

INSPECTION REPORT

NONSUCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Woodgate Valley

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103335

Headteacher: Mrs Valerie Houghton

Lead inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th July 2005

Inspection number: 267399

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:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	244
School address:	Wood Leasow Woodgate Valley Birmingham West Midlands
Postcode:	B32 3SE
Telephone number:	0121 4642064
Fax number:	0121 4642688
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lynn Weaver
Date of previous inspection:	14 th December 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a slightly larger than average primary school with 244 pupils. Twenty-five per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, mostly White and Black Caribbean and Black or Black British. Less than one per cent of the total number of pupils at the school is learning to speak English as additional language. The area the school serves is one of significant social and economic deprivation, with a higher proportion of pupils than in most other schools known to be eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry is well below the level found in most schools at the start of the Reception class. There is an above average number of pupils with special educational needs, 40 per cent overall, but in some classes it is as high as 70 per cent. There is a lot of movement in and out of the school, with only about two thirds of the current Year 6 pupils remaining since the start of Year 1. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2002 and a Healthy Schools Award in 2005. It is involved in national and local projects including Excellence in Cities, The Children's Fund, and the local education authority's Intensive Support Programme. It provides a number of adult classes, parent courses, and family learning courses. During the inspection there were two temporary teachers covering staff absence.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22261	Mrs Barbara E Doughty	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage curriculum Science Information and communication technology English as an additional language
14141	Mr Ernest Marshall	Lay inspector	
15015	Mr Mike Wehrmeyer	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
19120	Mr Derek Pattinson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Religious education

The inspection contractor was:

peakschoolhaus Ltd
BPS Business Centre
Brake Lane
Boughton
Nr Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG22 9HQ

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	9
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	20
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This school is not as effective as it should be and gives unsatisfactory value for money. Standards are too low. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall, with too many things that do not work well enough and too many pupils underachieving. Improvements have been too slow coming about because of ineffective leadership and management; the school has lost its way and is unsure about what to do to bring about improvement.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class because of effective teaching and exciting learning opportunities.
- Despite the good teaching in Years 5 and 6, unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4 leads to underachievement at the end of Year 6.
- The needs of the most and least able are not met as well as they could be in Years 1 to 4.
- The school has had some success in getting pupils to attend school regularly, but attendance is still below average and too many pupils arrive at school late.
- Leadership is too slow in dealing with the weaknesses and combating the underachievement.
- English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are not used well enough in other subjects.

Standards have declined over time and this is not as good a school as it was. Some of the weaknesses from the last report have been dealt with, such as in ICT and religious education, but improvement has been limited. Some weaknesses remain, such as some ineffective use of assessment information and the under-use of computers. The quality of leadership and management has deteriorated and although leadership, with the help of the local education authority, has identified the current weaknesses correctly, it has been slow tackling them because it does not have a clear plan for improvement.

In accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections Act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school. This is because although the school is being supported by the local education authority and new systems and procedures are being implemented, it is in a very precarious state and is currently failing to provide its pupils with a satisfactory education.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is unsatisfactory. Children achieve well in the Reception class, as do pupils in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. Despite the good teaching in Years 5 and 6, because many of these pupils are not fast learners and need lots of consolidation and repetition, there is too much ground to be made up and standards are lower than they should be by the end of the school. By the end of the Reception Year, standards are below the expected level in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development and are well below the expected level in communication, language and literacy, and mathematics. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science.

Compared with how well they did at the end of Year 2, pupils do not achieve well enough in English, mathematics or science by the end of Year 6. Standards in ICT are not good enough and achievement is unsatisfactory. Although standards in religious education do not meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus, achievement is as good as could reasonably be expected.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory overall. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory, but behaviour is unsatisfactory because too many pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4, do not want to learn and hold back the work of the whole class. Attendance and punctuality are not good enough.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is unsatisfactory overall, as is the quality of teaching and learning. However, it is extremely variable. Teaching and learning are good in the Reception Year and Years 5 and 6, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. In the Reception and Year 5 and Year 6 classes, learning is exciting and tasks meet the needs of the pupils well. Most of the pupils behave well most of the time because they understand what they are doing and, most importantly, why they are doing it. Learning is based on first hand experiences related whenever possible to everyday life situations. In contrast, in Years 3 and 4, pupils are not motivated by the work. They do not see the purpose of it, and some of them become bored and behave badly. Too much time is then spent trying, unsuccessfully, to make pupils work. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall; it is not particularly exciting nor does it meet the needs of the pupils well enough in Years 1 to 4. The care of pupils is good; the school has an effective partnership with other schools and colleges, and good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. This is because the school does not have a clear way forward and has been unable to stem the decline in standards and improve the quality of teaching in Years 3 and 4. The head teacher is aware of the weaknesses and has started to involve subject leaders more in identifying what needs doing, but management does not make change happen where it is most needed and is not yet effective enough. Although the local education authority is currently supporting the school's leadership through its intensive support programme, things are still not improving fast enough. Governance is satisfactory, but governors rely on the head teacher to keep them informed about what is going on. They do not meet their statutory duties fully because there are some omissions in their annual report to parents. They have, however, a strong determination to improve things and raise standards.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils are generally happy with what the school offers. Most of the pupils like their teachers and enjoy the work they are given to do. Parents are equally as happy as their children, but have concerns about the standard of behaviour of some of the pupils and the way it affects the learning of others. These concerns have been substantiated by the inspection team.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school urgently needs to raise standards and improve behaviour by:

- Ensuring that school leaders devise a clear plan of action that focuses on how to improve provision and raise standards.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning opportunities in Years 3 and 4.
- Ensuring all pupils' needs are met effectively enough in Years 1 to 4.
- Ensuring that English, mathematics and ICT are taught through, and used in, other subjects.
- Seeking ways to combat the unsatisfactory punctuality and increase pupils' attendance rate.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Include the national comparative test data and the school's accessibility plan in the governing body's annual report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is unsatisfactory. Children in the Reception Year achieve well, as do pupils in Years 5 and 6, and achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. However, pupils do not progress well enough in Years 3 and 4; there is too much ground to make up in Years 5 and 6, particularly given that many of the pupils are slow learners, and pupils leave the school at the age of eleven underperforming in English, mathematics and ICT. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception class children achieve well in personal, social, emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Progress is good in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 underachieve and their standards are too low given their attainment at the end of Year 2.

Commentary

1. Progress is patchy and standards are on the decline. Although test results rose slightly in 2004, the 2005 test results show a further decline this year in all three core subjects, despite the school's participation in the local education authority's intensive support programme.
2. The main cause of the underachievement stems from weak teaching in Years 3 and 4. Although pupils achieve well in Year 5 and Year 6 nearly half of the pupils at this school have special educational needs, and because they need so much consolidation and repetition, their learning is slowed and there is too much to do to make up for the shortfalls. Although the school knows where the problems lie, and is receiving support from the local educational authority to deal with them, it has as yet been unable to remedy the weaknesses and stem the decline.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (14.3)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.7 (14.5)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.5 (15.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 33 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (23.3)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	24.8 (24.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	26.7 (26.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Achievement in the Reception Year has improved since the last inspection, especially in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children in the Reception Year now achieve well. Although they do not reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the year,

given their well below average attainment on entry, their achievement is good in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Achievement in all other areas of learning is satisfactory. This is because leadership has supported the teaching in this class well and staff have been given appropriate in-service training and been on visits to other schools to learn how best to provide for such young children. Children have a good understanding of the world around them through exciting learning opportunities and are developing, in particular, good reading skills. They are confident and self-assured and get off to a good start because of this.

4. Similarly good progress is made in Years 5 and 6, but it is too late and there is too much to do to make up fully for the poor standards achieved in Years 3 and 4. In the oldest two year groups, work is tailored well to meet pupils' needs and all groups, including those with special educational needs and those new to the school, do well because their learning builds effectively on what they already know, understand and can do. The work is exciting and pupils see the purpose of it, hence they work hard and achieve well in lessons and over time. The progress pupils make in their work and attitudes shows the potential for improving standards and behaviour in the younger junior classes.
5. However, this is not the case in Years 3 and 4. Too little regard is given to what pupils know and do not know. Insufficient regard is given to the learning needs of those pupils with special educational needs and they make little progress. Work is taken from the national teaching guidance, which is often inappropriate for these pupils and does not build step by step on what they already know. There is evidence of regression in pupils' workbooks, particularly in writing, and the bad behaviour of a significant minority of pupils, resulting from a lack of motivation and inspiration to learn, disrupts teaching and learning too often. The amount of work pupils do is minimal at these times because too much time is lost trying to maintain order in the classrooms and progress is slowed. Although during the week of the inspection, temporary teaching tried hard to motivate pupils, such is the negative work culture established in these years, these efforts were in vain.
6. Standards in ICT are below the nationally expected level and achievement in both key stages is unsatisfactory. This is because insufficient time is spent teaching ICT. Both the computer suite and the classroom computers are under-used and ICT is not embedded well enough in other subjects. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory. The subject is allocated an appropriate amount of teaching time and good regard is given to teaching the locally agreed syllabus.
7. The level of attainment of pupils with special educational needs is low and overall their progress is unsatisfactory. This is because of the significant lack of progress in Years 3 and 4, where the poor climate for learning works against them, both in their academic development and in their personal development. However, in Years 1 and 2 these pupils make sound progress and in Years 5 and 6 they make good progress because they are supported sensitively, their needs are met effectively, and they begin to catch up small amounts of the ground they have lost.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and most pupils show an interest in what they are being taught. Behaviour is unsatisfactory overall. It is good in the Reception class and Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. However, it is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4, where a small minority of pupils frequently disrupt lessons. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The behaviour of some pupils in Years 3 and 4 frequently disrupts learning.
- Children in the Reception class have good attitudes to learning and settle quickly into school routines.

- The school tries hard to get pupils to attend school regularly but the attendance rate is well below that of most other primary schools, having a detrimental effect on the progress some pupils make over time.

Commentary

- Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. The majority of pupils show a liking for school and willingly co-operate with teachers and other adults. They are happy to participate in activities both in and out of lessons and work sensibly in pairs or groups. However, there are a small, but significant, number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who show little interest in learning. Because the teaching fails to capture the attention and imagination of these pupils for enough of the time, they become disruptive. This slows their learning and that of their classmates because it means that teachers' attention is spent dealing with the bad behaviour. Although the most disruptive pupils are finally withdrawn from lessons and given individual support by the school's learning mentor, lost time adversely affects progress and achievement in these two year groups and leads to too much needing to be done in Years 5 and 6.
- Whilst there has been a reduction in the number of exclusions during the current year (48 to 31 so far), the figures are still considerably higher than most schools serving a similar area, reflecting the school's lack of success in changing the bad behaviour of some pupils in the long term. Whilst staff deal with these pupils through withdrawal from lessons, counselling from the learning mentor, and by excluding them from school for fixed periods of time, this is not getting to the cause of the bad behaviour, which is mainly brought about by a lack of interest in lessons, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

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	213	43	1
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	3		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	28	2	
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	3		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	15	3	
Black or Black British – African	6		
No ethnic group recorded	2		

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded. The table refers to the school year 2003/2004.

- In contrast, behaviour and attitudes are good in the Reception class. Relationships and child care are very effective and children settle in to school routines quickly. This gives them confidence to take part in the wide range of activities provided and they are able to make good early progress in their personal, social and emotional development in particular. Similarly in Years 5 and 6, pupils are motivated and want to learn. They have established good relationships with each other and the teachers and teaching assistants and because of this all pupils carry out a good amount of work, concentrate well, and make good progress.

11. Attendance is well below the national average for primary schools and learning time is also lost for a significant number of pupils who arrive late in school or do not attend regularly. The school has recognised the problem and is working hard to improve it. Parents are reminded of their responsibilities and first day contact is attempted in every case of an unexplained absence. The school and the local authority's education welfare officer work together in order to identify and help those families who struggle to get their children to school regularly and/or on time. The learning mentor also visits homes and sometimes brings pupils to school if necessary. Attendance certificates are presented to pupils with good attendance records and announcements of individual class performance are made in weekly assemblies. The outcome is encouraging. The overall attendance rate has improved by two per cent over the past year but still has some way to go before national average rates are achieved.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.5	School data	2.8
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is unsatisfactory, but with variability between year groups. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall and not as effective as it could be because although it is good in the Reception class and Years 5 and 6, too much of it is satisfactory in Years 1 to 2 and unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, but is uninspiring in Years 1 to 4, and in Years 3 and 4 in particular fails to meet the needs of all pupils successfully. However, pupils are well cared for and the school takes the time to seek their views and act on them. Partnership with other schools and links with the community are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall. They are good in the Reception class and Years 5 and 6, but unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory overall. Teachers collect details about what pupils know, can do and understand, but make insufficient use of the information in Years 1 to 4 to adapt work for the most and least able, including those pupils with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Reception class learn well because their work is exciting and based on learning through observation and exploration.
- Lively and accurate teaching in Years 5 and 6 motivates pupils well because it is relevant and pupils see the purpose of working hard.
- Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is not good enough.
- Teachers use the national teaching guidance well to know what to teach each year group, but take insufficient notice in Years 1 to 4 of pupils' previous learning to tailor the work for differently attaining pupils.
- Except in the Reception Year and Years 5 and 6, marking does little to help pupils to improve, learning objectives are unclear to pupils, and pupils' work presentation is not promoted as well as it should be, resulting in untidy work.
- English, mathematics and ICT are not promoted through or used in other subjects enough.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 32 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	4 (13%)	13 (41%)	10 (31%)	2 (6%)	2 (6%)	1 (3%)

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. All but one of the good and very good lessons seen were in the Reception class and Years 5 and 6. Of the eight lessons seen in Years 3 and 4, five were unsatisfactory, poor or very poor; the three that were satisfactory or better were taken by senior staff. All but one of the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 were satisfactory and only one was good.
13. Teaching is good in the Reception class and Years 5 and 6. In the Reception class, learning is exciting and children are enthused to try out the different activities. There are often interesting things around the room for children to look at and touch, such as plants growing, tadpoles turning into frogs, and butterflies hatching. Visitors give children a good understanding of the world outside school, such as when one child's mother came in to talk about life in Malawi. Watching ice-cubes melting in the water tray and mixing paints fascinate children, as does looking at and stroking animals at the local farm, and collecting leaves and mini-beasts on a walkabout around the local area.
14. Similarly in Years 5 and 6, pupils see the point of what they are doing and because of this, enjoy their work. Interventions in pupils' learning are focused and timely, providing constructive advice and guidance about how pupils can improve their work. Tasks are suitably adapted to meet the needs of differently attaining pupils and effective planning makes sure lessons are prepared well and run smoothly. Teaching is accurate and links work to everyday life, such as when Year 5 pupils recorded information on a spreadsheet relating to attendance at a local cinema. In contrast, in a Year 4 ICT lesson, pupils saw little point in compiling a questionnaire about a make-believe art gallery and too many achieved very little during the hour-long lesson. The teacher's and teaching assistant's time was mainly spent trying to keep order when a number of pupils became bored and behaved badly, disrupting the lesson.
15. Although during the week of the inspection two of the three teachers in Years 3 and 4 were temporary, the pupils' workbooks showed that over the whole year the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. There is too much work that is incomplete and marking that does little to help pupils to improve their work. Expectations about what pupils can reasonably achieve are too low and too much time is spent in lessons trying to keep order when pupils call out and talk whilst the teacher is talking. This is because teaching fails to inspire pupils to want to learn, the atmosphere created is not conducive to learning and relationships are fraught with tension. Much of the school's work in supporting vulnerable pupils emphasises the development of their confidence, self-esteem and the building up of positive attitudes to learning. Much of this momentum is lost in Years 3 and 4 where the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is poor. The support assistants can do little to counter the weak climate for learning that now exists. The learning mentor provides good, systematic and sensitive support and lively relationships, as pupils talk through their problems. The scale of the problem in Years 3 and 4 is such, however, that this work is often undone as soon as the pupils step back into the classroom.
16. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is too often no better than satisfactory. Whilst much of the learning is sound, time is often wasted when pupils are asked to draw and colour in, stick pictures in books, or complete low level worksheets which make little demand on them to work hard.
17. Throughout the school, teachers tell pupils at the start of lessons what it is they are going to learn by the end of the lesson. However, in Years 1 to 4 these learning objectives are unclear and pupils are often confused about what it is they are going to be able to do by the end of the lesson, lessening their enthusiasm to work hard. In addition, the comments teachers write in pupils' workbooks do not tell pupils what they do well and what they need to focus on improving.

Too often the most able complete work they are clearly able to do, marking time and the least able can only do the work with support from adults. This is because unlike in the Reception class and Years 5 and 6, in these years teaching pays insufficient attention to what pupils already know, taking the work from the teaching guidance without adapting it sufficiently for differently attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers also accept untidy work from pupils too readily, which does little to instil in pupils a sense of pride.

18. Most subjects are taught in discrete subject lessons, and planning takes insufficient account of how pupils can make use of or practise skills learnt in language and literacy, mathematics and ICT lessons. This limits progress and slows achievement.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. It is suitably broad and balanced but with weaknesses in catering for all pupils' needs and ensuring progression in their learning. Learning opportunities for children in the Reception Year and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are good, but not good enough for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Enrichment is satisfactory, as are the quality and quantity of accommodation and resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Except in the Reception Year and Years 5 and 6 the curriculum lacks excitement and fails to inspire pupils to do well.
- A good, lively curriculum provides a solid foundation for children's learning in the Reception class and at the end of the school in Years 5 and 6.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory.
- The deployment of support staff is good and they make a good contribution to the progress of the least able pupils in particular.

Commentary

19. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage has improved well since the previous inspection. It is no longer a watered-down Year 1 curriculum. Instead it is a lively sequence of planned activities related closely to the principles embedded in the stepping stones of learning that lead towards the early learning goals. Activities are based well on learning through observation and exploration, and enable children to make good progress. Similarly, in Years 5 and 6, the curriculum is well planned and relevant to pupils' interests and needs. Work is based whenever possible on solving everyday life problems and because of this pupils see the point of what they are asked to do.

20. There have been other improvements since the previous inspection to the curriculum including consistency in lesson planning, setting learning targets in the English, mathematics and science, and filling in gaps in the curriculum that existed at the time of the previous inspection. However, the adapting of the teaching guidelines to meet the needs and interests of differently attaining pupils has not been successful. The curriculum planned for Year 3 and 4 either for the half term or individual lessons does not meet the needs of the pupils in terms of relevance to their interests or life skills. The pupils fail to thrive, which severely limits their entitlement and their opportunity to get the most out of the good curriculum provided in Years 5 and 6. Equality of opportunity overall is therefore unsatisfactory. The work of the learning mentor is a positive influence, trying to adjust the Year 3 and 4 pupils' attitudes to enable them to look at class work more productively. The fundamental weakness, however, lies in the nature of the curriculum, which is uninspiring and not always relevant to pupils' needs.

21. The breadth of the curriculum is satisfactory, but the focus is very much on individual subjects. There is a suitable range of out-of-school activities, visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum, but lacking the excitement generated by imaginative links between subjects makes this a lacklustre and uninspiring curriculum. It particularly lacks relevance for Year 3 and 4 pupils. The

experiences offered to Year 5 and 6 are more stimulating as the principles behind the national primary strategy are being explored, but these are not embedded throughout the school.

22. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Their needs are not met well enough and the weak climate for learning in Years 3 and 4 prevents the planned provision for pupils with special educational needs being put into effect. Teachers throughout the school have put much effort into improving the quality of education plans for individual pupils. The targets in these plans have become more precise since the previous inspection. They guide the special educational needs support assistants in the programmes of work or social development that enable the pupils to make progress through their personal targets, but in Year 3 and 4 the general disruption in class negates the benefit. Teachers in other years do not systematically refer to the pupils' individual learning targets, partly because they do not have a signalling system to remind them to do so. It is part of the action plan to provide training to embed this practice. Equality of opportunity has improved for pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection; because the teaching and support is almost entirely within the class lessons, pupils do not now miss important experiences to go out of class to do their work.

Care, guidance and support

The school has good procedures for safeguarding pupils' health, safety, and welfare. Support, advice and guidance based on teachers' monitoring of pupils' academic progress and personal development have both strengths and weaknesses, but are satisfactory overall. The school has good arrangements for consulting pupils and involving them in the work of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good induction arrangements for children in the Reception class help them to make good early progress.
- The good standards of pastoral care provided by the school ensure pupils can work and play in a safe environment.
- The school actively seeks pupils' opinions and provides opportunities for pupils to influence the work and routines of the school.
- The guidance given to pupils about how to improve their work does not make it clear to them what they need to do next.

Commentary

23. The school maintains good contact with local playgroups and the nearby Nursery. Reception class children make regular visits to the Nursery and similar return visits are arranged, providing good opportunities for children to mingle and develop friendships. New children and their parents are invited into the Reception classroom for three short sessions during the summer term. At these times, parents can see the children at work and the facilities offered. They are given a comprehensive information pack detailing what will be taught and the help they can give their children at home. Staff are on hand to discuss any foreseen problems. Children are informally assessed for any potential special need requirements. All new children begin school on the same day and are formally assessed shortly after entry. During their year in the Reception class there is frequent contact with Year 1 pupils and many joint activities are provided. Work provided in the summer term is planned to ensure continuity into the coming autumn term. Children in the Reception Year are well cared for and quickly build up the trust and confidence necessary for them to make good progress.
24. The good level of pastoral care provided by the school applies to all age groups. Staff and the governing body work together to ensure pupils can work and play in safety. There is a separate play area for the Key Stage 1 pupils and this helps prevent accidents caused by boisterous play amongst the older pupils. Playground supervision levels are good. Parents' concerns over possible hazards created by fixed play equipment have been addressed by restricting its use in wet weather. All fixed and large equipment is tested annually. All other required health and

safety inspections and equipment tests are carried out and regular fire drills are held and evaluated. The governing body are involved in site and premises inspections to identify potential hazards. Accidents are investigated and appropriate risk assessments are prepared. First aid arrangements and medicine control procedures are good. The school meets child protection requirements.

25. The school consults pupils on proposed policy changes where pupils are directly affected. The policy is carefully explained and pupils' opinions are sought. The 'Poster Path' displayed in the entrance area charts their suggestions. Rules for behaviour and play are included. The recent election of the school council, made up of pupils from all age groups, has also provided an effective means for pupils to bring forward their problems or suggestions for discussion with senior staff. The council meet each fortnight, in their own time, and discuss the merits of items brought to them or the merits of their own suggestions. The council sought and were given access to the governing body to convince them of the pupils' priority rating for improvements to the school toilets above other items of planned spending. The council succeeded in getting improvements to the toilets. Other successes include provision of fixed play equipment and a revision of the playground rules. Class and school rules have been discussed and reviewed. The council have quickly established a good reputation and feel they are being effective in school improvement.
26. The school's policy of early assessment of and intervention for pupils with special educational needs works well; children are identified early in the Reception class. Assessment systems are in place to keep a check on these pupils as they move through the school, but the data from these assessments has not triggered a suitable response to the needs of the pupils in Years 1 to 4. The extent of trusting relationships between staff and pupils is satisfactory overall but inconsistent between year groups. The behaviour of a small number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 can be disruptive and these pupils often fail to show respect and co-operation. This is because the assessment of pupils' academic progress and achievement does not always take account of the needs of all pupils, including those who need help in becoming motivated learners. However, the school has developed good links with specialist support agencies, and in addition, behavioural support and guidance are provided by the school's learning mentor. This means that the school's most vulnerable pupils have access to good guidance on behaviour and learning, but unfortunately this is not always continued back in the Years 3 and 4 classrooms, where these pupils struggle to learn.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are satisfactory overall. The links with the local community are good and used productively to support learning. The provision of extended services is good and is part of the drive to attract more parents into school. There are good links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good links with other schools and colleges are used well to support staff development and contribute effectively to pupils' learning.
- Good links with the local community enable the school to provide additional stimulus to learning.
- The good range of extended services offered by the school is used well to help parents understand how they can help their children to learn.

Commentary

27. The school is working hard to encourage more parents to take an active interest in their children's education at school and at home. The 'open door' policy operated by the school ensures parents are made welcome and their concerns are fully considered. Parents' views are sought on specific issues relating to policy changes or reviews by setting up representative or parent focus groups.

28. The school is keen that more parents could be involved in their children's education and to help parents to do this the school provides a range of services and adult education opportunities designed to help parents to help their children. Courses have been provided for improving computer skills, 'positive parenting', and personal health. The school provides weekly 'mother and toddler' groups, 'inspire workshops' and 'play and stay' sessions where parents and children work alongside each other. Through these services the school is helping parents to develop their own skills and gain the confidence to become involved in their children's education.
29. The school's membership of the local cluster of schools provides good opportunities for staff development through joint training, talking about how to combat weaknesses, and sorting out how to build on the best practice. The transfer of the Year 6 leavers to secondary education is significantly helped by the co-operative approach maintained within the group. The process begins in Year 5 with joint work in design and technology and continues in Year 6 with further transition work in literacy and numeracy. To assist the school with behaviour management, groups of four pupils and their parents are invited to three full days of close support and advice sessions provided by the secondary staff. A secondary school staff member maintains contact with the school to keep the head teacher aware of how pupils have settled into Year 7 and the progress they are making.
30. There are good links with two local colleges and with a local university. These provide tuition for national vocational courses and first aid instruction for staff members. Work experience placements are offered to students. The university provides workshops in science for the most able pupils in Years 5 and 6 and makes drama sessions available. In turn, the school provides placements for the university's graduate teachers and five or six take up the offer each year, providing extra support in the classroom.
31. The school has developed a good range and variety of links within the local community. The premises are made available for local groups and are currently used by the scouts and cubs. The head teacher is on the local community action group, comprising residents and police, and meetings are held on the school premises. The local Member of Parliament holds surgeries at the school. Visitors are welcomed and include a resident cartoonist, the community police, nurse, and health visitor. Fire service personnel attend to talk to pupils about home and personal safety and are currently trialling a scheme to help pupils with behavioural problems. Off-site visits to local facilities such as the country park, local farm, and nearby theatres are used well to stimulate pupils' interest through illustrating their topic work and extending their knowledge.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Leadership by the head teacher and other key staff is unsatisfactory. Governance is satisfactory overall, but the governing body does not fulfil all of its statutory duties.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The experienced head teacher wants the school to improve, knows where the weaknesses lie, but does not have a clear view of the way ahead.
- Factors not entirely within the school's control, such as staff absence, have made matters worse, hindering the drive to raise standards.
- Although some improvements have been made to the quality of teaching and learning in Year 1, strategic planning lacks clarity, focus and rigour to help bring about other much needed improvements.
- Subject leaders are not yet empowered to help them understand what works well and what needs doing.
- Arrangements for monitoring standards and quality are not bringing about essential improvements quickly enough.
- The governing body is steadily becoming more involved in the school's work but does not fulfil all of its statutory duties.

- The school's leadership works hard to successfully secure pupils' health, safety and well-being, encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning, and establish good links with the community.
- Finances are now managed appropriately, but the high staff absence, not covered by an insurance policy, has led to a deficit budget which the school is finding difficult to eliminate.

Commentary

32. The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management have deteriorated since the last inspection and this is now a school with a lack of clear direction and way forward.
33. The head teacher is a caring, committed and experienced leader with clear strengths in some areas. For example, she knows her pupils well and has forged good links with most staff who are keen to make the school more successful. Staff and governors have been consulted to determine the school's priorities, and all have an understanding of some of what the school needs to do to improve. However, the head teacher is not clear about what actions are needed to move the school away from its present precarious position. For example, she is not clear about how to help eradicate unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour in Years 3 and 4 which is having a serious impact on the rate at which pupils learn in all three classes. She is not clear about the strategies and approaches needed to help drive up standards quickly. As a result, she does not provide strong, purposeful and effective leadership at present. The intervention and continued support of the local education authority have been needed to ensure that clear goals and a reasonable plan of action are established to help overcome the school's weaknesses. However, at present, many weaknesses remain.
34. Difficulties substantially beyond the school's control have slowed the rate of improvement. For example, absence through illness of some senior staff and staff resignations made a succession of supply teachers necessary. However, the head teacher's decision to teach classes herself to save money led to a lack of effective leadership. As a result, the rate at which pupils learn slowed and the school lost much of its momentum, sense of direction, and purpose.
35. Strategic planning, currently an amalgam of priorities from internal and external sources, is too complex and does not help generate a clear understanding of what the school must do to secure needed improvement. The school's own planning for next year lacks clarity, focus and rigour, and as a result it is not an effective tool to help drive up standards. Areas identified for development are the right ones, but there is an absence of clear direction to help teachers achieve them.
36. The leadership of many subjects is currently unsatisfactory. This is because subject leaders do not monitor standards and quality regularly or rigorously to enable them to discover what works well and what needs doing. Performance management arrangements, which are slowly helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning, are embedded in the school's work, and are linked to the planned provision of training of teachers and support staff.
37. Senior teachers, including the deputy head teacher, work together satisfactorily to help drive up standards. However, the school's arrangements for evaluating and improving its own performance are not good enough. For example, the head teacher's monitoring of teaching and learning to help improve its quality has led to improvements in Year 1, but its success has been slow to impact because of its lack of rigour and regularity. Pupils' performances in the national tests are analysed and pupils' progress over time is starting to be carefully tracked. However, teachers are not yet using the information gained from this to overcome identified weaknesses. As a result, many pupils are not making best possible progress. The setting of individual targets by teachers to give pupils greater understanding of their learning is at an early stage of development and as a result is not yet helping to drive up standards.
38. Nevertheless, the school's leadership focuses well on ensuring pupils' health, safety and well-being through effective procedures, encouraging parents to become involved in their children's learning through family learning projects, and establishing good links with the community.

39. The governing body is steadily becoming more involved in helping and supporting the school. It is rightly becoming more assertive to help shape the school's direction by challenging and supporting senior managers. It meets frequently and supports the school through its established committee structure. As a result, governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, as at the time of the last inspection, there are some statutory omissions from the information it provides to parents. There is no coherent approach, such as through the linking of governors to specific subjects, to enable governors to gain, from first-hand evidence, an informed overview of what the school does well and what needs doing. As a result, the governing body is not yet rigorous enough in checking aspects of the school's work and in holding the school to account for what it achieves. For example, it has failed to introduce strategies to prevent declining standards over time.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	854674
Total expenditure	875464
Expenditure per pupil	3768

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	-21019
Balance carried forward to the next	-41809

40. Regular monitoring of spending patterns helps to ensure that finance is now used to benefit pupils. However, due to insufficient insurance cover for staff absence, the school now has a deficit budget, which the governing body is finding difficult to eradicate. Principles of best value are soundly applied, and the governing body is committed to ensuring that all funds are wisely spent. However, the deficit budget is limiting what funds can be used for. Administrative procedures are efficient to help ensure that the school runs smoothly and that day-to-day financial management does not impinge on teaching and learning. Financial control is sound overall, but taking full account of the challenging social and educational circumstances and the relatively high funding per pupil, standards are still too low (and getting lower) and thus the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children start in the Reception class at the start of the academic year in which they reach five years of age. There is no Nursery class at the school, but some children attend local nurseries and playgroups before starting school. Attainment on entry is well below average and many children have impoverished social and communication skills.

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good, particularly in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. It is satisfactory in all of the other areas of learning. The classroom is bright and inviting and a hive of activity at all times. Children are eager to try new things and explore interesting objects around the room.

Although very few children reach the goals expected nationally by the end of the Reception class, achievement is good because teaching is effective. Activities are based on learning through observation and exploration, and effective assessment arrangements mean that work is tailored to meet the needs of differently attaining children. Good use is made of visits and visitors to support learning, and teaching assistants are deployed very well to support children in their work.

With good support from the school's senior managers and an eager and enthusiastic newly appointed Foundation Stage co-ordinator, things have moved on well. Good improvement has come about since the last inspection, when children were given a 'watered down' version of the Year 1 National Curriculum work; weaknesses in the provision for knowledge and understanding of the world have been dealt with and provision in this area of learning is now a strength.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's independence skills are promoted well, but children tend to choose activities they want to and can do, rather than those that will teach them new skills.
- Working in the classroom with parents helps children to settle to school well.
- Children are taught to value friendship and get on with each other.
- Effort and hard work are celebrated well through displays, captions, and photographs.

Commentary

41. Teaching is good in this area of learning and children achieve well. Although most of them do not reach the goals expected for their age, they come close to them. The classroom is well organised and resources are labelled and easily accessible. For example, children who choose to make little books can easily find the sticky tape, paper and scissors. Children's achievements are celebrated in good quality wall displays and photographs of them working.
42. Parents are encouraged to come into the classroom and work with their children on set days. They make games together that they can take home and play with. This, and the good modelling of relationships by the class teacher and teaching assistants, helps children understand the value of working closely with others. Children are encouraged to say positive things about each other on, for example, their 'friendship tree' and to build things together such as a tall tower.
43. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, most of the children are confident learners. This is due to the expectations the adults have of children to plan where they are going and what they are going to do when asked to work independently. Children eagerly select an activity from

those on offer and they concentrate well at it. However, they usually choose something they can already do well. In addition, the 'play' in the self-chosen activities is undirected and learning is incidental rather than planned. There is no real challenge to inspire children to achieve something, lessening the progress children could make.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children learn to spell well.
- Enjoyment of reading and a love of books are promoted effectively.
- Lots of opportunities for children to write give them a sense of purpose in learning to write.
- A linguistically stimulating classroom helps children to understand the importance of communication.

Commentary

44. Although not many children reach the expected level by the end of the Reception Year, most achieve well in this area of learning because of good teaching. Lots of words and captions around the room, some of which are written by the children, show children the importance of learning to read and write in order to be able communicate with others. Writing letters, such as to the local policeman who visited them, compiling newsletters for parents on computer, and making up their own storybooks, shows children the purpose of the written word.
45. Spelling is taught well. Many children already know most of the letter sounds and are starting to use this knowledge when writing and reading. Games make learning fun, such as when a group of less able children played a 'sound' game which involved matching pictures to the letters they began with. Children are developing their technical writing skills well; around a quarter of them are starting to form letters using the correct sequence of strokes and can put together two sentences using capitals and full stops, such as when one of the six most able children wrote, "I went to the prk. I playd wthe m.u.m."
46. Story-telling features well in the Reception class, with adults promoting a love of books and children wanting to find out what lies inside the covers. Time is set aside each day when adults share books with the children. Children were seen 'reading' to each other in small groups, whilst others sat quietly 'reading' silently to themselves, engrossed in the book and the tale it told.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All strands of mathematics are incorporated well and work is tailored well to meet children's needs.
- Mathematical language is promoted well and the classroom has lots of numbers around it, things to count, and objects to sort.
- Some of the free-choice activities lack focus and specific challenge, lessening the impact of them on children's learning.

Commentary

47. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Children achieve as well as could reasonably be expected although very few reach the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. The range of mathematical experience children are given is suitably wide and varied,

incorporating, for example, work on shape, colour, sorting, counting and measuring. Lots of things around the room for children to count encourage them to use number daily. There are things to sort, such as the 'hot' and 'cold' pictures, and to add together, and shape templates for children to use independently to draw pictures.

48. High expectations mean that children, particularly the most able, are pushed to achieve just that little bit more, such as when the class teacher was working with a group of ten children adding up to and taking away from ten. Most children, having been shown how by the teacher, managed to hold numbers in their heads and count on using their fingers. Using an egg timer to show children how much time they had to complete their tasks not only promoted a sense of time, it also added pace to the lesson. However, whilst good progress was made by the children when working directly with the class teacher, when allowed to choose activities for themselves, many chose ones that did little to move their learning on further. This is because children are not directed often enough to particular activities that will help them acquire a skill they do not have, and the activities lack specific challenges and learning is therefore incidental.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's ICT skills are developing well.
- Visits and visitors enrich the learning opportunities effectively.
- Lots of activities such as caring for plants and animals and baking prepare children well for their work in Year 1.

Commentary

49. An area of weakness at the time of the last inspection, this is now a strength. Although standards are below the nationally expected goals by the end of the Reception Year, most children achieve well in this area of learning because of effective teaching and exciting learning opportunities.
50. Lots of opportunities for children to observe the world around them help them to understand what is happening and to ask why and how things happen the way they do. For example, melting ice cubes and baking cakes develop their understanding of how things change, listening to African drummers and hearing about life in Malawi gives them an understanding of different cultures, and visits to a local farm to care for some of the animals shows them how creatures can be dependent on others.
51. Watching the seasons change during walks in the countryside gives them an experience of nature, as does looking at a bird's nest and new-growing and dying leaves through magnifying glasses. Watching caterpillars turn into butterflies and tadpoles into frogs captures their sense of awe and wonder and makes them marvel at the world around them.
52. Teaching develops children's ICT skills well. Children learn how to operate the tape recorder to listen to taped stories or record their singing or talking. Their 'mouse' control skills are good as they 'drag and drop' objects around the computer screen and complete graphs of favourite pets. They know how to program a floor robot and can 'drive' the remote control car skilfully around the playground.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use small equipment skilfully and with good co-ordination.
- Access to larger climbing equipment gives them the opportunity to develop their gross motor skills.

Commentary

53. No specific physical development lessons were seen during the inspection but from what was seen in lessons and photographs, standards are below the nationally expected level by the start of Year 1, but most children achieve as well as could reasonably be expected because of sound teaching.

54. Opportunities for them to manipulate modelling dough and use cutters to create shapes, threading beads and needles through holes, and using tools such as scissors and glue sticks to construct models develops children's hand-eye co-ordination skills well. Bouncing on the trampoline, making different shapes in the air, and climbing on the large apparatus helps them learn how to control their larger body movements. Manoeuvring wheeled toys around the outdoor learning area ensures that they develop a good sense of direction and awareness of space.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for children to be creative and use their imagination are plentiful.

Commentary

55. Standards in creative development are below the nationally expected level by the end of the Reception year, but most children achieve as well as could reasonably be expected because of satisfactory teaching. Activities involving children making and creating develop their creative skills well. Children have access to a range of resources that they can use freely to make pictures and models from, for example pasta, sequins, material, card and paint. By mixing paints they create just the shade they want for their pictures and by engaging in role-play learn how to negotiate and take turns. Opportunities for music making are available during the free-choice sessions and small world play enables children to engage in a world of fantasy. By the time they leave the Reception class, they are confident creators and can use equipment independently to create pictures and models.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching in Year 5 and 6 enables these pupils to achieve well; the school has worked hard on Year 5 and 6 provision to turn the pupils there into well-behaved, eager learners.

- Poor teaching in Years 3 and 4 means that pupils underachieve considerably, setting up a deficit in attainment that cannot be corrected by the end of Year 6.
- The curriculum overall is sound, but in some years lacks interest and relevance, with a negative impact on learning and behaviour.
- The data from a good range of assessments is not used consistently well.
- Good support is given by classroom assistants.
- The pupils have insufficient knowledge of their own learning and the ways they can improve.

Commentary

56. Standards are well below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents an overall trend of declining standards and insufficient improvement. There is considerable movement in and out of the school throughout Key Stage 2, and the current Year 6 does have a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, but these pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6 and those pupils coming into the school during Key Stage 2 tend to do better than those who stay throughout. The main reason for the significant underachievement at the end of Year 6 lies in the weak teaching pupils experience when in Years 3 and 4. Pupils do not make sufficient progress in skills and understanding in these years, and this puts them in a very low position on entering Year 5 to an extent that cannot be fully made up by the good teaching in Years 5 and 6.
57. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall, but there are strengths in some year groups. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and pupils' progress is as good as could reasonably be expected from their attainment at the start of Year 1. Teaching in Year 5 and 6 is consistently good, and at times very good. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory and often poor. In their workbooks, Year 3 pupils start at a sound level but bit by bit their work goes downhill over the course of the school year. They lose the skills in handwriting they brought from Year 2. Year 4 pupils also try to make a good start in September, but by the end of the year many pupils have lost the sense of writing in sentences, of using punctuation and interest in exploring vocabulary. The work ethic has gone. Largely this is due to inadequate management of pupils and control of the class. Partly it is due to using the curriculum planning in a dull way, without relevance to pupils' interests and needs. The Year 5 and 6 teachers then work hard to restore the pupils' engagement through very good relationships, planning carefully and delivering lessons in a lively manner. It has taken most of the year but the end result is a very good achievement. Pupils now listen well and try very hard because they are involved and challenged, and behave very well. However, too much needs doing to eradicate the underachievement of Years 3 and 4 and pupils still under perform by the end of the year.
58. By contrast many Year 3 and 4 pupils are not engaged by the activities presented, do not listen well and therefore do not extend their skills in speaking and listening. Relationships are fraught, and even the pupils who have special educational needs, with a good level of support from teaching assistants, do not thrive in this climate. In other years the good work of the teaching assistants results in good progress in lessons.
59. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory overall. Leadership is sound. The subject leaders have promoted a stronger commitment to inclusion, and the planning of tasks to match the different attainment levels of pupils is a good feature in most lessons. The re-organisation of time for reading has produced separate guided reading sessions that strengthen the provision for reading in most classes. Opportunities for pupils' speaking have been increased and the 'talking partners' strategy is a popular and valuable part of many activities. In response to the previous report the co-ordinators have ensured that there is a place for research and debate in the pupils' learning skills.
60. It is the management of the subject that is unsatisfactory. Although assessment procedures are more precise than they were and enable staff to identify groups of pupils by attainment this does not always result in giving them more challenging work. The tracking of progress has not successfully increased the pace at which Year 3 and 4 pupils would have to work in order to

catch up with their learning deficit. The evidence about under-performance in Years 3 and 4 did not prompt decisive action from the school's leadership to remedy the issue. In addition, although the monitoring of the subject has resulted in a much wider range of writing, which is good, it has not shown that, as pupils explore this range, they often lose sight and practice of the writing skills they have already acquired. This is linked to the targeting of work. Pupils mostly work towards well-focused and relevant class targets, but many pupils would benefit from much more precise knowledge about the levels they are dealing with, for instance what is needed to turn a level 3 story into a level 4. The introduction of 'gap tasks' for older pupils goes some way to tackle the key issue in the previous inspection about preparing pupils for assessing their own work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The linking of language and literacy to other subjects is unsatisfactory overall. In Key Stage 1 teachers use a sound range of opportunities to enable pupils to practise and use their language skills. For instance Year 1 pupils use reading well to do simple research of information in history, and then they try to write their answers in sentences. Year 5 and 6 pupils also research history topics like the Second World War from books and computer programs. Pupils learn to build up a debate in personal, social and health education lessons from ideas structured by post-it notes into a longer account, for instance on their hopes and fears about their move to the secondary school. In Years 3 and 4, however, the extension of literacy in other subjects is a chore, limited in extent and often avoided. Pupils like to make models in design and technology, but do not do any written design briefs or evaluations. Overall these opportunities are not planned in a systematic way in all subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good and pupils achieve well in these classes.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is now embedded and is helping to improve things in Year 1, but not in Years 3 and 4 where the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory and pupils under perform.
- The subject is without an effective leader to secure much needed improvement and because of this significant weaknesses outweigh strengths and are hindering the drive to raise standards.
- The least able pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants.
- The development of mathematics through other subjects has too low a profile.

Commentary

62. Standards in mathematics are well below national levels at the end of both key stages, reflected in the 2005 national test results. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall because pupils' progress is unacceptably variable as pupils move through the school. This is because the curriculum is often dull, teaching is weak in Years 3 and 4 with work rarely matched precisely enough to pupils' differing needs, and the subject is not being effectively led at present. Pupils' achievements across Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory, with the current Year 6 cohort performing well below their capabilities given their performance at the end of Key Stage 1. Many pupils make good gains in learning in Years 5 and 6 but are left with too much ground to make up after weak teaching in Years 3 and 4 significantly impedes progress. Results have fallen over time in Year 2 and 6 and improvements since the last inspection are not good enough.

63. Teaching and learning are sound in Key Stage 1, but are unsatisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, with lessons seen varying between poor and very good. In Years 3 and 4, pupils 'mark time' because behaviour management strategies are insecure and work is not matched to their

precise needs, which prevents all pupils from making sound progress. However, the quality of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 is good, and some very good teaching was seen during the inspection. In good and better lessons, teachers have high expectations and pitch work at appropriate levels. Purposeful questioning develops clear understanding of new knowledge. Other positive features of lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 were the high levels of enthusiasm, good relationships and secure subject knowledge, which help to keep pupils motivated and involved. As a result, many pupils make good progress. However, weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics are having a negative impact on the urgent need to address the underachievement of a significant number of pupils.

64. The school is currently being supported by the local authority's intensive support programme, and is working hard to improve things. At present, however, the subject is without effective leadership because the school's arrangements during the absence of the co-ordinator have been ineffective. As a result, a clear and rigorous timetable of carefully prioritised developments to secure needed improvement has not been established. The head teacher is overseeing the subject at present. She has established strategies to monitor teaching and learning, which are helping to improve, in particular, the quality of teaching in Year 1. Pupils' progress is now carefully tracked to help identify whether pupils are making enough progress. Data from national tests is analysed and weaknesses identified, but strategies to rectify the gaps in pupils' learning are not securely established. Pupils have targets to aid learning, but they do not have much understanding of them at present.
65. Significant weaknesses in provision outweigh strengths, especially in Years 3 and 4, and are hindering the drive to raise standards. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, but is too dull, with few 'real-life' experiences, such as with money and shopping, to help bring learning alive for pupils. 'Low level' worksheets, colouring and copying, are evident in Key Stage 1 and the lower Key Stage 2 classes, which limits progress. Standards of presentation are unacceptably variable with some pupils taking little pride in their work. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are often not good enough in Years 3 and 4, with some pupils showing little concentration, which prevents all pupils from moving forward. Investigative approaches to help facilitate understanding are evident, but need more emphasis, as at the time of the last inspection. There is unnecessary repetition of already understood work in Years 3 and 4 and pupils are rarely given appropriately challenging tasks. However, 'working wall' displays help motivate pupils, celebrate their work and teach a mathematical vocabulary. The quality of marking has improved, to aid learning, but approaches are not yet consistent across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

66. This is unsatisfactory. The development of mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding through other subjects is under-represented as it was at the time of the last inspection. For example, links with ICT are minimal, such as to help pupils with data handling to facilitate mathematical understanding. Opportunities for developing number skills in other subjects are not being planned, implemented and evaluated as part of a systematic approach.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching in Years 5 and 6 means that pupils' learning is exciting because it is mainly based on investigation and exploration.
- Unsatisfactory teaching in Year 4 slows the rate of achievement pupils make by the end of the school.
- Effective leadership has brought about improvements to Year 1, but has been too slow to tackle the weaknesses in Year 4.

- Teaching makes good use of the national subject guidance to know what to teach and when, but not enough regard is given to tailoring the work to meet pupils' different needs and ineffective marking does little to help pupils to improve.

Commentary

67. Test results fluctuate from year to year, but generally fewer pupils reach the nationally expected levels than in most schools and standards are well below average. Whilst this reflects pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 and most pupils achieve as well as could be reasonably be expected, the provision in science is barely satisfactory and has deteriorated in some important aspects since the last inspection.
68. However, there are signs of improvement as the implementation of new management systems starts to identify what needs doing. An increased emphasis on scientific investigation is making work more exciting for pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6. However, there has been insufficient improvement in Years 1 to 3, and very little at all in Year 4. This is because the subject co-ordinator has not been empowered until now to find out what is going on in science. This means that although the subject leadership is satisfactory, with some strengths in particular in the provision by the leader of good role models for other staff, management is not effective enough at monitoring performance data and reviewing patterns.
69. Whilst the decline in the test results this year can be partly explained by the high incidence of special educational needs in the current Year 6 cohort, over 60 per cent, there are some weaknesses that are slowing the rate of progress pupils make over time and depressing standards by the end of the school.
70. Teaching is satisfactory overall and, from starting in Year 1 to leaving in Year 6, pupils' achievement is just about good enough. However, improvements to the teaching in Year 1, brought about with help from the local education authority consultants, are only just starting to bite, with clear evidence that prior to recent months, it was unsatisfactory. The teaching in Years 2 and 3 is sound, with a fine balance of strengths and weaknesses, but in Year 4 it is unsatisfactory. Here, there is too little investigative work and pupils are not asked to explain precisely what they mean. Sloppy work is accepted, such as lines drawn without rulers and teachers' comments, such as "Most labels correct", do nothing to help pupils to improve their work. Assessments of what pupils have learnt from each unit of work show a lack of understanding of general scientific ideas, but nothing is done to remedy this and pupils move onto the next step regardless.
71. Only when pupils get to Years 5 and 6 do they start to receive good teaching, but by then there is so much ground to make up they do well to just about reach the standards that their end of Year 2 assessments show they are capable of. In these two year groups, however, despite the high incidence of special educational needs, pupils enjoy their science work and talk enthusiastically about what they have done. They can explain, for example, how they have separated substances and made electrical circuits. They show a good basic factual knowledge of science, but lack the depth of understanding about how scientific ideas are based on evidence or how to relate conclusions to patterns and to form them in the light of their scientific knowledge. In contrast to what happens in other years, marking helps pupils to make improvements to their work, sometimes by asking questions such as, "What are you going to measure the length of the wire with?" Pupils' learning is built in small steps, based on what they know already. Teachers' explanations are clear and precise, helping pupils to understand what is going on. For example, in a Year 6 lesson investigating if the number of components in a circuit affects the current flow, all pupils listened attentively as the teacher spoke, eager to answer her questions, which were suitably adapted for differently attaining pupils, so all could join in and contribute something to the lesson.
72. This does not happen in other years, however, where pupils are too often given the same work to do, with teachers accepting different outcomes from different pupils. This means that the most

able find the work relatively easy, whilst the least able struggle to do it successfully without adult support.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good; here pupils see the relevance of what they are asked to do.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4, where the range of work is limited and the bad behaviour of a few pupils adversely affects the learning of all pupils.
- The subject has not moved on enough since the last inspection because of unsatisfactory leadership and management.
- Insufficient use made of the school's ICT resources means that standards are too low.
- Checks on what pupils have learnt are not frequent enough to build pupils' learning in steps and insufficient use is made of any assessment information collected.

Commentary

73. Standards are below the nationally expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Despite the school now meeting statutory requirements in ICT, computers and other ICT equipment are still under-used and the subject has made insufficient progress since the school's previous inspection. This is because in the year-long absence of a subject leader, the head teacher has only recently started to get a grip of what is going on. Whilst she and the senior managers have managed to bring about some improvements to teaching in Year 1, not enough has been done to combat the weak teaching in Years 3 and 4. This is because leadership tends to react to issues in order to solve problems in the short term, but without a clear long-term vision of how to bring about long-lasting improvements.
74. Despite the sound teaching in Year 2 and the good teaching in Years 5 and 6 the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall. This is because of the many weaknesses there are in Years 1 and 3 and particularly Year 4, where pupils cover insufficient work and much of it is often incomplete. In addition, pupils waste time colouring in self-assessment sheets that are much larger than they need be, and marking does little to tell pupils how to improve their work. Because they do not see the point of what they are asked to do, some pupils start to misbehave. This bad behaviour goes unchecked, interrupting lessons and slowing pupils' progress. For example, in one Year 4 lesson, when pupils were asked to compile a questionnaire about a visit to an art gallery, teaching failed to inspire pupils about the purpose of the work and some pupils did not get beyond typing in their names and the date.
75. In contrast, teaching in Years 5 and 6 is lively and interesting and it inspires pupils to want to learn. This is because pupils see the point of it, such as when Year 5 worked on spreadsheets solving problems. Clear explanations meant that the pupils knew what they were doing and by relating it to the buying and selling of cinema tickets, pupils understood why it was important to be able to represent and interpret data in such a way.
76. Except in Years 5 and 6, assessment and its use are unsatisfactory. Teachers in Years 1 to 4 do not check rigorously enough on what pupils have learnt each lesson in order to plan the next step. Whilst they carry out half-termly checks on how well pupils have done in a unit of work, they do not use this information to alter the next unit to move those pupils on who have secure ICT knowledge and understanding, or revisit an idea some have not grasped.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. This is unsatisfactory. Whilst there is now adequate direct teaching of ICT, teachers still do not incorporate ICT enough into work in other subjects. Although there is evidence of work in the computer suite used to complete some mathematical spreadsheets or type up some stories, this is not intentionally to support work in the other subjects. For example, pupils often write out their

stories first and then spend time typing them up, missing the point of how useful computers can be.

HUMANITIES

78. **History** and **geography** were not part of the main focus of the inspection and because of this, inspectors saw no lessons in either subject. There was not enough evidence from pupils' workbooks and wall displays to form secure judgements about teaching and learning, standards and provision in either subject. However, from what was seen, geography and history are securely represented within the school's curriculum. In geography, Year 2 pupils have learnt about the seaside, studied a map of the locality and identified the countries of the United Kingdom. Year 6 pupils have studied the distribution of rainfall across the United Kingdom and learnt about the water cycle. In history, by the end of Year 6, in work on Ancient Greece, pupils wrote about the events of the Battle of Marathon as a newspaper report for the Greek Times.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not reach the standards expected in the locally agreed guidelines, but their progress is satisfactory overall as they move through the school.
- Religious education is secure and pupils learn both about and from religion, but there are too few visits and visitors to bring it alive.
- Weaknesses in teaching impede progress in Years 3 and 4, but strengths are evident in Years 5 and 6.
- Assemblies make a satisfactory contribution to religious education and to pupils' personal development.
- There are clear plans for the subject's continued development.
- Links with other subjects, especially literacy, are under-developed.

Commentary

79. Overall standards are below those set out in locally agreed guidelines. However, pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. This is because the subject is secure within the school's sound curriculum, teaching is satisfactory overall, and the subject is soundly led. By the end of Year 2, pupils appreciate why God is important to Christians, learn about important church furniture, such as the font and lectern, and write about why Christmas is a special time. By the end of Year 6, pupils begin to appreciate the importance of the Hindu belief in one Supreme Being, learn about a Hindu temple as a place of worship, and begin to understand the use of symbolism for Buddhists.

80. Pupils acquire secure knowledge of different religions, and begin to apply what they are learning about to their daily lives. For example, Year 2 pupils explored how quarrels may be solved after listening to a Hindu story. By the time pupils reach Year 5, they use their developing knowledge of world religions to consider qualities they admire in themselves and others, and explore how responsibilities increase as they get older. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural understanding through the studies of world religions. However, while there are established links with a local church, visits and visitors to support learning in religions other than Christianity are limited.

81. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but they are varied. Teaching is sound in Years 1 and 2, unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4, and mostly good in Years 5 and 6 where teachers address both strands of the curriculum well. Features of poor teaching seen during the inspection include insecure control strategies which prevent pupils from extending their learning, and inappropriate handling of artefacts, with pupils showing little respect or reverence to help

foster understanding of their importance. In most years, low level work sheets, drawing and colouring tasks do not extend understanding.

82. Assembly themes, such as about 'honesty', enable pupils to consider a wide range of issues, which contribute to their understanding of religion. Pupils learn about the importance of courtesy, care and consideration for others. As a result, the subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' personal development.
83. The subject is soundly led. The co-ordinator knows that teachers do not assess pupils' progress consistently and that monitoring needs developing to help identify what works well and what needs doing. She is working hard to try to deal with these weaknesses. However, the plans lack rigour and are insufficiently clear about precisely how these improvements are to be brought about.
84. Links with other subjects, such as ICT, are limited. Although there are good examples of the development of writing skills, such as when older pupils re-tell the story of the Last Supper, most teachers give too little attention to developing pupils' writing skills through religious education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. No full art and design, design technology, music and physical education lessons were seen during the inspection because of the focus on the core subjects. Therefore, no judgements are made about the quality of provision, standards, or teaching. Overall the school provides a sound curriculum in these subjects, but they are not yet influenced by the more exciting demands of the national primary strategy. There are no systems in place for assessing pupils' progress in these subjects at present.
86. Year 4 boys stated that their favourite subject without doubt was **design and technology**. They enjoyed making their models of elephants where moving the tail operated the trunk by levers. They did not prepare the design briefs before starting, nor did they do any evaluations at the end. This means that they achieve less well than expected because they are not engaged in the full process. Year 2 pupils by contrast were careful to include design drawings and simple evaluations of their felt bear puppets. Year 5 produced a good quality of finish in their mechanical models of the earth and moon in orbit.
87. Little of pupils' art and design work was displayed around the school, but from what was seen, pupils' achievement in **art and design** is satisfactory, reaching standards that are broadly in line with those expected. The work of the artist in residence had a positive impact on the pupils who worked on the skills of cartoon drawing. Some useful links are made with ICT, such as the Year 2 pupils' work following the style of Mondrian using the computer.
88. Pupils are excited about **physical education** and looked forward to sharing in the ambitious dance projects prepared by the Malachi Trust. Although no full lessons were seen during the inspection because of time restraints, several classes were observed for short periods. In physical education lessons sound use is made of the hall and playground facilities of the site. Most classes were involved with gymnastics. Year 5 pupils enjoyed their small games sessions where they built up their throwing and catching skills as well as learning the rules and tactics of mini-rounders.
89. **Music** is on the timetable for all classes. In addition to lessons pupils learn new hymns in singing assemblies and perform well. The head teacher's ethnic drumming sessions are popular and give the pupils an insight into an aspect of the culture of other countries. The school maintains its tradition of running a choir and some pupils receive instrumental tuition.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

90. Only one personal, social and health education lesson and no citizenship lessons were seen during the inspection due to time restraints and the focus on the core subjects. From what was seen, however, the school provides satisfactorily for pupils' personal development.
91. The school gives pupils a good say in school routines and procedures through their work on the school council. It gained a healthy schools award in 2005 and this is reflected in pupils' good understanding of the need to eat healthy foods and take regular exercise. Pupils have a good understanding of the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse and they know that, "Smoking one cigarette takes five seconds off your life".
92. They learn how to deal with feelings of anger by, for example, "Putting water on your face" and "Talking to someone about how you feel", and are encouraged to live in harmony with others through the shared reading sessions and playground 'buddy' system.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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