

INSPECTION REPORT

MOUNT C OF E PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Newark

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122747

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Bunnell

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 6th to 8th December 2004

Inspection number: 267355

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 3 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 172

School address: Kings Road
Newark
Nottinghamshire
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of Mrs M V Brock
governors:

Date of previous 2nd July 2001
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average size Church of England primary school with 172 pupils, including 23 children attending part-time in the Nursery class. There are almost twice as many boys as there are girls, with significant imbalance in Year 1. The area the school serves is one of considerable social and economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is currently 55 per cent, which is well above the national average. Attainment on entry is very low. Most of the pupils are from white English speaking families and there are six from mixed race backgrounds. However, the percentage of pupils learning English as an additional language is very low at less than one per cent. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behaviour difficulties, is twice the national average at 33 per cent. About a third of the pupils come from the town's permanent Traveller site. There is high number of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual time of admission, with only about 30 per cent of the pupils remaining from the start of Year 1 to the end of Year 6. The school is involved in local and national initiatives including the Intensive Literacy and Numeracy Support programmes and Investors in People. The school moved to a new building, which was only completed in September 2004. Community provision at the school includes adult education and family learning programmes.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22261	Mrs Barbara E Doughty	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology
14141	Mr Ernie Marshall	Lay inspector	
14976	Mr Peter Dexter	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History Religious education
17794	Mr Dave Hardman	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school that gives good value for money. Effective leadership and management have brought about a firm upward trend in performance. Although standards are below nationally expected levels, good teaching means that most pupils do well and learning is good, hampered only by some intermittent attendance that the school is working hard to deal with.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get off to a very good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Most pupils achieve well, but the progress of some is affected by unsatisfactory attendance.
- Good behaviour management means that most pupils behave well most of the time; they enjoy learning and work hard, but some are unsure about what to work on next and how to improve, and their poor speaking, spelling and handwriting skills adversely affect the standards they reach.
- Good account is taken of the needs and circumstances of pupils from different backgrounds; those with special educational needs are supported well and their achievement is good.
- Learning opportunities are interesting and enhanced well by after-school clubs, visits and visitors.
- The head teacher gives a very good steer to improvement; effective management systems mean that she, the subject leaders, and the governors know the school well.

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection two years ago. Standards have risen year on year, particularly in English and mathematics, and significantly faster than nationally. The school has dealt with all of the key issues. Pupils' behaviour is better than it was and teaching has improved. Good achievement has been maintained, but the spasmodic attendance of some pupils still affects their progress.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Standards are below nationally expected levels overall, but pupils' achievement is good. Although official figures show that this school does not usually do as well in the tests as similar schools, the comparative data must be treated with extreme caution because of the very high number of pupils who join the school between Years 1 and 6 (68 per cent), the high incidence of special educational needs (31 per cent) and the preponderance of boys. Those pupils who remain at this school from Years 1 to 6, and who attend regularly, do well. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well; they do very well in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. However, in all areas of learning most of them are long ways off reaching the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are well below average in English, mainly because of pupils' poor speaking, spelling and handwriting skills, and they are below average in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 2 in information and communication technology (ICT), as new resources start to impact on learning, but pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily because they are still catching up on skills they should have learnt sooner. Pupils achieve well in religious education, although standards

are well below the requirements of the agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and below them at the end of Year 6. Pupils' personal qualities are good, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good but the unsatisfactory attendance of some pupils adversely affects their learning.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is good overall. The learning of children in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good because teachers have a clear understanding about how children learn through observation and exploration. Learning is exciting and children are inspired by the activities. Adults work and play alongside the children, asking just the right questions at just the right moment to extend children's ideas and move them onto the next step. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good overall; it is imaginative, learning is enhanced and there is a high level of interest from the pupils. The learning of pupils with special educational needs is good because work is tailored well to their needs and teaching assistants support them well. Adults relate well to all pupils and expect them to work hard. Teaching takes good account of what pupils should learn by a particular age, but has insufficient regard to pupils' individual needs and this means that pupils are not well enough aware of what they need to learn next. Whilst teachers mark pupils' work regularly, their comments do not give pupils a clear enough idea of how they can improve their work next time. In addition, teaching does not do as much as it could to develop pupils' speaking skills, nor does it tackle well enough their poor spelling and handwriting. The curriculum is good and the school cares well for pupils; its work with the community, local colleges, and other schools is very good. The effective partnership that the school has with parents means that parents are confident about visiting the school and participating in school life.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. Leadership, management and governance are all good and the governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. The head teacher's infectious enthusiasm is inspirational and she is the main drive behind the school's success. A clear sense of shared purpose permeating throughout the school means that staff and governors are all pulling in the same direction. The school is highly successful in integrating everyone into its work; everyone associated with the school is treated fairly and with high regard to their backgrounds, beliefs and circumstances. Senior managers and governors know the school well and because of this are fully aware of what works well and what needs improving. Barriers to improvement are overcome and despite some challenging situations that the school has to tackle, it identifies, pursues and eradicates the weaknesses and moves on.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are happy with this school. Pupils like the teachers and are confident that they will support them all equally and prepare them well for their future. Parents value the way in which staff listen to and act on their views and opinions.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve pupils' speaking, spelling, handwriting and presentation skills.
- Ensure that pupils are clear about what they can do to improve their work.
- Find ways of improving the attendance and progress of pupils who miss school regularly.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Almost all pupils achieve well through the school. They make good progress from a very low starting point, although standards are still below the nationally expected level by the time the pupils leave the school at the age of eleven.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well at this school, although standards are greatly affected by the high incidence of special educational needs and the preponderance of boys; in addition, the progress of some pupils is adversely affected by their poor attendance.
- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a very good start and their achievement in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy is very good.
- Poor speaking, spelling and handwriting skills affect standards in all subjects.

Commentary

1. The tables below show that by the end of Years 2 and 6, test results at this school are well below those in most other schools. However, because of extenuating circumstances, this national comparative data must be treated with extreme caution. Even so, from the work seen, standards in English are well below those expected nationally at the age of seven and eleven and in mathematics and science they are below. However, because of effective teaching, pupils achieve well over time, especially in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.3 (13.5)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.4 (14.2)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.1 (15.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 22 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.9 (23.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.1 (23.5)	27.0 (26.8)
science	26.0 (25.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 25 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Since the previous report in 2002, the Year 6 test results have risen year on year, particularly in English and mathematics, and significantly faster than the national upward trend, with more pupils now reaching the nationally expected level and above. This is despite some extremely challenging circumstances that could easily have slowed the pace of change including the very low attainment children start school with, the high number of pupils that come new to the school between Years 1 and 6 (sometimes not having been in school before), the high percentage of boys compared with girls, the significant number of pupils that take extended

breaks from their schooling to travel the country with their families, and the high incidence of special educational needs. Those pupils who do stay at this school from start to finish, and those who attend regularly, make good and sometimes very good progress. However, pupils who are away from school while travelling with their families inevitably miss vital chunks of their learning which slows their progress.

3. Although in all areas of learning, most children fall well short of reaching the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year, they do well given the very low attainment they start school with. They achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. This is despite the fact that many children start in the Nursery class reluctant to communicate, whilst others converse using single words or gestures. However, staff persevere; they talk constantly to the children, acting as good role models and encouraging them to talk back. They set up exciting things for the children to do that promote their personal and social skills well by encouraging them to talk and work together and play with each other. Although progress is slow, children make good headway and by the end of the Reception Year, most are developing into secure learners who are starting to communicate, albeit reservedly, with others.
4. These developing speaking skills are not built on well enough in Years 1 to 6, however, although focus on giving pupils experiences about which they can talk and write is starting to impact on standards in writing in particular. However, the rate of improvement is being slowed because pupils have too few opportunities to rephrase what they say to make it more coherent. Teachers tend to model changes too infrequently, at the expense of asking the pupils to think of different ways they can say things. Pupils' narrow vocabulary is impacting detrimentally on standards across all subjects, as are their poor spelling and handwriting skills. The school has identified this as a priority weakness to deal with and is currently working hard to bring about some improvement. However, not enough has yet been done and pupils consequently struggle to accurately, for example, record their work in science, write reports in history, and label designs in design and technology. In addition, not enough is done in ICT lessons to teach pupils to use the spell-check facility on the computers, or in lessons to use dictionaries and thesauruses, hindering progress further.
5. Analysis of how well individual pupils achieve over time shows that those pupils who remain at this school from the start of Year 1 to the end of Year 6, and those who attend regularly, do well. However, there are some who take too much time off school and others who take several months travelling the country with their families, returning having not attended any other school in the meantime. The school works hard and does all it can to make up the learning that these pupils miss, including giving them possible homework activities whilst they are away so that families themselves can compensate for their children missing formal lessons. However, the fact is that some miss so much schooling that it adversely affects their progress and the standards that the school can reasonably be expected to attain.
6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because the work is tailored to their needs and these pupils are supported effectively in lessons and in small group withdrawal sessions.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attitudes and behaviour are good overall. The provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance is very low, but punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Through its consistent approach to behaviour management, the school successfully promotes pupils' good behaviour.
- Pupils are interested in lessons and concentrate well.

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have very good attitudes to learning and make good progress.
- Spasmodic attendance by some pupils means that they do not achieve as well as they could.

Commentary

7. Through its recognition and rewarding of positive behaviour and attitudes, the school effectively promotes good behaviour and is seeing significant improvement in this aspect of its work. School and class rules are made very clear to pupils and parents. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss these rules and the reasons why they are necessary; as a result, they know what is expected and what will not be accepted. There is now a clear sense of mutual respect between pupils, and pupils and staff, with pupils from different backgrounds getting on extremely well together. No bullying or other forms of harassment were seen during the inspection. As a result, this school is a happy community where pupils are valued and work well together in pairs or groups; they show an interest in what is being taught and try hard. They share resources sensibly and are happy to take on extra responsibilities in class and around the school; for example, older pupils look after younger ones at lunchtimes. The building of the new school has provided a unique opportunity for pupils and parents to become involved in shaping the facilities, particularly the outdoor areas; this joint working has done much to bring a sense of pride and belonging to the school community.
8. To foster the good relationships between pupils, the school's reward system not only includes awards for good work, effort and behaviour, but also for other qualities such as friendship and helpfulness. The school encourages all parents to attend the weekly award assemblies so that they can share the pride of their children.
9. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development through, for example, assemblies, art, music, drama and dance. Its close links with the church are a strength and its work with the local secondary school, a performing arts specialist school, provides many opportunities for pupils to enjoy the arts. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and their moral and social development is good. Through lessons and visits, pupils have gained a good knowledge of their own culture and are given many valuable opportunities to study other cultures, world faiths, and different beliefs. The school provides lessons in French and has close links with a school in Africa. Pupils are taught to appreciate the importance of listening to and respecting each other's points of view, such as similarities and differences between the traditions of the travelling and non-travelling families.
10. Although the school works hard to promote good attendance through monitoring absence on a daily basis, this has had little impact as yet and attendance is unsatisfactory. This is because some parents do not encourage their children to attend school regularly and some families take extended periods travelling. Absences are monitored by the family workers and same-day contact is made with the parents to discuss any problems. The educational welfare officer works closely with the school to support its drive for better attendance.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.5	School data	3.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

11. There were a relatively high number of exclusions last year involving six pupils. They centred on serious behaviour issues, followed correct procedures, and were appropriately designed to improve behaviour. So far this year there has been one exclusion, indicating the growing impact of the school's successful behaviour management policy.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	89	6	0
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2		
Mixed – White and Black African	2		
No ethnic group recorded	77		

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Learning opportunities are exciting and relevant and the school takes particularly good account of pupils' different backgrounds. The school has established good relationship with parents, who are listened to and whose views acted upon.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils learn well; teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage and good in Years 1 to 6. The assessment of pupils' work is accurate and the information is used well in the Nursery and Reception Years; it is used satisfactorily in Years 1 to 6 and well in providing for pupils with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Purposeful and exciting activities in the Nursery and Reception classes mean that children get off to a very good start.
- The learning of pupils with special educational needs is good because the work is tailored to their needs and these pupils are supported well in lessons.
- Throughout the school, lessons are prepared well and organised effectively; pupils know what they are doing and, most importantly, why they are doing it.
- Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and enhance pupils' learning significantly.
- Teaching makes learning interesting most of the time; it takes good account of how pupils learn through first hand experience, but sometimes pupils are kept listening to lengthy explanations when what they want to do is get on with their tasks.
- Teaching has good regard to what pupils of different ages must be taught and tailors the work to suit the learning of differently attaining groups, but insufficient regard is given to pupils' individual learning needs and marking does not set pupils targets for further improvement.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop their speaking, spelling and handwriting skills.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	3	19	7	0	0	0

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

12. Effective teaching throughout the school means that most pupils make good progress and achieve well. This school has come a long way since its last inspection because of effective leadership and management; teaching is much improved and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Throughout the school, lessons are well prepared and organised effectively. Teaching assistants, and the teaching students currently working in school, make a significant contribution to the quality of the teaching and learning. They work very well with teachers and are fully aware of their role and how they are expected to work with the pupils. They relate extremely well to pupils and expect them to work hard – a challenge which most pupils rise to most of the time. Teachers make sure that pupils know what they are meant to learn by the end of lessons and this means that pupils see purpose in working hard.
13. Those pupils with special educational needs are taught well. This is because individual education plans set out clear individualised targets which the teachers use to tailor the work to meet the pupils' needs and to which the support assistants have good regard.
14. For the rest of the pupils, teaching takes good account of what pupils should learn by a particular age, year group targets are well established, and pupils are taught in ability groups. However, teachers have insufficient regard to the variety of needs within each group. Individuals are not as aware as they should be about what they personally know and need to learn and work on next. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, which gives them and the support assistants some detailed information about pupils' knowledge and understanding. But the comments that teachers write in pupils' workbooks do not give pupils a clear enough idea of what they, as individuals, need to work on next time. Whilst the school has made a start in involving pupils in assessing their own achievements, this is in its infancy and not yet well enough established.
15. Children get off to a very good start in the Foundation Stage where staff help them to feel secure, gain confidence and learn to communicate and get along with others. Teachers and support assistants manage this so successfully because they have a very good understanding of how children learn through exploration and observation. Their teaching styles match the learning styles of the children because teaching takes place whilst children are busy working and this means that children's ideas are extended, their interest is maintained, and they learn as they go along.
16. Whilst this approach is in place in Years 1 to 6, it is not as embedded and occasionally pupils lose interest because they have to sit through lengthy explanations and instructions before they get round to carrying out their tasks. When teaching is imaginative, as it often is, learning is greatly enhanced and there is a high level of interest from the pupils. For example, in a Year 3 ICT lesson, the teacher used a large white sheet with grid references drawn on it. She moved 'pirate ships' around the grid following pupils' instructions. Because this was based on the practical, pupils understood well and later successfully programmed the floor robot to move around a smaller grid.
17. There are, however, too many missed opportunities for teachers to extend pupils' speaking, spelling and handwriting skills. Pupils often respond to teachers' questions with one word or short phrases. The words they choose are not always appropriate and do not give the message clearly enough. Teachers tend to rephrase the pupils' answers, mostly to save time, but also in an attempt not to take away pupils' confidence. Whilst this gives pupils a good model of speech to copy, it deprives them of the opportunity to practise having a go at rephrasing their explanations or finding more accurate words to say what they mean, slowing their progress. In addition, some of the pupils' work, across all of the subjects, is littered with careless spellings, which go unchecked and untidy handwriting, which is not commented on. This does little to improve the quality of pupils' writing.

The curriculum

The school provides an effective curriculum that is enriched well by a wide range of activities, clubs, visits and visitors outside normal lessons. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The school makes a determined effort to include all pupils in school life.
- The extra-curricular activities are stimulating and enrich pupils' learning opportunities well.
- The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- Not enough is done to improve skills in English, mathematics and science through individual learning targets for all pupils, not just those with special educational needs.

Commentary

18. Pupils have a very good beginning to their school life because of the breadth of the rich opportunities they experience in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum in the rest of the school builds on this well with a strong focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
19. Many pupils begin school with little knowledge of the world beyond their home and family, so every opportunity is taken to add to the usual school day with well-chosen visits and visitors that stimulate pupils' thinking and enrich their experiences. In addition, there is a wide range of after-school clubs and sporting opportunities that meet the needs and interest of pupils. Religious education is provided for well with the newly introduced local syllabus. Consequently there is a good balance to the school day, the curriculum meets statutory requirements and maintains pupils' progress well. However, not enough account is taken of pupils' individual learning targets when planning work. Whilst lessons are planned with good regard to what pupils of different ages should be taught, pupils' individual learning targets are not based well enough on what individuals already know and need to learn next.
20. The school is determinedly inclusive in all it does to ensure all pupils, whatever their background or ability, access what it has to offer. This determination to include all pupils in learning is an integral part of the school's approach to personal, social and health education and is embedded in the school's learning day. Pupils' personal and social development is dealt with in everyday situations in the classroom, so pupils know how to behave, how to work in groups, and what is expected in social situations at break and lunchtimes. Health education is part of the science curriculum and extra specialist help comes from the police about the misuse of drugs, and from the school nurse for sex education.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and the extra help necessary is given in class lessons by well-qualified and experienced teaching assistants. Further specialist help is provided by family workers and support staff from the Traveller Service and the Behaviour Support Service, to make sure all pupils with learning, behaviour and emotional needs have extra help on top of the good provision from the school. This aspect of the school's work is led and managed well by the special needs co-ordinator, with very strong and knowledgeable support from the head teacher.
22. The new school building is a great improvement on that in use at the time of the last report; the open, modern design is attractively different. The extremely well equipped computer suite ensures ICT equipment is up to date and readily accessible. There are extra rooms for specialist group work, a very large family room, and areas in the spacious central area for

individual or group teaching by the support assistants. Class sizes are smaller than most state primary schools, which means there are sufficient teaching and support staff, and resources, to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school has good procedures in place to ensure pupils are safe and well cared for. Pupils get good support and guidance about their personal development and satisfactory guidance with regard to their academic progress. The school involves pupils well in its work and development, and values their opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction and care for children in the Nursery and Reception classes ensure that these children gain confidence and make very good progress.
- The school maintains a good level of pastoral care and this ensures that pupils work and play in a safe environment.
- Pupils are guided and supported well by the school and outside agencies.
- The school council is promoted well and pupils are encouraged to help plan improvements to school facilities and routines.

Commentary

23. This is a very caring school where all pupils, whatever their background and ability, are respected and valued. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are very well cared for. The Nursery class teacher visits parents and children at home to discuss any particular problems or concerns they may have about the school, and to record details of the children's abilities and needs in order to ensure the staff can prepare the support that different children will need. Parents and children are invited into school to see what their children will be doing and watch them at work and play. Regular contact with the Reception class minimises fear or problems when children transfer from the Nursery class.
24. The staff and governing body work together to ensure requirements for health, safety and welfare are met. Even though the premises are new, they are regularly inspected by school staff for potential hazards. Risk assessments for visits are carried out and child protection procedures are fully in place; all staff have had relevant training. Fire safety equipment is checked and fire drills are held regularly. First aid arrangements are good; there is a separate first aid room and, again, all staff are trained. Medicines are properly controlled and pupils are carefully supervised during the day. Separate and secure outdoor learning areas are available for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.
25. Teachers routinely carry out procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is less formal but information is effectively gathered through the knowledge teachers have of individual pupils and their needs. This information helps teachers to plan appropriately for pupils to achieve as well as they are able. However, it is not always used as effectively as it could be to determine pupils' personal learning targets and extend the level of individual challenge.
26. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported by staff and a good range of visiting specialists to ensure that they make good progress. Traveller children have additional support from local education authority staff to help them make up shortfalls due to periods of absence. Pupils across the school respond well to the level of care and support given and this enables them to approach staff with confidence when they need help or advice.
27. The school values pupils' views and in order to give pupils a voice in school development has set up a group of 14 pupils from Years 5 and 6 to form a council. Members are elected by their classmates and two are then assigned to each class for the purpose of obtaining ideas for school improvement or solution of any concerns. Items raised are discussed with the head teacher, and council members are required to give feedback to their respective classes and to the whole school. Recent improvements brought about by the school council include widening

the range of school clubs, providing better play equipment, and provision of hot toast at morning break. Council members have been given the role of mediators in playground disputes and playground 'buddies' – pupils who offer friendship or advice to any pupil seeking help.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has effective links with parents and encourages them to take an active part in their children's education. It has very good links with the community and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very active and enthusiastic family workers promote the school well and build up parents' confidence to become involved with the school.
- Very good links with the local community provide additional resources for learning and enrich the curriculum.
- The school's very well established links with other schools and colleges are used effectively to support pupils' learning and personal development.

Commentary

28. The school has additional funding to provide two part-time family workers, whose primary objective is to help raise standards in literacy by working with small groups of pupils and supplementing the work of outside agency staff. A significant part of their work involves developing relationships with parents to help give them confidence in the school and to encourage and enable them to play a larger role in their children's education at home and at school. The family workers carry out home visits along with the education welfare officer and encourage parents to attend the twice-weekly 'parents club' activities held in school. These activities focus on developing parents' own skills, combining both academic and practical features. The hard work is beginning to show positive results and parents have successfully carried out environmental improvements to the school by planting fruit trees and flower borders and making mosaics and wood carvings for decoration; they are currently designing a large-scale wrought iron model of the school logo. The family workers have arranged computing skills courses and loan out laptop computers for keen parents to use at home.
29. Parents are encouraged to come into school to help in classrooms and join in the work of the parent-teacher group. The number of parents helping the school is increasing and the school has won a national award for its improved parental involvement. The school keeps parents well informed and all parents are issued with a comprehensive annual handbook giving details of what is provided and what will be taught. The head teacher makes a point of being in the playground each morning to welcome parents and to be available for discussing any concerns.
30. The local area is rich in historical features and the school uses it very well to support topics covered in the curriculum; visits include those to churches, the castle, the river, and the town's historic buildings. The wider area provides opportunities to visit a Minster, agricultural college, art gallery, working farm, and prehistoric caves. The school has developed links with local businesses, and these now make regular contributions through sponsorship and support. The school encourages local groups to use school premises and several have taken the opportunity.
31. The school is a member of a local cluster of schools and regular meetings are arranged for the schools' head teachers, special needs co-ordinators, and subject co-ordinators. This enables them to share best practice and discuss and solve common problems. The school's link with the local performing arts specialist secondary school is used very well to provide art, music and drama experiences for the pupils. The school has very good links with the adjacent special school and regular shared lessons are arranged. Other secondary schools organise

competitive sports tournaments for the local primary schools and provide support in classrooms through work experience placements. The local college provides the venue and support for some parent club activities, supervision of Year 5 and Year 6 games sessions, and placements for the school's teaching assistants. The school's links with the local university provide classroom help from teachers in training.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good. Leadership by the head teacher is very good and the work of key staff is good. The governing body meets its statutory duties well and its involvement in, and governance of, the school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the head teacher is highly influential in the work of the school.
- The head teacher and key staff provide a very clear sense of direction for the school, enabling a strong drive to improve pupils' achievements and so raise standards.
- The whole school shares the head teacher's clear commitment to inclusion.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and assists in shaping a clear vision for its work.
- The school works hard to overcome the barriers to learning created by the high pupil absence rate and, because of this, when pupils are in school, they achieve well.

Commentary

32. The manner in which the head teacher leads and manages the school is inspirational; she is the mainstay of rapid improvements at this school. Through her vibrant skills and passion for success, there is a very good team spirit in the school. She sets high expectations for all of the staff and nurtures the skills and talents of every individual. Her drive for excellence has been the main reason why the school has improved so well over the last few years. She places great store in teamwork and valuing the contributions made by every person who works at, studies in, or shows support for the school. In doing so, she has gained the respect of pupils, staff, governors and parents. Her leadership and management are complemented very well by the hard-working and effective senior management team.
33. Inclusion is a very important element of the work in this culturally diverse school. The head teacher is very committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, receive the best possible provision to enable them to achieve as well as they can. There is a good focus on monitoring and evaluating the provision to ensure its effectiveness and to check on the progress of pupils from different backgrounds and of different abilities. The leadership of special educational needs is particularly good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and committed to meeting the needs of these pupils and has strong support from the head teacher.
34. This means that the provision for all pupils, whatever their needs, is well managed and the school responds appropriately to pupils' needs by providing work that is challenging. The head teacher and staff meet regularly to discuss common issues and oversee work in the different aspects and subjects of the school. The assessment of each pupil's knowledge, skills and understanding is used well to plan the next step in learning, especially in English and mathematics. This process has been instrumental in improving pupils' achievements and raising standards. However, targets are set for groups of pupils and insufficient regard is given to pupils' individual needs so that they know what they have to do to improve further.
35. This school knows where it is going and how it will get there. For example, the head teacher's very good leadership has ensured that any difficulties are identified and dealt with as they arise. This is shown in the way the recent building work on the new school did not disrupt pupils' education. The promotion of pupils' personal development, as well as a commitment to

making learning relevant and interesting, is fundamental to the head teacher's vision for the school. The whole school community shares this inclusive ethos, which creates a warm, family atmosphere. The effective professional development of all staff is very well managed and closely linked to the school's priorities. The head teacher and subject co-ordinators monitor their colleagues' teaching, check lesson plans, and scrutinise samples of pupils' work. As a result, they support teaching improvements well.

36. The governors are very well informed about what is going on. Although not always successful, the governing body tries to recruit members from the different communities the school serves in order to ensure that all parts of the community are fully represented. The governing body is involved in improving pupils' achievements and providing constructive criticism of the work of the school. Governors have kept a close eye on the extent to which the key issues arising from the last report have been addressed. They have a clear idea of standards and pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science. There is written information on the budget that governors discuss to ensure that expenditure is closely monitored; as a result, they ensure that the school gets good value for money. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development and support the work of the school in a committed manner. They are fully involved in strategic planning, and relationships between the governors and the school are very good. The governors play an important role in the management of the school and they are successful in acting as a 'critical friend', monitoring the work of the school, and putting their skills to effective use in supporting and improving provision.
37. The governing body is very committed to providing a successful service for the school and this is demonstrated clearly by the governors' arrangements to appoint individual governors to be regular visitors to classes to see how pupils are doing. Governors follow pupils' progress in subjects and report to their colleagues after visits; this ensures all governors understand how, and how effectively, the curriculum is covered. The head teacher provides regular, clear reports on the progress of all aspects of school life which, coupled with their own monitoring, ensure that governors are kept up to date with all initiatives the school undertakes. The school is carrying forward a larger than usual contingency, mainly because it has managed without a deputy head teacher for the last three years. The budget has been agreed with and approved by the local education authority and the carry-forward is to be used to sustain small classes for the next few years. Funds are used wisely to support initiatives shown in the school improvement plan; as a result, the school provides good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	646011
Total expenditure	637201
Expenditure per pupil	3540

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	61169
Balance carried forward to the next	69979

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. Children start in the Nursery class when they are three years old and transfer to the Reception class at the start of the term in which they reach five years of age. This means that the number of Reception age children increases through the year, and whilst these children usually start off the Reception Year sharing a classroom with the Year 1 pupils, once more children transfer from the Nursery class, they have a classroom of their own. There are usually two Nursery classes – one in the school grounds and another half a mile away on the Traveller site. However, whilst the one on the Traveller site is being rebuilt all of the children come to the school Nursery class.
39. Provision has improved since the last inspection and children now get off to a very good start in the Foundation Stage. Although not many children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year, given the very low starting point for most children they achieve very well in personal, social, emotional, communication, language and literacy development, and they do well in all of the other areas of learning.
40. There are many reasons why children achieve well despite their high absence rate and their lack of punctuality, not least the very strong drive for learning in both the Nursery and Reception class and the very good teaching of all areas of learning. All staff have high expectations about what children can achieve and they provide a very good and imaginative curriculum, which meets children's needs very well. The school has directed more resources to staffing these two classes than most primary schools and because of this investment all children are supported very well. Relationships are very good and, as a result, the children's personal skills improve rapidly. Good leadership and management from the top have integrated the Nursery class into the school and there are good procedures in planning, monitoring and assessment. Assessment information is used well to plan work at the correct level for all children, including those with special educational needs. The accommodation and resources are good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because teachers understand their needs very well.
- Very good relationships between children and adults create an atmosphere of highly effective learning.
- Teachers' planning is good and they make lessons interesting and exciting.

Commentary

41. In personal, social and emotional development, teaching and learning are very good and children achieve very well in this aspect of their education. They make rapid progress although they are well below reaching the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. The very good relationships between all the adults in the Nursery and Reception classes provide an excellent model for children. Consequently, children learn to take turns and use resources well. However, despite the staff's encouragement for children to play co-operatively, many children are still happier playing on their own, reflecting their well below average maturity. Staff work very well together to maintain consistently very high expectations of children. All adults give very good encouragement to children, which mean that children readily

join in activities. For example, in a short session of imaginative play with a member of staff, children named a range of wild animals correctly and one knew that a cub is a baby lion. Behaviour is good in a range of situations. Children know the routines and keep to them; they behave sensibly and many choose activities independently. For example, in the Nursery class, children arrive in the morning and select their own photograph to stick on the wall to show they are present. They then choose activities from around the room confidently and independently. Children of all abilities respond well and find their work enjoyable because it is planned and pitched at the correct level to provide interesting challenges. Examples of children's previous work in the Reception class shows a very good range of activities that promote their personal development; for example, they showed respect for other faiths when they made a Diya light holder to celebrate the festival of Diwali.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well because teachers provide a very good range of activities that ensure children learn very well.
- Early reading and writing activities are threaded through all the areas of learning very well.
- All staff use every opportunity to enhance children's communication skills.

Commentary

42. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, the sharing of books, listening to stories, playing games and singing rhymes are carefully planned so that children learn letter sounds and a few simple words. Their learning is fun and highly effective because of very good teaching. In all activities, there are very good opportunities for the children to develop their language skills, which are often very poor when they start school. All children achieve well and their skills improve as they respond to the opportunities to talk about their activities, although, by the end of the Reception Year, most do not reach the goals expected for their age. Skills in literacy and language are developed systematically through carefully planned activities. Children are encouraged to become aware of the importance of the skills of reading and writing through very well planned activities. For example, in a lesson for the children in the Reception class and older Nursery age children using the topic 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', the teacher used the homemade book containing paintings done by the children to highlight and talk about different parts of the story. When answering questions related to the story, it was very clear that a few children, to quote their response, "did not like porridge". Through various activities, children learn to write the letters in the air and recognise them when looking through storybooks. There are many opportunities in the Nursery class for children to use language to communicate with others. For example, they select their own photograph and name when they arrive in the morning and place it in the correct position on the wall. Children are given many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills through purposeful and imaginative play and through responding to stories and repeating rhymes. In the Reception class, there are many opportunities for children to share books throughout the day. They enjoy looking at the attractive books in the classroom. Children enjoy listening to their teachers reading to them and they remember words or phrases.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well because teaching places a strong emphasis on learning through practical activities.
- Mathematical skills are put to good use across many areas of learning.
- All staff provide very good support for all activities.

Commentary

43. The very good teaching of practical activities helps children to achieve well. Although by the time the children leave the Reception class, most do not achieve the goals set nationally, they do well in working towards the targets set for them individually. Many mathematical activities are of a practical nature and together with the good resources support children's learning well. This is because of the strong emphasis placed on developing not only number skills but also the use of opportunities in other areas of learning to promote and develop other mathematical skills. For example, in a very good session in the Nursery class, children used different shapes to print circles, squares, and triangles to make interesting pictures. Adults stressed mathematical language right from the start so that children recognised the shapes they were using. In another good example, in a lesson with the Reception Year children developing their number skills, children selected the correct number of spoons and dishes for the three bears to have their breakfast. Children painted portraits and counted the features as they put in eyes, ears, a mouth and a nose. This idea of grouping was reinforced very well by staff in the Nursery class when children were taught to use the language of 'full' or 'empty' when talking about how they were using sand to fill containers. Very good links are made with literacy when children sing number rhymes and they learn to count up to and count back from a given number in the songs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well because all staff have high expectations and a very good knowledge of the requirements of this area of learning.
- Teaching provides children with countless opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- All of the available space is used to provide a good range of experiences based on observation and exploration.

Commentary

44. Teaching and learning are very good and help to ensure that all children achieve well and although only a small minority reach the goals they are expected to by the end of the Reception Year, they are working towards their targets. In the Nursery class, children are provided with a wealth of opportunities to learn about their world. The outdoor learning area is a very good resource and the teacher ensures that it is used daily to allow children to explore. For example, the children using the large wooden ship pretend to be sailors and pirates and keep a sharp lookout for others on the sea. In addition, children planting bulbs and visiting places of interest strongly support this area of learning. The imaginative play areas are changed regularly to keep interest levels high and, in the Nursery class, children enjoy imaginative play on Santa's Sleigh when, for example, one held the reins while another pretended to be Rudolf. In the Reception and Year 1 class, children celebrate many of the important festivals of the world, they look forward to Christmas and they listen attentively to stories in assemblies. Children in the Nursery class explore the properties of different materials and children in the Reception Year develop this work very well when they use the digital camera to take photographs of shiny materials. One child was very excited when the camera flashed as a picture of a Christmas decoration was taken. The teaching assistant talked about the photographs taken by a number of children as they came up on the computer screen and they were all very pleased when their own picture appeared. Computers are used regularly. At first, children in the Nursery need a lot of adult help but in Reception children move the mouse and, by holding down a button, they pick and drag boxes to make pictures such as a robot dog and a castle.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Access to the large school hall is good so that children achieve well in moving within a large space with control and co-ordination.
- Children in the Nursery class have access to a large, secure outdoor space where they can choose to use large apparatus on a daily basis.
- The teachers plan a wide range of activities that develop physical skills alongside other learning.

Commentary

45. Teaching and learning are good and most children are well on the way to reaching the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. There is a small, dedicated, secure outdoor area for the children in the Reception class and staff use this facility well. In addition, children use the well-resourced hall to develop their sense of space and they move with control and co-ordination. For example, a group of Nursery and Reception children used the hall well to extend their physical control when moving in different directions using a variety of steps, strides, hops and jumps. They showed a good awareness of space and created their own sequences of high and low movements. During outdoor sessions in the Nursery class, children use climbing and other equipment and develop their body control. For example, children in the 'play park' moved along beams, climbed onto boxes and crawled through a tunnel when developing their physical control. In one very good physical education session in the Reception/Year 1 class, children used ribbons imaginatively to make different shapes in the air as they moved around the hall. The teacher reinforced children's skills as they were asked to make higher and lower shapes with their ribbons. Many have good awareness of space and work hard to avoid collisions. The use of scissors, paintbrushes, pencils and other tools is a daily activity and provides children with many opportunities to develop their physical skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children achieve well because teaching and learning are very good.
- Children are provided with a vibrant range of activities that enrich their learning.

Commentary

46. Staff plan a wide range of stimulating activities and, with very good teaching and high levels of support, children achieve well, but very few Reception children reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year, although they are working towards them. The children in the Nursery class need a lot of help to learn important skills when they first start school and, therefore, the direct teaching of specific skills is the focus of many activities, along with very good opportunities for play. Children are taught, for example, the skills needed to mix paint and use brushes to express their ideas in imaginative paintings. They learn how to use scissors and glue and confidently wrap Christmas present to put into Santa's Sleigh. Children enjoyed immensely the experience of covering their hands with gold paint and swirling them on a tabletop. They listen to music and use instruments to make their own simple compositions. Reception Year children made their own musical instruments using a variety of fillings in plastic cups and cardboard tubes. As in other areas, because of the excellent support by all staff,

there are many opportunities for staff to talk with children as they play and to extend vocabulary and ideas. For example, children draw letter shapes when painting and search for two-dimensional shapes and match them to pictures.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, which enables pupils to achieve well.
- Leadership of the subject is good, with strong support from the head teacher.
- Pupils behave well and try hard in their learning.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with small groups and individuals, particularly those with special educational needs.
- Personal learning targets are still too general for individual pupils to be clear about what they should work on improving next.
- There are some good opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects, but poor standards in speaking, spelling and presentation depress standards overall.

Commentary

47. Pupils make good progress in English and achieve well. Nevertheless, standards are still well below the nationally expected levels at the age of seven and eleven. However, since its last inspection two years ago, the school has worked hard and things have improved well; its test results have risen considerably faster than those in most other schools, with nearly twice as many pupils now reaching at least the nationally expected level by the time they leave the school. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now good and teaching is consistently good, whereas both were only satisfactory before.
48. Many pupils begin school with very poor language skills. As they move through the school, pupils learn to listen well because teachers manage lessons skilfully, maintaining a quiet learning atmosphere. As a result pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language, concentrate well on what the teacher and other more confident pupils are saying. They understand what is being said, but when they are asked to speak themselves many find it very hard to speak at length, and to use expressive language. For example, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils usually give one-word answers, or short phrases, to teachers' questions, and Year 6 pupils, when asked to devise a short play about Christmas during the inspection, were strong on actions but very weak in dialogue. The school, however, widens pupils' experiences very well through the different learning opportunities, visits, and visitors to give pupils more to talk about, but not enough is done to teach pupils to order their thoughts and express them more coherently.
49. The teaching of reading is organised well through daily guided reading sessions. There are plenty of books to read, including graded fiction books to match pupils' differing abilities, and attractive reference books. Teaching assistants, students and volunteer helpers, who include some of the lunchtime supervisors, support different groups during these sessions very effectively. The range of ability within each class, however, is very wide. For example in a Year 6 session some pupils read fluently, discussing how to use an index to scan for a particular piece of information, whilst others are still mastering everyday words such as 'some' and 'because'. Not many parents can find the time or opportunity to help their children read at home, and although the school ensures all pupils follow a good structured reading programme, standards remain well below average.

50. The school has identified writing as a priority area for development. Teachers make sure that pupils have many good opportunities to write both in literacy lessons and in other subjects, such as history, geography and religious education. Pupils use the Internet and books to search for information, and record their findings in different writing styles, as Year 6 pupils did with 'facts from Victorian life'. Pupils are now writing at more length but their spelling and presentation skills are still weak. However, a start has been made to tackle this through the local education authority intensive support programme using outside consultants, which has established a systematic spelling and handwriting approach throughout the school. This is new and has yet to impact on standards. In addition, pupils' learning targets are very general; they often pay insufficient regard to pupils' individual abilities and do not give them a clear enough idea about what they need to work on improving next.
51. Literacy lessons are taught well and learning is good. Teachers are confident in their planning, basing their lessons on the National Literacy Strategy, but modifying what is taught carefully to meet the considerable ability range in each class. The number of pupils with special educational needs is high and their needs vary considerably too. Some have difficulty learning and others have challenging behaviour, but the teachers have a calm authoritative approach and maintain a good learning atmosphere. They use questions, rewards and praise skilfully to manage pupils, to maintain their concentration and interest. Relationships are warm and secure and as a result pupils get on well with each other and all adults. Teaching assistants give effective support to small groups and individuals in all classrooms.
52. The literacy co-ordinator provides good leadership and management for the subject, with good support in her role from outside consultants and very good support from the head teacher. She and the head teacher analyse test results, set targets for improvement and monitor pupils' progress year by year. Some pupils receive extra support from outside agencies, such as Family Workers and the Traveller Service, which is organised very effectively.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. Although pupils' competency is poor, teachers promote literacy skills well in other subjects in order to give pupils more opportunities to read and write. For example, pupils use computers regularly and confidently to carry out research in other subjects such as history and geography, which helps to improve their reading skills. Information books are available such as when a group of Year 5 pupils followed up their history work on the Ancient Greeks by reading a range of texts about this subject in their guided reading session. However, pupils' spoken language skills are not developed as well as they could be and there are too few opportunities in other subjects for pupils to put things in different ways and explain what they mean in more depth. This is because teachers accept too readily the first answers pupils give, often going on to clarify themselves what they think pupils mean instead of asking pupils to try to explain things more clearly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is good because all staff know pupils well and relationships are very good.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well because suitable work is planned to meet their different needs. However, although group targets are set for pupils, teachers' marking does not set pupils' individual targets to build their learning step by step.
- Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and most try hard in lessons.

- Teachers use challenging, targeted questioning during the mental and oral part of lessons.

Commentary

54. The provision for mathematics has improved well since the last inspection. Although standards are below the nationally expected level, most pupils respond well to the challenges they are set because they have positive attitudes to mathematics and many say they enjoy the subject. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language. This is because they work hard, the teaching is good, and lessons are well planned. For example, teachers plan appropriate activities for the full ability range in each class by setting work initially at three different levels. This ensures pupils understand what they are doing and make good progress. The most able pupils achieve well because teachers sometimes split these pupils into sub-groups, setting different tasks for them at suitably challenging levels. Teachers deploy support staff very effectively so pupils often benefit from working in small groups. In addition, all staff know pupils well and the very good relationships they have established with them help pupils to develop confidence. New learning targets are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons so that they are aware of what they are supposed to know and do by the end of the lesson. However, most of these targets are related to what the whole class or the different attainment groups should learn and insufficient regard is given to what individual pupils need to work on next. In addition, teachers' marking does not set pupils targets for further improvement and this slows their learning.
55. Even though there are significant numbers of pupils where poor attendance adversely affects their attainment, most pupils do well whilst they are in school. This is because of good teaching throughout the school and the effective leadership and management of the subject. Staff work closely together and frequently discuss pupils' progress in the subject. The co-ordinator has completed observations in lessons and undertaken scrutiny of pupils' work. The information she has gained has been used to guide future school developments. The co-ordinator ensures that there has been analysis of National Curriculum test results to find out which areas of mathematics need improving and teaching is adjusted accordingly to tackle the problem areas. For example, the improvement plan for the subject shows that the co-ordinator has correctly identified problem solving and increased use of computers as the main focuses for improvement.
56. All pupils are engaged and challenged during the introductory part of lessons when teachers use knowledge of pupils' ability to accurately target questions. Pupils in Year 1 build on the positive start they have in the Foundation Stage through a range of practically-based activities. They learn to count, add and subtract with increasing accuracy. In Year 2, very good questioning skills ensured that pupils improved their mathematical language and understanding when identifying different shapes. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils worked with two-digit numbers and broke them down to solve practical problems using a number line. Higher attaining pupils tackle problems that involve fractions, percentages and decimals using their knowledge well when changing $\frac{69}{100}$ into 0.69 and finally 69 per cent. These pupils are given challenging problems to solve, for example creating shapes using co-ordinates that include negative numbers. In all year groups, teachers use challenging questions in the introductions to lessons; for example, in a Year 3 lesson the teacher used a model of a Roman boat to make sure pupils understood how to use co-ordinates to correctly place the boat on a map.

Mathematics across the curriculum

57. Although pupils' competency in mathematics is weak, there is satisfactory use of mathematics across the curriculum. For example, pupils measure and record temperatures in science, draw plans in geography, and collect data in a variety of subjects. Pupils and teachers sometimes use computers to support pupils' mathematical skills; for example, in Year 3 pupils produced

graphs of the litter they found in their local study. However, this area is highlighted by the co-ordinator for future development now that the computer suite is in full use.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a clear idea about what needs doing to improve things.
- Improved emphasis on investigative work is increasing pupils' interest in science and is helping to raise standards.
- Despite the good attitudes pupils have towards their work, poor speaking and writing skills are hampering standards in science, particularly in their written work.
- Good regard is given to what pupils of a particular age should be taught but not enough to pupils' individual learning needs.
- Good deployment of teaching assistants means pupils work in small groups and nearly always with adult support.

Commentary

58. Although standards are below the nationally expected level by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve well enough given their low attainment at the start of Year 1. This is because the quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils' learning in lessons and over time is secure. The increased emphasis on pupils learning through scientific investigation is working well and the school has satisfactorily raised standards from very low at the time of the last inspection to below average now.
59. Pupils enjoy the work very much because they can see the point of why they are doing it. Their good attitudes to learning mean that lessons are mostly successful and learning is nearly always satisfactory and sometimes good. Year 6 pupils, for example, talked enthusiastically about investigations they have done, such as when they "made dirty water clean" by filtering it. They likened the relevance of their work to the local sewage treatment works and to how water from the local reservoir has to be cleaned before it reaches our taps. They still have a lot of catching up to do, however, and needed a lot of support to explain how to test a given hypothesis; they suggested sensible ways to record the results, but did not see the need to validate these by carrying out the test more than once. This is because Year 6 pupils still need a lot of support with planning and carrying out experiments.
60. Whilst pupils often show a fairly secure understanding of the scientific ideas they are taught, and are developing their planning and investigation skills, their scientific recording does not always show what they know. This is because their handwriting is often untidy, their scientific reports are often disjointed, and spelling is inaccurate. However, teachers' marking does little to help pupils to improve because comments such as "Write in best writing" are too vague to offer sufficient and precise enough guidance because they do not tell the pupils what they are not doing well enough or what or how to bring about improvement to their work. Similarly in lessons, pupils' poor speaking skills mean that pupils struggle to explain what they are doing and how they are doing it. This is exacerbated further because teachers accept one-word responses to their questions and do not encourage pupils to find a more precise and accurate way to express their thoughts. Although teachers go on to reiterate the meaning of what pupils have said and offer a clearer explanation, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn from this model and have a go at rephrasing what they have said.
61. Teaching has good regard to the national subject guidelines and what pupils of different ages should be taught. However, many of the pupils are working at least one level below what is

expected for their age, but too little regard is given to this. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory but they are in their infancy and although a target level is set for each child to strive to reach, this level is based on what is expected nationally and not on what the pupils already know and need to learn next. For example, many children start in Year 1 still having not reached the early learning goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. Their targets, however, are taken from the Year 1 nationally expected level, without sufficient regard to what skills individual pupils have not yet acquired from their Reception Year work.

62. Nevertheless, pupils are supported well in their work because teaching assistants are deployed effectively to work with, in particular, those pupils with special educational needs. Because there are often three adults working in each class, this means that each of the three differently attaining groups usually have support, which enhances their learning and quickens progress. Effective, well-established teamwork between teachers, students and teaching assistants mean that all of the adults know what they are doing and how they can support pupils effectively.
63. Science is soundly led and managed. The subject leader has a clear grasp of what is going on through observing lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work and has rightly identified the need to raise the profile of investigative science to interest pupils more and make their learning meaningful. However, although a record is kept of pupils' achievements as they move through the school, the data has not yet been analysed to check inconsistencies nor have test papers been looked at to explore weaknesses in pupils' learning. The subject leader cannot therefore be sure that pupils are making as much progress as could reasonably be expected in each class.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good regular access to, and are confident users of, computers.
- Lessons are prepared well and usually run smoothly, but sometimes more able pupils work through exercises they can already do before moving onto more suitably challenging work.
- Good deployment of teaching assistants means that pupils get a lot of support.
- Good support for parents in developing their own ICT skills means that they are increasingly adept at helping their children.
- ICT is not used in other subjects as well as it could be and the spell-check function is not taught early enough, especially given the pupils' weak spelling. In addition, an unnecessary reluctance to let pupils use the full range of ICT equipment available is stifling progress in other subjects.

Commentary

64. Achievement is currently satisfactory, but due to sound improvements since the last inspection, standards are constantly rising as the effect of much-improved learning resources starts to bite. Year 6 pupils are still working at below the nationally expected level for their age because they have a lot of catching up to do, but those in Year 2 are doing well and are on course to reach the expected level by the end of the year. This is because as more time goes by teachers are getting more confident at using the newly installed equipment in the computer suite to teach pupils' some very useful computer skills and techniques. For example, Year 1 pupils can enter text onto the computer and print it out. Their mouse control skills are good and they can find their way around a program well, by using drop down menus and by clicking on

the mouse. Pupils in Year 2 produce effective pictures in the style of, for example, Mondrian, and enter and save data on the computer to use to generate graphs and charts. They word-process their stories well, putting in spaces and using punctuation well because of the warnings the computer gives them when they have done something wrong. However, throughout the school not enough use is made of the spell-check function because it is not taught early enough to help pupils to spell more accurately.

65. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. The co-ordinator and the ICT governor have worked hard training and supporting staff and because of this teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good, and teachers make good use of the newly equipped computer suite. Good support and guidance from teachers and teaching assistants mean that pupils are helped when they are stuck and effective use of the interactive whiteboard means that teachers' demonstrations are precise and accurate. Teachers take time preparing lessons beforehand so that they can take pupils step by step through the different processes, such as when Year 6 pupils researched Victorian Christmas on the Internet. The teacher showed them how to use hyperlinks to find out different things and to refine their search using different instructions. However, pupils of different abilities usually do the same work and this means that there are times when the most able pupils work through activities unnecessarily and the least able move on too quickly.
66. The school is very aware of the fact that some pupils do not have computers at home and work hard to offer support to these families. Family learning support sessions in school give parents the opportunity to improve their own computer skills so that they can help their children more effectively. Local authority support staff visit those parents who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to get into school, taking with them the portable laptops so that parents can use them in their own homes, again with a view to understanding what their children are learning and being able to support them at home.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

67. This is satisfactory. The school has bought a good range of ICT equipment, including a bank of portable laptops, and has more on order. Good use is made of the computers to teach ICT skills, and some use is made of them and the laptops to support work in other subjects. For example, the floor robot was used to help Year 3 pupils' understanding of co-ordinates in mathematics and word-processing supports work in English. However, pupils have yet to use other fairly newly purchased equipment such as the digital cameras to help them in, for example, geography and design and technology.

HUMANITIES

68. Only one **history** and one part of a **geography** lesson were seen during the inspection, so it is not possible to make judgements about the provision in either of these subjects. A scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, and school documentation shows history and geography are planned so that the National Curriculum is covered satisfactorily in all classrooms. Pupils' work shows that although standards are below average, there is satisfactory achievement by pupils in both subjects. The displays of pupils' work are colourful and enrich the learning environment. Visits and visitors are thoughtfully chosen to build on pupils' limited home experiences and these bring the subjects to life. Visits to local churches, museums, the bus station, town hall, Cresswell Craggs and Wollaton Park are incorporated into the subjects skilfully. Pupils write about these experiences at length in their own words, which is helpful in developing their literacy skills. They use the Internet for research work, but it is the better readers who benefit most from this, as they are the ones able to read the text and put it into their own words. It is clear from pupils' writings in history and geography that, although pupils are improving their ability to write at length in different styles, not enough is done to improve pupils' weak spelling and presentational skills.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good, based on a well-organised subject planning.
- The newly agreed local syllabus is being introduced effectively.
- The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well.
- Pupils work hard and their achievements in lessons are good.
- The standard of spelling and presentation in pupils' books is too low, having a detrimental impact on pupils' achievements in religious education.

Commentary

69. Teachers have welcomed the introduction of the newly agreed syllabus, which has been well organised by the subject co-ordinator, and everyone is teaching it with confidence. Many pupils begin school with very limited communication skills and very little experience of the world beyond their immediate home and family. Consequently, although standards are well below those expected for pupils aged seven, and below for pupils aged eleven, pupils achieve well from very low level attainment at the start of the school. Consistently good teaching, supported by quality resources, visits and visitors, is raising pupils' achievements in lessons and over time well.
70. Pupils in Year 2 learn about giving thanks to God, talking about God, and Judaism. Although their writing is well below average they remember what they have experienced. In the topic 'giving thanks' they composed prayers about harvest, visited the local church to talk about the harvest festival, and wrote, "We have poppies to remember those who died in the first war". These local traditional links are important for pupils' development and add to their spiritual growth well.
71. Year 6 pupils learn about sacred texts, Islam, the 'big questions of life' and spiritual ideas and are tackling these challenging themes successfully. Pupils are beginning to establish values, to differentiate between expensive material objects and 'things money can't buy'. They know about symbolism, for example that 'bread symbolises Jesus' body', and the links between holy books such as the Qur'an and the Bible. They are thoughtful and serious in their approach; their religious understanding and spiritual growth are maturing well.
72. Teachers plan lessons well so they run smoothly, are interesting and are lively. All adults have a calm approach, insisting on respect for each other's ideas; as a result pupils contribute confidently, even though many struggle to express their thoughts and opinions at length. These good relationships are essential to the success of lessons because pupils of different backgrounds are sensitive about the views they hold; however, all feel secure and join in well. Pupils write at length, and teachers always mark and monitor work, adding encouraging phrases such as, "Good illustrations" or "A lot of interesting creations". Learning assistants work with small groups often, and pupils enjoy and benefit from this extra help.
73. Pupils have plenty of chances to write at length in religious education. They are encouraged to give their ideas and opinions sensitively by teachers. However, there are weaknesses still in speaking, spelling and presentation and not enough is done to challenge pupils to say more, to use more expressive language and to spell and present work more accurately and neatly. This limits achievement and lowers standards in religious education.
74. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator works closely with the local authority advisers, the governors and the staff, so that she is aware of how the new local syllabus can be introduced, monitored and improved as necessary. Although the subject was

not reported on in the school's last inspection report, the co-ordinator has a clear idea about what is going on in the subject and how to improve things further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

75. Only one lesson in art and design and part of a lesson in music were seen; no lessons were seen in design and technology or physical education. It is not therefore possible to make judgements about provision in these subjects. In addition to the lesson observed, inspectors examined teachers' planning, which provided evidence about appropriate coverage and relevance, looked at a sample of pupils' completed work, and spoke to pupils about what they had learned in the subjects.
76. In **art and design**, pupils have good opportunities to study the work of famous artists. In Year 2, pupils use computers to create pictures in the style of Mondrian, and they use a program effectively to draw their own pictures using different widths of coloured lines. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate good observational skills when they draw figures that show movement using a technique involving 'Sausage' people. In Year 4, pupils link their art and design work well to their history topic on the Romans when they design and make their own mosaic patterns. In a close link with another local school, pupils in Year 4 design and make a gift bag for Christmas and the co-operation between pupils from both schools ensures the success of the project. The attractive bags made were well decorated and pupils' names on the bag were decorated with glitter to reflect each pupil's individual style. The success they achieved had a significant impact on their self-esteem and made a very good contribution to the interaction between pupils of the two schools.
77. In **design and technology**, although no lessons were observed, evidence shows that pupils in Year 2 understand a range of mechanisms to make a model crane lift and move objects. In Year 6, pupils designed a 'buddy bench' and evaluated how the materials to be used in the construction would have to be waterproof to withstand the weather. In a short session in Year 5, pupils made bread and selected the extra ingredient they wished to include to make it different; many chose the chocolate chips to add to their bread. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for hygiene when dealing with food.
78. Only one short **music** session was observed along with assemblies where pupils were involved in singing. In Year 2 pupils use chime bars to play individual notes and then develop their skills well when they play simple chords. Pupils were keen to play as the rest of the class sang the song 'Fossils in the Rock' tunefully. In the assemblies, pupils listen to classical music and sing tunefully a range of hymns and songs. In one assembly, the choir took the lead and their enthusiastic performance ensured that all pupils joined in and sang with gusto. In Year 1, pupils make their own musical instruments with plastic cups using various fillings to create shakers; this type of activity links a number of subjects together well.
79. In a **physical education** session observed, students from a local college were teaching the skills of tag rugby. Pupils followed instructions well and developed sound ball-handling skills as they practised passing and catching before playing the game in small groups. In one very good physical education session in the Reception/Year 1 class, pupils used ribbons imaginatively to make different shapes in the air as they moved around the hall. The teacher reinforced pupils' skills as they were asked to make higher and lower shapes with their ribbons. Many showed good awareness of space and worked hard to avoid collisions. Physical development skills are well extended during break and lunchtime as pupils have good access to bats, balls and skipping ropes. During play, pupils demonstrate sound skills of control and hand/eye co-ordination. There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities and school teams take part in local tournaments at other schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

80. Although personal, social and health education and citizenship is taught as a discrete subject, no lessons were seen during the inspection. However, from talking with parents, pupils and staff, it is clear that this aspect of the school's work is embedded in everything it does; equality is at the forefront of the school's agenda and all pupils are treated fairly.
81. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that they like the teachers because they are valued and trusted by them. Pupils of all ages show a good understanding about the need to work closely with each other. They feel well supported and say that there is always someone they can go to if they are worried. As one pupil put it, "If you mess up, there's always someone there". Pupils believe that their time in school will help them in the future and appreciate what the staff here do for them. For example, one pupil who intends joining the armed forces believes that the physical education he is doing now will help him, whilst another who intends being an accountant says that the mathematics lessons are helping her. As one pupil wrote when asked what he would place in his sacred treasure box, "I would have Mount School in my treasure box because the teachers help me to get ready for my career."
82. A real sense of pride permeates the school, for example through pupils' involvement in sporting events and the professional framing and displaying of pupils' artwork around the school. By working with parents and their children together, the school establishes a sense of camaraderie and belonging. Racism is tackled head on; "We don't like it," one Year 6 pupil told an inspector firmly, and through its sensitivity and thoughtfulness, the school has successfully developed a mutual respect between pupils of different backgrounds.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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