

INSPECTION REPORT

MOUNT PLEASANT LANE JMI SCHOOL

Bricket Wood, St Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117347

Headteacher: Mr C J Jukes

Lead inspector: Mr M Capper

Dates of inspection: 21st - 23rd February 2005

Inspection number: 267357

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 342
School address: Mount Pleasant Lane
Bricket Wood
St Albans
Hertfordshire
Postcode: AL2 3XA
Telephone number: (01923) 672 729
Fax number: (01923) 894 738
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr D Parry
governors:
Date of previous May 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a large community Primary and Nursery school which admits pupils between the ages of three and eleven. There are 342 pupils on roll, taught in a mix of single-age and mixed-age classes; pupils stay in either a single-age or mixed-age class as they move through the school. The large majority of pupils are of white British origin but a range of minority ethnic groups is also represented in the school's population. Only one pupil has English as an additional language. Pupils come from generally favourable home backgrounds and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Pupils' mobility is average. There are 34 pupils on the register of special educational needs, three of whom have a statement of special educational need. This is lower than the percentage found nationally. When they start school in the Nursery, children's attainment is above average.

The school recently received a *Healthy School Award*. The headteacher was appointed in April 2004 after a short time as the school's acting headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23239	Mr M Capper	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology (ICT) Religious education Personal, social and health education (PSHE) English as an additional language
9545	Mr K Greatorex	Lay inspector	
23609	Mrs A M Cartlidge	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology
21686	Mrs D Songer-Hudgell	Team inspector	English Music Special educational needs
30717	Mr G Tompsett	Team inspector	Mathematics History Geography Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a mainly effective school that is improving under the good leadership of the recently appointed headteacher. Standards are high in Year 6 in many subjects. Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are good overall though there is some variation from class to class. Pupils are keen to learn and they behave well. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have high aspirations and a clear, shared vision for school development.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) and above them in science and religious education (RE).
- Standards are too low in mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' achievement is good overall, but progress is uneven due to a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching.
- In Years 5 and 6, the teaching of pupils in ability groups in English and mathematics helps them to make very good progress.
- Improvements in the Nursery and Reception classes are being well managed and are having a positive effect on children's learning.
- The curriculum is not adapted sufficiently to reflect the age or ability of pupils, especially in mixed-age classes.
- Parents are supportive and contribute very effectively to their children's learning.
- Personal development is well supported and pupils feel happy and secure at school and work hard.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in 1999. Key weaknesses identified then have been successfully addressed but over the last four years there has been a downward trend in pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 which is only now in the current academic year being addressed. In contrast, by the end of Year 6 standards continue to rise at a rate faster than that found nationally.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is good overall. In the Nursery and Reception classes, all children, including those identified as having special educational needs, achieve well. Most children are on target to reach the levels expected for the end of the Reception year, with over half being on target to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world.

In 2004, the Year 2 test results were average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. They were lower than in previous years because of staffing difficulties in one class. The pupils from this class are progressing well now they are in Year 3. In the current Year 2, pupils' attainment is above nationally expected levels in reading and writing, in line with them in science but below them in mathematics. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2, but in mathematics the more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because there is a lack of challenge for them in some lessons.

In the 2004 tests for Year 6, the pupils' attainment in English was in the top five per cent of all schools and similar schools. In the current Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above nationally expected levels in English and mathematics and above them in science. Achievement is good overall, and the pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieve very well in English and mathematics. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. In ICT, pupils' achievement is good and their attainment is well above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. Pupils also achieve well in RE and, by the end of Year 6, their attainment is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are very polite and courteous and have good attitudes to work. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils are given good opportunities to contribute to work of the school through activities such as the school council. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Although teaching is good overall and none is unsatisfactory, there are important shortcomings in the curriculum. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes provide interesting practical tasks and have high expectations for children's independence. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching of pupils in ability groups for English and mathematics greatly benefits their learning. Occasionally, in Years 1 and 2 the work is not matched closely enough to the pupils' needs and teachers' expectations are inconsistent. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, although there are variations in the use of information to ensure that differing needs are met.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory because in the mixed-age classes teachers' planning does not consistently meet the needs of the younger pupils well enough and pupils of the same age in different classes do not always cover the same work. This has a negative impact on pupils' achievement over time. The curriculum is successfully enriched through a wide-ranging programme of clubs, visits, visitors and special events. The school takes good care of the children's personal needs and there are good links with parents, the local community and other schools. Accommodation and resources are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and he is supported well by the deputy headteacher. There is a strong commitment to school improvement and a shared sense of purpose. Together, they have quickly established a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory, with statutory requirements being met in full. Governors are supportive and take a good part in financial planning. However, they do not do enough to challenge the school over its performance.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about the work of the school. They are pleased that their children achieve well and they like the quality of teaching. Pupils enjoy school and feel that they are supported well by teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Review the curriculum to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and more account is taken of differing needs, especially in mixed-age classes.
- Improve the consistency of teaching across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good overall and, by Year 6, attainment is well above nationally expected levels in many subjects. However, there are variations in how well pupils achieve as they move through the school; in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 achievement is good. In Years 1 and 2, achievement is satisfactory overall. Both boys and girls do equally well, and there is no difference in the attainment or achievement of pupils from different backgrounds.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve well.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and ICT and above them in science and religious education.
- Standards in mathematics are too low by the end of Year 2.
- In Years 1 to 6, achievement is good overall, but progress is uneven across the school due to a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and in the breadth of the curriculum.
- Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills.

Commentary

The Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes)

1. Children, including those identified as having special educational needs, achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage. Children benefit from good teaching and by the end of the Reception year, most achieve the levels expected for their age, with over half the children on target to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Creative development and physical development were not areas of focus for the inspection and judgements have not been made on provision in these areas of learning.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (17.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.0 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.2 (16.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The school acknowledges that in 2004 the achievement of pupils in one of the Year 2 classes was adversely affected by staffing problems which meant that learning was disturbed. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2004 show that pupils' attainment was:
 - in reading, in line with the national average and well below that for similar schools;
 - in writing, in line with the national average and below that for similar schools; and

- in mathematics, well below the national average and that for similar schools.
3. There has been a dip in pupils' attainment since the last inspection and the trend in test results at the end of Year 2 is below the national trend. However, there is an improvement in the current Year 2, where attainment is above nationally expected levels in reading and writing, in line with them in science but continues to be below them in mathematics.
 4. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well in reading and writing but in mathematics more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because there is a lack of challenge for these pupils in some lessons, resulting in a lower than average number of pupils reaching the high Level 3 by the end of Year 2. Over the last four years, test results in mathematics have consistently been lower than in reading and writing at the end of Year 2. Until recently, effective action has not been taken to address this weakness, although there have been some improvements this year and more pupils are on target to achieve Level 3 than in 2004. In science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory with most pupils working at nationally expected levels but few working at higher levels. Again, this is because there is a lack of challenge for more able pupils in some lessons.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6)

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	31.8 (27.7)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	29.3 (27.9)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (29.3)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. Test results at the end of Year 6 are improving faster than the national average. In 2004, test scores indicated that attainment was:
 - in English, in the top five per cent of all schools and similar schools;
 - in mathematics, well above the national average and above that for similar schools; and
 - in science, above the national average and in line with that for similar schools.
6. The current Year 6 is working at broadly similar levels with attainment well above nationally expected levels in English and mathematics and above them in science. Achievement is good overall, with the best progress being made in Years 5 and 6 where achievement in English and mathematics is very good. In Years 5 and 6, the teaching of pupils in single-age ability groups for English and mathematics has a very good impact on learning. More able pupils are also benefiting enormously from working in a group for a part of each week, ensuring that they are given good levels of challenge.
7. In science, the good use of practical activities to support learning, as well as visits and visitors to bring the subject alive, ensures that achievement is good in Years 3 to 6, with pupils responding well to the expectations of the teachers.

Whole school (Years 1 to 6)

8. Test results show that there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or pupils from differing backgrounds. However, pupils' achievement is not consistent across the school. The achievement of pupils is adversely affected in some year groups by variations in the quality of teaching, with not all teachers planning work that consistently meets the needs of all pupils. Weaknesses in the curriculum also have a negative effect on the achievement of some pupils, especially in the mixed-age classes. Some pupils stay in a mixed-age class all the way through the school. In these classes, planning is often based on the need of the older pupils. Consequently, the needs of younger pupils are sometimes marginalised, especially when teachers are not successful at adapting their lesson planning to the needs of differing ages or abilities. At the moment, the school is very reliant on the good quality teaching and the use of setting in Years 5 and 6 to ensure that tests results at the end of Year 6 continue to be high.
9. By the end of Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills are well above nationally expected levels. Pupils speak very confidently in a range of situations and they listen very well to each other and the teacher.
10. In ICT, pupils' achievement is good. Provision has improved considerably since the last inspection, with a strength being the breadth of activities taught in lessons. This means that pupils have gained a very wide range of skills. As a result, their attainment is now above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 2 and well above them by the end of Year 6.
11. By Year 6, pupils use their literacy and numeracy well in other subjects. Throughout the school, pupils are given many opportunities to write purposefully and good links are made between mathematics and subjects such as science and design and technology.
12. Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and above them by the end of Year 6. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths.

Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language

13. In Years 1 to 6 the achievement of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Pupils make good progress when working with the support teacher, with planning taking good account of targets in individual education plans. However, in other lessons work is not always matched closely enough to need and this means that work is sometimes too hard, limiting pupils' achievement.
14. The only pupil with English as an additional language is given good support from a local authority support teaching assistant who regularly visits school. This is having a good impact on learning, especially in the development of spoken English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to work. Relationships throughout the school are good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attitudes to the school and their learning are positive.
- All round the site pupils' behaviour is good.
- Pupils' personal development and the provision for moral and social development are good.
- Relationships throughout the school are good.
- Rates of attendance are good.

Commentary

15. Pupils' attitudes and values are good. From the earliest stages they come happily to school and are eager and ready to learn. They are fully prepared to work hard and participate fully in all activities. They show good levels of independence and persevere well with their tasks. The early enthusiasm continues throughout the school and as they grow older they become more articulate, confident and mature.
16. Behaviour throughout the school is consistently good. Behaviour management by all staff is good. Pupils rise to the challenge of high expectations set by the school and as a result their behaviour in lessons is good. When they come to school, in assemblies, in the dining hall, on the playground and in the cloakroom areas, pupils show that above average levels of orderly behaviour are consistently achieved. Parental concerns about bullying were investigated and inspection findings show that although bullying does occasionally happen, it is dealt with appropriately by the school. Exclusions are very rare; in the last academic year, one pupil was excluded for fixed periods on three occasions.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
227	3	0
1	0	0
3	0	0
7	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
3	0	0
5	0	0
2	0	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
6	0	0

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

17. The school provides many opportunities to promote the personal development of the pupils. Pupils perform many jobs within the classroom and around the school and are extremely conscious of the environment and the need for conservation. They are very conscious of the plight of those less fortunate and are very regularly involved in activities designed to provide support.
18. Spiritual development is promoted through the opportunities to explore values and beliefs created, particularly, in assemblies and religious education. Members of staff consistently promote the social and moral development through their example and direction. Pupils confirm that they understand the rules and the sanctions if they misbehave. Trips and visits are regularly used to widen the pupils' cultural awareness.
19. Relationships are good throughout the school. Exemplified by the considerate attitude of the staff, all pupils show mutual respect and trust. Pupils constantly demonstrate a willingness to help each other and share resources. They work co-operatively and collaboratively together.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.2	School data	0.4
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

20. Attendance is above the national median and is good. Punctuality is also good. Virtually all pupils arrive at the school on time and many are early, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good overall and there are sound assessment procedures but the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are good levels of care, welfare, health and safety, with pupils given satisfactory support and guidance. There is a good partnership with parents and good links with the community and other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes provide interesting practical tasks and have high expectations for children's independence.
- There are inconsistencies in teachers' expectations and there are occasions when work is not matched closely enough to individual need, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- In Years 5 and 6, the teaching of pupils in ability groups in English and mathematics is very beneficial to learning.
- Teachers have good strategies to motivate pupils and expect them to behave well.
- Homework is used successfully to extend learning, especially in Years 3 to 6.

- Teachers do not always make enough use of assessment information when planning lessons, especially in some mixed-age classes.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	4 (9%)	27 (60%)	14 (31%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

- Teaching and learning have improved since the time of the last inspection, with more teaching being either good or better than at that time. Parents are happy with teaching and find members of staff to be approachable, though there is some justifiable concern about how well pupils' needs are being met in the mixed-age classes.
- Teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes are good. Members of staff are knowledgeable, provide good role models for behaviour and expect children to become responsible and self-sufficient. Teachers and members of support staff plan fun, practical activities that engage children's interest well, and these activities are especially effective in engaging the children in their learning when led by an adult. Some tasks for children to work at independently provide limited challenge and interest, because members of staff provide insufficient guidance in their use and there are some shortages in resources. Teaching and learning have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection, when there were some weaknesses, especially in the Nursery.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are calm and friendly and use resources well to maintain the pupils' interest. However, too many activities consolidate what pupils have already learnt rather than provide greater challenge. A scrutiny of work shows that pupils often complete the same tasks especially in mathematics and science, and more able pupils in particular, do not have their needs met well enough.
- Teaching and learning are good overall in Years 3 to 6. The most successful teaching is in Years 5 and 6, where some teaching is very good. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are grouped by age and ability for English and mathematics and this makes it easier for teachers to plan work that meets differing needs. In these lessons, teachers planned tasks that met pupils' needs accurately and there was a very good pace and challenge to learning. More able pupils also benefit greatly from additional teaching support for one session per week for part of each year. However, some planning for lessons in Years 3 and 4 is insufficient to show how pupils of differing ability are expected to learn and as a result, some pupils do not make enough progress.
- Throughout the school, good relationships between the children and members of staff have a positive impact on learning, and pupils' behaviour is managed well. There is a good working atmosphere in most lessons, with resources including ICT, being used well to make learning interesting. Teachers use questioning well to involve pupils and to extend their knowledge. Instructions and explanations for tasks are clear, enabling pupils to follow them easily.
- As at the time of the last inspection, teachers provide interesting homework that is closely linked to what pupils have learnt in lessons. Homework diaries have improved communication between home and school. Parents are very supportive and encourage their children to complete the set tasks as well as carrying out further independent research using the Internet.

27. Whilst assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, information is not used consistently by teachers to plan work that meets pupils' differing needs. The impact of this weakness is most noticeable in the mixed-age classes where assessment information is not used consistently to modify planning for individual needs. Good use is made of assessments in literacy and numeracy to track pupils' progress and to identify broad areas where additional help is needed. These procedures have contributed to recent improvements in standards in these subjects in Years 1 and 2. However, generally pupils are insufficiently clear about how well they are progressing and how they might improve their work. There are opportunities in some classes for pupils to evaluate their own work and progress and therefore become more involved and purposeful in their learning but this good practice is not consistent across the school. In some classes, teachers' marking, while regular, gives too few comments to help pupils understand how they can improve their work.

The curriculum

The curriculum meets statutory requirements but is unsatisfactory because it lacks breadth and balance. However, it is extended well through a good range of additional activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Inconsistencies between classes mean that not all pupils have equality in provision and access to the curriculum.
- There has been insufficient monitoring of the curriculum to ensure it effectively meets the needs of all pupils and particularly those in mixed-age classes.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by a specialist teacher.
- A good range of extra-curricular activities significantly enriches the curriculum.
- The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The good quality accommodation and resources in Years 1 to 6 support pupils' learning well.

Commentary

28. The curriculum is satisfactory in the Nursery and Reception classes, but in Years 1 to 6 it is unsatisfactory overall. Although it meets statutory requirements by including all subjects and religious education, the way it is planned and delivered does not enable all pupils to build systematically on their past learning in all subjects. A good range of teaching resources and other guidance is available to help teachers plan the curriculum. However, in most instances, individual teachers plan for their own class with little reference to the work pupils have done in past classes or what is being done in other classes with pupils of the same age. Whilst themes and topics titles are usually consistent, teachers' interpretation of how these are to be delivered and the curriculum content is inconsistent. This means that there is a lack of continuity from year to year and some topics are covered inadequately. As a result, pupils' achievement is uneven as they move through the school, with pupils generally achieving better in Years 3 to 6 than in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics and science.
29. There have been some significant areas of improvement since the last inspection. There is now a good curriculum in ICT and provision for pupils in the Nursery now meets differing needs effectively. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. However, currently, monitoring of

the curriculum by co-ordinators is not as rigorous as it should be and not enough has been done to identify the inconsistencies in practice across the school.

30. Teachers often plan work that is more closely matched to the need of more able pupils, with less able pupils expected to try the same activities, producing work at their own level. The impact of this is that pupils, and particularly the less able, are not consistently being given work that is specifically planned to meet their needs, resulting in them not always learning as quickly as they should. This is also a significant concern for pupils in the mixed-age classes where teachers largely base planning on the expectations for older pupils. This means that the younger children in the class do not always receive the same curriculum as their peers in the single-age class, resulting in inconsistencies in knowledge and understanding from class to class. In Years 5 and 6, the school has successfully overcome this problem in English and mathematics by teaching pupils in single-age ability groups. Consequently, the planned curriculum is usually well matched to individual needs and is effective.
31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall, with a strength being the way that the school makes good use of test data to identify pupils with special educational needs and the more able. Provision for these pupils is good when they are withdrawn from class to work on specific short targeted programmes with a support teacher. At these times, pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards achieving the targets they have been set in individual education plans and are able to develop, for example, their spelling strategies, which enable them to improve their work in class. More able pupils deepen their understanding and thinking skills, which helps them to achieve higher standards in their everyday work.
32. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, with visitors bringing opportunities to learn about the world outside school and visits to museums and places of interest enabling pupils to experience this first hand. Sport is a very good feature of the extra-curricular activities, with very good quality opportunities offered in, for example, football, netball and tennis. All these activities contribute to the school's good curricular provision for personal, social and health education. Pupils learn how to become caring citizens and good friends to each other. They recognise their moods, emotions and feelings and are able to use these positively to stay motivated and hard working.
33. The school has a wide range of good resources and accommodation for Years 1 to 6, with the library, computer facilities, outside area, music and PE resources all being significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. These and the attractive environment have a good motivational effect on pupils and help to support them well in their learning.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes good provision for the pupils' welfare in a safe and caring environment. Appropriate support and guidance is provided for pupils' personal needs. Processes for seeking pupils' views are effective.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has effective procedures in place to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment.

- Pupils trust members of staff who provide good support and guidance for their pastoral needs, although academic support is less secure.
- Pupils are very involved in the work and development of the school.
- There are good induction practices in place to ensure smooth transitions at the start and between school transfers.

Commentary

34. Members of staff work hard to provide an environment that is safe. All members of staff are diligent in their search for emerging hazards that might cause danger to the children. When potential issues are identified, effective remedial action is implemented. All equipment is properly checked to ensure the children's safety. There are effective arrangements for child protection. All members of staff know the signs to look for and the procedures to follow if their suspicions are aroused.
35. Relationships have been maintained since the last inspection and continue to be good. All adults know the pastoral strengths and weaknesses of the pupils. In turn, pupils show high levels of trust in members of staff who provide sensitive support for pupils' personal needs. However, because assessment information is not used sufficiently, academic support is less effective. Pupils confirm that they know whom to approach if they have a problem. They confirm that there is very little incidence of bullying or harassment. They are careful to add that the incidents that occur relate almost entirely to verbal comments rather than physical aggression. They are confident that in all instances staff will deal effectively with any issues.
36. There are effective mechanisms in place to take account of the ideas and opinions of the pupils. The children show initiative in responding to disasters across the world. The school council is instrumental in providing the opportunity for pupils' views to be considered by the staff. Recent consultations have resulted in improved playground equipment.
37. There are good quality induction procedures in place to enable the children to feel comfortable from the moment that they start school. Members of staff form a good early partnership with parents by visiting children and their parents at home. The school also provides parents with good quality information that enables them to be reassured and in turn to reassure their children.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with its parents and carers. Community links, including those with other nearby schools, are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very supportive of the school and contribute well to their children's learning.
- Visits into and visitors from the community are used effectively to enhance the pupils' learning.
- The school works effectively with partner schools and colleges.

Commentary

38. A high proportion of parents are very supportive of the school and its work. They believe that it has many strengths. However, a few parents responding to the questionnaire had concerns about mixed-age classes, bullying and homework. Inspection evidence supports the positive feelings of parents and the concerns are addressed under other headings of the report.
39. Information provided for parents is good overall. Information communicated during the induction of pupils is very useful in advising parents about how they can help their children's learning in school and at home. General information and regular updates give them more useful information about the school and its activities. Annual reports contain much detailed information about what the pupils know, understand and can do. In addition, they tell parents about the progress the children have made. They also contain targets for improvement. Together with the meetings to discuss their children's progress, the school works hard to involve parents constructively in the partnership link.
40. Parents are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and many respond positively. As well as helping in the classroom and around the school, they also help out on trips and visits. In addition, the parent teacher association (PTA) is active in fundraising and social activities. The school values highly the efforts of parents, visitors and other members of the community for the valuable contributions that their efforts make to the quality of education and the children's learning.
41. Members of the community contribute effectively to pupils' learning and links with the community are good. Educational and residential visits are both used regularly and effectively to further extend the range of community support. Links with other schools are active and effective. There is regular liaison over curriculum issues and there is a supportive network of local primary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership and he is supported well by the deputy headteacher. The leadership of other key staff is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory, with statutory requirements met in full.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher have high aspirations and a clear, shared vision for school development.
- The headteacher is strongly committed to school improvement and there have been many positive, recent initiatives.
- Developments in the Nursery and Reception classes are being well managed.
- Recent training and support has helped to develop the roles of co-ordinators, though not all have a clear understanding of their responsibilities.
- Governors are supportive and are beginning to monitor the work of the school but they do not do enough to challenge senior managers about school effectiveness.
- Financial planning is thorough and is clearly targeted on raising pupils' attainment.

Commentary

42. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher are only recently appointed. They work together effectively as a team and provide good leadership for the work of the school. They know what sort of school they want and have high aspirations. There is a strong

commitment to school improvement and a shared sense of purpose. Together, they have quickly established a clear understanding of some of the most important weaknesses in the school and they have already begun to address some of these issues. This means that the school is in a good position to improve further.

43. There is a clear, shared vision for the future of the school that is based on a secure understanding of how the school could improve. The headteacher has successfully reviewed the effectiveness of different parts of the school's work and there is good strategic planning for school improvement. There have been many important developments though they are very recent and have not yet had a significant impact on overall school effectiveness. Recent improvements include:
- There have been significant developments in the way that the Foundation Stage is organised. A new unit has been established and accommodation significantly improved. This is being well managed by the headteacher and by the Foundation Stage leader who have a clear understanding of what they want to improve next.
 - The headteacher and new assessment co-ordinator have begun to pull together all available test data into an accessible and manageable format. This test data is being rigorously analysed to identify how well different groups of pupils are achieving, as well as variations between subjects or year groups.
 - The headteacher has reviewed the organisation of the Years 1 and 2 mixed-age class so that it takes more account of pupils' ability and maturity rather than just being based on age.
 - Setting has been introduced for English and mathematics in Year 5 and funds have been allocated for the teaching of a more able group for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.
 - Performance management procedures have been strengthened so that there are regular reviews and a closer link is being made between the targets that are set for teachers and the training that is provided for them.
 - Systems of communication within the school have been reviewed and the deputy headteacher has successfully taken responsibility for managing teaching assistants, ensuring that they are fully informed about day-to-day decisions.
44. The leadership of subject co-ordinators is satisfactory. Again, there have been significant, recent improvements. The school is participating in the '*Primary Leadership Programme*' and this has focused on developing the role of co-ordinators. This is beginning to have a good effect, and co-ordinators are developing their skills in both data analysis and lesson monitoring. As a result, they are now beginning to provide a clear lead in their subjects, although in some cases, there is still a limited understanding of the need to have an overview of and responsibility for whole-school provision.
45. Management is satisfactory. Appropriate account is taken of the need to consider the workload of teachers and the school has well-considered plans in place for implementing planning and assessment time for teachers in the next academic year. The school day runs smoothly; the headteacher is well supported by a hard working and efficient administration team who are friendly and welcoming to visitors.
46. Governance is satisfactory. The chair of governors has a good working relationship with the headteacher, and other governors are very supportive. Statutory requirements are met well and the governors' annual report is well-presented and informative. The headteacher works hard to keep the governing body informed and governors are beginning to take greater responsibility for monitoring the work of the school. This means that governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not yet do enough to challenge the school over its performance.

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	848,603
Total expenditure	842,265
Expenditure per pupil	2,752

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	47,965
Balance carried forward to the next year	54,303

47. Financial planning is good. Governors are knowledgeable about the current financial situation and planning is based on a good understanding of the school's priorities, with budgetary decisions made carefully on the basis of *'How will this help the school to improve?'* Best-value principles are applied appropriately. Spending has been targeted on providing additional staffing as well as improving the quality of accommodation. Both of these aims have been successfully achieved. The decision to allocate funding to employ a part-time teacher to extend setting in Years 5 and 6 and to work with more able groups in Years 4, 5 and 6 has had a very good impact on pupils' achievement.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48. Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection and is now good. Children's attainment on entry to the school is above average, with most having pre-school experience before starting in the Nursery. Induction arrangements are good, enabling children to settle into school routines quickly. Members of staff form a good, early partnership with parents by visiting children and their parents at home, by providing extensive information and by encouraging parents to become involved in their children's learning at home and by helping in school. Parents are pleased with recent improvements in provision.
49. Children, including those identified as having special educational needs, achieve well during their time in the Foundation Stage. By the end of the Reception year, most achieve the levels expected for their age, and over half the children exceed them in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Creative development and physical development were not areas of focus for the inspection and judgements have not been made on provision, attainment and achievement. Most children develop good attitudes towards learning and behave well.
50. The quality of education has improved since the time of the last inspection with the curriculum being developed so that it now meets the needs of young children appropriately. Teachers and other members of staff work together closely to plan exciting practical activities that engage children's interest well and provide very good opportunities for children to use their initiative and develop independence. There are satisfactory records kept of children's progress and attainment at the end of each term, though few examples of children's work are kept to show this development and to enable members of staff to provide consistent challenge, particularly when children have chosen activities for themselves. Good use is made of voluntary helpers to support groups of pupils. Whilst children with special educational needs are supported well and included in all activities, some younger Reception children with attention difficulties have not yet been identified as needing specific education plans or support.

51. The recently appointed leader of the Foundation Stage provides good leadership and management. She has high aspirations and provides a clear educational direction in the action plans drawn up following a thorough evaluation of provision and a good personal knowledge of the needs of small children. Support from the local education authority has been used well to help monitor teaching and learning and to bring about rapid change in the curriculum.
52. Accommodation has been improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. The Nursery and Reception classes are partially open-plan providing flexibility in the way space can be used and an outdoor area is accessible to all children in the unit. Resources are barely adequate. Whilst recent funding and existing resources are used well, there are shortfalls in interesting construction kits and resources for imaginative play.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Independence is encouraged very well.
- Members of staff have high expectations for behaviour.
- A few younger Reception children find it difficult to work as a group.

Commentary

53. Children achieve well because the Foundation Stage leader and other members of staff have very high expectations for independence and establish clear routines to help children become confident and eager to learn. For example, children who have been in the Nursery for just a few weeks already change into boots by themselves when preparing to work outside, and older children understand the sequence of events for the day and respond quickly to known signals such as the music for tidying-up resources.
54. Throughout the Foundation Stage classes, members of staff set good examples for relationships and provide clear guidance for good behaviour. Good teaching helps children to develop sensitivity towards each other and they enjoy sharing each other's experiences such as a visit to the dentist, and things they can do. However, some of the less mature Reception children find it difficult to listen to the ideas of others. Most children know the difference between right and wrong and some comment without prompting, on kind behaviour such as not laughing at the misfortunes of others.
55. Whilst most children concentrate well for a long time and enjoy choosing their own activities, a few children in the younger Reception class find it difficult to co-operate and do not sustain interest in activities for long enough. These children have been affected by a high turnover of teachers and they are much less settled than children in other groups. Their specific needs have not been formally identified and the curriculum has not been adapted well enough to compensate for their immature behaviour. In addition, some free-choice activities have limited resources to help engage the children's interest, and members of staff do not provide enough support to help children understand how they can be used to extend their learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in reading.
- Children are articulate and most listen well.
- Teachers provide interesting activities, though some opportunities are missed to encourage children to extend their writing.

Commentary

56. Children achieve very well in reading because teachers help them to develop a love of books by reading stories well, encouraging children to look for clues in the illustrations and asking challenging questions. Members of staff and parents often share books with children, helping children to learn letter sounds and frequently used words very quickly. A large proportion of Reception children can already read simple texts and are on target to exceed the expected levels by the end of the year. Children make choices about the books they like to read and use the skills they have been taught to help them read unfamiliar words.
57. Children are successfully encouraged to communicate with each other and members of staff, and most speak clearly and confidently. In whole class and small groups, members of staff ask questions that help children to listen carefully, though some less mature children in the younger Reception class have a short attention span and the curriculum is not always adapted enough to their needs.
58. There are plenty of inviting activities to help children develop an interest in literacy. For example, children choose to use the whiteboards, clipboards and the playground to improve their mark making and enjoy making cards and notes for their family and friends. However, there are some missed opportunities to inspire and encourage children to attempt to write more, when tasks provided involve more drawing or colouring in than is necessary.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Number skills are promoted well through counting activities and the use of rhymes.
- Children develop a good mathematical vocabulary.
- There are too few opportunities for children to apply what they have learnt.

Commentary

59. Members of staff provide plenty of opportunity for children to develop their knowledge of number by counting or adding small numbers together. They provide regular practise in counting through the use of number rhymes, and in the Nursery, puppets that make mistakes are used well to make learning fun. Counting strategies such as moving, touching or ordering the objects help children to be more accurate. Children learn to match numerals with the correct number of objects by playing games with dice.

60. Teaching and learning are good and children are successfully encouraged to use the correct mathematical language to describe the relative position of objects and to compare size. Children have good opportunities to sort objects into sets and match coins to amounts of money. However, there are missed opportunities for children to apply what they have learnt when working on activities they have chosen for themselves, particularly in measuring. Some counting tasks in the Reception classes do not allow enough challenge for more-able children or give them the chance to write down numbers. An interactive whiteboard was used well in one Reception class to encourage children to take part in a shopping activity.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have a good knowledge of living things.
- Members of staff provide children with good opportunities for exploration.

Commentary

61. Children achieve well because they are given plenty of opportunity to find out for themselves. They learn about seasonal change during walks in the school grounds, plant beans and collect leaves for the compost bin. They develop an understanding of technology by working with computers and learn about the past when listening to the personal histories of older visitors to the school. Children demonstrate an impressive knowledge of different animals and some of the ways they behave.
62. Teaching and learning are good because most activities are interesting and good use is made of the outdoor area to show how wheeled vehicles move and how living things grow. Children have regular opportunities to learn skills on the computers and older Reception children print their own work. However, members of staff miss some opportunities to extend the children's understanding by encouraging them to make predictions about what they might see or what might happen. Occasionally, less mature children become inattentive, especially when tasks are too repetitive.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

63. One satisfactory outdoor lesson to develop the children's awareness of the use of space was observed in the Reception class for the younger children. Whilst the teacher had clear expectations and explained tasks well, there was insufficient variety in the activities to maintain the interest of the children throughout the lesson. Children are given good opportunities to improve their hand control with activities such as bead threading, or using tongs and pipettes to pick up objects or liquid. The school supports children identified as having special educational needs well, by providing adapted furniture and helping them to participate in whole-class activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

64. No specific lessons were on the timetable, but some children in the Nursery were given a good opportunity to experiment with 'Spring' colours by mixing and applying

powder paint. Children in the Reception class enjoy working in the role-play garden centre. In all three classes, children are happy to join in with sung rhymes. Resources for children to make their own pictures are readily available, though some art activities, where Reception children use a template as the basis of their work, provide insufficient opportunity for children to use their own imaginations.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 6, pupils attain very good standards.
- Parents contribute well to pupils' learning, especially in reading.
- In Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils lack independence when spelling new words.
- Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening skills.
- Setting arrangements are effective in Years 5 and 6 and for the more able but there are occasions when less able pupils do not learn quickly enough.
- Inconsistencies in the planned curriculum for mixed-age classes means that pupils do not all have equal access to the same learning opportunities.
- Planning and monitoring of the curriculum content is not rigorous enough.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

65. Inspection findings indicate that, in the current Year 2, pupils are achieving well and attainment is above the nationally expected levels. This is higher than national test results in 2004, which showed a fall in standards from those of previous years with the numbers achieving the higher Level 3 well below average when compared to both the national average and that for similar schools. This appears to be atypical because of unsettled staffing and provision for one of the classes in this year group. By the end of Year 6, inspection findings show pupils achieve very well, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where they are taught in single-age ability groups. In the current Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above nationally expected levels. National test results at the end of Year 6 indicate variations from year to year with a big rise in standards in 2004, when attainment was in the top 5 per cent of all schools and similar schools.
66. Pupils' achievement in reading is good in Years 1 to 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils of all ages enjoy books and read with good expression, favouring comical stories, poems and adventure texts. They are keen to discuss what they are reading and imaginative in their ideas about characterisation and plotting. Parents make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning by hearing reading regularly with the younger pupils and supporting English homework with the older pupils. The school offers a range of good quality books and most children use the library well, regularly and independently.
67. Pupils' achievement in writing is good in Years 1 to 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6. They write for a wide range of purposes. However, given the very good capabilities, particularly of the majority of the older pupils, in the time allowed they are not always able to develop their writing into longer, extended pieces of work. A significant number of pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4, whilst able to write with reasonable

independence, are not always secure in their spelling strategies. Some waste time in waiting for adult help, which stops them producing more written work. They are reluctant to try to spell new words as they do not want to make a mistake and they do not readily make use of resources such as dictionaries and word charts. Even when using a computer to word process, Year 2 pupils produce a limited amount of work as they fear mistakes and appear unfamiliar with the spell check process. Presentation of work is satisfactory and most pupils write in a good handwriting style.

68. Achievement in speaking and listening skills is very good. Throughout the school, standards are very high. Pupils are articulate, use interesting language and are very descriptive and imaginative in talking about their work and ideas. Older children are well able to adapt their language for the audience and create lively feelings and mood by their choice of words. When in debate with their peers they hold a balanced view that they justify with well-chosen reasons. Teachers actively encourage well-developed answers to their questions and have good strategies to allow pupils time to rethink, deepen and add to their answers.
69. Teaching is overall good throughout the school with particular strengths in Years 5 and 6 when working in ability sets. In these groups the pace of the lesson is fast, the work challenging and there is a clear expectation expressed to the pupils of what will be required of them. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work at the end of each lesson and teachers' marking gives explicit next steps for ways to help pupils improve. This makes pupils concentrate very well and work hard. In Years 1 to 4 the teachers often rely too heavily on worksheets. Whilst work is usually suitable for the more able pupils, teachers do not always meet the needs of the less able. Where work is specifically set for the less able it is frequently too easy and does not strike the right balance between challenging them at an appropriate level whilst meeting their needs. This is particularly the case in the classes where there are two age groups of pupils. Throughout the school, teachers are skilful in their choice of texts and in bringing texts to life by animated story telling and reading. This is especially motivating for boys. Teachers are very good at ensuring high standards of behaviour in lessons.
70. When planning lessons for their classes, teachers mostly work individually. Whilst there is a good range and amount of resources to assist them and a national framework for literacy, teachers' interpretation and use of these is too flexible. Pupils of the same age in different classes do not always receive the same curriculum. Texts, strategies and emphasis can be different with teachers' expectations of the outcomes for pupils' work also inconsistent. Where there are two age groups in the class, work is usually planned for the oldest children with little difference being made for the youngest pupils. Although the work may be interesting and challenging for the older pupils, it is not always the case that it is also appropriate for the younger pupils. As work is usually the same for everyone in most classes in Years 1 to 4, the match of work to pupils' needs is often missing. Those pupils with special educational needs, where identified and withdrawn to work with a support teacher on intensive programmes, receive good support and make good progress to achieve the targets they have been set. The groups for more-able pupils in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6 who also work within a targeted group also benefit from this provision.
71. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because planning and monitoring of the curriculum content is not yet rigorous enough to ensure all pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. Younger pupils in mixed-age classes in particular, sometimes miss out when teachers plan for the oldest pupils. This does not give them equality of access to the same curriculum as their peers.

72. Appropriate longer-term targets are set for pupils and their progress towards them checked regularly. The information that results from these checks is inconsistently used to plan lessons, particularly in Years 1 to 4.
73. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how to develop the subject further and has given good support to teachers for how to improve areas of identified weakness. The school has benefited by being part of a national programme to improve literacy and is trialling, in different year groups, ideas and strategies to evaluate their use before implementation throughout the school. Whilst some useful monitoring of pupils' work, teachers' planning and lessons has been undertaken, it has not identified the inconsistencies and weaknesses in the curriculum coverage and balance, which results in inequalities of opportunity and access.
74. There has been a sound improvement since the last inspection with improved resources and access to ICT facilities. Displays are of very good quality; they value and show pupils' work to its best advantage and are motivational in encouraging them to take pride in their achievements.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

75. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is good in Years 1 to 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6. For example, topics in history, geography, science and RE all provide good opportunities for reading and writing and assist pupils in their progress towards the very good standards they achieve by the time they leave the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are too low in Year 2.
- Pupils' attainment is well above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make very good progress in Years 5 and 6.
- There are inconsistencies in teaching across the school and work is not always matched closely enough to individual need.
- Good use is made of mathematics across the curriculum.

Commentary

76. The school has not made enough progress since the last inspection and there has been a drop in standards of attainment by the end of Year 2, where teacher assessments in 2004 were well below national average and those for similar schools. The school acknowledges that in 2004 the achievement of pupils in one of the Year 2 classes was adversely affected by staffing problems, which meant that learning was disturbed. Nevertheless, test results at the end of Year 2 are consistently lower in mathematics than in other subjects and despite there being an improving picture in the current Year 2, where attainment is below nationally expected levels, more able pupils do not achieve well enough.
77. Pupils do not make enough progress in Years 1 and 2 because teachers do not have high enough expectations of more able pupils and the curriculum is not adapted

sufficiently in mixed-age classes to take account of differing needs. Too much time is spent on teaching number skills with too little time allocated to other aspects of the mathematics curriculum, especially the application of skills in practical work. Consequently, although most pupils reach nationally expected levels (Level 2), too few reach the higher Level 3, given their capability.

78. There are significant improvements in pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6, with achievement good overall in Years 3 to 6. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is well above nationally expected levels. This is similar to the results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004. Pupils make the best progress in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is very good. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are taught in single-age ability groups. This makes it easier for teachers to plan work that meets differing needs and helps pupils to develop a broad range of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding. More able pupils also benefit greatly from additional teaching support for one session per week for part of each year. Consequently, the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2004 was well above the national average. In Years 3 and 4, achievement is good, although once again there are inconsistencies in the way that work is planned in the mixed-age class, with planning being based on expectations for Year 4 pupils. As a result of this, work is not always matched sufficiently to the age and abilities of all pupils, meaning that some do not make enough progress from lesson to lesson.
79. Teaching is good overall, with the best teaching seen in Years 5 and 6. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory. Where teaching is very good or good, teachers have good subject knowledge, teach the pupils the correct mathematical vocabulary and plan well for all abilities, giving them good opportunity to apply their mathematical skills to practical applications. At these times, pupils are very well motivated, work at pace and are challenged to move onto the next level of learning, enabling all pupils, including the more-able and those identified as having special educational needs, to make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, work is not always suitable for all abilities, especially the more able, and consequently they are not always challenged sufficiently in their development of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.
80. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers regularly assess learning and they monitor trends and set targets. However, this information is not always used effectively to inform or amend future planning. The quality of marking is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to understand how they can improve their mathematical skills. Where marking is good, it includes many positive and constructive comments but also clearly identifies areas of weakness so that pupils know what to do to improve their work.
81. Leadership and management is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is benefiting from additional support as part of the '*Primary Leadership Programme*' and is beginning to make more use of test data and monitoring to analyse trend and to set targets. However, over the last four years, not enough has been done to acknowledge or remedy the weaknesses in Years 1 and 2.

Mathematics across the curriculum

82. Good links are made between mathematics and other subjects. Teachers plan good opportunities in subjects such as science, ICT, history and geography for pupils to use their good numeracy skills to support learning. This helps to make learning purposeful.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is above nationally expected levels by Year 6.
- Good teaching in Years 5 and 6 has a good impact on learning.
- Recorded work is often the same for all pupils, whatever their prior attainment or age.
- There is a lack of consistency to curriculum planning for pupils in mixed-age classes.
- There is good enrichment of the curriculum.

Commentary

83. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. As at that time, pupils' attainment is above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. This is confirmed by national tests results at the end of Year 6 in 2004. However, there has been a dip in attainment in Years 1 and 2, and in teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2004 whilst all pupils achieved the expected level for their age (Level 2), none achieved the higher Level 3. The achievement of this group of pupils was adversely affected in 2004 by a high turnover of staff in one class. In the current Year 2, attainment is in line with nationally expected levels, though the number of pupils working at Level 3 continues to be low given the capability of pupils.
84. Pupils' achievement, including those identified as having special educational needs is good overall. However, there are variations in achievement as pupils move through the school. In Years 1 and 2, where achievement is satisfactory, there is not always enough challenge for more able pupils and this slows their progress. In contrast, in Years 5 and 6, pupils achieve well, with teachers planning work that provides good challenge and is more closely matched to need.
85. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Key features in teaching and learning throughout the school are:
- Teachers make good use of resources and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, there is a purposeful working atmosphere in most lessons.
 - Teachers encourage the pupils to think like scientists, and they give them good opportunities to learn through practical activities.
 - Homework is used very well to extend learning beyond the classroom.
 - Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs, ensuring that they are included in activities and helping them to fully access the curriculum.
 - Teachers' expectations are not always high enough, with pupils often completing the same piece of recorded work whatever their age or ability. There is sometimes a lack of challenge in lessons for more able pupils and teachers do

not plan enough opportunities for more able pupils to devise their own experiments or to use their scientific knowledge to explain their observations.

- Although assessment procedures are satisfactory, teachers do not make enough use of marking to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Teachers make good use of ICT to introduce topics, but they give pupils little opportunity to use ICT to support their learning.

86. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it is not adapted sufficiently to take account of pupils' needs, especially in mixed-age classes. Pupils in the same year group do not always cover the same work because teachers plan to the needs of older pupils in the mixed-age classes, rather than considering the specific needs of both age groups. This has a negative impact on achievement and the school has identified that test results show that over time, pupils in mixed-age classes do less well than those in single-age classes.

87. A strength of the curriculum is the way that it is enriched though a good range of visits and visitors. Regular science workshops help to bring the subject alive and are greatly enjoyed by pupils. Good use is made of the school's wildlife area and woodland to teach pupils about habitats and this has a good effect on learning.

88. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has high aspirations and a clear vision for future development. She has undertaken some useful monitoring of provision, but this has not been sufficient to identify the inconsistencies in provision across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management mean that there has been good improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils achieve well and, by Year 6, attainment is well above nationally expected levels.
- There is a good curriculum and good links are made between different subjects when pupils are working in the ICT suite.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to use their skills in subjects such as science, history and geography.

Commentary

89. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and pupils' attainment is now above nationally expected levels by the end of Year 2 and well above them by the end of Year 6. Developments since the last inspection have been carefully planned and have been well led and managed by the headteacher and co-ordinator. Resources have been greatly improved and are now very good, with resources in the ICT suite being excellent both in quality and quantity. The appointment of an ICT manager to oversee technical problems and to support teachers has had a good impact on learning and has helped to improve the confidence of teachers. There is now a good curriculum, with a strength being the breadth of activities taught in ICT lessons in the suite. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the different uses of ICT and, by Year 6, show a very good range of skills. They very confidently word-

process their writing, produce paintings and plans using art programs and make moving pictures or presentations using a very good range of multi-media techniques.

90. The quality of teaching is good, and this means that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well throughout the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons in the ICT suite are well organised with a strength being the way that links are made between different subjects. For example, in a good ICT lesson in Year 5, pupils used modelling skills to help them draw plans of their classroom, with the teacher successfully introducing mathematical concepts such as scale. This helped to make learning purposeful. Consequently, pupils are fully engaged in their work. They support each other well and show good levels of self-esteem and confidence.
91. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to demonstrate how a new program can be used and they successfully break skills into small parts to help pupils understand what they need to do. This means that there is a good pace to learning, with differing needs met well. Teachers are aware of those pupils who bring good skills from home and they ensure that these pupils are challenged in lessons. Less-able pupils are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants, ensuring that these pupils make good progress in developing basic skills.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

92. Good links are made between different subjects when pupils are working in the ICT suite. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work in science, history and geography shows that there are still missed opportunities to use ICT to support learning in these subjects. The co-ordinator and ICT manager have rightly identified this as the next stage of development in ICT provision. There are good plans in place to purchase laptops for use in classrooms to enable cross-curricular links to be extended further on a daily basis.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

These subjects were not an area of focus for the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to form overall judgements on provision.

93. Due to the nature of the timetable only one **geography** and no **history** lessons were seen. In the one satisfactory geography lesson, pupils investigated similarities and differences between lives in the UK and Kenya. Types of food grown and eaten in the two countries were compared and the pupils' knowledge of other cultures improved. From the evidence of planning, displays and previous work seen, there is sound coverage of the curriculum in both history and geography and the pupils make satisfactory progress. However, there is inequality of opportunity as pupils of the same age do not always study the same topics. In mixed-age classes, teachers plan work that is often more suitable for older pupils and they do not always take sufficient account of the needs of younger pupils. Teachers' planning rarely identifies expectations for different age groups in mixed-age classes.

Religious education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is good by the end of Year 6.
- Good teaching helps pupils to achieve well.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of pupils' work in different classes.

- Good use is made of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum.

COMMENTARY

94. At the time of the last inspection there were important weaknesses in the way that religious education was taught across the school. Good leadership and management since that time means that these have been successfully addressed and achievement is now good. Pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and above it by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 accurately retell stories from the Bible and recall the names of various Christian festivals. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of Christian and other faiths. For example, they can confidently explain some of the key features of Sikhism.
95. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching generally meets differing needs well and there is a clear focus on encouraging pupils to think about the beliefs of different faiths. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Teachers make good use of resources to make learning interesting and they have good expectations of behaviour. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to share their ideas and questioning is used well to help extend learning. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and participate well in activities.
96. Coverage of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, there are inconsistencies in the breadth of the curriculum for pupils of the same age in different classes. This means that there are variations in both the quality and quantity of work from class to class, and in some classes there is little recorded work to show what has been achieved in lessons.
97. Resources are good and there are good links with other local churches. Regular visits to different places of worship support learning well. This has a good effect on pupils' spiritual and social development, helping them to develop a good awareness of the responsibilities of living in a multicultural society.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

This was not an area of focus for the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make overall judgements on provision.

98. In a good lesson in **art and design**, the teacher in Year 6 provided an interesting introduction to a series of lessons on expressing mood through the use of colour. Pupils enjoyed experimenting with various materials and used their prior knowledge of the work of some famous artists to help develop their ideas. There are some good displays of artwork around the school, and pupils in Year 2 have produced some especially good sketches and pastel drawings. There are good links made between art and other areas of the curriculum, especially in history. ICT is used well to support learning; pupils produce work in the style of some famous artists such as Mondrian and they use digital cameras to capture different shapes observed around the school. There are clear plans to develop the subject further and a popular art club successfully raises the profile of the subject in the school.
99. A satisfactory lesson in Year 2 and a very good lesson in Year 6 were observed in **design and technology**. In the very good lesson, pupils were prepared very thoroughly for a planning task by taking apart and drawing the mechanisms used in a range of battery operated objects. The teacher's very clear instructions and

expectations, and the use of carefully selected video clips enabled pupils to gain a wealth of knowledge in a short time and their interest was held successfully to the very end of the lesson.

100. One good **music** lesson was observed in Year 1. The lesson followed a plan from a commercial scheme of work and focused on teaching pupils about the pulse in music. Good musical skills were promoted by the teacher using appropriate music specific language. New skills were introduced as a game in which pupils joined in actively and enthusiastically. The level of challenge was high, with girls able to learn the movements in time to the pulse faster than the boys. Pupils can name the instruments they later played in time to the pulse and were able to improve their performance with practise. They handle the instruments carefully and follow instructions very well using good listening skills. Pupils responded well to the teacher's good methods, achieved well and in this lesson were working at a level above that expected nationally for their age.
101. No **physical education** lessons were seen during the inspection. From the evidence of planning, displays, photographs, trophies and talking to teachers and pupils it is apparent that there is satisfactory coverage of the whole physical education curriculum and that the pupils enjoy and are well motivated in these activities. The PE subject leader gives good support to other staff by either supporting or taking a PE lesson. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that are well supported by the pupils. This has led to the school being successful in a wide range of competitive fixtures for both boys and girls. The school reports that over 95 per cent of the pupils attain the nationally expected target of being able to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

There is insufficient evidence to form judgements on provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship as no lessons were seen during the inspection.

102. There is a good curriculum for PSHE and members of staff give pupils good opportunities to share their views at different times during the school day. When this happens, issues raised are considered sensitively. The school council helps pupils to understand the responsibilities of being part of the school community. Councillors take their responsibilities very seriously and carry out their roles well. Throughout the school, members of staff are good role-models, treating all pupils and each other with care and respect. There is a good emphasis on adopting a healthy life-style, including sex and relationships education and learning about the dangers of drugs, ensuring that pupils develop good values.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

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

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
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	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

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

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