

INSPECTION REPORT

NETHERTON CE (Controlled) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Netherton, Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103841

Headteacher: Mrs S M Churchill

Lead inspector: Mr C D Loizou

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th January 2005

Inspection number: 267375

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:	323
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Gregory
Date of previous inspection:	26 th February 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Netherton Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School is an infant and junior school with a Nursery class. It is situated in the Netherton district of Dudley in the West Midlands and is closely associated with St Andrew's C.E. church which is very close to the school. There are 323 boys and girls on roll, which is above average in size. The Nursery admits up to 60 part-time children (30 full-time equivalent) and the school admits up to 60 four-year-old children into its Reception year each September. However, due to falling rolls over the last four years, the number on roll has been lower than the school's capacity. The children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average overall, especially in language and communication skills. In addition to the Nursery and Reception classes, there are two mixed-age classes, one for Year 3 and 4 pupils and one class for Year 5 and 6 pupils, and seven single age classes from Year 1 through to Year 6. The school sometimes admits large numbers of pupils from traveller families and this can affect the rate of mobility in some year groups. There are currently no traveller pupils in the school. Most of the pupils live near to the school. The large majority of pupils (81 per cent) are of British white heritage and a significant proportion (18 per cent) are of mixed, black Caribbean, Asian or Chinese heritage. An increasing proportion of pupils joining the school (currently 10 per cent) are of Pakistani heritage. The school has 11 per cent of pupils receiving additional language support as they speak another home language as well as English. A small number (five pupils) are in the early stages of English

language acquisition. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is average (21 per cent) and five of the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18645	Charalambos Loizou	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage; English as an additional language; Science; Information and communication technology; Physical education
13448	Dawn Lloyd	Lay inspector	
20010	John Sangster	Team inspector	English; Art and design; Design and technology; Music
18505	David Matthews	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Mathematics; Geography; History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

As a result of good leadership, management and teaching, the school provides a **good standard of education**. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is low. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are below average but the pupils make good progress and achieve well. Overall, the school gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and are well supported by the staff and governors
- Achievement in English and mathematics is good and standards are rising well as a result but science standards could be higher
- The teaching is good and is particularly strong in the Nursery and Reception classes
- The personal development of the pupils is good, resulting in good attitudes to school and learning as well as very good behaviour
- The curriculum is satisfactory but there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to study subjects other than English and mathematics in depth
- Although attendance rates are improving steadily they remain unsatisfactory

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in 2003. Standards are rising and the results of the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been improving well. The teaching, curriculum, leadership and management have also improved. Good progress has been made in addressing the key issues, although there is still improvement needed to raise standards in science and to improve attendance rates.

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	E	E	B
Mathematics	C	E	E	C
Science	B	E	E	C

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

Inspection evidence confirms that the pupils, including those with special educational needs, those learning English as an additional language and those capable of attaining the higher levels, **achieve well**. The children enter the Nursery with low skill levels, particularly in language and communication. They achieve very well and, although few will achieve the goals expected of them by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, most will reach the expected levels in the other areas of learning. The school's results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The inspection confirms that, by the end of Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. The 2004 results for pupils in Year 6 improved compared with those for the previous year in English and mathematics but not in science where there has been a steady decline. The

improvement in English and mathematics is reflected in the improvement to the proportion of pupils attaining expected and higher levels in the tests. English results in particular compare well with results in similar schools. Inspectors found that standards in the current Year 6 are continuing to rise and the pupils are making good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science but science standards could be higher as the pupils only make satisfactory progress in science compared with the good progress seen in English and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now in line with what is expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, as they are in history, music and religious education.

The pupils' **personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good**. They have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. Although improving, attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. The teaching is good and contributes to the very good start made by the children in the Foundation Stage and the pupils' good learning and achievement in Years 1 to 6. The teachers, well supported by teaching assistants, are particularly successful in planning challenging work that meets the needs of different levels of ability, using information from the good assessment procedures. Good use is made of resources, particularly those for ICT.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities. The care and welfare of the pupils are very good and they are offered good support and guidance. The school benefits from good links with parents and the community and satisfactory relationships with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership and management of the school are good** overall. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and this is having a direct impact on the pupils' achievement, and the rising standards in English and mathematics. There is a strong focus on developing and improving the quality of education which is beginning to have an impact on the rest of the curriculum. As a result, the school has a good climate for learning in which all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, are able to make good progress. The governors and senior staff play a significant part in the school's development. The governors have been instrumental in ensuring that the school moves forward.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents and pupils are pleased with the school. In particular, parents are pleased that their children like school and are made to feel very welcome when they first start. They feel that the school is well led and managed and the teachers expect their children to work hard. The pupils confirm that they enjoy school and feel that they are treated fairly, learn new things and are valued.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in science to match the improvements seen in English and mathematics

- Improve the curriculum further so that pupils are able to study subjects other than English and mathematics in greater depth
- Continue to improve attendance rates to bring them in line with the national average

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The evidence of the inspection confirms that the pupils' achievement is good overall. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards are rising well in English and mathematics but could be higher in science. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, including those learning English as an additional language, achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages, ability and ethnic background achieve well because they are well taught
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress
- Standards in English and mathematics are rising but science standards show a steady decline

Commentary

1. The children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below average; language and communication skills are particularly low. They settle very well, enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception class and are very well taught. They make great strides, achieve very well and, although few will achieve the goals expected of them by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, most will reach the expected levels in the other areas of learning.
2. The school's results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared with the results of schools in similar circumstances, the results were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 improved on that for the previous year and is close to average in mathematics but overall below average in reading and writing. The results over recent years have been improving at a faster rate than the national picture, reflecting much improved and consistent teaching.
3. Inspectors found that in Years 1 and 2, the pupils' achievement is good. They are well taught and they make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. By the end of Year 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average but achievement in science is uneven. This has resulted in good improvements to standards in reading, writing and mathematics but less secure improvement in science.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (14.6)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.1 (14.0)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.4 (15.4)	16.2 (16.3)

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

4. In Year 6, in 2004, the national test results were well below average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with the progress from Year 2 of pupils in similar schools, the results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was just below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. However, unlike English and mathematics, where the performance of the pupils has improved since the last inspection, science results declined in the same period year on year. More significantly, the same pupils that achieved well in English and mathematics did not do so well in science. Over time, the results have been improving in line with the rate found nationally but if science results had improved this improvement would have been greater.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.6 (25.0)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	25.0 (24.7)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	26.7 (27.4)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising in Years 3 to 6 and the pupils are achieving well but could do better in science. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. The school places a high priority on the pupils' literacy and numeracy and a very close check is kept on how they are progressing. Well-planned English and mathematics lessons help the pupils to make good progress in acquiring the basic skills. A wide range of strategies is used to develop the pupils' literacy skills as they move through the school and reading and writing are taught effectively. However, given the pupils' low levels of language and literacy when they first start school, standards in English remain below average. Grammar and spelling are taught well, although the pupils' accuracy in their weekly spelling tests is not so evident in their day-to-day writing and the school has rightly identified the need to develop a more systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting to improve the pupils' fluency and standard of presentation. The mathematics programme is well organised and taught and this enables the pupils to reach the expected levels. Standards in science are below those expected and the pupils make steady yet satisfactory progress. However, the pupils are not consistently given challenging investigations and experiments, so that they do not develop the skills of scientific enquiry as consistently as they should as they move up the school.
6. Among other subjects, standards have risen in ICT and are now in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, due largely to improvements to resources, teaching and organisation. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and standards are also in line with what is expected in history and music. No specific judgements have been made about standards in other subjects but there is room for improvement as the curriculum is not always planned so that the pupils are able to study and improve their skills in depth. The pupils enjoy a broad curriculum but it is not consistently planned so that pupils persevere and explore tasks fully.
7. Pupils with special educational needs do well overall in relation to their capabilities because the school has improved the organisation of its provision for these pupils since the last inspection when their progress was only satisfactory. However, despite the new systems, there are times when the work given to some pupils with special educational needs is not accurately matched to their needs. On these occasions their progress is not as good as it could be. The pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported and so make good progress. Particularly

skilful support is provided by a peripatetic specialist who visits the school part-time to assess and teach those in the very early stages of English language acquisition.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their behaviour is very good. Provision for their personal development is good overall, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is still unsatisfactory and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good arrangements are in place to encourage pupils' social development and they promote very good relationships and a sense of personal responsibility
- Pupils behave very well because the school teaches them moral values and because teachers have high expectations
- Although procedures to monitor and improve attendance are very efficient, attendance overall is still not good enough

Commentary

8. Pupils enjoy coming to school because they find it a happy place, where people are friendly and teachers are kind. There is a real community spirit, with shared pride in achievements and shared ambition for the future. A Praise Assembly was a good example of how, by valuing both achievement and effort, the school seeks to raise pupils' aspirations and enhance their self-esteem. Pupils showed genuine pleasure as they celebrated the successes of others. Relationships are very good and bullying is rare, because staff emphasise the importance of being friendly and considerate. When pupils are asked to work together in pairs or groups they co-operate well, taking turns fairly and listening to one another's ideas. For example, in a Year 5 science lesson, groups of pupils worked together sensibly to perform their experiments and agree their conclusions. The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to develop social and organisational skills, for example, as librarians, prefects and members of the School Council. Older pupils benefit significantly from these opportunities, which allow them to show initiative and take on responsibilities that enhance their sense of self-worth. A residential experience for Years 5 and 6 teaches independence, teamwork and sociability and is much valued by the pupils. The school is very committed to its Christian ethos and this is reflected in the close relationship it has with the neighbouring church of St Andrew's. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good.
9. Pupils help to formulate the school rules so that they understand why rules are necessary and find them sensible and fair. Teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' conduct and reward good behaviour with praise and approval. As a result, behaviour around the school and in lessons is almost always good or very good and has improved dramatically since the last inspection. There has only been one fixed term exclusion in the past year. Pupils are motivated by the rewards they can gain. The competitive element of the house point system is proving particularly effective in encouraging pupils to behave well, to attend regularly and to have a positive approach to learning. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and do their best and most pupils take part enthusiastically in lessons, settle quickly and sensibly to practical tasks and concentrate on their work. Tolerance and respect for views, customs and beliefs that differ from their own are taught through assemblies, religious education and personal, social and health education. Pupils learn to take responsibility for themselves and to explore the consequences of their actions. They are also developing a wider awareness of the needs of others, which shows in their willingness to raise funds for a range of good causes.
10. Attendance is well below that found in most primary schools and the rate of unauthorised absence is higher than the norm. The school's detailed analyses show that overall figures are affected badly by the very poor attendance record of a small number of pupils, together with an increasing number of holidays taken in term time. High levels of genuine illness also contribute to the absence rate. Staff work hard to make parents aware that children must attend school regularly in order to learn. Attendance has a very high profile in the school and this, together with a rigorous monitoring system and awards for good attendance, has succeeded in bringing about a small, but measurable, improvement in the last term. A steadily increasing number of

pupils achieve excellent or very good attendance. The school is encouraged by the success of its efforts to improve attendance and punctuality and continues to make this a target in its school improvement plan.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.0	School data	0.5
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.

Exclusions

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	255	1	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	31	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0

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 school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is satisfactory. There are very good arrangements for securing the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Links with parents and the local community are good and there are satisfactory links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good and there are good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers make lessons practical, interesting and challenging
- The use of ICT, including the use of interactive whiteboards, is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning

- The teachers use assessment information well to match work to the needs of different abilities but in subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT, this is not always consistent

Commentary

11. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and this has a significant impact on the pupils' achievement and the progress they make, particularly in English, mathematics and ICT. The teaching was very good in almost one out of five lessons seen and, across the school, there are many noteworthy features. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection because the amount of good teaching has risen substantially with good lessons seen in every class.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	9 (18%)	30 (59%)	12 (24%)	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.

12. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well because of the high quality of teaching. The teachers and teaching assistants work as a very effective team due, in no small part, to very good leadership and management. All of the staff know the children well because of their very detailed assessments of the children and the effective monitoring of their daily progress. Communication with parents is very good. The highly organised and effective planning ensures that every child works at a level that matches his or her age and ability. A significant number of the children (about three-quarters) enter the Nursery with varying degrees of speech and language difficulties which are identified as early as possible. Programmes are then provided that will help each child improve in all areas of learning, particularly in early language, literacy and mathematics. There has been good progress since the last inspection in the teaching of children in the Foundation Stage.
13. The school gives the highest priority to the development of the pupils' self-esteem and their progress in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, these areas are well taught and the pupils achieve well as a result. Teachers have a clear understanding of how the basic skills should be taught and the headteacher has established a consistent approach from class to class. Lessons in literacy and numeracy follow the national guidelines, but are adapted to take account of the pupils' understanding and experience. This is effective and has largely been responsible for the consistent rise in standards. The teaching of ICT has also improved well, due largely to the leadership of the school and the sensible approach adopted towards staff training during a significant period of staffing instability. Teachers and teaching assistants are increasingly improving their knowledge and confidence, ensuring consistency from class to class.
14. The pupils respond very positively to the teachers' very high expectations of how they should behave and approach their work. Lessons are invariably calm: the pupils are able to concentrate on their learning, secure in the knowledge that their contributions will be valued by adults and other pupils. They are not afraid to make mistakes but, equally, they enjoy succeeding. This was seen to great effect in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, where the pupils enjoyed using the interactive whiteboard to divide numbers into constituent parts. Year 3 and 4 pupils also enjoyed improving their story writing skills, stimulated by stories from Greek mythology.
15. Teachers have very much been aware of the need to raise standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics and to this end they have been largely successful. However, this has led to some less effective, yet satisfactory, teaching and learning in science and some other subjects. In science, the teaching, although instructive and practical, does not allow enough

opportunities for the pupils to investigate independently or to draw their own conclusions. Prediction, inference and research skills are not being developed as effectively as those seen in, say, mathematics or ICT. Lessons are planned to take account of the whole National Curriculum and the school has made good strides in developing the teaching across all subjects. In an effort to improve the performance of the pupils in the national tests, subjects such as art and design, geography, history and music, have not been covered in sufficient depth to have had a lasting impact on the pupils' learning. Music lessons, although satisfactory, are given half-hour blocks of time so that there is little time for the pupils to consolidate what they have learned practically. This is an area recognised by the school for improvement and there are already plans to change the way other subjects are taught and planned.

16. Teachers generally ensure that the work given to pupils with special educational needs matches what they need to do next to improve. Pupils receive extra adult support to raise their confidence and give them the necessary guidance in their learning, so that most accomplish their tasks effectively and make good progress. On occasion the work set for an individual pupil is too difficult, say during a small group literacy lesson, and progress temporarily slows for that pupil. The pupils in the early stages of English language acquisition are provided with good quality support enhanced and supplemented by the part-time support of a visiting specialist who has bi-lingual skills that engage and stimulate their interests.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. There are good opportunities for enrichment. The staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has kept an effective focus on its provision for numeracy and literacy and on the learning of children in the Nursery and Reception classes
- Provision for other subjects, while satisfactory overall, does not always enable pupils to study in depth
- Teachers enrich learning in a range of ways so that pupils enjoy school

Commentary

17. Since its last inspection the school has worked successfully to maintain a strong, well-placed emphasis on numeracy and literacy. This has enabled it to raise standards in these important subjects throughout the school so that pupils achieve well in them. Provision for other subjects is satisfactory overall. Pupils learn what they should do and as a result their achievement is broadly as expected in these subjects. However, the school's arrangements for teaching some subjects do not always allow pupils to study the various aspects in detail or in depth. For example in science, insufficient emphasis is sometimes placed on developing pupils' abilities to use their initiative to experiment and investigate. In geography and history, just occasionally, teaching deals with some issues too superficially. In religious education pupils do not always study the aspects of different religions in as much detail as they might, partly because some lessons are too short or split into two separate parts. The school rightly plans to extend what it does well in numeracy, literacy and the provision for children in the Foundation Stage to other aspects of the curriculum in order to raise achievement across the range of subjects.
18. Very good provision in the Nursery has been maintained since the last inspection. It remains well organised and welcoming. The breadth of curriculum opportunities for the children in the

Nursery and Reception classes is now very good and it prepares them very well for the next stage of their education. Here there is a good match of teachers and support staff to the children's needs and the accommodation and resources are used effectively to help them to do well.

19. The provision for children with special educational needs is good in the Reception and Nursery classes and it meets their needs well. For other pupils it is satisfactory. Teachers give pupils clear specific targets for what to learn next. These targets are precise enough to enable progress to be measured accurately. Just occasionally, however, teachers give some pupils tasks that are too difficult and the learning is not broken down into sufficiently small steps to meet pupils' current needs well enough.
20. The curriculum is enriched in a range of effective ways. There are ample opportunities for pupils to become involved in a wide range of sports and to participate in musical activities outside normal lessons. The school takes part in numerous initiatives such as those involving care of the environment and raising money for the victims of the recent Asian tsunami victims. Effective links with the local church, for example that enable pupils to learn about the building and for special celebrations, support the school's Christian character well. A range of visitors enlivens pupils' learning though the school is aware of missed opportunities to involve visitors from a range of world faiths to extend their learning about religions further. The wide range of opportunities contributes well to pupils' good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good. The school gives good support and guidance to pupils, based on monitoring, and involves them well in its work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Health and safety procedures are very good and meticulously observed
- The pastoral care of pupils is very good
- Pupils' views are sought, valued and acted upon

Commentary

21. Staff take great care to ensure that pupils work in a secure, healthy environment. The provisions of a comprehensive health and safety policy are strictly followed. Regular checks of the building and equipment are carried out by responsible staff and a designated school governor, so that potential hazards can be identified and eliminated. Risk assessments are completed in accordance with local authority guidelines, with particularly careful attention paid to arrangements for visits outside school. Staff have received appropriate training and are constantly vigilant. Safe practices are meticulously followed in lessons. Pupils are supervised well at all times and there are good arrangements for routine first aid and medical care. Child protection procedures are properly in place and all staff have been trained in their use. The school is proud to have maintained its Healthy Schools Award and encourages pupils to adopt a healthy lifestyle through sensible eating and exercise.
22. Pupils are confident to approach staff with problems of any kind, secure in the knowledge that help will be available for them. All adults who work in the school show genuine concern for pupils' personal welfare and treat each incident with due gravity, whether it be the anxious football star who sustained an ankle injury a few days before a big match or the six year old in tears because of a perceived unkindness in the playground. Staff know pupils and their families well and willingly give time to talk to individual children and parents or to arrange support from

an appropriate external agency if this is needed. Breakfast and homework clubs have been set up, identified pupils attend sessions to help promote their self-esteem and there are good arrangements to help those who join the school mid year to settle in. Pastoral care is strong, resulting in pupils feeling happy at school and so achieving well. The school provides a secure environment for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.

23. The work of the School Council enables pupils to become involved and to influence decisions that affect them directly. Fortnightly meetings allow them to discuss ideas and suggestions, which then result in positive action, such as planning the adventure playground and purchasing Friendship benches. Pupils appreciate the fact that their ideas are taken seriously and they are proud of the valuable contribution that they make to developments in school. The elected councillors also benefit personally from their experiences. Taking on such responsibility increases their self-esteem. Pupils' views are also canvassed periodically by the headteacher in assemblies, so that any significant issues can be included in the school development plan and previous decisions can be evaluated. This democratic process helps pupils to learn some of the basic principles of citizenship.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and with the local community. There are good arrangements to provide extended services for parents. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very good arrangements to ensure that parents' views are taken into account and to involve them in the life of the school
- The school provides useful information for parents that helps them to support their children's learning
- Strong links with the local community contribute to pupils' personal development and social awareness

Commentary

24. Partnership with parents is regarded as very important and much has been done to gain parents' confidence and involve them in their children's learning and in the life of the school. Most parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire agree that they find the school approachable and feel that their views are taken seriously. This is borne out by the way the school tries to respond to parental suggestions, for example in changing the format of open evenings and in seeking ways of ensuring effective communication. Formal consultation with parents is undertaken through questionnaires, while discussions with parent governors and members of the Home School Association, together with the day-to-day informal contacts that parents have with staff, all play their part in ensuring that the school knows what parents are thinking. The headteacher even offers a monthly Saturday morning surgery for parents who cannot visit school at other times. Staff welcome parents into school, to help in classrooms, to become reading buddies or simply to form relationships and share experiences at the Mother and Toddler group or informal coffee mornings. In this way, the school is showing that it values its links with parents and is helping them to play an active part in the school community.
25. A wide range of information for parents ensures that they are kept up to date with what pupils are learning and with the progress they are making. Termly consultation evenings enable parents

to discuss how well pupils are achieving, while annual school reports give detailed information on what pupils know, understand and can do and set targets for improvement. Useful leaflets explain what will happen when children start in the Nursery and Reception classes and give pointers on how parents can help their children learn, while regular newsletters tell parents about events and developments. All information for parents is written in a friendly, welcoming style. Inside school, notice boards for parents have colourful displays that celebrate the achievements of pupils. In order to help parents support children's learning, the school offers a range of courses, some of which carry accreditation and are run in conjunction with a local college. Parents can choose to learn about safe Internet access or obtain a qualification in First Aid, Computing or Child Care. Special workshops, such as those run under the 'Share' scheme, encourage parents to learn skills that will help them engage in activities with their children at home. The courses and workshops are becoming increasingly popular with parents.

26. The school's image in the community is enhanced by the pupils' involvement in a wide range of local activities. Links with the church are strong. Pupils attend Sunday services and take part in music and drama performances at major festivals, such as Harvest, Christmas and Mothering Sunday. They also participate in local events, for example displaying art work in the shopping centre and singing in the Town Hall carol concert. Teachers make good use of the local area as a curricular resource, so that pupils visit places of interest to enhance their classroom learning, while visitors from organisations such as the police, the fire service and music and drama groups work with the school to enrich the curriculum. Local businesses support the school by donating raffle prizes for fund-raising events run by the Home School Association. These links with the community outside school contribute to pupils' growing awareness of their place in society. They take pride in their school and in themselves and their commitment and good behaviour receive many compliments from local people.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership. Other key staff give good leadership. The management of the school is good. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership
- They are supported well by other staff with key responsibilities
- The governing body meets all its legal obligations and plays a good part in shaping the direction of the school
- There is a very strong commitment to staff development and training
- The financial management of the school is good

Commentary

27. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, provides very good leadership for the school. She has guided it through a period of change, particularly in staffing, and because of these changes the strategies she has implemented have not yet had their full impact. However, standards are rising well, and the good quality of teaching is now more consistently balanced across the school, marking a significant improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear vision for the school, focusing first on the raising of standards in English and mathematics but proceeding now to ensure that pupils have a broad and rich curriculum, as well as providing for their good personal development.

28. The management of the school is good. New staff, including newly qualified teachers, are given a very good introduction, and the school contributes very well to the training of trainee teachers. The deputy headteacher works very closely with the headteacher, particularly in tracking the progress of individual pupils through the school, and they are supported well by other members of the senior management team, including the key stage co-ordinators. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics manage their core subjects well. There is a clear and effective programme for the monitoring of teaching and learning by senior staff.
29. The leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to improve the organisation of provision since the last inspection. Notably the targets in pupils' individual education plans are usually, but not always, very specific. This precision enables the school to measure the progress that individual pupils make towards their targets. Additionally the co-ordinator has introduced a system to focus teachers' attention on pupils' targets when they plan their lessons. These potentially good systems, however, are not always reflected in the work that some pupils are given to do. At times, for example, they are expected to do work that is too difficult. There are effective arrangements to manage and plan work for the increasing number of pupils joining the school who speak English as an additional language. Specialist staff visit the school on a part-time basis to work with individual pupils and to ensure that their progress is monitored and recorded to help teachers track the performance and progress of these pupils.
30. The school has a very effective improvement plan, to which parents, staff, governors and pupils all contribute. It sets out clear priorities and progress towards these is monitored effectively by the school's management team and governing body. The governing body meets all its legal obligations. It has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance, the priorities in its development and issues which are still to be addressed, such as attendance. It monitors and evaluates decisions about spending to ensure that the school is getting the best value. Each meeting of the full governing body includes an element of training, to enable the governors to continue to develop their roles.
31. The school has identified the continuing professional development of staff as a key factor in raising standards, and this has been recognised by its gaining Investors in People accreditation. All subject co-ordinators are receiving training in budget planning and monitoring, and staff training is linked clearly to performance management, which is well established in the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	976,320
Total expenditure	949,474
Expenditure per pupil	2,826

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	41,411
Balance carried forward to the next year	68,257

32. The balance carried forward to the next financial year, currently seven per cent of the school's expenditure, exceeds the nationally recommended proportion (five per cent). However, the governors and headteacher have managed the school's funds well during a period of falling rolls and staff changes. This has resulted in a stabilisation of the school's spending with appropriate priorities identified and sensible predictions, given the uncertainties of pupil numbers in the

recent past. Resources are well deployed so that the school provides good value for money in view of the achievements of the pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33. Overall, the provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is **very good**. There have been significant developments since the school's last inspection. For example, there has been considerable improvement in the quality of teaching, planning and the use of assessment to help teachers and support staff plan work for the children.
34. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes achieve very well and make very good progress in developing and consolidating their skills in all the areas of learning. This is because the staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn. The quality of teaching is very good. The children are well prepared for the next stage of learning in Year 1 because of the emphasis placed on the development of the children's social and independent skills. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. Staff work skilfully as a team, children are regularly assessed and their progress is carefully monitored. By the time children move from Reception to Year 1, although standards are below the expectations of the early learning goals in some key areas of learning, the children have achieved very well in relation to their low attainment on entry to the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Adults have very good relationships with the children, enabling them to feel secure and valued
- All children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and their equipment

Commentary

35. The teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants show how pleased they are when children succeed. Adults in the Nursery encourage the children to care for themselves, to put on coats and aprons independently and to tidy up at the end of sessions. Snack times reinforce social skills and discussions help the children to become more aware of the feelings and needs of others. In the Reception classes the children begin to understand that people, plants and animals have different needs, and through stories and role-play, are beginning to show empathy with others. The use of themed areas, such as the 'Vet's', the 'Jungle' and dressing-up times or role-play in the home corner, help children to overcome the limitations of their language skills. Nursery children soon feel part of a group and Reception children are encouraged to feel part of the school community through regular contact with the main school. Children are taught what behaviour is expected of them from the start of their school life and behaviour is very good as a result. Children in the Reception classes work and play co-operatively. The planning in both the Nursery and Reception classes enables younger children to play with their peers or to work with a partner. Teaching is very good throughout the Foundation Stage as it successfully develops the children's personal, social and emotional development. As a result of the high quality of provision, the impact of the teaching and the welfare and care offered, the majority of children will achieve the early learning goals by the end of their Reception Year in most aspects of this area of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good because letter sounds and writing skills are taught systematically
- The school makes good provision for children with little English language and those with special educational needs
- Books and writing materials are readily available to all children

Commentary

36. Almost all children start school with low levels of spoken language and approximately five per cent currently joining the Foundation Stage speak little English and have acquired another home language such as Urdu, Panjabi or Pashto (language of Pathans spoken in Afghanistan and northern Pakistan). All adults speak clearly and make sure that new vocabulary is repeated often to aid learning. Songs and rhymes help children develop their spoken language even if the words are not fully understood. Adults take every opportunity to talk to and question the children. They regularly correct mispronounced or inaccurate words and encourage the children to explain what they mean, giving time for them to articulate clearly. In both the Nursery and Reception classes the teaching is very good and children make very good progress.
37. Teachers and support staff understand the children's needs very well. The children in the Nursery are provided with many opportunities to make marks using a range of tools as part of their role-play. They enjoy, for example, finger painting, printing and writing using crayons, pencils and marker pens. In both the Nursery and Reception classes, the teaching of the sounds, letters and letter clusters reinforced by the use of big books, traditional and modern stories as well as nursery rhymes, improve speech as well as reading and writing by the time the children complete the Reception year. Regular exposure to books and reading are steadily improving the children's skills as are the interesting themes that generate enthusiasm for learning. Work across all areas of learning around the theme of 'Animals and their Habitats', for example, makes learning relevant and fun. The children regularly have reading and writing tasks to do at home that are extended in school where new targets are set. New children are given additional support and some staff speak the home languages of some of the children which supports parents and children when needed. Although the children achieve very well and make very good progress only a few achieve the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy in spite of the very good teaching and the children's enthusiasm.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many children have very few mathematical skills when they start school
- Activities are very well planned to provide a good range of mathematical experiences
- Basic number skills and mathematical vocabulary are reinforced effectively

Commentary

38. When children join the Nursery almost all have a very limited experience or understanding of numbers and counting, shape and space. The adults in the Nursery take every opportunity to encourage children to count and use numbers, to discuss shape and size and to use positional language such as 'over' and 'under'. The children make very good progress and by the time they reach the Reception year the majority can name several common shapes and are familiar with number names. A Reception child described two triangles as forming a 'diamond' during a very effective lesson about the names of shapes. Although the children make very good progress their poor spoken language makes learning more difficult. The teaching is very good in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults use every opportunity to promote mathematical understanding through everyday objects and events. In one lesson, for example, children formed coloured dough into circles and shapes. Both Nursery and Reception children enjoy printing shapes using different utensils and templates. The role-play shop, home corner and outdoor areas use brightly coloured equipment and the staff constantly reinforce mathematical language by encouraging the children to name shapes or count how many children wait their turn before going on to the slide or the see-saw. Throughout the Foundation Stage children use computers to play simple mathematical games or to reinforce learning with relevant programs. More able children match numbers to objects accurately, compare the size of objects and name common shapes. Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage, but because of their limited vocabulary and delayed speech development their mathematical development is below average by the end of the Reception Year.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is very good, making learning fun, practical and relevant to the children
- The organisation of the working areas enables teachers and adults to use themes to stimulate learning
- Children are encouraged to find things out but their poor communication skills inhibit their response to learning

Commentary

39. Most children have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the world when they join the Nursery. The Nursery staff provide a very good range of interesting activities to broaden the children's experiences. The children use a range of materials to make objects, models and shapes, and explore patterns and changes. During the inspection children in both Nursery and Reception made shapes with coloured dough and used their imagination with building blocks to make, "a castle...a fort" or as one Nursery child said, "...a dumper truck for making things". They use computers regularly and are increasingly learning to draw shapes, make pictures and control the computer mouse and keyboard. Many aspects of the area of learning such as describing events or commenting on their environment, beliefs, friends and home are very challenging for these children because of their limited vocabulary and the delayed development of their speech. They play alongside each other in the home corner or with water and sand, but many are unable to extend their learning through discussion or questioning.
40. In the Reception classes there are dedicated areas for the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. There is a good variety of interesting activities to promote

curiosity but some of the resources appear cluttered and larger storage areas can block lines of sight for the children. The staff have recently reorganised these areas and are well on the way to resolving these minor areas for development. The children enjoyed a recent visit from the 'Animal Man' (a peripatetic specialist who brings wild animals into schools) which stimulated further work in the classroom such as creating camouflage in the role-play jungle area and drawing or painting animals and then writing descriptions about their key features and habitats. The children enjoy using glue and sticky tape to make models and can compare natural objects such as leaves, branches and plants. Teachers introduce new words carefully and use them often but the children find it very difficult to discuss their learning and the world about them and to explain how things work. Although their use of the computer is appropriate for their age, other aspects of the children's knowledge and understanding are below average in spite of the very good teaching.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many opportunities are provided for children to improve their co-ordination and physical skills and as a result they reach the early learning goals in this area of learning
- The planning for the use of the outside area is very good enabling children to explore large spaces and learn through trial and error

Commentary

41. Most children start school with very few experiences of playing with other children or using large apparatus. The daily use of the very good facilities in the dedicated outdoor areas specifically for children in both the Nursery and Reception classes is having a positive impact on their physical development. The staff provide challenging tasks for the children ranging from traditional games, types of movement, parachute games and climbing. These are enjoyed by all, including many of the younger children. The teaching is very good for all aspects of physical development and the children make very good progress as a result.
42. Children are made aware of how to keep safe and to look after themselves. Nursery children wash their hands before their snack and when preparing food or making sandwiches. Older children begin to understand how to eat healthily. They use tools safely and tidy up well. There are many opportunities for children to manipulate small objects. Children thread, stick, cut and sort as well as using writing tools and brushes although many find it difficult to control them accurately. They experience materials such as bark and clay, sand and dough. Most do not have a broad enough vocabulary or the language skills to describe materials or their feelings about them but this is very much compensated for by the way adults prompt the children to explain what they are doing. The children make very good progress and achieve very well and will meet the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year so that standards are in line with those expected for their age.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a wide range of opportunities to promote creative development
- Imaginative play is a central part of the curriculum and this is successfully promoting opportunities for the children to express their feelings

Commentary

43. Both the Nursery and Reception classes have a very good range of areas to stimulate the children's imagination. The children have opportunities to paint and make models, play in the theme areas such as the home corner, the office and the Vet's and to use a range of toys as they play. This helps them to experience new things and to express themselves through play, helping to overcome language barriers. The activities are well managed and planned and are closely linked to the children's own experiences. The home corner in the Reception classes, for

example, has kitchen tools that are familiar to the children. There is a good range of books and the well-told stories effectively stimulate the imagination but children find it very difficult to verbalise and express their feelings. A few of the older children engage in co-operative role-play as they act out the traditional stories or nursery rhymes. Artwork is always part of relevant and interesting topics although there is limited evidence of the children's own ideas. Children sing a range of songs and nursery rhymes and these are reinforcing key skills as well as developing language. Older children work co-operatively with younger ones as recorded or photographic evidence shows that the children use instruments or everyday objects to accompany their songs, showing an awareness of rhythm and tempo. Overall, although children make very good progress, very few will achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year because most of the children start from a very low standard on entry to the school.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress even though standards are below the national average
- The quality of teaching and learning is good
- The subject is led and managed well
- Pupils' targets are not yet sufficiently individual
- More use should be made of opportunities to develop writing in other subjects

Commentary

44. In the national tests in 2004 pupils in Year 2 achieved results which were below the national average in reading and writing, but which were average when compared to those of similar schools. Standards have been improving steadily over the last four years. Results in Year 6 in 2004 were well below the national average, but they were above average when compared with the results in schools where pupils' previous attainment was similar. The evidence of the inspection showed that standards in the current Year 6 are still below average, but are an improvement on those of the two previous years so that standards are continuing to rise well throughout the school.
45. Standards of speaking and listening are below average but demonstrate good progress from the very low communication skills with which most pupils enter the school. The school has speaking and listening as priorities in its improvement plan but has not yet identified clearly the stages by which they should be developed in each year group. Pupils generally listen well but they often reply to questions with a single-word answer. Sometimes teachers do not phrase their questions in such a way as to invite a longer reply. In contrast, in a lesson with Year 2 the teacher used questions well to involve all pupils in a discussion of different versions of 'Little Red Riding Hood'; as a result, pupils were able to retell the story in their own words. Similarly in a Year 3 and 4 mixed-age class, the teacher insisted on complete sentences in pupils' answers to questions about the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. Pupils develop speaking skills well in discussion with a partner in some lessons.

46. Standards of reading are below average. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and read regularly both at home and in school. Pupils in Year 2 know terms such as ‘author’ and ‘illustrator’ and more able pupils know how to use both contents and index pages of a book. Most pupils read a familiar text accurately but find difficulty with new words and phrases, and do not use inference to help them understand. Pupils in Year 6 read books by a range of authors, including Jacqueline Wilson and J. K. Rowling, but only the most able read with real fluency. All pupils know how to locate information in a reference book and how to use a dictionary. However, the school library, as it is currently arranged, is not conducive to use by individuals or by whole classes for research.
47. Standards of writing are below average. In Year 2 more able pupils are able to write in complete sentences, but others do not do this well and their handwriting is not consistent. Pupils in an extended writing lesson observed in Year 2 were slow to use the prompts provided by the teacher to help them develop a wider vocabulary. In Year 6 all except the most able pupils still find difficulty with more complex sentence structure, but they write in a wide range of genres, including play scripts, diaries and poetry, where they use personification, metaphor and simile appropriately. In a lesson observed during the inspection pupils were constructing an argument for or against mixed games, but few of them used the connecting words suggested by the teacher. Sometimes pupils use computers successfully to help them draft their written work.
48. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers’ understanding of the subject is good and lessons generally proceed at a good pace. Teachers have high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and manage it very well; as a result pupils are attentive and keen to take part in lessons. Teachers also use interactive whiteboards well to engage pupils’ attention, particularly in the early part of a lesson. Tasks are generally matched well to the abilities of the more able and less able pupils, who receive good support in lessons, but sometimes pupils in the middle group in the class do not have sufficient direction to enable them to complete their tasks independently. Pupils all have targets to help them in their learning, but these often have too many elements to them and are not easily assimilated by the pupils, who would benefit from more individual targets in language which is easy for them to understand. Teachers track individual pupils’ progress well, however, and pupils are also helped by being taught in sets of similar ability in all year groups
49. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject but already has a clear view of the areas which need development and is providing good leadership. She monitors teaching and also pupils’ work but does not regularly see teachers’ planning, which would enable her to see more easily how far the plans for the development of the subject are being implemented. The steady improvement in overall standards since the last inspection is being maintained well.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

50. Teachers take the opportunity to develop other subjects through English, for example using historical texts for shared or guided reading, but there are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills by using them more widely in other subjects, for instance by writing extensively or recording the findings of individual research.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils make good progress and achieve well because lessons are effectively planned to challenge them
- Leadership and management of mathematics are good and support well the improvements in pupils' achievements
- Opportunities are missed to develop mathematical skills through other subjects

Commentary

51. Standards in mathematics are below expectations in Years 2 and 6. Given children's generally poor skills, notably in language, when they start school, most make good progress in mathematics and achieve well by the end of Year 6. The results gained by Year 6 pupils in the most recent national tests were well below average because there was a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Conversely a number of more able pupils taking the most recent Year 2 national tests contributed well to the overall average attainments.
52. Teaching and learning are consistently good from Years 1 to 6 with significant strengths and one main weakness occurring in some, but not all, lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan lessons thoroughly. Clear explanations and a strong sense of direction are features of teaching throughout the school. Teachers are good at encouraging pupils to try hard. Despite some reservations, they use resources such as interactive whiteboards well to develop understanding, as when teaching about the value of digits in numbers. The teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour is very effective. There is often good challenge for pupils. Occasionally, however, the level of challenge is unrealistically high because teachers do not make effective use of information from the school's good systems for assessing pupils' progress. As a result pupils of differing abilities sometimes find the work too difficult and this slows their progress for a time.
53. Since the last inspection the good leadership and management of mathematics have supported well the school's strong emphasis on the subject and they have contributed effectively to the good quality of the teaching and learning. Despite a significant turnover of teachers the co-ordinator has had a good impact on the quality of teaching through her observation of lessons to find out what is working well and to give guidance for improvement. Through analysing test results she identified the need to develop pupils' skills in problem solving and this has led to a well-judged school focus on this important aspect of mathematical learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Although there are sound links between mathematics and other subjects, opportunities are sometimes missed to develop mathematical skills across the full range of learning. ICT is occasionally used effectively to support pupils' mathematical understanding, for example, and time-lines in history help pupils to develop a sense of chronology. Some links between mathematics and other subjects are incidental rather than planned so that chances are missed to improve learning across the whole curriculum. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented well throughout the school.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils make satisfactory progress but too few achieve the higher levels in science in national tests
- Although the teaching has improved since the last inspection there are not enough opportunities for the pupils to plan their own investigations and draw conclusions

Commentary

55. Since the last inspection, the school has focused on raising standards in English and mathematics and this has resulted in an improvement in standards in national tests. However, standards have declined in science and this suggests that the pupils should be doing better given that their performance in English and mathematics is improving well. The low levels of language evident when the pupils first start school hamper their progress and teachers do well to compensate for this with practical lessons. However, the teaching is too instructional and so does not provide enough opportunities for the pupils to plan their own investigations and draw conclusions after making appropriate hypotheses. Science standards are below average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Given the low standards on entry to the school the pupils have made satisfactory progress but could do better.
56. In most of the six lessons observed, the pupils were provided with good opportunities to make suggestions. For example, in a good Year 2 lesson, the pupils used bicycles and scooters and then explained which force, push or pull, was being utilised. This was common to other lessons in Years 1 and 2 but the pupils were not provided with an opportunity to predict outcomes or suggest ideas without being prompted too much by teachers and support staff. Most of the teaching seen was satisfactory with some good features but the school has not established a consistent policy to encourage the pupils to generate their own ideas in science in the way they do in English and mathematics lessons. Year 6 pupils were engaged in a good investigation about upthrust in water but their own suggestions were not channelled into further lines of enquiry. Similarly, when pupils in Year 3 were investigating the dissolution of solids in water, the more able were not provided with tasks that expected them to make their own suggestions.
57. Given the inconsistencies of the teaching, particularly in providing work that challenges more able pupils, the progress that pupils make across the school is patchy. The school is aware of its shortcomings in science and recent monitoring and analyses of the pupils' performance are beginning to have an impact on raising standards but the pupils' achievements remain inconsistent across the school and this is reflected in their performance in the national tests.
58. The pupils enjoy their science lessons, particularly when they engage in practical experiments. They are responsive to teachers' questions in most lessons and well motivated to remain focused on the tasks set. Good use is made of the pupils' mathematical and language skills. For example, Year 6 pupils could easily read the calibration on their Newton meters when measuring and comparing the relative weight of objects suspended in the air and then in water.
59. The subject co-ordinator has only recently been given responsibility for managing the subject. His leadership of the subject is satisfactory and he has already identified the key areas for improvement in science to ensure that standards rise and the teaching is more consistent across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is playing an increasingly important role in the teaching and learning across the school
- The pupils are provided with appropriately challenging work in the computer room
- Teachers are planning the use of ICT well in other subjects

Commentary

60. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in developing and improving the ICT curriculum and resources. From the work that the pupils do in the computer room it is clear that standards are improving and are currently in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. There is also evidence that teachers and support staff are increasing opportunities for the pupils to use ICT in other lessons and printed work displayed in the school indicates that the pupils are making good use of ICT in other subjects. The work includes, for example, Year 3 to 6 pupils researching on the Internet and designing Christmas cards using desk-top publishing and control skills. Electronic mailing (e-mail) is increasingly being used, for example, to reply to fictional characters in stories or to describe events to another person. Year 1 and 2 pupils demonstrate how well they acquire skills such as word processing and graphics and are learning to edit and improve the presentation of stories. Older pupils enjoy editing their writing with a wide range of written accounts and presentations of particular topics or projects. In literacy, older pupils in Years 3 to 6 can produce simple headlines and stories in the form of newspaper articles.
61. The teaching is good with particularly skilful support and teaching provided by a teaching assistant who is specially trained to teach in the computer room. Given the steady improvements to ICT and to standards, the leadership and management of the subject are good, with increasingly efficient use being made of the school's resources to enable teachers and support staff to utilise computers, projectors and programmable devices. There are plans to use interactive whiteboards across the full range of the curriculum with some already being used well in classrooms.
62. The pupils achieve well because there is a cross-curricular approach to the subject and the teaching successfully combines the skills the pupils acquire with those in other subjects. This was demonstrated when Year 2 pupils used a text and graphics program to arrange and edit a poem and when Year 3 pupils e-mailed letters of reply to 'Robo-Teacher'. Control and modelling skills are being learned well as when older pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a special control program (*PowerPoint*) to produce simple web pages, book covers or posters. Throughout the school the pupils increasingly develop word-processing and graphics skills. The tasks provided for them include some challenging problem solving, but the school does not always give enough time for the pupils to consolidate what they learn. Extension activities lack enough challenge for more able pupils because the work does not present different levels of difficulty.
63. The pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language also make good progress. They are usually well supported by teaching assistants, especially when working in the computer room. The school is also good at grouping pupils so that more able pupils are on hand to help those who need additional support. This improves the knowledge, understanding and skills of both the more able pupils and those who find it difficult to grasp key skills at the first time of trying. The specialist teacher assigned to teach pupils in

the early stages of English language acquisition makes good use of a notebook computer so that the pupils can improve their word-processing skills.

64. The good leadership and management of the subject combined with the effective support provided by teachers and teaching assistants have helped the school to improve the subject further. The headteacher is very good at organising training for staff and deploying resources to help the staff develop their skills and this has improved the professional competence of teachers and other support staff.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. In English, a lot of the computer-generated work involves editing and refining extended writing using word-processing skills. In other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education, word-processed work is also evident and good use is made of the Internet to help the pupils undertake research on a range of topics. Teachers' planning across the curriculum is satisfactory and an increasing proportion of this planning incorporates the use of ICT. In mathematics, there is good evidence of spreadsheets being used for data handling to complement and enhance what the pupils do when problem solving or interpreting data but this is not always challenging enough for more capable pupils. In science, there is less evidence that the pupils have used computers or new technology such as sensors to improve their investigative work but digital cameras are well used to provide recorded evidence of visits or activities both in school and off site.

HUMANITIES

66. No **geography** lessons were observed, so no overall judgements can be made about the quality of provision. Pupils' work and discussion with the co-ordinator indicate that Year 6 pupils broadly reach the standards that are expected for their age, but because of a lack of study in depth, geographical skills are not always developed well. This is because the teaching and learning of some aspects of geography are, at times, too superficial for pupils to gain a comprehensive understanding of the elements studied. Teachers help pupils to look critically at the environment from Year 2 when they 'design a perfect local area' to Year 6 when pupils develop a strong sense of conservation when learning about rainforests. Teaching is effective when it makes good use of ICT, as when Year 6 pupils make slide shows about Brazil. Teachers sometimes miss opportunities, however, to focus pupils' attention precisely on the features of the regions studied by, for example, getting them to draw their own maps. Some teachers ensure that they develop pupils' strong awareness of the impact of natural events on humans by, for example, discussing the effects of the recent tsunami in South East Asia. Following its emphasis on other subjects, the school has wisely identified the need to raise the profile of the geography and to ensure that the co-ordinator monitors the effectiveness of provision.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use strategies that contribute well to pupils' historical understanding
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to study aspects of history in sufficient detail to raise attainment significantly

Commentary

67. Pupils broadly reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and their achievements are satisfactory. While the plans for the subject ensure that pupils learn what they should, the work that they do is sometimes too superficial to develop their historical skills, knowledge and understanding as well as possible. The school intends to place a stronger focus on history to improve learning.
68. Teaching is good. Pupils' books, however, indicate that until recently the work that teachers sometimes required them to do did not always enable them to study in depth and so deepen their understanding. During the inspection teachers used effective strategies to help pupils to learn well. Time-lines were used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of chronology in historical periods including the Roman occupation. This was most effective when pupils themselves contributed, for example, by adding captions showing significant events. Drama and discussion were used well to help pupils to consider the characteristics of Boudicca and to empathise with her. In a good lesson the teacher made effective links with science when Year 2 pupils examined the materials used to date toys as 'old' or 'new' while the support assistant effectively modelled writing for the lower ability pupils. Just occasionally teachers' marking of pupils' work misses opportunities to take pupils on to the next stage of their learning through relevant comments and questions.
69. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Following its emphasis on other subjects, the school has wisely identified the need to raise the profile of the subject and to ensure the co-ordinator rigorously monitors the effectiveness of provision.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planning and timetable do not always enable pupils to study aspects of their work in depth
- Opportunities are missed for representatives of world faiths to contribute to pupils' understanding
- Good links with the local church enrich the school's Christian character

Commentary

70. Attainment in religious education is in line with expected levels in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and world religions, including Judaism and Islam, as a result of satisfactory planning and teaching. Sometimes pupils do not make as much progress as they could because some activities limit opportunities for them to deepen their understanding or learn new ideas. Some lessons, for example, are too short to enable pupils to consolidate their learning or to undertake further research to make learning better still. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of world religions is basic rather than detailed. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils use terms such as 'Torah' and 'synagogue', though other pupils do not always use such subject-specific terms with understanding. Achievement overall is satisfactory.
71. Teachers develop good relationships with pupils so that behaviour is good. In some lessons discussion effectively develops pupils' understanding. For example by bringing out words such as 'unselfish' and 'kind' a teacher helped Year 2 pupils to appreciate qualities in saints such as Saint Francis. In a lesson with older pupils hot-seating* was used well to help pupils to learn about Jewish Kosher food. Teachers sometimes use ICT to enable pupils to find out about

religions. However, its use in the subject is incidental rather than securely planned to ensure an effective contribution to learning.

72. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Having improved other aspects of its provision, the school is now aware of the need to focus more on religious education to make achievement better. The co-ordinator knows that there are too few visits from representatives of world faiths and visits to places of religious significance to enrich understanding of world religions. There are plans to address the lack of a system for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. The school also intends that the co-ordinator will observe lessons to add to the view of standards that she builds up by looking at pupils' work.
73. Since the last inspection the school has built on its restored links with the local church, using it effectively for celebrations at different times of the year and for pupils to learn about the building and its religious artefacts. Local clergy visit to enrich the school's provision. These good links support the school's Christian affiliations well.

** Hot seating usually focuses pupils' attention on one pupil who explains or discusses an issue in role as a character*

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. It is not possible to make a judgement on provision in **art and design** or **design and technology** as only one art and design and no design and technology lesson were observed during the inspection. Pupils' sketchbooks were scrutinised, displays looked at and a discussion held with the subject co-ordinators. Pupils cover the full range of **art and design** activities, including work in three dimensions and with textiles. They use a range of media and also use computers to generate images. Pupils' work has been exhibited locally and the school has also had visits from artists to work with the pupils. In **design and technology** teachers follow national guidelines. Work on display included glove puppets from Year 2 and slippers designed and made by Year 6. Neither subject has been a priority in the school's improvement plan but the co-ordinators have drawn up suitable action plans. They have not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning directly. No **physical education** lessons were observed during the inspection but the school provides a good range of competitive and non-competitive sports and games as well as after-school clubs.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good enrichment through extra-curricular provision
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject
- Lessons are sometimes too short

Commentary

75. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are as expected for their age. During the inspection pupils in Years 5 and 6 were practising a song with a rap which they sang in two parts. Pupils were able to synchronise actions with the words of the song but had some difficulty combining

the two parts of the rap. No lessons were observed in Year 2 and it is not possible to make a judgement on standards there.

76. The school does not have a music specialist, and teachers are trialling a commercial course to help them in their teaching. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall; teachers make good use of the course but sometimes lessons, timetabled for half an hour, are too short and there is not time to develop sufficiently what pupils are doing. For instance, in the lesson with Year 6, pupils were about to combine all the parts of the song they had rehearsed when the bell went and the teacher stopped the lesson because pupils had to move into different class groups for the next lesson. In Year 4 pupils worked in small groups to compose 'mood music' using percussion instruments and each group performed its piece, but the time left was too short for pupils to evaluate each other's work in the way the teacher had planned.
77. Pupils enjoy music lessons. Pupils in Year 1 had fun during the inspection making long and short sounds, which they produced with a range of instruments, although some pupils found it difficult to distinguish between the two. Year 4 pupils took pleasure in their short compositions, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 sang their rap with enthusiasm. Teachers always encourage pupils to show respect for the instruments they handle and pupils respond well to this. Singing is also an important component in school assemblies, and all pupils join in well.
78. The school has a good range of percussion instruments for use in lessons. Opportunities for pupils to make music are supplemented well by extra-curricular activities, including a band, choir and recorder group. Some pupils also have lessons from instrumental teachers. The leadership and management of the subject by the headteacher are satisfactory: arrangements for assessing pupils' progress are in the early stages of development. It is not possible to make a judgement on progress since the last inspection, as there was no judgement on music in the last report.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

79. No direct teaching was seen in this area. The evidence from discussions with staff and pupils and from scrutinising the planning indicates that a good programme is provided, but it is not possible to make firm judgements on the quality of the provision and learning. The school has developed a good policy and a comprehensive scheme of work to support the pupils' personal and social development and, from the time they join the Nursery, the school places a very strong emphasis on this aspect. Very good behaviour is reinforced during class discussion times, where pupils are given the opportunity to explore ways of resolving issues and the school is particularly successful in supporting high quality relationships. Aspects of personal and social development are taught regularly in each class and strongly supported in assemblies. There are clear procedures for teaching sex education and drug awareness.

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	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
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	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
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).