

INSPECTION REPORT

LOATLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Desborough, Northamptonshire

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121910

Headteacher: Mr A Spencer

Lead inspector: Mr C Green

Dates of inspection: 24th to 27th January 2005

Inspection number: 267227

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	275
School address:	Harrington Road Desborough Kettering Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN14 2NJ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Larmour
Date of previous inspection:	28 th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Loatlands Primary School is a larger than average school. There are 275 children altogether, including 77 who attend the nursery class on a part-time basis. Five pupils have English as an additional language. There are eight Traveller children. There is a significant level of pupil mobility with up to 24 per cent joining or leaving the school between Years 1 to 6. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery class is below average and their language skills are particularly weak. There is a greater than average number of pupils with special educational needs, 27 per cent compared to 19 per cent nationally. There are five children with statements of special educational need and a further 58 pupils on the special educational needs register. About one in five pupils is entitled to a free school meal which, with other census information, means that the area served by the school is one of below average social and economic circumstances. Following a period of unsettled leadership, the recently appointed headteacher and the new senior management team are beginning to tackle the causes of low achievement, but there is still much to do. The school received a Healthy Schools Award in 2001 and the Investors in People Award and Basic Skills Quality mark, for the third time, in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2771	Christopher Green	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Music Physical education English as an additional language Personal, social, health and citizenship education
14141	Ernest Marshall	Lay inspector	
24895	Kathleen Hurt	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum English Art and design Design and technology
4676	Mary Griffiths	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics History Geography Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Loatlands Primary School provides a **satisfactory** standard of education. It has some good features including the **very good** relationships that exist between pupils and adults. Pupils are **very well** behaved and have positive attitudes to school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve **very well**. Standards in mathematics and science are average and although standards are below average in English by the time the pupils leave the school, achievement is **satisfactory** overall. This is because of sound teaching and pupils' good attitudes to work. Leadership and management by the recently appointed headteacher and senior managers are **satisfactory**. The school gives **satisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are below average in English although achievement is satisfactory.
- Standards are above average and achievement is good in history, music and physical education.
- Very good relationships between pupils and adults result in pupils having positive attitudes.
- Teaching in the nursery and reception is good and good lessons are taught in all year groups.
- Teaching does not challenge the most able pupils enough.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The systems for marking, assessing and checking pupils' progress are unsatisfactory.
- Some top-level management systems are not currently in place.
- The school has very good links with the community.

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1999 is unsatisfactory. Since then there have been rises and falls in the standards achieved during an unsettled period in the leadership of the school. The two key issues reported then have received satisfactory attention; standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and curriculum guidance is now in place. However, there are still outstanding issues pertaining to the effectiveness of strategies for managing the school's curriculum, particularly in relation to assessment, and standards in English are judged to have declined.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall standards are **average** and achievement is **satisfactory**. As a result of good teaching in the nursery and reception, children in these classes achieve well. Because of this, most reach the goals expected by the end of the reception class. Standards of achievement are satisfactory both in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6. Satisfactory progress is made in most subjects. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in English are below average and, although achievement over time has been unsatisfactory caused by weaknesses in writing, improvements are now evident and standards in English are better than those indicated by the 2004 test results below. In mathematics, average standards and satisfactory achievement are secure. In science, ICT and geography, standards are broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. In science standards are better than those indicated by the 2004 test results as pupils have sound knowledge and understanding. In religious education, standards of achievement are in line with the expectations in the local agreed syllabus. Standards are above average and achievement is good in history, music and physical education. Achievement in personal, social, health and citizenship education is also good.

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

Science	E	C	D	D
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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.

The achievement of the most able pupils is unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve well. Gifted and talented pupils achieve well in music and physical education, and Traveller children achieve as well as the majority. Pupil mobility affects standards adversely as high attaining pupils sometimes leave before the Year 6 tests. Pupils who have English as an additional language are generally well accomplished bilingually. Language and literacy skills are used in a range of subjects but do not contribute to the pupils' achievement enough, for example in science and geography. Pupils' numeracy skills and ICT competencies are satisfactory and are often good when applied in practical situations, in using the Internet and producing *PowerPoint* presentations.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. Pupils have positive attitudes and they behave very well. Attendance rates are satisfactory and pupils' punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching in the nursery and reception is good because children make good progress. Across the school, teachers and their assistants have very good relationships with the pupils which help create an effective atmosphere for learning. They ensure that the pupils enjoy their work and this means that pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. Overall, teaching makes effective use of the national guidance to plan work for different aged pupils but does not make effective use of assessment information to adapt the guidance to meet the needs of the differently attaining pupils. This in turn has led to a lack of rigour in the work planned and consequently insufficient challenge – weaknesses which are now being addressed. Teachers and teaching assistants are good at giving appropriate encouragement but expectations about what the most able can be expected to achieve are too often below what they should be. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. Opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular activities are good. A wide range of good quality information is available for parents. Arrangements for pupils' transfer to secondary school are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory**. The headteacher and senior team provide good role models and inspire and motivate the staff and pupils well. A good school ethos with a clear commitment to inclusion has been created. Although the school improvement plan has identified appropriate priorities for action, not all aspects of management are properly in place and therefore are not fully effective; for example, the headteacher has not yet formed effective teams responsible for ensuring that learning is built systematically over time and that school self-evaluation information is used to take prompt action to set targets to address specific areas of underachievement. New systems are being established rapidly. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has ensured that the school fulfils its statutory duties well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are pleased with the school and with the progress their children make. Children's views are very positive. They like the headteacher, teachers and staff, and feel they are treated well, helped in their work and life at school, and feel that notice is taken of their ideas in the way the school operates.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in English, particularly by improving writing.
- Improve the use of assessment and the quality of teachers' marking to ensure that the most able pupils achieve as well as they could.
- Make sure that leaders and managers keep a close check on pupils' achievement in order to find out where the most and least progress is made, identify gaps in learning and pursue and eradicate weaknesses in teaching.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall to reach average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Children achieve well in the nursery and reception classes and do well enough in Years 1 to 6. The most able pupils do not do well enough. Standards in writing are not as high as they could be.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in nursery and reception and pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Standards in English, especially in writing, are below average; achievement is improving and is currently satisfactory.
- Achievement by the more able pupils is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils achieve well in history, music and physical education to reach above average standards and in personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Commentary

1. Since the previous inspection, the trends in the standards reached and the levels of pupils' achievement are broadly similar, apart from in English where they have declined, and for the higher attaining pupils.
2. As children enter the nursery class their attainment, particularly in their language skills, is below average. As a result of good teaching in the nursery and reception classes, the children achieve well and make good progress. Speaking and listening are taught well and because of this pupils make particularly good progress in their personal and social development. The majority of children enter Year 1 having achieved well and reaching the standards expected in all areas of learning.
3. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 to reach average standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, standards in writing are below average. Trends over time confirm this, even though results in 2003 were better.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (15.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	12.6 (15.1)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.7 (16.2)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Pupils' standards are still judged to be below average in English because of weaknesses in writing. Their learning and achievement in lessons are now satisfactory; the underachievement is a remnant of weaknesses in teaching that have now been tackled.
5. Pupils go about their work with confidence and most make satisfactory progress now in lessons and their achievement overall is satisfactory. However, the higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they should and their achievement sometimes is unsatisfactory. This stems from ineffective assessment of what these pupils have and have not learned previously. Therefore, planning for the next steps in their learning does not take sufficient account of what they already know, understand and can do. Most pupils' levels of achievement are satisfactory.

6. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the standards attained in science, ICT, geography and religious education are average and achievement is satisfactory. Scientific investigations are undemanding for some pupils. There is insufficient use of the range of ICT resources for pupils to achieve well, although in some activities, such as using the Internet and making *PowerPoint* presentations, competences are good. Standards are above average in history, music, physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education, and achievement in these subjects is good. Pupils have a good understanding of terminology in history, sing and play instruments well in music and perform well in a range of activities in physical education. Gifted and talented pupils are identified in music and physical education and the school is successful in meeting their needs both in school time and through extra-curricular activities.
7. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are average and achievement overall is satisfactory. Numeracy skills are satisfactory and applied well in some practical situations, although there is too little measuring in science. However, standards in English are below average with a history of unsatisfactory achievement in writing, mainly because pupils are still learning skills they should have been taught earlier, a situation which is now being corrected. The table below shows that in 2004 the performance of pupils at the end of Year 6 in English was below average, and in mathematics and science it was broadly average. Whilst below average standards and unsatisfactory achievement still exist in English due to weaknesses in writing which have persisted over time, improvements in lessons are evident. Trends show that mathematics and science have improved.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (26.4)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	27.6 (28.1)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.8 (28.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 29 pupils in the Year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous Year

8. Achievement from Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. However, as in Years 1 and 2, the teaching is planned appropriately against National Curriculum requirements, but does not take sufficient account of what the pupils have already learned and particularly so for the most able pupils. This results in these pupils making less progress than they should.
9. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make very good progress throughout the school. This is because the targets for their development and learning are based on an accurate assessment of their needs, and are set out clearly and reviewed carefully in their individual education plans. Very effective systems for checking pupils' progress are used, enabling appropriate action to be taken if pupils are experiencing difficulties. Knowledgeable and experienced teaching assistants use a range of strategies, which are effective in promoting good achievement for these pupils.
10. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. Those few pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and have good language acquisition. The achievement of pupils from Traveller families is in line with the rest of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average for primary schools and is **satisfactory**. Punctuality is **good**. Pupils have **good** attitudes. Those in the nursery and reception classes are **very good**. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is **very good**. Pupils' personal

development is **good**. Moral and social development is very good; cultural and spiritual development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's promotion of very good relationships between staff and pupils contributes positively to learning.
- The school has high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond very well.
- The school provides well for pupils' personal development and prepares them successfully for their future lives.

Commentary

11. This aspect has improved since the previous inspection. The school has recently reviewed its behaviour and anti-bullying policy. It has a positive approach to fostering very good personal relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. This positive approach begins in the nursery class and extends through all age groups. Pupils are taught to respect each other and to show kindness. This is seen in the infants' playground where pupils stand holding the 'Friendship Stop' post and sign. Any pupil feeling the need for help or for a friend knows he or she has only to ask the sign holder. Year 6 pupils sit with the younger ones at lunchtimes to give help and support. The mutual respect this engenders enables pupils to feel confident and happy to take a full part in school life.
12. There is a clear emphasis on good behaviour being recognised, rewarded and used as an example for others to follow. At the beginning of the new school year, pupils discuss the school rules and draw up their own classroom codes of behaviour. Pupils are taught and clearly know the difference between right and wrong and the nature of any behaviour or attitude that will not be tolerated. Pupils say that the teachers apply the rules fairly. There is a good response and respect for the process. Pupils' behaviour across the school is very good. Their interest in lessons and ability to work together are good and contribute positively to their learning. There are no exclusions. Children in the nursery and reception classes have particularly good attitudes and this enables them to make good early progress.
13. The school is very successful in developing the confidence and self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs. A consistent approach to supporting and rewarding good behaviour ensures that these pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school; they work hard and support one another very well.
14. As indicated in the responses to the parents' questionnaire, parents firmly believe that the school encourages pupils to become mature and independent. This belief is borne out by the school's provision of many opportunities for pupils to take on additional responsibilities such as membership of the school council, acting as house captains, caring for other pupils, pairing with younger pupils for reading, and performing a variety of tasks in the classroom, library and assembly hall. The annual residential visit for Years 5 and 6 pupils provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their leadership and team-working skills.
15. Through the school's provision and positive encouragement of high standards of behaviour, pupils have very good standards of moral development. The school has no racial or bullying problems and through pupils' ability to work and play well together, their social development is also very good. Pupils understand the need to keep the school as an orderly and happy community. They have a good awareness of their own culture and are taught well to understand and respect the values and beliefs of others. Their spiritual development is good and is achieved through participation in assemblies and in art, drama and music activities. Membership of the school choir and instrumental group is particularly well used to promote spiritual awareness.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.7	School data	0.8
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory**. In the nursery and reception classes they are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes are good.
- Good lessons which are interesting and well organised are taught in all year groups.
- Teaching does not challenge the more able pupils enough.
- Teachers usually show good command of the subjects they teach.
- Teachers and assistants insist that pupils behave very well in lessons.
- The marking, assessing and tracking of pupils' progress over time are unsatisfactory.
- The very good relationships which exist between adults and pupils help learning to occur.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	4 (10%)	21 (51%)	12 (29%)	2 (5%)	1 (2%)	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.

16. On balance, the quality of teaching and learning is similar to that reported in the previous inspection. As the table above shows, a minority of lessons have unsatisfactory features but most lessons observed during this inspection are good or better. Over time the teaching has not been good enough to raise levels of achievement in English, nor those of the higher attaining pupils in a range of subjects. Indications are that teaching is improving and with it the achievements of pupils, but too often the impact of accurate assessment on lesson planning is insufficient. Good lessons are taught in all year groups and teachers usually show good command of the subjects they teach. These better lessons are well organised and planned so as to meet the different learning needs of most groups of pupils, especially for those with special educational needs. Staff encourage and engage the pupils' interests well.
17. In the nursery and reception classes the teaching and learning are consistently good. Speaking and listening are taught well and this is the basis for the very good personal and social development of the children. In these classes the satisfactory assessments made of the children's achievements are used constructively to inform the next steps for learning and this, coupled with good planning and the effective use of resources, brings about progress at a more rapid rate than later in the school.

18. Most of the lessons in Year 1 and Year 2 are good. They are well planned against National Curriculum requirements and are presented in a variety of interesting ways which encourage the pupils to learn. The teaching ensures that the pupils are attentive, behave very well and concentrate appropriately on their tasks. In some lessons though, particularly in English, the work is not challenging enough for the higher attaining pupils. Teaching assistants support learning well and they are particularly successful in helping pupils with their reading done both at home and at school, and in supporting those who have special educational needs.
19. In Years 3 to 6, there is more very good teaching than in other parts of the school. However, the reason that more than half are satisfactory, rather than good, is because the process of marking pupils' work and checking their progress is not carried out with sufficient thoroughness and rigour. Consequently, the planning for these lessons, and particularly for those which were unsatisfactory, does not take sufficient account of what different groups of pupils have already learned, and so the teaching lacks appropriate levels of challenge. What the pupils know, understand and can do is not tracked well enough over time. Therefore the achievement for many is not as good as it should be, especially in writing in English and in other subjects, and for the higher attaining pupils. In mathematics the National Numeracy Strategy is often allowed to dictate what is to be taught, rather than what is relevant to the needs of particular groups of pupils; for example, pupils who are more able are not sufficiently extended in their work.
20. There are good procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs. Teachers receive good information and individual education plans are used effectively to set targets and plan work at an appropriate level. Teaching assistants are attached to specific classes and make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. They work closely alongside teachers and are valued for the contribution they make. Work is often planned to take into account the individual needs of pupils. Regular reviewing and recording of progress are carefully done.
21. Speaking and listening are taught well, though teaching children to explain and share personal experiences in writing is not as good. Opportunities for developing writing are frequently missed. In many cases this can be attributed to an over-dependence on worksheets, annotated diagrams and recording grids which seriously restrict opportunities for independent writing. It is the advanced skills of reading and writing, and the application of literacy and numeracy in more demanding contexts such as in science, which are not taught well due to the weaknesses described. Consequently, planning to meet individual needs is inconsistent.
22. The teaching of history, music and physical education is consistently good with some outstanding practice which conveys complex ideas in relevant and inspiring ways. The use of drama, for example, to engage pupils in learning about the history of the Nile and to make relevant connections between ranges of different resources stimulated excellent interpretations of historical evidence. The five best lessons (those judged excellent or very good) succeeded in securing very good learning. These lessons were in history, English and mathematics in Years 4 and 6, and in the reception class. Teaching in science, ICT and religious education is satisfactory.
23. Very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults create an atmosphere which helps pupils to learn because pupils like their teachers and work hard to please them. However, in some cases, pupils retain a high level of dependence on teachers and assistants and are not held to account sufficiently for the development of their own work. In most subjects they are not familiar with selecting from a range of resources to help them with ideas to extend their work independently and they are unsure of what it is they have to learn in order to improve.

The curriculum

The school provides a **satisfactory** curriculum with **good** opportunities for enrichment. Accommodation and resources for learning are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall evaluation of the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Preparation for later stages of education is good.
- There is good participation in sport, the arts and other activities and for learning outside the school day.

Commentary

24. The quality of this aspect is satisfactory and similar to that reported in the previous inspection. The areas of learning in the nursery and reception classes are covered with a broad range of relevant opportunities for all groups of children including those with special educational needs.
25. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which meets statutory requirements in all areas of the National Curriculum and religious education. Sufficient time is provided for teaching the programmes of study. Attention is given to issues of equality of opportunity but there are many examples of higher attaining pupils being insufficiently challenged. Systematic monitoring of what is actually taught is not well established and so the evaluation of provision is haphazard.
26. There is a clear sense of purpose about what needs to be taught to pupils of different ages but not to pupils of different abilities. The school has introduced the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully and is developing them. Those who support teaching (nursery nurses and teaching assistants) are deployed well and the resources chosen are good. All subjects have written policies and subject guidelines. Short-term planning translates the curriculum schemes into appropriate lessons for the most part. The school makes effective provision for teaching sex education to Year 6 pupils. Teaching about the dangers of drugs misuse and alcohol abuse is effectively carried out. Provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good.
27. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils have access to the full range of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Most of their support is provided appropriately within the mainstream classroom. The deployment of support staff to enable pupils to access the curriculum is good. From time to time, some pupils are withdrawn for additional literacy and numeracy support. Some receive specific corrective teaching for dyslexia. Individual targets for pupils are realistic and achievable and are used effectively to raise standards and to improve pupils' social development. The school fulfils its legal requirements for all pupils with statements of special educational needs.
28. The school prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Induction programmes are in place for all children entering the nursery class. Year group brochures outline expectations for other pupils entering a new class. Bridging units have been prepared for pupils in Year 6 to ease the transition of moving to the secondary school and pupils receive lessons in French well before they are due to transfer. Many Year 6 pupils also have an opportunity to attend a secondary summer school for a week and gifted and talented pupils attend 'master classes' at the local City Technology College. These make a positive impact on their learning and further prepare them for secondary school.
29. Opportunities provided for pupils to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, mainly in sport and the arts, are good. These activities provide a valuable extension to the

curriculum and are well attended. Plans are also being discussed for each subject to have an 'enrichment week'. Grandparents and great-grandparents are regularly in school to talk to pupils about life as it was when they were young. Both they and the pupils value these shared experiences. A Tudor day has been held and a Roman banquet organised. The school is part of a local arts project and for the last two years has employed an artist in residence. Year 5 and 6 pupils regularly go on residential visits.

30. The quantity and quality of accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The provision of computer-linked interactive whiteboards and data projectors has considerably improved the use of ICT in the delivery of the curriculum and teachers make good use of them. Outdoor learning areas include adequate hard play areas and a good playing field which enable pupils to follow a broad programme in physical education.
31. The purpose-built nursery accommodation is of a high standard with good quality outdoor and covered activity areas. The spaces inside the nursery are roomy and are used in ways which match the purpose for which they were designed and the needs of the children.
32. The main school generally creates a pleasant learning environment but space is at a premium and facilities for storage are restricted. This is not helped by the fact that a lot of indoor space is cluttered, untidy and unnecessarily screened with partitions. There is no base for special educational needs but teachers and support staff make use of available spaces in and around the classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **satisfactory** overall. Pupils have very good relationships with adults in school and can readily approach staff for advice and guidance. The support, advice and guidance given are based upon teachers' monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress and are **satisfactory**. Pupils' views are **satisfactorily** sought and acted upon to enable them play an effective role in bringing about improvements in school routines.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good support for pupils with special educational needs helps them achieve well.
- Carefully planned induction into the nursery helps children to make good early progress.
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff give pupils confidence to approach an adult for guidance when worried or concerned.
- Information gathered by monitoring pupils' academic progress is not always used effectively to ensure each pupil can achieve as well as he or she is able.

Commentary

33. The school has good procedures for identifying children with special educational needs at an early stage in the nursery and reception classes. This enables staff to identify the type of support each of these may require and allows the school to approach specialists from relevant outside agencies. A wide range of specialists work closely with the school staff to ensure the children can be included as much as possible in mainstream activities and in doing so, can make good progress.
34. The school has implemented good procedures for induction of new children into the nursery class. Parents are invited to visit the school and nursery class to meet the headteacher and staff and see the facilities on offer. They are given a detailed information pack describing what is taught and how parents can help. Home visits by the nursery staff follow and the early assessment of children's abilities and needs is prepared. These induction procedures ensure that the children can quickly develop confidence and trust in the staff which enable them to

make good early progress. Regular contact with the reception class prepares them well for transfer at the end of their first year.

35. High standards of mutual respect between staff and their pupils are shown by a clear willingness of staff to encourage pupils to bring worries or concerns to their attention. Pupils respond well and know that they will be listened to. Advice and support are freely given. Staff monitor pupils' academic and personal development and know pupils as individuals with individual needs. However, the procedures for using the information gathered about pupils' progress and achievement are not consistent. This means that for some pupils, particularly those with higher ability, work does not always provide maximum challenge and these pupils do not achieve as well as they might.
36. The school has established very successful procedures for ensuring the care, support and guidance of those pupils with special educational needs. Clear procedures for the early identification of pupils are well understood by the staff. Individual education plans set appropriate targets that are reviewed regularly and amended as often as necessary. These plans match the recommendations of pupils' statements of special educational needs where these apply. These pupils are very well supported, enabling them to have good access to the curriculum.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents are **good**. Parents are very supportive of the school. The school has established **very good** links with the community and uses them well to enhance the curriculum. There are **good** links with other schools and colleges and these are used well to improve the quality of education provided for the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use of the local community is made to enhance the curriculum and provide additional personal support for pupils.
- Parents play an effective role in school and make a good contribution to their children's learning.
- Links with other schools and colleges are used well to support staff development and pupils' learning.

Commentary

37. Since the previous inspection good progress has been made in this aspect of the school's work. The school has established very good and varied links within the local community. Visits are regularly made to enhance their understanding of what is being taught in school, such as those to local historical sites and to the space centre. Pupils visit the local elderly persons' residential homes and play music in the local Salvation Army's premises in order to broaden their audience and strengthen community links. Competitive music and singing are performed at local festivals. Visitors to the school are also used well to support learning and provide advice and guidance on personal issues whilst members of the local police force, fire brigade and St John Ambulance service speak on safety. The school nurse and local Temperance Society talk about health and alcohol and drugs-related issues.
38. The school encourages community use of school premises. Voluntary group users include scouts, rainbows and brownies. Adult groups include fitness and dancing classes and the school facilitates adult learning courses, all of which impacts on the pupils' sense of the importance of community learning.
39. The school welcomes parents' support and interest in improving the quality of pupils' education. There are regular parent helpers in class and the parent/teacher association is

active in supporting the school. Some 30 grandparents come into school for half a day every year to talk to the reception class about their experiences in the 1950s and 1960s and to join in the planned activities. Children carry out imaginative role-play and revel in the opportunity to engage the adults in sharing and conversation.

40. The school has established good working relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs. The school's 'open door' policy ensures that they are well informed about pupils' progress and what the school is trying to achieve. Attendance at annual review meetings is very good.
41. The school has successful links with other schools and colleges which provide good opportunities for staff development through sharing best practice initiatives and joint training. The local group of schools includes both primary and secondary schools and the co-operative approach with the secondary schools helps significantly with the transfer of the Year 6 leavers. Pupils are invited to the secondary schools for sample lessons, and transition work in English and mathematics is provided to ensure continuity in their learning. French tuition for the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils is provided by staff from the secondary school.
42. Links with the local City Technology College are used to secure extended learning for groups of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils through attendance at voluntary Saturday morning lessons in English, mathematics, music, science and computer work. The school provides work experience placements for secondary school pupils and college students. Student teachers are given opportunities for practical classroom teaching experience. The additional adult help in classrooms is used well to support pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**. The effectiveness of management is **satisfactory**. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and senior team inspire and motivate the staff and pupils well.
- The senior management team provide good role models and have created a good school ethos with a clear commitment to inclusion.
- Some top-level management systems are not currently in place.
- Over their short time in post, key leaders have not yet created an effective set of teams.
- Information from the school's self evaluation has not been used in taking sufficiently prompt action.
- Leadership and management of special educational needs are very good.
- The governing body well understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Commentary

43. The quality of leadership and management is similar to that reported at the previous inspection. Following an extended period when the school's leadership and management arrangements were unsettled, the recently appointed headteacher, assisted by the new senior management team, is providing satisfactory leadership which has inspired and motivated the staff, pupils and the wider community of parents. With broad participation from the school community, the headteacher has led the re-orientation of the aims of the school and introduced an appropriate new motto, 'Try Hard – Aim High' and a new school logo. This has focused attention on the central purpose of the school being to raising standards.
44. The school has an inclusive ethos. This commitment to inclusion has brought about many of the good features of the school, particularly the very good relationships which exist between pupils and staff and the good achievement by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The senior management team shows proper commitment to the induction

of new pupils and staff and to the professional development of its teachers, teaching assistants and teachers in training.

45. Some top-level managements systems which are required to raise the performance of the school and evaluate success are not currently in place. Improvement in these aspects is a priority. The headteacher and senior teachers are working well together to secure improvements. Their leadership is beginning to tackle the causes of low achievement where it exists, but there is still much to do. Although a well-conceived school improvement plan has been constructed, they do not yet have a consistent and coherent strategy to take action to deal with weaknesses in those aspects which need the most improvement. The new senior management team have had little time in authority to deal with the root causes of the low achievement of the higher attaining pupils throughout Years 1 to 6, but there are some signs of improvement because of their recent actions.
46. Whilst some management systems for monitoring and evaluating provision and standards are in place, insufficient action has been taken to improve the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress across the school. The senior team, including those leading English and mathematics, have not created an effective set of teaching teams responsible for ensuring that the learning of different groups of pupils and whole year classes is systematically built up as they move through the school, year by year. Good data and support have been provided by the local education authority but the systems in school are not consistent or well embedded for these to be fully utilised.
47. However, provision for special educational needs is very well led and managed. An experienced co-ordinator works closely with teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that pupils are well supported both in and out of the classroom. Detailed records are well kept about what pupils already know and need to know next and are up to date and informative. Legal requirements in respect of pupils with statements of special educational needs are fully met.
48. The governors understand well the strengths and weaknesses of the school and support the school effectively. They are now ready to adopt more challenge in their style as they see the new leadership team as robust and determined to see the school move forward. Their commitment to the school and their relationships with pupils, parents, staff and the community are good. Overall their contribution is satisfactory in challenging the school and seeing that it moves forward. They have taken action to ensure that the school meets its statutory duties but their involvement in the oversight of standards has been less than effective.
49. The school operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Pupils benefit from the well-established routines. Very good office practices are well established with clear routines. Resources are identified for improvements for ICT, remodelling the school's workforce and developing additional teaching and learning areas around the school. These are identified for the expenditure of most of the high budget carry-forward of almost 20 per cent. The school overall gives satisfactory value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	637251
Total expenditure	623664
Expenditure per pupil	2284

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous Year	102268
Balance carried forward to the next year	115855

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

50. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall.
51. Children get off to a good start in the nursery and reception classes as they did when the school was last inspected. Many of the good features in provision noted then are still evident, and children achieve well in both classes. Children come into the nursery at the start of the school year when they are three years old and transfer to the reception class a year later. Their attainment on entry is below average overall, mainly due to limitations in speech and language. This hampers their development in other areas of learning.
52. Good teaching means children make good progress and are on course to reach the goals for their age by the time they start in Year 1. Children exceed the goals in their personal, social and emotional development due to very good teaching in this area. Children with special educational needs are identified early and careful planning and good support by all the adults mean they make good progress in working towards their targets. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively as a team. They are knowledgeable and very caring and their roles are well defined. They are clear about what children are to learn and because of this plan a wide range of interesting activities carefully.
53. The leadership and management of the nursery and reception classes are satisfactory and progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The co-ordinator's role is currently being expanded in line with developments in the school. There is good liaison between the nursery and reception classes and between the teachers and teaching assistants. There are regular and detailed observations so that teachers know what children can and cannot do, but the systems for checking on the effectiveness of teaching and children's attainments, whilst satisfactory, are not as thorough as they might be in recognising and addressing weaknesses in otherwise good quality provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships between adults and children create a strong sense of partnership in learning.
- Adults set a very good example in the way they work as a team.
- Children concentrate and behave very well because they are eager to try out the many interesting activities set out for them.

Commentary

54. Children's achievements are very good as they are likely to reach the goals expected for them in this area of learning. Teaching is good because staff working in both the nursery and reception classes place a strong emphasis on this area of learning in all they do. Very good relationships develop because adults are caring and take a keen interest in the children. In both classes, children and adults work very well together so that children are eager learners. High levels of teamwork mean that staff work very effectively together. This sets a very good example for children, acting as a spur so they play happily and co-operatively with others. Children are confident in moving around the activities because adults make their expectations clear and make sure that children understand the well-established routines in each class.

55. The range of activities set out for children is very good. Because the activities are interesting, children become absorbed in their play and concentrate very well. Rarely do children flit around the activities. They know what they want to do and how to go about it. Even the youngest children in the nursery organise themselves well when painting. They collect and put on their aprons, and place their finished painting on the drying rack independently. The very good behaviour of children in the reception class is impressive. Even when occasional noise, such as singing, from another class is distracting, they still do their best to listen and behave very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in their speech and language development because teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes.
- Good teaching of reading and writing in the reception class means that children's achievements are good.
- The progress of the more able children is sometimes slowed when activities do not take enough account of their needs.

Commentary

56. The adults in both classes work very hard in boosting children's speech and language skills, which are often limited when they come into the nursery. Adults take every opportunity to engage children in talking about their play. They model speaking well, using questions effectively as prompts so that children learn to describe and explain their thoughts and knowledge. Sometimes, they could do more through careful use of additional questions so that children extend and add more detail when speaking. Listening skills develop particularly well. This is because the adults provide interesting activities, and children want to listen to what they and others have to say. Children listen intently in the reception classes, for example remembering the word 'posser' they had previously heard during an exciting 'Grandparents' Day'. They are on course to exceed the goals in their listening skills.
57. Good teaching helps children achieve well, so that in all other aspects of communication, language and literacy they are set to reach the goals for their age. Well-chosen books mean that children enjoy listening to stories in the nursery. Activities like the 'Bear Hunt', when children took on the roles of the bears and went outside and 'through the wood', help them remember the story well. The different spaces and trees in the outdoor learning area provide a good resource for such activities, and they are used well. The 'doctor's surgery' encourages children to try out their writing skills as they make entries in the appointment book. They handle books carefully and begin to use the pictures as clues in retelling the stories.
58. The good teaching by the school's literacy co-ordinator, working in the reception class, helps children achieve well in reading and writing. Very thorough in her approach, she develops children's basic skills particularly well. There are regular sessions when all the adults read with children individually. They make sure that children understand what they read by skilful use of questions. They encourage children to use their growing knowledge of letter sound as clues in trying to read new words. There is a good and effective partnership with parents who support their children well in reading at home. A particular strength is the way notes are very carefully taken of what children can do and what they need to learn next in developing writing skills. These notes could be used more effectively in future planning. Working with small groups enables children to receive very good support as they write. Before they start the teacher reminds them of their targets, and praises them when they achieve them. These regular

checks, and the many opportunities children have to practise their writing skills in 'real' play situations, such as the 'travel agents', enable them to achieve well. Sometimes, when activities are too closely directed, children mark time when they wait for instructions, and more able children could sometimes be challenged to write more.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children develop their mathematical skills well through play and practical activities.
- When activities lack sufficient challenge children mark time in their learning.

Commentary

59. Teaching and children's achievements in this area are satisfactory and most children are on course to reach the goals by the end of the reception year. In both classes there are good opportunities for children to develop their mathematics skills through such activities as counting and weighing the sweets in the 'sweet shop' in the reception class. Adults develop children's language well in the nursery so they learned to describe the clay bowls they made for the 'Three Bears' as big, middle-sized and small, and use the terms 'bigger' and 'smaller'. Good intervention by the teacher meant that a group of more able children estimated with good accuracy the number of moves a programmable toy needed to make to reach points on the floor map they had made. These kinds of activities continue to extend children's skills in the reception class where good demonstrations help children understand balance when weighing. When activities lack sufficient challenge, counting activities are not ambitious enough or too much time is spent in cutting and sticking shapes, progress in mathematical development is slowed, particularly for quicker learners.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievements are good because effective planning in both classes provides a rich and vibrant range of experiences that capture children's interest well.
- Excellent resources used most effectively mean that children in the reception class have a very good awareness of what life was like in the past.

Commentary

60. Planning for this area of learning is a strength in both classes. Good teaching helps children achieve well and they are comfortably on course to reach the goals by the time they move into Year 1. Imaginative planning provides a rich and vibrant range of practical experiences that clearly excite and fully absorb the children. In the nursery, effective planning of the 'Three Bears' theme has children making and tasting porridge, drawing a large-scale floor map showing the position of houses and other features in the story and using the computer mouse to click and drag shapes when creating their own picture of a house. They learn to join materials together and produce a large, sturdy class replica of an elephant linked to the story of 'Elmer'.
61. Outstanding experiences like the annual Grandparents Day bring topics very much to life for children in the reception class. There is inspirational use of an impressive collection of resources like an old desk, precious gifts, an old Welsh dresser and film showing old forms of transport and buildings. These create a strong sense of atmosphere and understanding of what life was like in the 1950s and 1960s. These experiences are made all the more real and detailed by the way a group of committed and very effective grandparents join in the play, riding on the steam train as children shovel on the coal. They ask and answer questions and

add their own telling anecdotes that add much to the fun, enjoyment and experience of the children. The interest this generates is long lasting, so that children remember what they learnt in detail, and eagerly explored the many activities that followed. The care that had gone into creating a model of an outside toilet was amply repaid by the excitement and language generated as children explored its “dark and spooky” interior with a torch, remembering not to leave it on too long “or the battery might run out”. This very good teaching means that children exceed the goals in their awareness and appreciation of what life was like in the past.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery do well in their physical development because good facilities provide regular opportunities for children to practise.
- The lack of an outdoor learning area in the reception class limits the opportunities children have to develop their physical skills outdoors.

Commentary

62. Teaching and children’s achievements in their physical development are satisfactory overall and most children reach the goals expected for their age by the time they leave the reception class. The nursery has good facilities for physical activities both indoors and outside; children have access to these throughout each session. Good supervision and interventions by adults mean that children use space carefully and learn to ride and steer wheeled toys with considerable skill.
63. There is no designated outdoor play area for the reception class, but regular sessions in the school hall have a clear focus and good use of demonstrations helps children improve their physical skills. Sometimes the pace is slowed when observations of these go on too long. Regular sessions using the nursery facilities and equipment set out for children in the nursery provide useful experience of climbing and riding, but do not provide enough scope for adaptation with the needs of older children in mind.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good opportunities for role-play help children do well in this aspect of creative development.

Commentary

64. The teaching in this area is good and children achieve well. Most reach the goals expected for their age by the time they leave the reception class. The provision for role-play is particularly good in both classes so that children learn to organise themselves and develop their play successfully. Children in the nursery make a good start in developing their imagination and enjoyment when taking on the roles of characters in well-known stories. They show confidence in acting out their roles because of the good teaching, for example by a nursery nurse who participates and helps them structure their play, using good quality props. The reception class has several activities with good potential for role-play that are very popular with the children. Great care goes into providing high quality resources and props. The realistic ‘station’

complete with steam train and booking office, and others like the sweet shop, all generate lots of interest. Children develop good skills in playing together, developing imaginative storylines and using their growing language skills in negotiating their play.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although achievement is currently satisfactory, standards in writing are below average.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and behave very well because teachers are lively in their presentations and the tasks set are often interesting.
- The systems for checking pupils' achievements and identifying what they need to do next are not thorough enough, so that lessons do not always take proper account of what pupils need to learn next, particularly in writing where more able pupils do not do well enough.
- A good partnership with parents in reading at home boosts pupils' skills in reading.
- Recent improvements in the leadership and management of English have identified where weaknesses lie, but systems for checking the quality and impact of teaching and pupils' achievements are not yet rigorous enough in ensuring that strengths are shared and weaknesses eliminated.

Commentary

65. Standards in English have fallen since the time of the last inspection, particularly in writing. Standards are below average in Year 2 and Year 6. Although pupils' achievement over time is unsatisfactory, their current level of achievement is satisfactory. This is because weaknesses in teaching in the past have led to underachievement, particularly in writing. These weaknesses are now being addressed systematically and effectively, although there is still some underachievement by the most able pupils by Year 2 and Year 6.
66. However, the standards judged in Year 6 during the inspection show a marked improvement compared to the very low standards evident in recent tests. This is partly due to the different abilities of pupils in the current year group and to the recent emphasis the school is placing on raising standards by the use of booster groups and improved teaching. This comes after a lengthy period during which time the school staffing was unsettled and did not keep pace with developments nationally. This meant that the school was slow to respond to the issues raised in the last inspection.
67. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall. Teachers are well organised and forge very good relationships with pupils so that lessons run smoothly. They are confident in their teaching and are clear about what pupils are to learn. Lively introductions and interesting activities successfully capture pupils' interest so they generally concentrate very well and work hard. Even in over-lengthy introductions they behave well. Teachers use the ten minutes set aside for registration very well in extending literacy skills. Activities are carefully focused on developing particular skills, such as awareness of adjectives and the use of different tenses that help pupils with their work in other lessons. Pupils quickly and independently settle to their work and their progress is good. When asked to work in pairs or small groups they are good at co-operating. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants and the activities set for them. They have good attitudes to their work and make good progress.
68. Even in teaching that is satisfactory or better, there remain some weaknesses when planned activities that do not take enough account of what pupils can already do and what they need to do next. This is the main cause of some unsatisfactory teaching and low achievement in writing. A good example was when the teacher modelled writing well, but the tasks that

followed did not allow the pupils to practise their own skills whilst ideas were fresh in their minds. There is often too little emphasis on the more able pupils in teachers' planning, so that their activities lack sufficient challenge. Too few reach the higher levels and they do not achieve as well as they might. In the lessons seen, progress in writing was slowed because there were too few opportunities for pupils to engage in writing at length.

69. Standards in listening in Year 2 and Year 6 are good, and in speaking they are satisfactory. In view of the limited speech and language skills of many pupils on entry to school, their achievements in both aspects are good. The school has rightly highlighted this aspect as a priority for improvement, and teaching is good. Teachers place a good emphasis on boosting pupils' skills in the activities they plan. Imaginative use of activities like talking partners, hot seating and role-play stimulates lively debates where pupils learn to express their thoughts clearly and persuasively whilst listening intently when others are speaking. These were often the best features of the good and very good lessons seen. The improvements are beginning to show in the vibrant language some pupils in Year 6 use in their written work and the confidence pupils often have in speaking. However, teachers do not always use the excitement such activities generate well enough as an immediate stimulus for pupils' writing.
70. The school has a system for checking pupils' attainments and has established clear principles for marking pupils' written work. This is at its best in Years 4 and 6 where there have been noticeable improvements in writing. In these years teachers provide useful comments that highlight the strengths, but also set clear written targets so that pupils know how to improve. This is not consistently used in other classes, and progress in writing is slowed because the checks on pupils' writing are not sufficiently frequent or precise. Too often, overly positive comments do not challenge pupils enough, and inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and handwriting persist for too long. Whilst most pupils write neatly and legibly using a cursive handwriting style, their handwriting sometimes deteriorates when teachers' expectations are too low and their own handwriting when marking books and writing on the board does not provide a good example.
71. The teaching of reading and pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Most children reach the levels expected for their age. A good partnership with parents who help their children learn to read at home boosts pupils' skills in reading considerably, particularly in Years 1 and 2. There is a good dialogue between teachers and parents so that each knows what needs to be done. Teachers and teaching assistants take time to read parental comments and to discuss them with pupils. A structured approach through the reading scheme soundly guides teachers. Teaching assistants and teachers provide good support in focusing pupils' attention when working with small groups of pupils. There is often a better emphasis on reading than writing in lessons, and teachers focus carefully on the basic skills pupils need to develop.
72. The leadership and management of English are both satisfactory. Only recently has the subject leader's role been improved alongside the establishment of a senior management team. Her role, supported effectively by the recently appointed headteacher, is evolving soundly. She is enthusiastic and eager to set about improvements and provides a good example for others in her own teaching. Senior managers have identified pupils' writing as a major focus for improvement. They have already set about instigating some improvements, for instance in the way teachers mark pupils' work and boost pupils' language skills and the systems for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. These are leading to improvements and a greater awareness of what needs to be done. However, there is still much to do. The analysis and evaluation of pupils' performance and checks on teaching are not precise enough in establishing strengths and weaknesses. This means that the features of the most effective teaching are not always identified and adopted by everyone and the weaknesses are not eliminated as quickly as they could be.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

73. This is unsatisfactory. The school does not have a clear plan to guide teachers in providing opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills in other subjects, particularly writing. The heavy use of unchallenging worksheets in subjects like geography and science means that pupils are not expected to write at length or develop reasons for conclusions in report writing. Their achievements are slowed because they have too little practice in organising and extending their own writing for different purposes.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is some good teaching throughout the school.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils are well behaved in the majority of lessons.
- Pupils are taught a range of strategies for calculating their answers, thus helping to increase their understanding.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Assessment arrangements are clearly identified but the information is not used consistently to tailor the work for differently attaining pupils.
- High ability pupils are not always sufficiently well challenged.

Commentary

74. Satisfactory teaching leads to pupils achieving as well as could reasonably be expected from the start of Year 1 to the end of Year 6, therefore achievement is satisfactory. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and by the time the pupils leave the school at age 11. Work in lessons and over time in books indicates that standards overall are average even though the national tests results in 2004 were above average. This would suggest that pupils are well prepared for their tests through booster classes and good teaching in Years 2 and 6.
75. An above average number of pupils with special educational needs and an identified unnecessary slowing of progress over time have contributed to the fact that achievement has only been satisfactory. A lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils also restricts progress. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs is often good due to the high quality of the support they receive. Here, methods of teaching are often helpful and support rapid learning from a low base of understanding mainly because it is clear what needs to be learned next. However, not all work is planned so effectively to meet the individual needs of pupils. Teachers do not always use assessment information well enough to inform the tailoring of the national teaching guidelines.
76. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory although there is some good teaching throughout the school. In these lessons teachers have higher expectations and pupils are appropriately challenged and supported. A weakness identified at the previous inspection is now being effectively remedied as pupils are taught a variety of ways of calculating their answers. This is successfully developing their knowledge and understanding. Good teaching also ensures that pupils are well behaved and can apply their numeracy skills in practical situations such as in finding perimeters and explaining how using patterns in numbers can help resolve problems.
77. Despite having a policy which acknowledges the need to plan work that is closely matched to pupils' needs and interests, this practice is inconsistent. This also applies to pupils of higher ability being fully extended through more challenging activities. Assessment and tracking procedures are clearly identified, but are not used effectively by all teachers. Marking of work is very variable and does not always inform pupils as to how they might improve. Target setting is not embedded as teachers and pupils have not yet had time to promote these in focusing on

what needs to be learned and how this will impact on achievement. Springboard and booster classes have been successfully introduced to improve standards.

78. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. A recent focus on mathematics has resulted in a distinct improvement in the enthusiasm for teaching the subject. Systems are now in place and teachers are well informed about the national guidelines and ways of teaching mathematics. Although priorities for development of the subject are appropriate there has been a delay in acting upon them due to unsettled staffing. The National Numeracy Strategy is now fully operational and statutory requirements are fully met.

Numeracy across the curriculum

79. This is satisfactory. The mathematics policy clearly identifies how numeracy can be developed across the curriculum but planned opportunities are still limited. In geography pupils are familiar with constructing line graphs to plot rainfall. They add and subtract accurately to calculate average amounts of water that are used on a daily basis. Tally charts have been constructed as part of a litter survey. In history, pupils establish a sense of time through the use of timelines.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too few pupils are attaining high standards.
- Scientific investigations are undemanding.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their science work and they behave very well.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and learn effectively.
- Assessments of pupils' achievements are not used to determine what pupils should learn next.
- Measuring and ICT are underused to quantify the results of science work.
- The use of subject language means pupils explain their work with precision.

Commentary

80. Pupils attain nationally expected standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and have satisfactory achievement overall. However, the work of the higher attaining pupils does not ensure that they reach the levels that they should. The work does not challenge them enough and so progress is slowed. This is because too little time is spent on activities which require them to carry out scientific investigations and which demand higher levels of thinking and interpretation. Instead they make notes about scientific facts, label prepared diagrams and record the results of simple practical experiments which they carry out. These activities contribute to the pupils' understanding of scientific knowledge but are not sufficiently testing of their skills of analysis and deduction. Also, particularly for the older pupils, this does not encourage independence in controlling and managing investigations which require careful measurement and recording.
81. The pupils enjoy their science work and behave very well. When asked to talk about their work they do so with interest and clarity and are able to recall salient facts and information. Their knowledge spans the appropriate aspects of the National Curriculum; pupils in Year 2 know about simple materials and that ice turns to water when the temperature rises and that it can be changed back, whereas those in Year 6 know that when things burn a non-reversible chemical change has occurred. They know about the way the body works and most pupils of

different ages understand the health and safety features associated with their work, such as keeping warm, avoiding and controlling toxic gases and respecting the dangers involved when working with naked flames. Pupils with special educational needs also contribute well and respond positively to the appropriate challenges which are set for them and to support which they are given. They undertake appropriate practical work and are effectively helped to understand the significance of it.

82. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use vocabulary carefully and accurately when introducing and explaining lessons. In Year 4, for example, a lesson on forces and friction caught the interest of pupils because of the precise language used to describe the application of friction in gripping and sliding. Pupils in discussion, in pairs, used correct vocabulary about ways to measure forces and showed good understanding, but the practical work was planned only for the next lesson. The pupils could have moved on more quickly to carrying out the investigations, but this work was delayed unnecessarily.
83. Teaching is effectively planned against the National Curriculum but too little emphasis is given to teaching areas of knowledge and understanding through making hypotheses and practical investigations. Planning takes too little account of what pupils already know and can do. Although work is in hand to improve the assessment of pupils' progress, currently it does not impact sufficiently on the planning for the next steps of learning. Marking is not effectively linked to pupils' learning targets in that teachers' comments in pupils' workbooks do not focus on how successful pupils have been and in particular on what individuals were trying to improve, nor do they point the way forward for further improvement.
84. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use a range of measuring equipment to quantify their work in science. Whilst in a Year 2 lesson pupils used electronic stop watches to measure the time taken for ice cubes to change to water and in Year 1 they graphed results using a computer, there is little recorded work and few verbal commentaries which indicate that measurement is used sufficiently in science work with pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school has a computer-linked microscope and recent purchases include sensory equipment for measuring environmental data such as light, sound and temperature, but these are not yet in regular use, mainly because science investigations are not well developed. ICT is not contributing to the science curriculum as much as it could.
85. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Despite the weaknesses in investigations, the co-ordinator has developed the curriculum and ensured that pupils have maintained a satisfactory level of performance overall. The correct priorities for improvement have been identified in the action plan. These are in the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and in developing aspects of science investigation. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning about and using ICT.
- Staff make good use of ICT in their teaching.
- Pupils find information using ICT effectively and present ideas well.
- Pupils do not use the range of ICT resources available.

Commentary

86. Progress since the last inspection has been good as pupils in Year 6 attain satisfactory levels in ICT, even though some aspects of control technology remain underdeveloped.

87. The standards attained by Years 2 and 6 are broadly average for pupils of their age and achievement is satisfactory. Standards achieved in aspects of control technology are limited because regular access to the full range of ICT experience and resources is not good enough. However, pupils are confident in, for example, making a programmable toy move to their commands and in finding and presenting information from the Internet. In many aspects such as these achievement is good. The ICT co-ordinator and staff have improved their own skills and understanding. The access pupils have to new facilities such as computers in the classrooms and the use of computer-linked interactive whiteboards is good. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.
88. By Year 2, pupils are confident about finding words that they need on the computer-linked interactive whiteboard and about editing simple word-processing work they are doing. In Year 1 pupils are proficient at collecting data and using a simple program to convert their findings into picture graphs. Pupils are able to talk about and demonstrate how they have used different programs, such as logging instructions into a programmable computer, word processing, number games and simple databases. They are careful as they learn to save and retrieve work. Pupils have not developed skills in using sensors to record changes in temperature, light or sound. Not enough ICT is being used to take measurements such as these, even though the school has an appropriate set of resources for them to do so.
89. By Year 6 pupils demonstrate satisfactory standards and are keen to make use of ICT. They are enthusiastic about the success they are having in gaining new skills and understanding. For example, in Year 6, pupils have effectively used clip-art, digital photographs and sound to produce an audio-visual presentation for helping newcomers to settle into school. They have also used the Internet to import a range of ideas and materials including facial pictures displaying different emotions, and various themes on religion, to create high quality *PowerPoint* presentations.
90. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with teachers making increasing use of ICT in their work as their own confidence improves. The installation of the computer-linked interactive whiteboards throughout the school has focused the attention of teachers and pupils on ICT and some good use is made of this equipment, for example in using touch-screen information buttons to find the meaning of words contained in a poem displayed on the screen.
91. Examples of the use of ICT to support learning are evident in teachers' planning across the curriculum and for all age groups, but the breadth of its application is still narrow with respect to science and particularly in the use of control technology.
92. Since the last inspection teachers have improved their own skill and confidence by participating in training and applying their knowledge and skills to teaching with laptops and interactive whiteboards. Pupils are good at learning alongside the teachers and sometimes they adapt ideas quickly and move ahead! Some resources have improved and this represents a significant change over time but other pieces of equipment and software need the new investment which has been planned. The use of control technology is still limited and specific training in its application is not in evidence. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

93. This is satisfactory. The links made with ICT in many classes are incidental rather than planned systematically. This limits the occasions when children can consolidate their ICT skills in different subjects, especially in Years 1 and 2 and in science throughout the school. Nevertheless, examples of ICT are evident in many activities and there are good examples in Years 3 to 6 in English, mathematics, history, personal and social education, religious education and music.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.
- Pupils develop good understanding of historical terminology.
- Good planning of tasks and resources leads to very effective learning.

Commentary

94. Although only lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6 were seen, other observations of pupils' work in books, a visit to the 'Grandparents' Day' in the reception class and conversations with pupils show standards by Year 2 and by Year 6 to be above average and levels of achievement to be good throughout. Pupils show a keen interest in their work. This is the result of committed teaching to encourage pupils to look carefully at the evidence they have in order to glean what information they can. Very good support for pupils with special educational needs, for example in interpreting drama activities about events in history, ensures that they make good progress.
95. Children in reception make a good start to exploring history by inviting grandparents into the school to share a day with them. This is an annual event and the verdict of grandparents is that it gets better year on year. Pupils dress up as their grandparents would have done when they were young and use a range of resources that were common both in and out of the home. Visiting grandparents lend some authenticity to the venture, showing pupils how meat was minced and how fish was sold. An "authentic" outdoor toilet was a sight to behold, complete with hanging spiders and all manner of creepy-crawlies. No sophisticated toilet rolls here – only squares of newspaper hanging on string from nails in the wall.
96. Good planning of tasks and resources leads to very effective learning. Pupils in Year 6 are good at researching information; they use a range of resources both in and out of school to acquire their ideas and material. For example, ICT, including the Internet, was used very effectively to explore the life and death of John Lennon. As the haunting tune of *Imagine* filled the classroom, pupils listened with attention. This helps their learning. They offered informed judgements on what the words meant to them and why they think the song was written. Year 4 pupils demonstrated good recall of facts about the Egyptians and good factual knowledge of the value of the River Nile. They use and understand historical terminology very well. Year 5 pupils are eager to find out about Greek gods and goddesses after linking their work to a literacy lesson on myths and legends.
97. The quality of teaching is good. An improvement since the previous inspection has been a broadening of activities. Drama is used effectively to enable pupils to examine the composition of tomb paintings and interpret them through movement. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to enable pupils with special educational needs to have access to the curriculum. Good opportunities are provided for all pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. However, despite being encouraged to write in their own words there are times when opportunities to develop pupils' writing further are missed. Work is regularly marked and comments are supportive and give pupils useful guidance.
98. Leadership and management are satisfactory. They are a shared responsibility which is in its infancy. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. Resources are good and are used well, particularly artefacts from the Second World War which are often supplied

by parents and grandparents. They are well prepared for use in lessons and help bring about effective learning.

Geography

99. No overall judgement can be made about geography since no lessons were observed. An examination of pupils' work in books indicates that by Year 6 there is good coverage of the syllabus and that standards are average and achievement is satisfactory.
100. There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets, sometimes hand-written by the teacher. This does not help pupils to develop independently and further their opportunities to improve their own writing. Most of the work seen was the same for all abilities with little thought given to planning for individual needs. Marking is often weak and does not indicate to pupils how well they are doing.
101. There are some good examples of the development of numeracy skills in the pupils' geography files. Pupils demonstrate that they are capable of adding and subtracting to calculate the amount of water used over a given time. Line graphs are used to plot rainfall and tally charts record information for a litter survey.
102. Teachers have used the recent Tsunami tragedy in Asia to study earthquakes and tidal waves. Pupils have also focused on lifestyles in Sri Lanka resulting in some impressive written and illustrated work being displayed in the hall.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is successfully preparing pupils for life in a multi-faith society.
- Pupils learn effectively about their roles and responsibilities in life.

Commentary

103. Although only two lessons were observed, evidence has been taken from teachers' planning, assemblies, displays in classrooms and around the school and pupils' books. Standards are judged to be average. Whilst the larger part of teaching reflects Christian traditions, the school successfully prepares pupils for life in a multi-faith and multicultural society. The school is built on the quality of its relationships and its core values of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance underpin the teaching.
104. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve satisfactorily. Knowledgeable teaching successfully introduces the idea that some people follow different religions and rules. Pupils accept that other people may have different beliefs and values but that you cannot necessarily tell by looking at them. However, some pupils are adamant that they can tell from a collection of photographs which children are Jewish.
105. By the end of Year 6 satisfactory achievement is maintained. As pupils move through the school they learn about the Bible and its stories of Jesus. Year 3 pupils develop an insight into the meaning of friendship. They design cards to celebrate the occasion of Diwali. In Year 4 pupils make interesting comparisons, such as those between Christianity and Islam. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 successfully learn about holy books and what makes them special. They are able to use their knowledge of Bible stories to perform a simple scene about the baptism of Jesus by John. Working alongside a local clergyman in assembly they created an occasion

which was valued by other pupils. Pupils are aware of how they can show love for people in different ways. The whole school has been involved in fund raising for the Tsunami victims.

106. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as others and often make highly salient observations about the meaning of events in the stories they hear. Teaching assistants help them to understand the work most effectively.
107. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils show a keen interest in their lessons and try hard to present their work well. However, variable teaching does not always sufficiently develop this enthusiasm for learning. Opportunities for pupils to find out things for themselves are missed. Where teaching is lively and interesting pupils are appropriately stimulated. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to express their ideas in extended writing, a fact highlighted at the previous inspection. Procedures for assessment have still not been established and this hinders progress. Shared co-ordination of the subject has prioritised religious education for development but this development is only at the discussion stage and therefore provision remains satisfactory. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design and Design and technology

108. Limited evidence was available during the inspection as no lessons were seen. Examples of teachers' planning and pupils' work were scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils and teachers about their work.
109. Consequently, no overall judgements can be made in **art and design** and **design and technology**. Planning for **art and design** has improved. Aspects like three-dimensional work, that were weak when the school was last inspected, have been successfully improved. Appropriate opportunities are now provided as when pupils in Year 1 created an attractive sculpture using twigs and different types of fibres. Some of the artwork on display is of good quality, like the imaginative interpretations of faces using pastels created by pupils in Year 6.
110. Evidence from the work displayed around the school shows that **design and technology** is now taught in line with national requirements. Projects become increasingly complex as pupils move through the school, and pupils have access to a suitable range of materials in their work. They have worked with card to produce wheeled vehicles, fabrics to make money containers, foods to produce sandwiches and a variety of materials to make musical instruments. There is a greater emphasis on helping pupils develop their skills in designing, planning and evaluating their projects. In the work seen, pupils' work is now satisfactory. Their plans and evaluations become more detailed as they move through the school.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A highly enriched curriculum leads to above average standards and good achievement.
- Pupils demonstrate very good attitudes to learning.
- Good use is made of resources and visiting musicians, resulting from good subject leadership and management.

Commentary

111. Standards are above average and achievement is good by the end of Years 2 and 6. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers confidently prepare and lead exciting lessons and encourage a high proportion of the pupils to learn an orchestral instrument by Year 6. Other visiting musicians make a positive contribution to enriching the curriculum. They teach brass, string and woodwind instruments and pupils are able to use these skills in class music lessons. This helps other pupils to be motivated in both composition and performance.
112. The quality of singing throughout the school in lessons and assemblies is above average and the school enjoys a good reputation for the high quality performances by the school choir in district festivals. Pupils enjoy music and perform confidently, demonstrating very good control of pitch and rhythm.
113. By Year 2 pupils sing well in unison. They compose rhythms collaboratively, using a wide range of percussion instruments. They record their music to tape and repeat their compositions. Although the title and composer of the music played in assembly were promoted each day and were well 'signposted' by posters and reminders, pupils in Years 1 and 2 could not recall either when asked, due to a lack of expectation to be able to do so. Nevertheless, such musical intervals help develop good listening skills and, with the programme of well-

planned lessons, offer good opportunities for evaluating and performing music; less so for actual composing.

114. By Year 6 most pupils read and use simplified musical notation to record their compositions. After listening to a South American Bossa Nova, they used a range of instruments including a cornet, flutes, strings, electronic keyboards, chime bars, xylophones and glockenspiels to practise and perform their own particular parts in self-conducting groups, before coming together to perform a class orchestral piece. Achievement by all groups in this lesson was good.
115. Achievement for most groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Pupils with special educational needs sing well and perform with good discipline, rhythm and timing when playing instruments. Positive attitudes are expressed by pupils who are keen and motivated about the broad range of musical opportunities offered to them. Extra-curricular clubs include ocarina classes, orchestra and choir. Overall provision and the levels achieved by the pupils in music reflect good leadership and management of the subject. Progress since the previous inspection has been good as good provision has been maintained.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High motivation in the pupils leads to above average standards and good achievement.
- There are very good links with the community and extra-curricular opportunities to develop sport and fitness.

Commentary

116. Standards attained by the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average and achievement is good. Pupils have good opportunities to cover all the necessary elements of the National Curriculum in physical education. They take part in an appropriate range of gymnastic, dance and sporting activities and utilise special opportunities (for example the older pupils during their residential visits) for outdoor challenges such as following trails in unfamiliar environments. This full range of endeavour helps to maintain high standards.
117. In Years 1 and 2 pupils get changed and present well for physical education lessons. They understand how they feel during different physical activities. They know about warming up and calming and cooling down and can describe what they have done and how they felt about it. Teaching and learning are good. For example, a rhythmic gymnastics lesson in Year 2 tested the basic skills of movement and flow that the pupils had learned previously. They selected new ideas to add into their sequences with flying ribbons as a way of emphasising the shapes, levels and speeds of the movements they had chosen. The lesson moved with pace and purpose and the pupils had to think hard about the quality of their movements as well as making physical demands upon themselves.
118. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is also good. Clear objectives and good subject knowledge in leading the lessons give pupils the chance to apply their skills safely and with ambition. For example, a gymnastics lesson built up sequences from the floor and onto the large apparatus. Pupils showed control and tension in their movements and balances. From their own options they selected well for the development of this work to symmetrical pairs. The phase of evaluating and improving performances to the highest levels was less effective.
119. Swimming has been offered to a wide section of pupils and this has brought high standards. By Year 6 all pupils can swim at least 25 metres unaided and nearly all undertake advanced

qualifications in personal survival and/or life saving. Closure of the local pool for rebuilding work means that the swimming programme is to be suspended in the near future.

120. There are clubs for football, cricket, 'high fives' netball, rugby, dance/drama and keep fit. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to represent the school in teams and play in a range of friendly games against other schools. Good links exist with local clubs and sports coaches, particularly for cricket where some pupils get to play on Northamptonshire's County Ground. Facilities in school are good with a large well-equipped hall, hard outdoor play areas and a playing field. The range and quality of the provision and the levels of achievement across the school are good and reflect well on the good quality of the leadership and management of the subject. Progress since the previous inspection is good as good provision has been maintained.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Provision in personal, social and health education (and citizenship) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Involvement of the special needs co-ordinator ensures pupils are well supported.
- Personal and social elements are very well taught in nursery and reception classes and pupils respond very well.
- The school's use of outside agencies supplements the personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum well.

Commentary

121. The policy to ensure full linkage with other subjects in the curriculum has recently been reviewed. Links with the sex education and revised behaviour and anti-bullying policies are incorporated and are helping the programme to become embedded effectively across the curriculum. The school has a good range of resources available. The policy is introduced through assemblies, lessons in religious education, participation in the school's council and weekly circle time, where pupils gather as a whole class and discuss personal concerns or problems. Pupils are encouraged to voice their opinions and feelings openly and, where possible, to resolve the issues raised for themselves. This is very beneficial to the development of their independence in learning.
122. Sex education and drug/substance abuse issues are covered by the Year 6 staff and the school nurse. Further instruction on drugs, alcohol and personal safety is provided by outside agencies such as the police and speakers from the Temperance Society. Through effective teaching, the school has achieved bronze standard for the Healthy Schools Award and is about to receive silver standard to mark the good progress made.
123. Good behaviour and good social attitudes are taught as soon as children enter the nursery and standards achieved there prepare children well for the later age groups. These children are helped to develop confidence and are taught to recognise the difference between right and wrong. They are taught that friends care for each other. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given additional responsibilities in order to develop their sense of responsibility. Every pupil has a folio of personal achievement where they can compile their own chosen records of good work and deeds. Achievements gained outside school are also recognised and celebrated. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, their overall personal development is good, illustrated by their responsible behaviour towards themselves and others.
124. Many aspects of geography and religious education cause citizenship issues to be raised in discussions. These promote the personal, social and health education of pupils effectively and particularly their awareness of citizenship. Specific 'citizenship tuition' is currently being trialled with a small group of pupils who attend weekly sessions to learn how to recognise and respect

differences between people and to prepare to play an active role as members of the community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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