has set for the 2005 tests may well be met in response to the much-improved provision. Pupils have made good progress in learning about many aspects of science. However, their test results reflect the underachievement that occurred in response to past weaknesses in the provision to develop key scientific skills of enquiry and investigation. These weaknesses have now been identified and are being addressed effectively. Currently, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in this subject.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in social skills, speaking, listening, and in their general self-confidence. In class, pupils generally make good progress in developing basic literacy and numeracy skills, particularly where teachers are skilled in using their individual education plans (IEPs) to plan lessons and identify individual targets. Records show that for pupils attending the SPLD Centre progress is always good and often very good.
10. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as others. Those who are at an early stage of learning the language make good progress towards the targets in their individualised programmes. This is in response to good specialist support teaching and additional help in class from teachers and assistants. Sometimes the rate of achievement of pupils from minority ethnic pupils is interrupted by extended absences, usually to their home countries. Similarly, whilst traveller pupils benefit as well as others from the good quality provision their achievement is adversely affected by extended absences. Pupils with particular gifts and talents achieve well in response to the specific, additional, activities that are provided for them, such as in sport and the arts.
11. Throughout the school, pupils achieve very well in art and design and RE. The standards of work seen in these two subjects exceed what is expected for pupils' ages. There is also some good achievement in aspects of PE. For instance, infant pupils demonstrated above average standards in dance and upper junior pupils showed particularly good games skills when playing hockey. The improvement that has occurred in the provision for ICT is resulting in pupils making good progress and reaching the expected standards by the end of year 2. Although standards are below expectations by the end of year 6, junior pupils are quickly making up lost ground and are achieving well. In design and technology, music, geography and history there was insufficient evidence to make secure judgements about standards and achievement.
12. Standards in the core subjects are not as high as they were at the time of the last inspection. However, the significant decline that occurred afterwards has been arrested and standards are beginning to improve in response to the good quality of education that is now being provided.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. Their personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Attendance is well below the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' enthusiasm for learning and their good behaviour contribute positively to their achievements
- Very good relationships promote a highly effective learning environment
- Pupils' personal development is very good because of the strong emphasis the school places on this aspect
- The poor attendance of traveller pupils has a negative impact on their attainment and the school's overall levels of attendance

Commentary

13. Pupils really like coming to school. They are enthusiastic about learning and find lessons interesting and fun. The revisions that have been made to the curriculum during the last two years have had a very positive impact on pupils' desire to learn, providing many opportunities for them to be actively involved in learning and to make relevant links between subjects. For example, a visit from 'Percy the Park Keeper' to reception children was closely linked to books read in literacy sessions and the work they were completing in art. The teacher created a high sense of anticipation about the visit and children spoke to the visitor confidently because they already knew quite a lot about him. As a result, the rate of learning was high.
14. Pupils get on well with each other and their teachers and develop caring relationships. This helps create a very positive and supportive learning environment. Children in reception quickly develop good social skills and enjoy school. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all activities. Their contributions are valued and their progress is a matter of interest to all. As a result they grow in confidence and self-esteem. The good role models set by staff are copied well by pupils who accept each other for who they are rather than what they have achieved. Pupils attending the SPLD Centre also thrive through close contact with the school's own pupils. Throughout the school, and in many subjects, pupils work well together. Paintings displayed in the dining hall are a very good example of successful collaborative work between pupils in different year groups.

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	263	11	1
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	16	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	5	0	0
Chinese	4	0	0
Any other ethnic group	9	0	0

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

15. Behaviour around the school is good and often very good. During the inspection, pupils always behaved very well in assemblies and were calm and thoughtful during periods of reflection. The majority behave well in lessons, particularly in years 1 and 2 where behaviour is almost always very good. There is, however, a small but significant number of boys in years 5 and 6 who, despite high expectations from teachers, are disruptive and have unsatisfactory attitudes to learning. This impacts on their attainment. Last year there was a high number of temporary exclusions, all for unacceptable behaviour. However, these pupils have now been successfully reintegrated into school life. Pupils say that there are rarely incidents of bullying or racism in their school and they are quite clear that these are unacceptable.
16. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are friendly, confident and very polite. Morning assembly sets a very positive tone for the day and the school's programme for multicultural education develops pupils' understanding and tolerance of others. Positive images of the different cultures represented within the school, such as travellers, help to create a harmonious environment. Children write to pupils in a school in Africa and learn about dance and art from around the world. They have visited a mosque and synagogue and a pupil in year 6 wrote that his most vivid memory of the school was '*attending the Christingle service in the local Church*'.
17. Pupils willingly accept responsibilities and take these seriously. They are very proud of the achievements of the Learning Forum (pupil council) and rightly feel they have made many good suggestions about improvements, such as establishing a tuck shop that sells healthy snacks.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.7	School data	1.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

18. Attendance is well below the national average and unauthorised absences are higher than average. However, this is mostly attributable to the low attendance of the significant number of traveller children whose attendance during the last school year was less than 70 per cent. When these children are accounted for separately school attendance is about 94 per cent, which is very close to the national average. The school takes very good action to promote good attendance, including maintaining effective links with the parents of traveller pupils and the Traveller Education Service (TES) to improve the attendance of this group and try to lessen the impact that sustained periods of absence have on attainment.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides its pupils with a good quality of education.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. The use and quality of assessment is good overall. Both of these aspects have improved since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in years 1 to 6 is very good
- The quality of teaching in the reception year is too varied
- The teaching of basic skills is effective, with speaking and listening being promoted very well
- There is some very effective use of specialist teaching in the juniors
- Most support staff make an good contribution

- The school has consistent procedures for assessment that are used well by most teachers

Commentary

19. The table below shows the quality of teaching seen throughout the school during the inspection. Over three-quarters was good or better, with almost a third being very good or excellent. This high quality of teaching was seen in years 1 to 6 and in half the lessons with reception children. However, over a fifth of lessons seen for the year group fall short of the level expected. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The impact of this is being seen in the, current, very good rate of learning. However, this is a recently improved situation so the impact is not yet being reflected in the school's test results.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 68 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (6%)	17 (25%)	32 (47%)	12 (18%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

20. In years 1 to 6 teachers' very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the new city curriculum³ is evident in their thorough planning. This shows very good ingenuity in providing pupils with really stimulating work in which very good links are made between subjects so that key ideas are frequently re-visited. For instance, year 6 pupils' work about volcanoes in science and geography was reinforced well within art lessons. Older pupils are able to articulate their appreciation of these features, explaining that it makes learning exciting and fun. This was clearly very evident in many lessons, which were characterised by pupils listening and concentrating well and making good efforts to contribute verbally and produce the expected high standards of work. All of this, together with the strong relationships that teachers have with pupils, provides a very conducive ethos for learning.
21. There is significant variation in the quality of teaching for reception children. Where teaching is effective it reflects very good understanding of how young children learn. Lesson planning, questioning and interactions with the children reflect this knowledge very well. The teacher continually assesses children and is also quick to respond to their needs, amending plans mid-lesson if necessary to capitalise fully on children's interests and responses. At times, however, there is a lack of appreciation of young children's needs. The teacher experiences difficulties in managing children and organising activities to ensure all are productively engaged in learning. Good opportunities to promote key skills are frequently missed and errors are made in the teaching of some key areas, such as reading and mathematics. Support staff in both classes provide a satisfactory level of assistance. However, their lack of training limits their impact on teaching and learning. Whilst they are given some direction, overall they receive insufficient guidance from teachers about how to support during whole class sessions and how to promote the best possible learning when working with groups.
22. Throughout years 1 to 6 English is taught very well, with particular strengths in developing speaking and listening skills, both in this subject and others. In many lessons teachers provide opportunities for pupils to engage in discussion in various sized groups. They also promote subject-specific vocabulary well, including correct spellings. Good thought is given to how literacy skills can be promoted and reinforced across the curriculum and this is paying off. Good teaching of mathematics is supporting improvements, with setting⁴ arrangements (from year 2 upwards) helping teachers to match work more closely to pupils' needs. In science pupils' work and discussions with them show that a greater emphasis has recently been given to teaching investigative skills. Since the last inspection teachers have become much more confident and competent in teaching ICT and this is being seen in pupils' improved standards and good rate of progress.

³ A curriculum designed by members of Gloucester Educational Action Zone.

⁴ Where pupils are organised into teaching sets based on their attainment.

23. Some very good use is being made of teachers' subject expertise. For instance, in years 5 and 6 one teacher each has taken responsibility for the teaching of music, RE and games. This is working well, with some excellent teaching seen, resulting in consistency of teaching and learning quality. In year 2 some excellent team teaching⁵ of dance was also seen.
24. Overall, marking is comprehensive; this, together with good quality verbal feedback from teachers and the setting of improvement targets for groups and individuals, informs pupils well about how effectively they are learning. The use and impact of support staff is good overall, particularly in helping pupils with special educational needs, but varies. Some staff would benefit from further training and some teachers would benefit from focussing on how best to deploy these staff in different parts of lessons.
25. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are taught well. Their learning is very evident in the small or one-to-one withdrawal groups led by a specialist support teacher. Here conversational skills and key vocabulary from various subjects are taught and practised. This teacher also supports pupils in class, explaining words and phrases during whole class sessions and reiterating key ideas in group work. In class teachers and support assistants provide extra help, ensuring that pupils are fully included. Thorough assessment records identify progress and where additional input is needed.
26. The school places a strong emphasis on class teachers reviewing and planning for pupils with special educational needs. This is usually characterised by attention to individual targets and good planning that links class work closely to pupils' levels of attainment. Whilst the support for pupils results in good progress overall, some staff are more confident in this than others. This means that there is some variation in the quality of planning for these pupils; for example, appropriate attention is not always given to the small steps in progress needed or made by pupils. In these cases learning is satisfactory rather than good.
27. Throughout the school procedures for assessment are consistent and of good quality. This means that senior staff and subject managers can gain a clear view of progress by individuals, classes and different groups, such as boys and girls. Improved assessment has helped the school identify issues and plan action relating to, for example, the progress of specific groups, such as travellers. A good start has been made in using assessment to set targets and most teachers are using assessment information well to match work to pupils' needs. The procedures for assessing pupils with special needs and using the information to formulate individual programmes have improved. However, while pupils are beginning to be involved in developing their own targets this is at an early stage in terms of helping them to fully understanding what their targets mean and involving them in reviewing their own progress. Formal procedures for reviewing and amending statements are good.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched by a very good range of additional activities. The accommodation is very good and resources are good

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and relevant links are made between subjects, with speaking and listening skills being given a high profile
- All pupils in years 1 to 6 benefit equally from good quality learning experiences, but provision for reception children is too variable
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs
- The provision of a wide range of additional opportunities enhances pupils' learning and personal development
- Very good accommodation and good quality resources provide effective support for learning

⁵ Where more than one teacher is involved in teaching a lesson.

Commentary

28. The city curriculum, introduced two years ago, is having a very positive impact on pupils' desire to learn. It is interesting and relevant to pupils' needs. Teachers and pupils show great enthusiasm for it, resulting in a tangible excitement and interest in learning. The impact of this curriculum, which is underpinned by meticulous planning, is very evident in pupils' attitudes, confidence and motivation. While its impact is not as evident in promoting significant rises in the school's test results, current learning in the core subjects is proceeding well. Linked with the current strengths in teaching, this ought to be reflected in future results.
29. A strong feature is the constant emphasis given to promoting speaking and listening skills, which supports literacy skills at the same time as helping pupils to understand knowledge and new ideas in a range of subjects. The very good links that are made between subjects, and the thought given to enabling pupils to be actively involved in practical activities, support their understanding very well. For example, in addition to the usual study of various artefacts and historical figures, year 5 pupils' study of the Tudors included work with a visiting thatcher, making a Tudor pudding, and sifting evidence to prepare an inventory. Similarly, in a year 3 science lesson, pupils' knowledge and understanding of the functions of different types of teeth and of the role that teeth and saliva play in eating and swallowing food was promoted effectively by a well thought out practical demonstration and activities that involved them in making predication and recording observations.
30. Literacy skills are promoted well in many subjects, as are ICT skills. However, the promotion of numeracy skills in this way is less evident. Although the same, good quality, curriculum is planned for children in reception classes, the way that it is taught varies considerably resulting in some children receiving better learning experiences than others.
31. Everyone involved in the school has a very strong commitment to inclusion and this is evident in the way that all pupils are accepted, challenged and supported. The only exception is in relation to the varying levels of challenge and support for reception children. Pupils with particular gifts and/or talents are identified and additional provision made to enable them to progress further with these. Lower attainers are given booster sessions to help them catch up. Pupils with special educational needs are full and equal members of the school. Those with and without disabilities live and learn on a basis of total equality. The various cultures of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including travellers, are valued and addressed well within the curriculum. Those learning to speak English are provided with individualised programmes to help them gain confidence and competence.
32. Extra-curricular provision is very good. During lunchtimes and after school pupils enjoy a host of additional activities. These include a variety of sporting opportunities as well as clubs for cookery, chess, French and the Bible. Pupils also have the opportunity to learn the flute, cello, violin and guitar. Many are involved in these activities, including those with special educational needs. Numerous visits and visitors also add much to pupils' learning. For instance, visiting musicians both perform for and teach pupils. Work in science, geography and history is frequently stimulated by visits, such as those to animal and butterfly farms, supermarkets and museums. A year 6 residential visit provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in outdoor pursuits and to further develop social skills.
33. The work of the SPLD centre received high praise in the last report and this very high quality of provision has been maintained. The planning, relationships and progress made by all pupils attending the centre are very good indeed. The inspection team was impressed by the number of testimonials provided by parents and past pupils.
34. The very spacious accommodation, including two halls and a well-resourced library, is secure, very well maintained and used effectively. It is enhanced by interesting displays, which celebrate pupils' achievements and help them to learn. Outside there are interesting and imaginative play areas with good equipment and a large playing field. The playground is being

developed further with the help of the parent/teacher association (PTFA). Resources are of good quality, particularly in English, art and design, PE and RE and have improved since the last inspection. Since that time, there have also been improvements made to curriculum provision for ICT, music, design technology and swimming. The library and the outdoor area for reception children have also been enhanced and are now good.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are very well cared for and they are given good support and guidance. The arrangements for taking their views into account in the work of the school are excellent.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good systems ensure that pupils are looked after well
- Pupils trust the adults who work with them in school and appreciate their help and guidance
- The Learning Forum gives pupils excellent opportunities to be involved in school development

Commentary

35. Pupils are very happy in school. This is because of the very good relationships that they have with all of the staff and the very high level of care they are given. Parents feel that all staff are approachable and that their children are treated fairly. Pupils feel that they are expected to work hard and that their teachers will help them if they get stuck. Health and safety and child protection are taken seriously and there are very good additional support arrangements for those who need it. A well-attended breakfast club operates every day and the learning mentor⁶ is always on hand to have a chat either with a parent or pupil to sort out any worries or concerns. An active partnership between the school and other agencies ensures that pupils and families have access to additional services if necessary. Pupils are taught about personal safety and healthy lifestyles, and learning experiences are enhanced by visits from professionals, such as the police and fire service. Lunchtime supervisors have been trained to help make the lunch time session pleasant and worry free; pupils are well supervised during this time.
36. Pupils say that they trust their teachers and other adults in the school. Teachers are making a good start to using learning targets to help pupils understand how well they are doing and how they can improve. In a year 4 English lesson, for example, many of the pupils were working with very specific individual targets during a writing activity, focusing on areas they needed to improve. Pupils with special educational needs have good plans which link well to their personal and additional needs. During the inspection, there were many occasions when very skilled work from a teaching assistant allowed an unhappy pupil to settle, a pupil to overcome an anxiety, and all pupils with special educational needs to participate well within class. This contributes to pupils' good progress in the development of social skills, behaviour and self-control.
37. The Learning Forum, with representatives from years 1 to 6, is highly valued and allows pupils to be fully involved in school life. The representatives hold positions of great responsibility and are strongly encouraged to set a good example for the rest of the school. This impacts positively on their personal development and maturity. The way the Forum is set up encourages pupils to consider the full range of activities in school, with regular discussions about learning, the environment, the playground and sport, and so makes sure that any developments take full account of their ideas. Pupils' views have been considered in staff appointments and determining what makes learning interesting. It was pupils who decided to support a local charity because it helped a member of the school community. A more formal programme of personal, health and social education (PSHE) is being introduced as a result of a pupil consultation carried out by the Forum.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents, other schools and the community are very good.

⁶ An individual who supports identified pupils, for example, in relation to their attendance, behaviour and academic development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very happy with the school and many support it well
- Information for parents is very good
- Close links with local schools and the community effectively support pupils' learning

Commentary

38. Parents are very pleased with the school. They feel that they are consulted well and their views taken seriously. The PTFA provides good opportunities for parents and the local community to be involved in supporting the school. For instance, amongst other fundraising activities, they have negotiated a parking arrangement (using the school grounds) with the local rugby club. The funds from this have been used to successfully develop the outside environment, making it more interesting and pleasant for pupils.
39. Information provided to parents about the school is particularly good. They can visit the very good school website to keep up to date with school life and are provided with ample, good quality, information to keep in touch with what their children are learning. Most say that they have a clear understanding of what is taught. Year-end reports are good because they tell parents how well their children are doing and share learning targets with them so that they may support their children at home.
40. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are regularly informed of meetings and reviews. The school makes every effort to let parents know when there is a change in their child's needs and staff are always available for discussion. Contact with parents takes place on an almost daily basis and parents are very appreciative of the work carried out and progress their children make. The school makes very good use of a wide range of support services.
41. Links with the local community and other schools provide very effective support for learning. An active involvement in the Neighbourhood Community Partnership (a group of community organizations) ensures that the school plays a vital role in issues that matter to the local community, such as traffic calming. Links with two local businesses provide reading buddies for children in school, and the rugby club has run coaching and study support sessions for pupils. A strong association with other local schools gives pupils the opportunity to benefit from specialist sports coaching and French teaching. The Network Learning Community (a group of local schools using the city curriculum) and Education Action Zone (EAZ) provide valuable professional links and training opportunities for staff, which have impacted positively on the learning experiences of pupils. The close contact with other local schools also makes a good contribution to provision for pupils with special educational needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is very good. The overall management and governance of the school is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership and motivational skills of the headteacher have underpinned significant improvements to provision
- The headteacher has embedded in the school a strong commitment to inclusion
- All staff are empowered to develop leadership and management roles
- The new co-ordinator for the foundation stage has not had sufficient time to address recent weaknesses in this area
- The governing body gives good support

Commentary

42. The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is an inspirational role model who is highly regarded by all. Her commitment to providing the very best for all pupils is clearly evident in the school's strong commitment to inclusion. To this end, the headteacher leads the constant drive to ensure that teaching, the curriculum and all aspects of provision offer pupils the opportunity to succeed. All the issues raised by the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Leadership and management are better and there have been other, more recent, improvements to key areas, such as teaching and the curriculum.
43. These improvements have not occurred by magic and have taken some time to achieve. The strategy has included the implementation of rigorous systems to monitor the quality of provision, especially teaching and learning. The headteacher is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, especially in this area, and is continuously building on the former and diligently tackling the latter. For example, the recent weaknesses that have emerged in the provision for reception children are being dealt with. New teachers are selected with care and a wide range of relevant training is ongoing. The headteacher is aware of the need for further training for support staff, particularly those deployed in the reception year.
44. In her work, the headteacher receives very good support from her deputy and other senior managers who also provide effective role models for colleagues. In particular, the deputy has had a significant impact on improving assessment, the curriculum and setting high standards for teaching. Good thought has been given to building the management structure to provide opportunities for all teachers to develop leadership and management skills. This is clearly evident in the evaluations and action plans produced by subject and other managers. These individuals carry out their responsibilities effectively, with the collaborative team approach making a strong contribution to school improvement. However, whilst the individual recently appointed to lead and manage provision for the foundation stage (the early years centre manager) is knowledgeable, well qualified and a good role model for teaching, she has not yet had time to deal with weaknesses that have recently emerged in this part of the school.
45. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator is an experienced practitioner and well respected by staff who draw frequently on her expertise and knowledge. Training has been good for all involved and there is a very effective link with the governing body. Funds identified for these pupils are used appropriately and pupils receive all of the assistance identified as necessary in their statements and IEPs. Whilst extremely dedicated, the co-ordinator only has one morning a week to oversee special educational needs throughout the school. This limits, somewhat, the effectiveness of her monitoring, for example of pupils' progress and the precision of teaching programmes. The Head of the SPLD Centre has provided inspirational leadership and has contributed well to the school's ability to support vulnerable pupils.
46. The headteacher's view of the school is well informed and communicated to all. Thus the priorities for improvement set out in the school's strategic plan are well focused and relevant, and emerge from thoughtful discussion, questioning and evaluation. Governance is good. An active governing body supports the school well, critically evaluating its work, questioning decisions and keeping the school on its toes about planned improvements. Governors' close involvement with the school, including visits to lessons, provides them with a good view of its strengths and weaknesses.
47. Financial management is good. Money is used wisely and good thought is given to ensuring the school gets the best value from its spending. Examples include the current increase and upgrading of resources for ICT and the decision to make radical changes to the provision for pupils' lunchtime meals.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	899,679
Total expenditure	916,420
Expenditure per pupil	2,648

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	67,677
Balance carried forward to the next year	43,396

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48. The two classes of reception children are fairly equal in numbers and ability range. Around two-thirds have had some form of pre-school education with the majority of these having attended (part-time) at the early years centre on the same site as the school. For some, however, attendance at the centre was sporadic.
49. At the time of the inspection the teachers in both classes had only been teaching this age group for two months. Inspection evidence showed significant variation in the quality of teaching and learning in many areas of the curriculum. Consequently, whilst half the children are achieving well, a significant number are underachieving. Because of this, the overall quality of provision is unsatisfactory. While this represents a decline since the last inspection, this has only occurred recently and is being dealt with by the headteacher. Samples of work and records of earlier groups of reception children show that progress in all areas has been at least satisfactory.
50. The last inspection's criticism in relation to lack of support staff has been partly addressed. A number of part-time support assistants are now on hand in both classes for most of the time. However, whilst caring and willing, none are trained. At times, some have a useful input with groups but, overall, they are insufficiently involved in planning and for the most part their lack of training is evident in the quality of their work with children.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- While good behaviour and children's understanding of simple rules is constantly promoted teaching methods are not always effective
- Daily 'snack time' provides excellent opportunities for development in this area and others
- Some elements of care and welfare are unsatisfactory

Commentary

51. Children's achievement varies significantly but, overall, it is satisfactory. Most are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the year. Most children are well behaved, sociable and happy to come to school. They play well with each other and have adapted well to the simple rules and routines. Skills of independence, such as undressing and dressing for PE and making choices about their work, are developing satisfactorily. Teaching varies considerably but is satisfactory overall. There are generally high expectations for children's behaviour and appropriate opportunities for them to gain independence. However, strategies to promote these personal and social skills vary from very good to barely satisfactory. Weaknesses in managing behaviour impacts at times on children's learning in this and other areas, for example, when they are allowed to chat and pay insufficient attention while the teacher talks. Occasionally, some inappropriate and potentially dangerous behaviour is not picked up quickly enough. In contrast, throughout the day, in numerous contexts, there are many examples of teachers and other staff promoting this aspect of children's development extremely well. The daily 'snack time' is one such instance. Led by the early years centre manager, groups of around six children eat healthy foods and learn good manners while being encouraged to share news and chat sociably. This unhurried activity is extremely worthwhile and children gain much from it, principally due to the excellent teaching that occurs. The teacher is adept at picking up on children's spontaneous remarks and actions and turning each into a valuable learning experience.

52. All staff are caring. Most do much to build children's confidence and make them feel secure and valued. Most also work hard at ensuring all children are fully included by providing for their specific needs. However, not all staff have a good enough understanding of children's needs in this area, for example, of the emotional impact of starting school. On occasions, inspectors noted some significant lack of empathy in relation to this feature and in valuing children's efforts and ensuring that the needs of specifically identified children were met.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant number of children underachieve because of weaknesses in teaching
- Opportunities for children to develop speaking, reading and writing skills are uneven
- Overall, letter sounds are taught satisfactorily

Commentary

53. While many make good progress and are on target to reach the expected goals by the end of the year, a significant proportion of children is underachieving because of unsatisfactory teaching. Standards by the end of the reception year have generally been below expectations for children's age. Despite the current group of children having a higher profile of attainment on entry, and some very good teaching in one class, the impact of weaknesses in provision look set to produce a similar picture of attainment by the end of this year.
54. Whilst the planning of learning experiences is consistent the way in which this is implemented varies. In the best lessons, children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are constantly promoted and reinforced, for instance when discussing books, engaging in pretend play or exploring outdoors. However, many opportunities to exploit these skills are missed and there is some lack of knowledge about how to teach early reading skills. In the main, weaknesses are linked to organisational strategies and the unsatisfactory quality of adult involvement and interaction with children. For instance, in many sessions, a very brief initial discussion with the class was followed by the teacher and support assistant each working with a small group whilst the rest of the class chose what they would do. While this type of free choice encouraged children's independence the limited structure and amount of adult intervention meant that learning was at a very low level.
55. The teaching of letter sounds is satisfactory overall, but varies from satisfactory to excellent. In an excellent lesson children were totally captivated by the teacher's input. She held their attention perfectly by creating an air of mystery as she produced items that began with the letter being learned from a 'magical' bag. The teacher used her voice very well to tell a story that promoted the identified sound and helped all children to develop competence in pronouncing and forming it. Very good use was made of an interactive screen to maintain children's interest and enthusiasm by demonstrating correct formation and allowing the children to do so too.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A significant number of children underachieve because of weaknesses in teaching
- Teaching and learning are too variable between classes

Commentary

56. While some make good progress and look set to reach the expected goals by the end of the year, too many children underachieve due to weaknesses in teaching that are linked to organisational strategies and subject knowledge. Overall, too many children are not reaching their potential so standards look set to be below expectations by the end of the year. Effective teaching of number in one lesson resulted in children making good progress in counting and reinforcing number order to ten. In the session seen the teacher moved learning along at a brisk pace and included the whole class in answering questions and actively ordering numbers on the interactive white board. This resource was also used well to demonstrate the concept of addition and by the end of the session most children had grasped the idea of adding 'one more'. In another lesson a very brief introduction with the whole class reinforced counting skills, but after this all but eight children chose their own activities. None of these was structured to link with the development of numeracy skills and there was no adult input that developed children's choices to this end. In the small group work with four children the teacher made some careless errors that confused one child. Learning was also hindered because the teacher was constantly being drawn away from the group to deal with low-level demands from other children. To a varying degree of success teachers make use of cross-curricular activities and incidental occurrences, such as games and action songs, to support the development of ideas about number, shape, size and position.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Significant variation in teaching quality means some children achieve better than others
- Children are curious and keen to learn

Commentary

57. While some children continually make very good progress others sometimes underachieve in response to weaknesses in teaching. On this basis, it seems unlikely that standards will be in line with expectations by the end of the year.
58. A very effective lesson for one class aroused children's curiosity and prompted them to use their imaginations and available resources to think of the purpose of the outdoor 'hide'. Whilst they had good opportunities to explore freely, the teacher's very good questioning and encouragement gave the children confidence to make suggestions and this promoted language skills very well. Mathematical development was also enhanced as children counted the birds and trees and discovered that looking through different ends of binoculars made objects seem smaller or larger and closer or further away. Eventually children gained a good understanding of the idea of camouflage and learned the importance of helping to care for wild birds during winter. In another lesson children were excited about making bird cake but, although they were involved in mixing the ingredients, the potential of the activity, in terms of getting children to observe and describe the ingredients and how they changed, was not capitalised upon.
59. Children often choose to work on the class computers and show an appropriate degree of competence. Past work shows evidence of them writing simple phrases and using art programs to draw pictures. Children also frequently chose to work with construction equipment and made some recognisable models with this. Good use of visits and visitors, such as 'Percy the Park Keeper's enhance learning experiences.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are some good opportunities to develop skills in outdoor play
- The work in some PE lessons could be more challenging

Commentary

60. Children make overall satisfactory progress and look set to reach the expected goals by the end of the year. Well-organised outdoor play makes a particularly good contribution to some children's progress, with well-prepared resources to promote large and small movements. In one lesson, the teacher demonstrated how to use brushes to sweep leaves in different directions. The children then threw themselves wholeheartedly into the activity, working co-operatively to brush the leaves onto shovels and empty them into large bags. Children lifted logs into wheelbarrows and manoeuvred these around the space. A good range of other activities, including a teacher-led cutting task, gave children very worthwhile experiences. In the one PE lesson seen progress was satisfactory. Children showed good awareness of space and were able to move in different ways and directions and respond to simple commands. They tried hard to balance beanbags on different body parts and throw these at targets. Whilst the lesson was satisfactory, some of the planned opportunities to teach strategies and skills and provide for simple evaluation were not implemented, so children did not achieve as well as they could.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Differences in teaching quality results in varying standards and rates of progress
- Teaching by a visiting specialist makes an excellent contribution to standards and achievement in music
- Adults are insufficiently involved in children's play

Commentary

61. Children engage in an appropriate range of creative activities and, overall, make satisfactory progress. By the end of the year their standards are broadly in line with what is expected. However, there are significant differences in the rate of achievement, with unsatisfactory teaching resulting in some underachievement. For instance, in one lesson, children were given time to explore the properties of clay and discover how they could mark it with different tools. The teacher capitalised upon the activity to promote scientific skills and some exceptionally good language development was also promoted. In contrast, other children had insufficient time to explore the clay, being directed to make a model rabbit almost as soon as they began. The effort of one child, who concentrated well and made a snake, was dismissed and had a noticeably adverse effect on his self-esteem.

62. Excellent teaching from a visiting music specialist showed exactly what the children were capable of achieving in this area. For instance, as they echoed the teacher's voice they showed very good understanding of the idea of pitch. In novel ways, the children were taught the importance of watching and listening carefully so that they responded well to visual and sound signals when singing and playing. The children learned how the sounds of different instruments could communicate ideas, for instance, about the weather. Children sang enthusiastically and made good gains in learning how to control their voices.

63. Displays show that children have opportunities to communicate through, for example, drawing, painting and collage. Whilst pretend play areas are well resourced to promote creativity too often the low level of adult involvement limits their potential.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are making good progress in speaking, listening and reading
- Initiatives to raise standards in writing are beginning to work but standards are not yet high enough
- Teaching and learning are very good
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good
- The promotion of language and literacy skills across the curriculum is very good

Commentary

64. Although the school's test results compare unfavourably with other schools, inspection evidence shows that standards are improving. While there has been underachievement in the past this has been arrested. Pupils are currently making very good gains in lessons in response to very good teaching and good learning experiences. The apparent underperformance by girls in the year 2 tests has been investigated and acceptable reasons found to explain this. School records show that girls have made the expected progress and are not underachieving.
65. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. While standards are below average by the end of year 2 they are broadly average by the end of year 6. The school's recent and thorough focus on promoting these skills is paying off. Pupils' enthusiasm to join in discussions and articulate their thoughts was noted in many lessons across the curriculum. Teachers speak clearly and correctly to pupils, planning lively discussions and many opportunities for poetry and role-play. For instance, in year 1, pupils were taught to think of imaginative words to describe a variety of sounds, which they later turned into poetry; in year 4, pupils debated the arguments for and against developing a city square.
66. Provision for reading is well planned and managed, and results in pupils making good progress. Standards are below average by the end of year 2 which reflects pupils' fairly low attainment on entry. Pupils have regular and varied opportunities to read and are taught a wide range of strategies. A strong emphasis is placed on word building and encouraging pupils to use this skill. This gives even the lowest attainers confidence and allows them to access and enjoy books. Higher and average attainers read suitable texts fluently and with expression. By the end of year 6 standards are broadly average. Higher attainers read confidently and widely, readily discussing authors and their personal likes and dislikes. Average attainers give due attention to punctuation and meaning and their skills of prediction are developing well. Below average attainers read suitable texts competently. Pupils with special educational needs are given much individual support and guidance and make good progress reaching their targets. The minority of pupils in years 1 to 6 who are at an early stage of learning English are making good progress toward their targets and are fully included in lessons.
67. Writing is the weakest area with standards being well below average by the end of year 2 and below by the end of year 6. However, the focus that is being given to promoting skills in speaking, listening and reading across the curriculum is supporting improvements to writing. Pupils in years 1 and 2 are making some good gains. Teachers are consistently demonstrating

good examples of effective writing and giving pupils good experiences in practising different types of writing whilst learning to take account of spelling and punctuation. Topics are well chosen to reflect pupils' interests and links with other subjects. For example, year 2 pupils write instructions for making sandwiches in connection with their work on healthy eating. Despite good teaching, however, the breadth of attainment within classes is so wide that, even with good input from support staff, many pupils do not complete writing tasks in the allotted time. Occasionally, too, the oral and practical input, while interesting and exciting, lasts too long and there is insufficient time to develop and complete writing tasks.

68. By year 6 standards are below average. However, there is evidence of pupils engaging in a wide range of writing for a variety of purposes in many subjects. Most understand the importance of developing key ideas, such as the setting, character and main event, and endeavour to use descriptive vocabulary. For example, one pupil set the scene with *'The sun was sitting low on the horizon, the shadows were getting longer every minute.'* Every effort is made to guide pupils' writing, including using feedback sheets. Pupils are required to redraft their first efforts and 'Best Writing Presentation Books' motivate them to present their work neatly and correctly. Writing is being taught particularly well in year 6. While standards are not yet high enough, reflecting some past underachievement, pupils are currently making good gains.
69. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and are implementing the curriculum well. Lessons are thoughtfully planned and stimulating so pupils respond positively, showing good attitudes and application. Pupils are fully involved in the learning process. They know their targets and understand what they are aiming for. Marking is good and constructive. Assessment procedures, to support the analysis of pupils' progress, individually and in various groups, are very good. The information is also used effectively to identify weaknesses and plan improvement strategies.
70. The subject is very well led and managed by two co-ordinators. They monitor the curriculum and ensure that the teaching of language and literacy skills has remained a priority within the curriculum revision that has occurred.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

71. The promotion of language and literacy across the curriculum is very good. The curriculum has been carefully designed to ensure that these skills are a key feature of in many lessons. Numerous links to promote reading, writing and discussion are well established in most subjects. For example, in mathematics pupils write down key vocabulary, learning meanings and spellings. Pupils' work shows many examples of different types of writing and research being undertaken across the curriculum. ICT is also used particularly well to support research and skills of drafting and editing work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving but are not yet high enough
- Teaching and learning are good, but the teaching of mathematical investigation lacks structure
- There are good assessment procedures
- A committed and skilled subject co-ordinator is promoting improvements to standards and provision
- Not enough is done to promote mathematics across the curriculum

Commentary

72. Inspection evidence shows that for the current group of year 2 pupils standards are well below average and for year 6 they are below. In respect of year 2 pupils, this reflects broadly satisfactory progress, given their low level of attainment on entry, and is a similar picture to the results of the most recent national tests. However, the current year 6 group are attaining more highly than last year's group and are achieving well. The school's thorough monitoring of test results by gender shows that when other factors are taken into account, such as pupils' special educational needs, length of time at the school and absence rates, differences in performance are not significant. Inspectors did not find any evidence of differences in boys' and girls' performance that could not be explained by such factors.
73. Standards are not as good as at the time of the last inspection. In the interim, weaknesses in teaching and the curriculum have contributed to this decline and to pupils' underachievement. The impact is still evident in some areas. For example, mental calculation skills and pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables are weak areas, as are standards in mathematical investigation. However the good effect of action taken is beginning to be seen. The decline is being arrested and is very evident in the work of the current group of year 6 pupils who have achieved well. In response, the school has set much higher targets to achieve in next year's tests. However, while standards throughout the school are improving they could be higher.
74. Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school, but the teaching of mathematical investigation lacks structure. Analysis of tests and assessments showed this up as a weak area resulting in it being identified as a priority, with all classes planning for this type of activity in lessons. However, this still needs work to enable pupils to develop investigative skills progressively as they get older. Throughout years 1 to 6, lessons are well planned to meet pupils' needs and amended when necessary as a result of assessing learning. Teachers work at a suitable pace. Explanations are clear and are well supported visually, notably by good use of interactive screens. The grouping of pupils from year 2 upwards into teaching sets based on their attainment is working effectively, allowing teachers to match work more closely to their needs. A very good lesson with higher attaining pupils in years 5 and 6 promoted mental skills of multiplication and division very well and challenged pupils to use mathematical knowledge to solve word problems. The teacher had very good subject knowledge and moved the lesson along at a brisk pace. He knew pupils well and provided effectively for all. Pupils made very good progress and enjoyed the work. Reference to pupils' targets ensured that they knew what they were aiming at and were keen to improve.
75. Assessment procedures are good. The information is thoroughly analysed to identify common areas of weakness and track the progress of individuals and groups. Any who do not make the expected progress receive additional help. While targets are set for all pupils this is a recent development and is not yet sufficiently refined. For example, those for lower attainers are insufficiently sharp and attainable in the short term. This task is currently being addressed.
76. The subject co-ordinator commits a great deal of time, energy and expertise to his role and has made a significant impact since his appointment last year. His own high-level teaching skills provide a very good role model for colleagues. Previous weaknesses in provision and learning, such as insufficient recording of work in years 1 and 2, are being addressed. Similarly, the previous over-reliance on a commercial scheme has been eradicated and the focus is now on developing the key objectives of the national numeracy strategy. Good improvements have also been made to resources to support this work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

77. While some useful links are made with science and ICT, such as when year 6 pupils measured their heart rate and produced spreadsheets, not much evidence was seen of pupils using and reinforcing mathematical skills in other subjects. The school recognises that this is an area for development and thought is being given to how aspects of mathematics can be integrated into the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Limited opportunities for investigative skills have had a negative impact on standards, but these are beginning to improve
- Revisions to the curriculum are ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to develop key skills
- The curriculum is interesting and motivates pupils well

Commentary

78. The way that science is planned means that there are periods when the subject is not taught. Timetabling arrangements meant that there was little opportunity to see lessons during the inspection. As a result, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching.
79. The results of national tests taken by year 6 pupils this year reflect a similar overall picture to those achieved in 2003. Although these do not compare favourably with other schools there has been some improvement, with more pupils this year reaching the higher level and fewer pupils falling below the expected level. The school attributes this to changes made to the curriculum, particularly more opportunities for pupils to engage in investigative work.
80. The school has devised strategies to ensure that, since the beginning of this term, investigative work has a high profile in all year groups. The headteacher and deputy, working with the subject co-ordinator, are significantly involved in the planning for and monitoring of science to ensure that this core subject is being implemented effectively. The headteacher does not feel that blocking⁷ the subject is detrimental, explaining that planning ensures that key skills are maintained within other subjects. Inspection evidence suggests that the planning and teaching arrangements are adequate.
81. The curriculum is well thought through, making relevant links with other subjects and devising activities that ensure the content interests and motivates pupils. Throughout years 1 to 6, coverage of areas such as life processes, materials, and physical processes is good. For example, in years 1 and 2 pupils learn about healthy eating, growth in plants, animals and humans, and the habitats and life cycles of minibeasts. During the inspection, work relating to some of these areas was stimulated by visits to a farm and a local supermarket. Older junior pupils' coverage of the respiratory, circulatory, digestive and nervous systems is very thorough. Their work also shows good knowledge of the main bones and muscles in the body and an understanding of their functions. Similarly, comprehensive work has been done in relation to the solar system and forces such as gravity. Pupils say that they are very interested in the subject and enjoy lessons.
82. An analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff show that they have achieved well in terms of gaining knowledge and understanding of some aspects of science, but achievement in investigative skills is less positive. Whilst the development of investigative skills

⁷ Where content is taught in blocks of time (for example, a term) rather than continuously throughout the year.

has recently become an integral part of the curriculum, past weaknesses in this element have had an adverse affect on overall standards and test results. Pupils are currently achieving satisfactorily. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are below average by the end of years 2 and 6 rather than well below.

83. Only one lesson was seen and this was in year 3. Here, the quality of teaching and learning was good. The teacher promoted vocabulary associated with work on the teeth very well and provided good opportunities for pupils to use this and be practically involved in activities, all of which enhanced their understanding.
84. Overall, the subject is being led and managed effectively, with key staff involved in analysing and monitoring provision and outcomes and planning appropriate action to raise standards. Although not as good as at the time of the last inspection standards are improving.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a strong commitment to improvement
- Teaching and learning are good, but the computer suite is not used to capacity
- There is good use of interactive screens but otherwise insufficient use is made of ICT in classrooms

Commentary

85. Standards are in line with those expected by the end of year 2 but below expectations by the end of year 6. The difference in standards is because older pupils have had insufficient time to benefit from the improvements made to the resources, curriculum and teaching. In some areas, such as control technology, they are only just beginning to experience tasks that much younger pupils have learned. However, pupils are achieving well overall.
86. There is a clear commitment to improvement. The use of ICT is planned well into the curriculum. The school is about to replace computers in the suite and is constantly adding to other resources, such as control boxes, digital cameras and interactive screens in many classrooms. These and other resources are used to good effect. For example, year 4 pupils took photographs when they visited Kings Square in the city centre and used these later in a geography lesson as a basis for planning improvements to the environment.
87. Teaching is good, with a number of very good lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers' own expertise has increased considerably since the last inspection. They now have confidence in explaining and demonstrating skills and they plan lessons well; other adults also provide good support. This results in a good pace to learning. Pupils enjoy the subject and, apart from a few disaffected pupils in years 5 and 6, they listen, watch and apply themselves well. Some very good teaching in year 5 overcame some noisy and inattentive behaviour through providing some stimulating resources. The pupils were fascinated with these and began to apply themselves much more effectively as they identified and sought to explain how the control toys worked. Overall, pupils work very well together, sharing resources and pooling their knowledge.
88. Currently the suite is timetabled for only about half of the time it is available. Understandably, the new and very knowledgeable co-ordinator is anxious to see it used to capacity. During the inspection insufficient use was made of the classroom computers, although some are in need of replacement.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

89. There is good awareness that the subject is not confined just to using computers. Pupils frequently use tape recorders, the overhead projector and digital cameras to support their work across the curriculum. Interactive screens are used effectively in many subjects as a means of motivating and capturing pupils' attention. In music pupils follow patterns whilst they conduct and then create their own. They use the Internet to research, for example, finding out about aspects of transport to support work in history.

HUMANITIES

Provision in **religious education (RE)** is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An innovative curriculum and effective teaching ensure that pupils achieve very well
- There is excellent teaching in years 5 and 6

Commentary

90. Pupils in years 1 and 2 are developing a good knowledge and understanding of the special occasions celebrated by Christians and Jews and of their special places of worship. They also learn the importance of keeping rules and make comparisons with their own school rules. Through stories and discussion, pupils learn the importance of religious ideas, such as love and forgiveness. Assemblies also provide good support for learning. For example, pupils listened to and reflected on the story of The Prodigal Son, leading one child to remark, *"You should treasure what you have."*
91. During years 3 to 6 the curriculum widens to include studying the worship and practices of Muslims. Good displays and a wide range of quality artefacts support learning well. Pupils are beginning to understand what motivates people to belong to a faith and how they show their belief in their God. For example, year 3 discussed Cliff Richard's use of his singing talent to tell people of his Christian beliefs. Pupils gain a growing appreciation of the similarities and differences in the religions studied and show sensitivity and respect for other people's feelings. For example, in a year 5 lesson the pupils unwrapped the Qu'ran with great care and in silence, ensuring that their hands did not touch it. They also compare specific 'special' objects used in different places of worship. For instance, items such as a rosary, a cross, a prayer mat, a bible and the candles were carefully examined and reflected upon.
92. The curriculum is very well planned to take account of both the locally agreed syllabus and the school's own themed curriculum. The accent is on investigative, interpretative and reflective skills. Teaching is good overall with some excellent teaching in the top junior classes. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and effective use is made of ongoing assessment.
93. The co-ordinator monitors work termly. Record sheets from each class are analysed and an action plan is drawn up to support improvements. Local clergy are frequent visitors and visits have been made to various places of worship. The use of ICT supports research skills well. Class books of topics and books of prayers are well presented and the subject supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
94. **Geography** was not a focus for the inspection. Only one lesson was seen so no secure judgements are made about standards, achievement and provision. Examples of work and a discussion with some year 6 pupils show that they have had a range of geographical experiences, understand what the subject is concerned with and demonstrate a grasp of basic skills.

95. There was insufficient evidence for judgements to be made on the quality of provision, standards and achievement in **history**. However, one good lesson was seen in year 5 that showed commitment and imagination on the part of all staff involved. This lesson provided pupils with a range of short workshops on thatching, cooking, artefacts and inventories from Tudor times. Pupil involvement was high and all learnt much about life four hundred years ago. Indications from a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work are that a good range of topics is covered and that history makes a very positive contribution to pupils' understanding and motivation. The development of themes within the curriculum is exciting and well planned, as is the use of artefacts, visits and visitors. There is a good balance between the learning of facts and the development of historical skills, such as using various evidence sources and developing empathy with people from the past.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Provision in **art and design** is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well and reach standards that are above those expected for their ages
- Teaching is very good
- The subject has a high profile in the school and is well integrated into the curriculum

Commentary

96. Pupils' very good achievement and above average standards are the result of a very good curriculum that encompasses all elements of art and design. This ensures that pupils have very interesting and worthwhile learning experiences. Pupils use a very good range of media and are taught a wide range of techniques. Three-dimensional work is very evident, as is work with textiles. Skills of evaluation of their own and others' work are integrated well and pupils benefit from a good range of visits and working with professional artists.
97. Teaching is of a high standard. A very good lesson in year 2 resulted in pupils producing extremely detailed observational drawings of cross sections of fruit. The teacher had high expectations of pupils and provided very good explanations and demonstrations, for example, of sketching and how to make best use of the paper space. Links with other subjects, such as science, language and mathematics were reinforced as pupils were continuously asked to make close observations and use a range of vocabulary to describe the properties and shapes of the fruits. This was an exciting lesson. The teacher's initial input enthused pupils so much that they could not wait to begin work. However, this eagerness, which could well have resulted in hurried attempts, was handled perfectly, with the teacher requiring pupils to spend five minutes discussing with a partner exactly what they could observe before launching into work. This focused pupils and, along with the calm but inspiring atmosphere created by the music being played as they worked, resulted in excellent application from pupils and work of a high standard. The teacher also took account of pupils' learning styles and provided an alternative activity for a small number. These pupils worked very productively in clay to produce models of a pineapple. Whilst the teacher maintained a good overview of their work, a classroom assistant made a very valuable contribution. She taught moulding and marking skills effectively whilst encouraging pupils to extend their vocabulary by using their senses to describe the fruit.
98. Very good teaching was also seen in year 3. Initial explanations and demonstrations from the teacher helped pupils to understand how they could communicate feelings, such as happy and sad, through line and colour. In this context, they were very keen to begin work in which they were required to 'take their pencil for a walk' (on paper) to convey their response to a piece of jazz music. Excellent teaching was seen from the subject co-ordinator working with year 5 pupils. These pupils worked very well with a partner to make clay tiles. The varied works, based on pupils' intricate designs in the style of William Morris, were quite outstanding. The teacher had provided very good initial demonstrations and continuously supported and challenged

pupils as they worked. Throughout, pupils worked industriously and conscientiously. Very good opportunities were provided mid-lesson for pupils to evaluate their own and others work, which provided the drive to make improvements. Pupils' comments showed depth of understanding as well as an appreciation of, and sensitivity to, others' efforts.

99. High quality displays of pupils' work abound, including those depicting art, craft and design from different times, traditions and cultures. A wide range of resources and good accommodation heightens pupils' learning experiences and the subject is led and managed very well.
100. Work in **music** was sampled so no secure judgements are made about provision, standards and achievement. However, a good curriculum is now in place, reflecting improvement since the last inspection. All elements of singing, listening, composing, performing and appraisal are included. A significant number of pupils learn to play instruments, but have not yet had opportunities to perform for the school. There is no choir, but pupils do take part in singing in the community and benefit from visiting musicians. The recently appointed co-ordinator is knowledgeable and, in leading a singing session, gave due attention to pupils' breathing, pitch and rhythm. This has not yet carried over to singing in assemblies, where pupils sing enthusiastically, but not always accurately. No teaching was seen in years 1 and 2. Of the junior lessons seen, all of which included composition, teaching was mostly good and never less than satisfactory. In these lessons, standards were broadly in line with expectations for pupils' age.
101. Work was sampled in **design and technology** so no secure judgements are made about provision, standards and achievement. Pupils have good experiences in planning, making and evaluating. For example, infant pupils list the ingredients needed before making sandwiches. They also make a cup and ball games and kites, showing how they chose suitable materials, joined them and then found ways to improve their efforts. The results are good. Linked to their topic work, year 4 pupils took photographs, then made sketches and scale drawings before producing models of cathedrals. The city curriculum gives scope for the subject to be linked well with other subjects. For example, in a history lesson pupils used food technology skills when making a pudding and learned how to thatch a roof. Design and technology is now being taught regularly and successfully, reflecting good improvement since the last inspection.

Physical education (PE)

Provision in PE is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in some aspects, such as dance and games, are above average
- Teaching is good overall
- The range of additional opportunities to promote pupils' physical development is very good

Commentary

102. Teaching and learning are good. The tone is set in the way that both pupils and adults dress for lessons and work diligently to achieve well. Some excellent team teaching was seen in a dance lesson for all year 2 pupils. As part of their topic, pupils enacted scenes from 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch'. Two teachers worked excellently in tandem so that pupils were engrossed in their task and achieved very well. They responded enthusiastically to the guidance and active participation of their teachers, controlling their excitement well. The lesson flowed smoothly so that pupils were able to put together their various parts into a complete dance. They showed above average ability in this work in relation to both their body awareness and response to the music. Pupils also showed a super attitude, working together very well and helping each other when necessary. Behaviour was excellent. Standards in basic hockey skills shown by year 5 pupils were also above average, with pupils learning quickly from a knowledgeable teacher. He

demonstrated skills clearly and implemented progressive practices so that very good learning took place, despite the poor attitude of a few boys who lack a sense of fair play and the ability to co-operate as a team.

103. The school invests well in all aspects of the subject. There is a range of well-run activities at lunchtimes and after school. There are school teams and some pupils advance to represent the area. Residential visits provide opportunities for additional activities such as orienteering.

104. A recommendation of the last inspection was to provide swimming. This has now been done, but has not yet had the impact of raising standards to the level expected nationally by year 6. The school is anxious to provide additional time so that pupils will have more and lengthier opportunities to become confident swimmers. The subject is led and managed well by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who provides an excellent role model for teaching.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Commentary

105. Provision in this area was sampled. Planning shows that pupils' personal, social and health education is well covered in the curriculum and the school is firmly committed to becoming a 'healthy school' in every way. To this end, a complete re-appraisal of lunchtime meals is currently being undertaken. The development of a healthy lifestyle is promoted in many ways and pupils show good understanding of the importance of this. Work is well integrated into the science and PE curriculum and there are specific times when pupils discuss issues that have a moral and/or social theme. Sex education and the need to be aware of the dangers of drugs is provided and there is a good emphasis on personal health and safety.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).

