

INSPECTION REPORT

LEE COMMON CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Lee Common, Great Missenden

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110428

Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Richardson

Lead inspector: John William Paull

Dates of inspection: 10th - 11th January 2005

Inspection number: 267198

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	49 (including 6 who attend part-time in the Reception class)
School address:	Oxford Street Lee Common Great Missenden Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP16 9JH
Telephone number:	(01494) 837 267
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd David Burgess
Date of previous inspection:	7 th December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- The school is much smaller than most primaries – 53 pupils, including a Reception class.
- Boys outnumber girls considerably in the present Year 2.
- The school gained *Achievement Awards* in 2001 and 2002, in recognition of its good National Curriculum test results.
- The school has several significant links with the local community, including:
 - A nearby private Nursery.
 - It provides facilities for *The Lee Flower Show*.
 - It provides service to the community as a photocopy shop.
 - An art school operates on the premises during the summer holiday.
- No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Nearly all pupils on roll are white and very few are from groups other than British.
- About seven per cent of pupils are identified with special educational needs, which is well below average and none has a statement (a statement is a document that records the extent and nature of a pupil's special needs and what must be provided to meet them at school).
- Attainment on entry and socio-economic circumstances in the area around the school are above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team				Subject responsibilities
22028	John Paull	William	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education Personal, social, health and citizenship education The Foundation Stage
9092	Ron Elam		Lay inspector	
31075	Daphne Harris		Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography History Religious education Special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9 - 14
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14 - 15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	16 - 26
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Lee Common is a good school at which pupils attain high standards in a wide range of subjects and achieve well. It is well managed and, overall, teaching and learning are good, which contributes much to pupils' good attitudes to learning and to the good relationships that exist between them and also with adults. Good value for money is achieved.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Results of the 2004 National Curriculum tests of pupils in Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics, were well above average compared with similar schools.
- Children achieve particularly well in the Reception class.
- Links with parents and with the community are strong, and provide a source of good support for staff and pupils.
- Management is good, so the school runs smoothly.
- Governors provide strong support, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and ask helpful questions about future development and improvement.
- The headteacher's leadership role is limited by her heavy teaching commitment.

The school has improved effectively since its inspection in December 1998. High standards in reading, writing and science have been maintained and, in mathematics, standards are higher now than they were then, so the main key issue has been addressed successfully. Several new procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment have been introduced, and the role and effectiveness of the governing body have improved considerably, which were also issues in 1998. Very good links with people and organisations in the community have been maintained, leading to much practical help and mutual support, which has a positive impact on the quality of education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	A	A	A	A
mathematics	B	A*	A	A

Key: A - very high; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Nearly all pupils achieve well. The table reflects the school's trend since 2000, indicating that high standards have been sustained successfully in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2003, in comparison with all other schools, results in mathematics were in the top five per cent. Current work seen in these subjects, and in science and information and communication technology, was of high attainment and good presentation. On entry to the Reception class, attainment is often good. Very good teaching in this class then ensures that by the time they begin the National Curriculum in Year 1, nearly all children reach the nationally expected goals for their age and several exceed them. Pupils then benefit from an overall good quality of teaching and learning as they move on, which contributes to their

high attainment by the time they leave. Pupils with special educational needs and those with particular talents are encouraged successfully and also make good progress and achieve well. **Pupils' attitudes to school are good overall**, whilst their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally satisfactory**. Several pupils are very self-confident and articulate for their age. However, a few have not yet developed sufficient self-control and, on occasions, they interrupt the flow of lessons, so the pace at which skills are acquired is temporarily slowed down to allow for correction. Pupils' cultural development in terms of what they learn in art and music is good. However, ways of preparing them for the diversity and range of ethnicity and traditions in modern multicultural Britain are not strong enough. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is good and contributes strongly to pupils' learning and their good achievements. **The overall quality of teaching and learning is good**, and often very good in the Reception class. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Examples of good and satisfactory teaching were observed in Years 1 and 2. Parents co-operate very willingly with teachers, helping well in the processes of their children's learning, personal development and behaviour. These very good links between school and home, including the quality of homework that is set, are contributing strongly to the overall quality of what is provided. Teachers employ a good range of procedures to assess pupils' work, and systems are in place to set targets for pupils and to track their progress, especially in English and mathematics. What is taught fully meets national requirements, and learning resources are used well to help pupils understand lessons and to achieve well. These judgements apply equally to pupils with special educational needs, who are supported well by knowledgeable learning assistants.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher manages the school well and has the confidence and support of the staff and governors, so systems and procedures run smoothly from day to day and are carried out effectively. Whilst several elements of the headteacher's leadership are strong, her heavy teaching commitment restricts the time that she has available for monitoring the effectiveness of developments, setting criteria for their success, and for reflecting upon change and direction for the future, which reduces the overall impact. The leadership of key responsibilities is good. The governors' role in monitoring finances, questioning and supporting practice, and seeking best value has improved considerably and is now good. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents at the pre-inspection meeting and in questionnaires were largely supportive of the school and what it provides for their children. Inspectors agree with them that the quality of education provided is good, especially in reading, writing, mathematics, science and arts subjects. Inspectors also agree with those parents who pointed out that behaviour is generally good, despite the immature behaviour of a few pupils. Pupils who were interviewed, in formal and informal situations, stated that they nearly always enjoy school and that adults in the school are kind to them and willing to listen to their ideas and to help them.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Governors should ensure that the headteacher has sufficient time both to monitor and reflect on the school's performance, enabling her to develop her vision of its future direction, and to set criteria whereby its success can be more easily evaluated.
- Ensure that pupils are fully prepared for life in today's society, seeking strategies to improve the self-discipline of those few who find it hard to concentrate fully, and providing more opportunities to experience directly the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of modern Britain.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

Pupils' achievements are nearly always good and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 2, attainment is often well above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results of National Curriculum tests are very good when compared with results in similar schools.
- Since the last inspection, standards in mathematics have improved.
- Pupils achieve well, and attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is currently well above average.
- By the time they leave in Year 2, many pupils attain levels above those normally expected in a wide range of subjects.
- Nearly all children achieve well during the Reception year.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above average in mathematics and science, and well above average in English. Currently, standards are well above average in all three subjects, so are higher now. Caution is usually advisable when looking at statistical evidence in relation to relatively small year groups, such as those at Lee Common. However, these high standards have been maintained successfully for several years, confirmed by the school's overall trend in test results since 2000. In mathematics, results were particularly good in 2003, when they were in the top five per cent nationally. This result is especially notable, as it indicates good improvement in this subject following the inspection of 1998, when it was made a key issue. The main reason that very good standards and test results are achieved is that teaching is good and takes account of pupils' above average attainment on entry by including plenty of opportunities for pupils to acquire skills at higher than normally expected levels. As a direct result, many achieve these levels by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. This feature was very apparent in all three tested subjects in both 2003 and 2004. It resulted in average points well above those scored nationally, as shown in the table below.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.9 (18.1)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.6 (16.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	18.1 (18.7)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 15 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. Current work that was seen in Years 1 and 2 was well above average in English, mathematics and science, suggesting that high standards are continuing and that

achievement remains good. Many pupils are very articulate speakers, which helps them to read expressively. Their vocabulary is good, which results in good understanding of texts and permits them to express ideas precisely and to good effect in discussions, so current standards in speaking and reading are also high. This good vocabulary is also often apparent in pupils' writing, in which many of them produce well-constructed sentences that flow easily. Again, teachers provide plenty of good opportunities for this strength to flourish and to develop at higher than normally expected levels, so those pupils with particular talents are able to progress at an appropriate level. However, pupils' listening skills are not as consistently strong. A few of them, especially in Year 2, find it difficult to await their turn and sometimes interrupt other speakers inappropriately. Currently, attainment in mathematics is high, with nearly all pupils attaining well within the expected level and many of them exceeding it already. This picture is very similar to that found in science, in which good planning is producing strong links with personal development, when pupils are taught how healthy foods affect their living processes positively, helping them to grow. This finding reflects the 2004 Statutory Teachers' Assessments, which were well above average.

3. In many subjects, samples of work and displays around the school indicate that many pupils achieve well, attaining standards above those normally expected by the end of Year 2. The pupils' very good literacy and numeracy skills are used well to enable them to make progress in all areas of the curriculum.
4. In information and communication technology, pupils are quick and adept in their use of the computer mouse and keyboard. They click buttons on toolbars, controlling the functions of programs and experimenting confidently. When working within a program, they know exactly what to do to achieve the result that is required or, as was seen in mathematics lessons, to answer computer-generated questions. Art and design, design and technology and singing are other subjects in which examples of work at a high standard were seen.
5. Many children enter the Reception class with well-developed speech patterns and a broad vocabulary for their age. Very good teaching provides many opportunities for them to develop confidence quickly, so they consolidate and build on these skills rapidly. They tell their daily news, count objects and talk about them, describe shapes and explain their own views of pictures and patterns. They are encouraged to use pencils, chalks, art materials and recycled objects such as plastic containers and tubes, as well as commercial wooden toys and kits to make marks on paper, write, create pictures, draw and build. Many good resources, allied to good planning and very skilful teaching and support, ensure that by the time children enter Year 1, nearly all of them attain the expected goals for their age, with many exceeding them.
6. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is much lower than in most schools. Nevertheless, work is adapted well for those who are present, and learning support assistants are knowledgeable, showing pupils what to do to learn effectively. As a result, these pupils make good progress towards their own individual targets. Their achievement is often particularly good in reading and mathematics. Last year, for example, in mathematics, every pupil in Year 2 with identified special needs attained the expected level for their age in National Curriculum tests. Owing to the relatively small year groups, often comprising uneven numbers of boys and girls, statistical comparisons of the performances of the genders are unreliable. In lessons that were observed, inspectors saw no evidence of any bias in teaching or treatment, despite the large number of boys in Year 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and their behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy learning and are eager to take part in lessons.
- The school's provision for social development is good and leads to good relationships around the school and good community awareness.
- The school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience the multicultural nature of modern Britain.
- A few pupils have not yet learned to be self-disciplined.
- Attendance is above that of other primary schools around the country.

Commentary

7. Pupils are interested in what happens in school and nearly all of them enjoy their work and follow instructions well. They are eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute their own ideas to discussions. Many pupils sustain their interest well, even when not being directly supervised. These positive attitudes reflect the quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities that are planned.
8. Children in the Reception class behave well for their age, settling quickly when they are asked to listen. They share toys and resources well, showing good awareness of each other's needs. Nearly all of them are on course to meet the expected goals for their age in personal, social and emotional development.
9. Nearly all pupils are beginning to acquire a good understanding of right and wrong. A typical example occurred when one pupil reminded another that he should put his lunchbox on the shelf and not leave it on the floor. This advice was accepted graciously when the second pupil picked it up and placed it correctly. Pupils are generally open, well-mannered and welcoming to visitors. They move around the school in an orderly way. The school uses a variety of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour such as its *Golden Rules*. It works to emphasise personal qualities such as kindness and sharing. However, a few pupils have not yet acquired sufficient self-control, which leads to occasional interruptions when others are speaking, slowness in settling and fidgeting. When this occurs during oral parts of lessons, such as questions and answers, discussion or direct teaching, it slows the flow of the lesson, as it necessitates correction and thereby reduces the pace at which knowledge and understanding are acquired. Behaviour, overall, is satisfactory and there have been no exclusions.
10. Pupils' social development is good. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to work co-operatively with classmates during, for example, activities in groups and paired discussions. In physical education, one group was observed watching another's sequences and then commenting on how improvements could be made. Many pupils respond well to these situations, showing maturity and sensitivity when making their remarks. Awareness of the wider world is enhanced by good links with the community. People from the village regularly attend events at the school and a

collection of Harvest gifts is made for senior citizens. Pupils' relationships with each other and with adults contribute to the quality of work in lessons, enhancing learning well. Pupils are developing an understanding of their own cultural heritage with, for example, visits to the local church, nursery rhymes, and maypole dancing. During the inspection, music by Mozart was played in assemblies and lessons on artists such as Mondrian, Van Gogh and others are planned. The school has started to introduce learning about other cultures; for example, with an African week and an Indian dancer. However, this provision does not include regular direct teaching about the multicultural nature of modern Britain and opportunities to raise the subject are sometimes missed. For example, during the inspection, displays around the school included almost entirely white people. Opportunities for pupils to meet with others who represent a wide ethnic range, perhaps linking with another school, have not yet been explored.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.2
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

11. The table above indicates absences that are accepted as unavoidable (authorised), and those where no reason is given or where the reason is not accepted as good enough (unauthorised). The school's level of attendance has been above the national figure for the past few years, which reflects the efforts of the school to ensure that parents are well informed about the benefits of regular attendance and parents' good response. Most pupils come to school on time and good arrangements at the start of the day ensure that pupils settle quickly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education that is provided is good. Teaching and learning are generally good and the curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet pupils' needs. Pupils are cared for properly, based on good relationships between pupils and the staff. Links with the community are generally very good and the partnership with parents is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Uses of assessment are satisfactory, overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, good teaching has been maintained since the last inspection, with improvement evident in mathematics.
- Teachers' understanding of what they should teach, and how to teach it, is good.
- Very good teaching is evident in the Reception class.
- Good uses of time and resources result in secure learning and contribute to pupils' good acquisition of skills.
- Homework, allied to a good partnership with parents, is contributing very well to the quality of learning.

- Strategies to develop the self-control and concentration of those few pupils who find these skills difficult are reactive, rather than preventative.

Commentary

12. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was good, with very good teaching in the Reception class. What was seen currently is very similar. However, in 1998, expectations were not high enough in mathematics, and the rate of pupils' progress was consequently adversely affected, so standards were not as high as in English. In this respect, improvement is apparent. Currently, little difference is evident in the overall quality of teaching and learning in any of the core subjects. Furthermore, in those lessons that were directly observed, the quality in mathematics was higher than in English, comprising consistently good teaching and learning. This improvement in teaching is reflected in pupils' current attainment, which is now well above average in mathematics, rather than simply above average, and in the results of National Curriculum tests in this subject.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 11 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	2	4	5	0	0	0

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

13. In Years 1 and 2, teachers' knowledge of the National Curriculum and their planning of how to teach it are good. Similarly, the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* are well understood and followed, ensuring that pupils are taught what they should be. Adaptations of planned work, including activities in the Reception class, are generally good and reflect assessments of pupils' prior learning. As a result, different work is provided to meet the needs of groups with different levels of previous attainment. These adaptations include work for pupils with special educational needs, who are supported knowledgeably by learning support assistants. Work is also provided for pupils of higher attainment, which ensures that they achieve above average standards by the time they leave in Year 2, as confirmed in National Curriculum tests and Statutory Assessments.
14. In the Reception class too, understanding of the relevant areas of learning and planning of sessions are of high quality. Different themes are introduced and are based on the *Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a nationally published document that explains what should be taught in Nursery and Reception classes). This good planning provides interesting teaching, so pupils are motivated to work hard and produce work of good quality and quantity. It is based on good procedures and uses of assessment that ensure planning meets pupils' needs effectively. Young children in the Reception class are very adept for their age at working either independently or in collaboration with others. An example of their strong co-operation with each other occurred when a group sat together and set up a road layout that reflected the theme of "Journeys". They incorporated the particular preference of another child, who wanted to include aircraft, by suggesting that a road to an airport would be a good idea. In observed lessons in this age group, the quality of teaching and learning was very good, which is consistent with the progress that was seen over time in samples of pupils' work.

15. Teachers in all classes use time and learning resources well to ensure that pupils acquire skills effectively. Several examples of these features were observed. One of the most telling is that parents and other members of the community come into the school and help pupils in the library. A good ratio of adults to pupils on such occasions ensures that time is spent well, helping pupils to change their books and to understand how the library is organised. This good arrangement supports reading well and provides good opportunities for pupils to seek useful information for a wide range of subjects. Another good example occurred in an art and design lesson in Year 2. Sufficient cardboard viewfinders were available for all pupils to have one of their own. They used these items effectively to establish what to draw, so teaching focused on skills of observation and drawing.
16. In the pre-inspection meeting and in responses to questionnaires, a large majority of parents expressed the view that effective homework is regularly set. Inspectors agree with them. In addition to reading books, opportunities are provided in Years 1 and 2 for pupils to seek information and to carry out simple tasks with the help of their parents. These tasks nearly always consolidate classwork or provide pupils with information that will be useful to draw on in lessons. A recent example in history was to find out something about Guy Fawkes. As a result, this homework contributed very well to the quality of learning.
17. During lessons, more frequently in Year 2 than Year 1, a few pupils were inclined to make comments while adults or members of the class were speaking. At times, these pupils also called out answers inappropriately, without raising a hand. When it occurred, this lack of self-control slowed the pace of teaching and learning, as it interrupted the flow of lessons and took time to stop. This is a pity, as it reduced otherwise good behaviour to a lower overall level. Whilst teachers' strategies were always effective in correcting this behaviour, they were in reaction to what pupils did, rather than preventative. When pupils worked on tasks, recording their ideas on paper, either individually or in groups, they were invariably co-operative and well behaved, producing a quantity of good quality work.

THE CURRICULUM

What is taught is sufficiently broad and balanced, and is enriched well by links with the community including visits and visitors. Accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Daily planning is good, often with good links between subjects.
- Overall, the curriculum for children in the Reception class is good.
- The exterior space for children in the Reception class is small, which makes it difficult to set up a full range of activities.
- The youngest children are very well prepared for Year 1, and the oldest pupils are equally well prepared for transfer to local combined schools.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Several good links with the community, including visits and visitors, provide enrichment.

Commentary

18. Planning of what to teach includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education as outlined in the relevant locally agreed syllabus. Planning uses broad themes that are changed each term to provide relevance for the pupils. Planning in mathematics, which was a weakness at the time of the 1998 inspection, has improved significantly and all elements of the subject are now addressed well. Improvements in other subjects have also been made and time spent on geography and history is now adequate. Much of the school's planning is drawn from national guidelines that are adapted to meet the needs of pupils attending the school and local characteristics. This care results in good, detailed daily planning. For example, the school has introduced work on local history that includes the history of the school. Swimming is also part of the curriculum.
19. In the Reception class, the curriculum is planned well and offers learning opportunities that are carefully based on statutory requirements, as indicated in the nationally produced *Curriculum for the Foundation Stage*. Teaching and learning are largely practical and well resourced in terms of staffing and general equipment. Although the classroom has an adjacent exterior area, which is safely enclosed, both spaces are relatively small. The lack of space outside makes it difficult to set up a full range of activities that reflect all areas of learning that are planned indoors. Nevertheless, the teacher who co-ordinates provision is aware of children's different preferences and ways of learning, and plans well to ensure that all children have equal opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge.
20. In each age group, preparation for the next stage of schooling is very thorough. Older children in the Reception class routinely spend half of their day with pupils in Year 1. Whilst their different needs are met separately with the support of a teaching assistant, they gain good insights into how Year 1 operates. Preparation for pupils moving on to combined schools is also very good. Arrangements include pupils' visits, regular meetings between the staff of the schools, and transfer of relevant information to ensure continuity of learning. Furthermore, the school uses the swimming pool at the combined school, so pupils become familiar with the buildings and with the journey to get there. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents with older children who had already moved on reported that settling-in presented no difficulty.
21. Provision for children with special educational needs is good. The headteacher acts as special needs co-ordinator and ensures that pupils' individual education plans include precise targets. Reports from the area educational psychologist indicate that needs are fulfilled well, including the use of other agencies when necessary. For lower attaining pupils, an intensive programme is organised in Year 1 to help them if they need to speed up progress to match expected levels. This support builds pupils' confidence and focuses on reading and writing skills in preparation for entering Year 2.
22. Visits and visitors are used to enliven the curriculum. Recent examples include visits to *The National Gallery* and several others locally. Pupils take part in many events in the community. For example, they take part in the harvest service at the church and help to distribute gifts to senior citizens. During the summer, pupils learn to dance around the maypole and take part in village events. Opportunities provided outside lessons include a computer club, a French club and football.

23. Teachers are well qualified and successful in taking responsibility for subjects across the curriculum, as required in a small school. A team of able support staff are effectively deployed, providing good teaching assistance where needed. Resources for learning are generally good, including sufficient numbers of computers and, overall, the accommodation is attractive and well used.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Arrangements to advise and guide pupils, including their care, welfare, health and safety, are satisfactory overall. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is also sound.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults in the school are very caring and know the pupils well.
- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff.
- The good links with pre-school providers help pupils to settle in quickly.

Commentary

24. As in the 1998 inspection, staff show good concern for the needs of pupils and provide good role models to encourage personal development. Parents correctly see the school as a caring community, where staff are approachable if there are any problems and parents know that the staff treat their children fairly, while expecting them to work hard. Arrangements to help young children settle when they first enter school are good. For example, opportunities are provided for children in local nurseries to come to events in the school and visits are made by the Reception staff to meet them before they start. Pupils are able to influence what happens in the school by, for example, helping to develop the school rules. They have also completed a questionnaire which led to improvements in the arrangements for playing football in the playground.
25. The school has appropriate arrangements for first aid. The school follows local procedures for child protection and teachers have had relevant training. However, not all the support and administrative staff know what to look for, so a possible risk exists that a cause for concern could be overlooked. The school has appropriate procedures in place for ensuring that the school is a safe environment. These include risk assessments. However, some of these have not been carried out recently enough and subsequently reviewed. The headteacher and governors have been informed about those items of potential concern identified during the inspection.
26. The school assesses and tests pupils' academic performance regularly and uses this information to assist with setting and adapting pupils' work. Results and records are also used successfully to contribute to decisions about how pupils should be grouped and how learning support assistants should be deployed to provide extra help to individuals and groups. In addition, teachers set targets for pupils and, in Year 2, they are set in discussions between the pupils and the teachers, successfully ensuring that pupils understand what they need to do to improve. However, no formal assessment of pupils' personal development is in place, which means that patterns of poor self-control or concentration might be missed as pupils move up the school. Nevertheless, teachers and support staff know pupils and their parents well and, as some staff live within the village, directly in first-hand social situations, leading to often good and trusting relationships that serve pupils well.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard and are pleased with what it provides.
- Parents' support at home and in school makes a good contribution to pupils' overall achievement.
- The involvement of a range of organisations and people in the community extends experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development.

Commentary

27. In their comments at the pre-inspection meeting and in responses to the questionnaire, parents indicated that they are pleased with what the school provides. They nearly all state that their children like school, that teachers expect their children to work hard, and that their children's progress is good. These views are similar to those at the time of the last inspection and inspectors agree with them.
28. It is apparent from many informal conversations observed taking place during the inspection that parents are comfortable in the school and readily bring their queries and concerns to the staff. Formal consultation meetings for parents about their children's progress are held termly during the year and a written annual report is also provided. Attendance at these meetings or at an alternative date shortly afterwards is usually 100 per cent. Parents acknowledge that such occasions are helpful to them in providing understanding about their children's educational targets and how they are getting on. The annual reports also provide a clear summary of children's work during the year, although the quality of commentary varies from subject to subject. Sometimes the wording contains information only on what has been covered or pupils' attitudes to the subject, rather than on their knowledge and understanding in relation to what is normally expected. However, in the main subjects, information is often very thorough. Workshops for parents provide useful guidance on how they can help with reading and similar topics. Frequent newsletters and letters home keep parents informed about what is happening in school.
29. The parents' and friends' association provides considerable sums of money for additional resources that support teaching and learning well. The headteacher states that staff are very grateful for this support, as it helps them in their work and planning to a considerable extent. Parents also help in the school on a regular basis. They are effective in contributing to pupils' achievement because they receive advice and guidance about what to do and are competent in carrying it out. In addition, parents provide good support at home, especially encouraging their children with reading, as well as with other types of homework, including mathematics. Each term, details are sent home of the class timetable, outlining what is to be taught in each subject and guidance on handwriting. An annual survey of parents' opinions enables the headteacher and governors to improve what they offer.

30. Community links are wide-ranging and ensure good support from the village community, which is of benefit to all pupils. In particular, several volunteers help in the school, including former members of staff, pupils who have left and their parents and grandparents. The school is fully part of the village, providing facilities for the flower show, acting as a local photocopy shop and an art school during the summer holidays. Events such as maypole dancing, harvest and other Church festivals, and the village show are all fully supported by the school. Pupils' understanding of good citizenship and society is enhanced by these events, especially the contact with the local church, charitable organisations and many similar activities. Links with the Nursery mean that new children settle quickly into the Reception class. These links include regular occasions when the Reception teacher visits the Nursery and tells stories. Similarly, links with combined schools in the nearest towns ensure a smooth transfer of pupils when they leave at the end of Year 2. Joint in-service training with a cluster of other schools provides opportunities for staff to develop further expertise.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is satisfactory, whilst governance and management of the school are good, ensuring that high standards are maintained.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and their relationships with staff are good.
- Strategic planning lacks sufficient information about the criteria for success and costs in terms of finance and time.
- The headteacher's heavy teaching commitment restricts the time available for reflecting on the school's future direction and for monitoring the effectiveness of developments.
- Effective systems and procedures have been established to ensure good management, including the management of resources and provision for special educational needs.
- Good levels of teamwork and a shared commitment ensure the effectiveness of the school.

Commentary

31. The governing body is appropriately focused on maintaining high standards and governors have a realistic picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They monitor the work of the school through discussions with staff and visits to classrooms, using an agreed agenda. Governors have clear roles and committees and fulfil their responsibilities conscientiously. This picture is an improvement since the last inspection, when roles were unclear and lines of communication not assured. Statutory requirements are now met and governors have formed good relationships with the staff. Governors also manage the headteacher's performance adequately, setting targets, supporting and asking relevant questions. They ensure that similar systems are in place for other staff.
32. In consultation with the headteacher and staff, governors have agreed a flexible programme of improvements within the school's development plan. However, as it stands, strategic planning lacks a way of easily identifying the main priorities, costings or criteria for evaluating expected outcomes. Nevertheless, as governors know the

school as well as they do, this shortcoming is not as serious as it might otherwise be and they are, in practice, providing the school with further challenge and support.

33. The headteacher has a strong commitment to the pupils and the community. She promotes a caring, supportive and orderly environment and has an adequate vision of the school's continued achievement of high standards. Effective improvements have been maintained since the last inspection, including a good response to the key issues of 1998. However, her other leadership responsibilities of monitoring the school, setting criteria for success and reflecting on future direction are restricted by a very heavy commitment to teaching. This particular weakness in developmental leadership has links with that in governors' strategic planning.
34. All the teachers, including the headteacher, have responsibilities for several areas of the curriculum and subjects are generally led and managed well, including the areas of learning for children in the Reception class and provision for special educational needs. Teachers support each other fully in these responsibilities, working together as a strong team. They attend courses and meet with staff from other local schools, including those in a cluster group of village schools and the local combined school in a nearby town. Such occasions help them to share ideas and provide good opportunities to check the reliability of their judgements of levels of attainment with other teachers. The headteacher is also the co-ordinator for special educational needs and has worked successfully to develop resources and provision in this area, as well as to monitor pupils' individual education plans. Clear procedures have been developed for keeping records of assessment for all pupils, and showing how they are progressing. Provision is appropriately made for those pupils who require extra support in either the Reception class or in Year 1, which enables them to meet the demands of the curriculum in Year 2.
35. The budget is well planned to meet the needs of this small school. The governors' finance committee meets regularly to review spending and reports to the full governing body. Spending is prudent and based on principles of achieving best value. To this effect, local knowledge is used to good effect. The administrative officer supports the headteacher and governors very well. She oversees efficient daily systems of financial and other management, thereby contributing well to the smooth running of the school, to the benefit of pupils' learning and helping parents with their queries.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	163,303
Total expenditure	162,984
Expenditure per pupil	2,865

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	4,165
Balance carried forward to the next year	4,484

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children are admitted to the Reception class at the beginning of the term following their fourth birthday. As a result, one or two children in the school are of Nursery age. Nevertheless, these children settle well and, as they enter with above average attainment and skills for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and social development, they are able to make their personal needs known and they nearly always settle quickly. Children attend part-time until the term in which they reach their fifth birthday, when they become full-time. Children who are currently full-time are joining pupils in Year 1 each day. As planning is very good in all areas of learning, this arrangement works successfully. Activities and themes that are planned permit learning across a wide range of areas simultaneously, so neither younger nor older children are at any disadvantage from this organisation. The two classrooms are adjacent, with an inter-connecting double doorway. Furthermore, the teachers work well as a team, so the school is well placed to respond to a current national initiative to bring what is taught in Year 1 closer to what is taught in the Reception year, so as to smooth this transition.

Few children enter with either actual or potential special educational needs. Nevertheless, adults are very aware of the learning requirements of different children, so adaptations to what is taught are made whenever necessary. Assessment is good, including the use of recently introduced national profiles in which children's preferences, attainment and personal development are recorded. This information is then used to track their progress and is passed on when they enter Year 1 or if they should move away, necessitating attendance at a new school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children settle well when they first enter school and good daily arrangements then ensure that their confidence grows steadily.
- Opportunities for children to use their initiative and to develop independence are very good.
- Nearly all children are on course to meet the goals expected at the end of their Reception year. Several are likely to exceed these goals.

Commentary

36. Children enter the school with personal skills above those usually found at that stage. Many are confident and self-assured. Very good teaching builds well on these skills, providing, for example, a smooth start to each day, so children feel comfortable at school. This very well-thought-out opening session includes a range of activities from which children can choose, providing a broad range of opportunities to use initiative and to develop independence. These activities offer learning opportunities that link well with all other areas of learning, for example by providing role-play, objects to count and appropriate computer programs, as well as sand, water, books and other resources. Adults in the Reception are very aware of different children's needs and provide encouragement and support as required. Older children, who stay all day,

have their own learning support assistant who works with them when they join Year 1, so they are not overawed or anxious in this different situation.

37. As a result of very good provision, children who are currently of Reception age are eager to learn, and are achieving and progressing well. They conform to the high standards of behaviour and attitudes that are expected. They follow routines with understanding; they move purposefully about their classroom, and they are nearly always reliable and sensible, while enjoying good humour and play, exactly as young children should. A good example of how their teacher involves them in decisions occurred when rain fell one day, just as some of them wished to go outside. They all stood together at the open door and watched. Their initial disappointment soon changed into amazement when their teacher joined them and remarked on the heavy downpour, indicating that such opportunities to develop spiritually are not missed – another example of very good teaching. Taking into account their good starting points on entry to school, this strong teaching and provision means that nearly all the children are on course to reach the expected goals for their age and that a high proportion are likely to exceed them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good.
- Expectations of children's language are high, which provides a rich environment.
- Children acquire advanced skills in the use of language and literacy.

Commentary

38. When children start in the Reception, their vocabulary is often very good for their age. Very good teaching then builds well on their starting points. Nearly all of them speak clearly and they are confident with visitors. For example, a group of boys in a "shop corner" initiated play with an inspector, offering to sell a cup of tea. They handed out the toy money, so that he would be able to pay and they entered into role-play very effectively, talking about the till, the price of the tea and giving change. During a very good lesson, a voluntary helper was involved very well, hearing several individuals read their books. These children read fluently, which is indicative of very good achievement. They used good skills of word recognition and sometimes sounded out initial letters when they were unsure of a word.
39. In a very good lesson, when their teacher called the class over to the carpet, it was clear that phonic skills are taught very well. The children thoroughly enjoyed making the sounds of the day, which were introduced in an interesting and very pacy manner. These sounds included the vowel "a", as well as "gr-r-r", which went with the word "growl". During this lesson, the children were also asked to tell the others about their weekend news. After each one finished, the teacher asked the speaker to provide a full sentence in summary. She encouraged the children very effectively, modelling examples, questioning them about the most important things that they said and providing new vocabulary when necessary. This high expectation thus produced a rich linguistic background that was well rewarded. Nearly all the children, with her help, succeeded well.

40. Samples of work and items on display indicate that, in written work, the older children are beginning to string words into simple sentences, which is an advanced skill for their age, representing attainment beyond the goals that are normally expected. Younger children, attending part-time, are given frequent opportunities to make marks on paper and several are already forming letters and simple words, suggesting that they are also on course to exceed the goals.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given many opportunities to count and match objects and to handle and name shapes, so they attain and achieve well.
- Simple number rhymes and songs are used effectively.

Commentary

41. In this area, nearly all children enter the school with attainment at around what is usually found, with a few exceeding it. During a very good lesson, younger children counted coins up to seven accurately to “pay for” items in their shop. Samples of work indicate that older children are given many opportunities to match and count objects and to practise writing and recognition of the shapes of numbers. For example, children of this older group, who had joined pupils in Year 1, worked with a learning support assistant and successfully matched numbers up to ten. In another very good lesson, children picked out floating balls from their water tray and matched and sorted them into boxes. This activity provided a good example of how careful planning provides learning across a range of areas. What the children were doing linked very strongly with literacy, as each ball also carried a letter shape, so opportunities to reinforce knowledge of the alphabet were also occurring. At other times, children sang simple counting songs, such as “1-2-3-4-5, *Once I caught a fish alive*, clapping the numbers and holding up fingers. Although direct observations of work with shapes were not possible, it is evident from resources around the room and from planning that many opportunities for this type of activity are introduced. Furthermore, those children asked were able to offer the names of simple shapes such as squares, circles and triangles. These skills and knowledge indicate that children are on course to attain the expected goals by the end of their Reception year, with several exceeding them. Their achievement is good.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are interested in their environment and ask good questions about what they see.
- Resources are used effectively and teaching and support are of good quality.
- Computers are used effectively to play games that offer information about the world.

Commentary

42. Children enter the Reception class with good general knowledge. They are interested in what is around them and seek knowledge about what they see, looking carefully and asking questions. Teaching and planning are good and build well on children's knowledge and skills. As a result, nearly all of them are likely to match expected goals by the time they enter Year 1 and many will exceed them. During the inspection, the class were following a theme about journeys. On Monday morning, for example, they were able to pass on much information about where they had been over the weekend. Their teacher prompted them effectively with relevant vocabulary, encouraging them well. During observed lessons, they used road layouts and showed interest in different types of vehicles, talking happily about motors and engines and how they drive along the road. They also spoke to an inspector about how trains and aircraft can take people "...to places far away on their holidays". Such ideas are indicative of good achievement.
43. Resources are of good quality and are used well to spark children's interest about the world. They are also taken on local walks, which encourage respect for their environment and they learn about buildings in the village and how old they are, which provides them with insights about the passage of time, as well as ideas about what is recent and what was there a long time ago. Resources include computers and a range of relevant programs. Children have good skills with the mouse and understand how to click, drag and use buttons to control simple games and programs that offer information about the world.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

44. It was possible to observe only some aspects in this area of learning, so a full judgement of provision, including overall strengths and weaknesses, has not been made. However, what is provided to develop children's co-ordination of hands and eyes, and to encourage their control of small hand tools is good. During observed lessons, plenty of opportunities were available for them to manipulate objects and to develop skills related to positioning items accurately. For example, children were observed with construction kits, such as *mobilo*, which they used to make an aircraft. A good link with personal development emerged when children used scissors, pencils and other small hand tools and materials to draw and make *Friendship Cards*. In relation to skills of co-ordination of this kind, learning is good and children are on course to attain the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1.
45. Owing to poor weather, it was not possible to observe children in their outside area and no lessons that included running, jumping and balancing were seen indoors, so it is not possible to comment on progress towards the goals in these aspects.
46. The exterior fenced space is small and, at the moment, fairly sparse in appearance. The Reception class teacher and headteacher are aware of these factors and improvements are currently prioritised in the improvement plan.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

47. It was not possible to observe all elements of this area, so an overall judgement of provision, strengths and weaknesses has not been made. However, resources such as malleable materials, paints, crayons and a variety of cards and papers indicate that learning resources are good. Displays of children's drawings, models and painting indicate that nearly all of them are likely to match the expected goals in these aspects, which is good achievement. Many children use colour effectively and, for their age, draw objects systematically. Children who were observed using brushes and paint were able to explain the purpose of their work and what they intended. All these features are evidence of strong teaching.
48. During the inspection, very few musical activities were observed, other than simple chants and number songs. Children joined in with these enthusiastically, keeping together well. In an earlier visit to the school, the lead inspector was invited to watch the school's Christmas performance. Children of all ages performed well, singing their parts tunefully and following the rhythms well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Overall provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and attain high standards in reading and writing.
- In Years 1 and 2, writing skills are consistently good.
- Extra reading sessions provided by parents develop pupils' skills further.
- Learning is sometimes affected by interruptions caused by the poor self-control of a few pupils.
- Marking does not offer pupils sufficient comment about how they could improve.
- The subject is managed effectively.

Commentary

49. English standards are a significant strength of the school. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain well above average standards in reading and writing and achieve well. National Curriculum test results in 2004 were well above average in comparison with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Teacher assessments for speaking and listening are above average and pupils with special educational needs are supported well and also attain and achieve well in relation to their targets. Extra focused support is provided for the few pupils who need it to ensure that they remain on track with expected standards before they enter Year 2. High standards in all areas of English have been maintained since the last inspection.
50. Consistently good teaching contributes considerably to the high standards that are attained. For example, speaking is focused very effectively in Year 1; during an observed lesson, pupils discussed their weekend news. During this session, the teacher used skilful questioning to help them develop their thoughts and insisted that they used complete sentences. Furthermore, at the end of each child's turn, their teacher asked them for a good sentence that summed up their weekend. Pupils in

Year 2 spoke clearly during assembly when they asked their friends in Year 1 whether they could solve some riddles. This strong emphasis on good spoken English has a strong impact on pupils' writing, as it helps them to understand ideas such as "complete sentence", "good vocabulary" and "thinking of an audience".

51. Teachers plan a wide range of opportunities to enable all pupils to develop writing skills and they effectively demonstrate different styles of writing for a range of purposes. Good examples include narrative, factual reports, letters, descriptions of characters and instructional texts. Good attention is paid to spelling and, in Year 2, this aspect is featured in homework. Presentation is of a very high standard in all work seen and nearly all pupils develop neat handwriting. Due attention is given to punctuation and many pupils use capital letters and full stops as early as Year 1. Higher attaining pupils are taught effectively. For example, in Year 2, they are shown how to use a range of connective words to join phrases into complex sentences, thereby extending flexibility in the use of language and adding to meaning. These higher attaining pupils are also shown how their writing can be adapted for different readers, thus working well above the expected level for their age.
52. A strong emphasis is placed on reading. Besides well-focused group work that is undertaken within literacy lessons, pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to practise. Several parents and trained volunteers hear pupils read regularly and these extra sessions contribute much to good achievement. Teachers promote reading well as a pleasurable activity and pupils enjoy listening to a rich variety of texts.
53. It is evident from standards achieved that teaching and learning are good overall. However, what was observed directly was not consistently of this quality. For example, in otherwise satisfactory teaching, the pace of learning was adversely affected by a few pupils who showed poor self-control, calling out answers without putting up a hand and occasionally interrupting with other comments. While strategies to stop this silliness were successful in the short term, they were reactions to it, rather than preventative, so in the longer term, the circumstances re-occurred. Lessons are generally well planned and include statements about what pupils are expected to know at the end. These objectives are shared with pupils, so they understand the purpose of their lessons, helping them to follow each point. Teachers are conscientious with regard to ensuring that their marking is up to date. However, in the context of pupils' usually high standards of reading, it does not contain as many comments about improvement as it might.
54. Subject co-ordination is good. Assessment procedures are thorough and are used effectively to track pupils' progress and to guide planning to meet their needs. Pupils are not yet fully involved in the evaluation of their own progress, although a start has been made, and each pupil has targets that are displayed in their English books. Resources are of good quantity and quality. They include a well-stocked library that parents help to run on a weekly basis. Parents' involvement and help are fully encouraged and welcomed, and have a strong impact on overall achievement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Literacy skills are used well in support of a variety of subjects, such as religious education, history and geography, in which pupils record factual information and read texts to gain information. Computers are also used well in this respect. Pupils are encouraged to speak and write in full sentences and to transfer this skill into their

learning across the curriculum. This good practice provides a range of opportunities for pupils to practise, consolidate and improve their literacy skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall standards and achievement are good and have improved since the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- Provision in the subject is well managed.

Commentary

56. At the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics were above average, although the results of National Curriculum tests were simply average when compared only to similar schools. Currently, standards are well above average, as were the results of the 2004 national tests. Work that was seen in the inspection was also of a high standard, so good improvement is evident in this subject, since the last inspection. This higher attainment has been secured because of good teaching – another improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. It is based on a strong response to the main issue in the last report, which focused on a lack of challenge for higher attainers. Planning is now adapted well to include teaching of skills at levels higher than those normally expected. As a result, a high proportion of pupils are now attaining at these levels. This finding is reflected in test results. Taking 2003 and 2004 together, for example, nearly half of all pupils attained a full level above that normally expected for their age and, in 2003, results were in the top five per cent nationally.
57. Good teaching and learning were observed in Years 1 and 2. Lessons were concerned with building on pupils' understanding of place value and provided good evidence of how work in Year 2 takes account of previous learning, building on it well. In Year 1, pupils were shown how to put numbers in order by looking at the digit in the "ten column" and then, if it is the same, by comparing the units. In the lesson in Year 2, many pupils were adept with two-digit numbers and added and subtracted tens and units quickly, recognising the significant digit for their calculation. Higher attainers went further and applied their knowledge to hundreds. Samples of work indicated that standards are good in other aspects of the subject, such as measures, shape and space. Pupils with special educational needs are also well catered for. In Year 2, for example, a pupil with special needs used a computer program to reinforce understanding of simple number bonds and to improve memory. This pupil was greatly encouraged by the success that this program provided and, at the same time, practised skills in information and communication technology, clicking on buttons to control and reset the program to provide further questions.
58. Co-ordination is good, ensuring improved provision and standards since the last inspection. Resources are generally good and used well. Results of tests and assessments are used effectively to track pupils' progress, establish targets and thereby to influence what is taught.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. Opportunities to use mathematics as part of learning in other subjects are taken as and when they occur. In work around the school, block graphs and charts provide evidence that pupils' mathematical skills are developed effectively to display results and record outcomes in other subjects. Measurement in design and technology and science, and shape and pattern in art and design are good examples. Computer programs such as *RmMathematics* are used throughout the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good and overall standards are high and are a little better than in the last inspection.
- Teaching and learning include plenty of well-planned opportunities for pupils to consider their own observations, experiments and tests.
- Co-ordination and management of the subject are good.

Commentary

60. At the time of the last inspection, overall standards were described as above average. Currently, pupils' attainment is well above average, which was reflected in last year's Statutory Teachers' Assessments of work at the end of Year 2. Samples of work in the current Year 2 are very well presented, providing evidence of good teaching that offers pupils clear advice and guidance about how to set out their conclusions. Good work focusing on living processes linked very effectively with education about personal and health issues. For example, ideas about the connection between what you eat and how well you grow were explicitly dealt with. This work was marked very well, as it included several examples of further scientific questioning. For example, when pupils claimed that "...plum stones cannot be eaten", the teacher wrote in response, "Can some animals eat these things?". High standards are also evident in pupils' work on simple forces, life cycles of creatures such as frogs and butterflies, and textures and uses of materials.
61. Pupils receive many opportunities to use their own observations. Previous work on forces included their firsthand experiences of scooters and skates, explaining how "pushes" and "pulls" are used to play with these items. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 used very good scientific language for their age, indicating attainment above what is normally expected. During a lesson on related aspects, all pupils were shown how the shape of a piece of paper affected the "push" of air resistance. Pupils knew that the pieces of paper must be dropped from the same height in order to ensure fair testing. This lesson was well thought out, as it provided opportunities for pupils to think creatively. Their ideas of "pushes" and "pulls" were developed very effectively when they were asked to design an imaginary machine that resulted in the use of such forces. They were very absorbed in this activity and produced several intriguing ideas. The introductory question and answer session was a weaker aspect of this lesson. A few boys did not initially concentrate properly. Instead, they called out responses which were sometimes silly, and caused interruptions in the pace of learning, as it was necessary for the teacher to take up time in correcting them.
62. Provision in the subject is well managed. Planning is based on national guidance with good adaptations to take account of the needs of particular pupils, including those few

with special educational needs. Opportunities to work at levels above those normally expected are included in planning for pupils with high prior attainment. Statutory assessments and assessments of what has been learnt by the end of themes and planned units of work are undertaken to track progress and to inform future work. In the lesson that was observed, good links with literacy were apparent. Claire Llewellyn's book *Forces and Movement* was used as a source of information during the introduction, with a strong emphasis on its vocabulary.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities have been developed to use computers in support of learning.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners and confident users of new technology.
- The co-ordinator has an appropriate vision for the future development of the subject.

Commentary

63. Information and communication technology has continued to have a high profile within the school since the last inspection and further improvements have been made. All areas of the two-year plan set in 2002 have been addressed successfully, resulting in effective planning, teaching, learning and training for staff. A small dedicated area for computers forms part of the large library in the entrance area. This space enables a teaching assistant to provide opportunities for small groups to acquire new skills that are first introduced in the classroom. It is also used at lunch-time for a daily computer club. A parent-helper assists pupils regularly, often with follow-up work linked to science, which supports learning well. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good, including those whose concentration is not always high in other situations.
64. Standards of work that were seen in Year 2 are above those expected nationally and have risen since the inspection of 1998. Pupils' achievement is good throughout the school. Pupils regularly use the Internet or a CD-ROM to research information about people or events from the past or to add specific information to themes or topics in other subjects. In Year 1, also, pupils work at a good level, controlling the functions of computer programs by clicking on buttons in toolbars and running programs confidently with good skills on both mouse and keyboard. Higher attaining pupils are given extra responsibilities, such as turning on the audio element of particular programs, when asked by the teacher. In Year 2, pupils research, save data and access stored information. Their keyboard skills are very competent. They also sometimes use web cam feeds on the Internet, which they use effectively under supervision. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by their teachers and teaching assistants and make good progress. The little direct teaching that it was possible to observe was in the context of lessons in other subjects. Nevertheless, this teaching was good and contributed to effective learning.
65. The experienced co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has a clear vision for future development, including the use of laptops to improve skills in word processing and publishing, and interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning. Systems are in place to assess standards attained and to track pupils' progress. Effective use is made of an interactive whiteboard already installed in the Year 2 classroom. A part-

time technician provides good support, and a skilled member of the office staff also offers support and guidance that are much appreciated by teachers.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. The subject is used regularly in mathematics, especially, where specific software is available to enhance pupils' mathematical skills. Many good examples of work linked to other subjects were also seen on display or in folders, including history, art and design, design and technology and literacy. In Year 1, for instance, pupils designed a picture of a garden and have made their own pictograms as part of "graphing and charting" work in mathematics. In Year 2, pupils have looked at the paintings of two artists on the Internet and then drawn and printed their own pictures on the computer in a similar style.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history were not main foci for the inspection and only one lesson, in history in Year 1, was observed, so overall judgements of provision, including main strengths and weaknesses have not been made. Some sampling of work and discussions with staff and pupils were arranged. Findings about these aspects are reported.

Geography

67. Work in pupils' books related primarily to what the present Year 2 pupils had achieved in Year 1. This work is well set out and standards are above those normally expected for pupils of that age. Discussions with pupils show that they are taken out to observe human and natural geographical features of their own village and, to some extent, those of nearby towns, which they compared well. These pupils explained that they enjoy the subject and "...know about maps". What is taught meets National Curriculum requirements and is based on national guidelines.

History

68. Work in pupils' books suggests that standards have improved since the last inspection. Owing to assessments carried out at the end of each topic, teachers have a clear picture of both the facts that pupils remember and the skills that are acquired. Year 2 pupils demonstrated enthusiasm for the subject when they discussed the previous term's learning about Florence Nightingale. Their knowledge about her work, the Crimean War and sources of evidence are very good. Their emerging understanding of the passage of time and different chronological eras are also often in excess of what is normally found at this age. In the observed lesson, teaching and learning were good. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed the story of *Dogger*, which introduced a series of lessons about the history of toys. Pupils were offered good insights when they discussed their own toys and reflected on whether their parents would have had a similar toy. The teacher used skilful questioning to ascertain how toys work and what materials are used in their manufacture.

Religious education

The overall provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- National guidance is used well to support planning that is based on the locally agreed syllabus.
- Respect for other people's beliefs and religious artefacts is focused well.
- Resources are good and used effectively.

Commentary

69. The school's scheme of work is appropriately based on Buckinghamshire's locally agreed syllabus and incorporates ideas found in national guidelines. Commercially published materials are also used to support the school's scheme. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, which was reflected in what was observed in Year 2. Analysis of pupils' work, including what was seen in this lesson, indicates that standards are as expected in both Years 1 and 2 and that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, this is not as high as suggested at the time of the last inspection. Christianity and Judaism are studied as the main focused religions, with reference to stories and festivals from others when appropriate, as suggested in the agreed syllabus.
70. In teaching that was observed, ideas from Judaism were the main focus. Teaching employed a video that illustrated several customs associated with a Jewish way of life. A good aspect of this lesson occurred when the teacher introduced the *Torah*, stressing its importance and helping pupils to understand the high regard and special significance that it holds for believers. This opportunity was seized well and extended to respecting other people's ideas and values. A weaker aspect was that while the majority of pupils were reflective and interested, a few lost concentration towards the end of the lesson, which interrupted the teacher's otherwise satisfactory summary of the main points.
71. The school has a good range of artefacts and these are used well in displays and to support learning. Pupils also benefit from visits to local churches and from the vicar. Religious education is supported well in assemblies, which appropriately follow the themes that are introduced in lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson in each of art and design, and physical education was observed, so overall judgements of provision, strengths and weaknesses have not been made. Some sampling of work and discussions were arranged. Findings about these aspects are reported.

Art and design

72. During the inspection, work on display around the school was colourful and of good quality. Many pupils draw accurately in their books and higher attainers in Year 2 use skills such as shading to good effect. In the lesson that was observed, cardboard frames were used as viewfinders to help pupils focus on what to draw. Good links with photography were established when pupils were questioned about the function of a viewfinder on a camera. Requirements of the National Curriculum are met adequately. For example, opportunities are provided to seek information about famous artists, focusing on their skills and producing artwork based on their styles. A good example included the use of computers to help produce work similar to that of Mondrian.

Design and technology

73. Pupils in Year 1 build on skills that have been acquired in the Reception class. For example, they use recycled materials to make models and artefacts. They often draw their ideas first, thus acquiring insights into the use of designs. Afterwards, they are encouraged to evaluate what they have made by describing the process. Work in Year 1 linked well with human geography, when pupils constructed a row of cottages after a walk in the village. These models used a range of different papers and cardboard and indicate that a strong emphasis is placed on finishing products well.

Music

74. No work that involved composition was observed and lessons were timetabled for later in the week. However, examples of singing of pupils in Years 1 and 2 were seen in two assemblies. On both occasions, pupils sang well for their age. Many pupils pitched tunes accurately and kept together, following the rhythms set by piano accompaniments. It is evident that music plays an important part in the life of the school. For example, during the lead inspector's visit to the school, its Christmas performance was staged. All pupils took part and many were sufficiently confident to sing solo, again indicating that standards are high. Music is also played while pupils enter and leave the hall during assemblies. For example, Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* was used during the inspection. Opportunities are taken to point out the names of composers on these occasions and, when appropriate, to make simple appraisals. The opportunity to promote self-esteem was taken effectively when a boy who could read the German was asked to do so and to explain what it meant.

Physical education

75. In a lesson in Year 1, good teaching helped pupils to refine short sequences of exercises. Pupils moved around enthusiastically, and with a good appreciation of the safety and space of others. Two groups were used during the main part of the lesson. As one group performed, the other watched. This good practice allowed pupils to appraise performance for each other. They did so sensitively, stating what they thought had been done well. As a result, pupils improved their own sequences, as well as those of others, as it focused their thinking on the types of issue that would raise attainment. A football club is provided, although a small charge is made to cover costs. Pupils are also given lessons in swimming. Records indicate that many attain the government's minimum safety standard of 25 metres, which is normally required in Year 6.

Management of creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects

76. Management of these subjects is generally good. What is taught meets requirements in the National Curriculum and is based on national guidance. Consumable learning resources are replenished regularly and other equipment is of good quality. Simple records of pupils' attainment are kept, although time available for monitoring this information and for staff to monitor lessons directly is limited.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

77. The programme for personal, social and health education is good. Good advice and guidance are provided in lessons about how to keep safe and healthy, and provide

opportunities to explore ideas of general well-being. Good links are established with other subjects. For example, in science, pupils learn about the beneficial effects of a good diet and ideas related to the importance of exercise are often raised in physical education. Teaching about the community, kindness towards others, and related ideas are developed into practical citizenship through, for example, harvest festival gifts and care of the environment. Times are also set aside when pupils can sit together in a circle and raise matters of importance or concern to them.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4

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

The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).