

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHWOOD INFANT SCHOOL

Northwood, Stoke-on-Trent

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 123995

Headteacher: Mrs J Hall

Lead inspector: Dr J N Thorp

Dates of inspection: 23rd – 25th May 2005

Inspection number: 267413

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	129
School address:	Keelings Road Northwood Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST1 6QA
Telephone number:	01782 234637
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd P Parkes
Date of previous inspection:	June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Northwood Infant School is located in the Northwood area of Stoke-on-Trent, about a mile from the city centre. The school is smaller than average in size, with its 129 pupils organised into six classes, including 43 children in the two reception classes. The school's nursery was closed in 2003 when a new separate nursery school was opened on the same site. Most children come from the surrounding area. There is significant mobility of pupils, with 20 joining the school other than at the time of first admission in the last school year and 12 pupils leaving during this period. The area around the school is fairly mixed; around 20 per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal, which is similar to that found in other schools. Attainment on entry is generally below average, although there is a wide spread of ability. There are 22 pupils (17 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, which is in line with most schools nationally. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, which is below average. Around 23 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language.

The school received a *Healthy Schools* award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
6327	Dr J N Thorp	Lead inspector	Mathematics Science History Music Physical education
14141	Mr E Marshall	Lay inspector	
10144	Mrs P M Marriott	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Religious education Special educational needs
25203	Mr R Cooke	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography Personal, social, health and citizenship education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. The headteacher leads the school very well, providing a clear vision for its further development and the maintenance of high standards. Arrangements to ensure that all pupils are fully included and able to learn are excellent. The quality of education the school provides is very good. Very good teaching ensures that pupils' learning is very good; pupils achieve very well in reading, writing and mathematics, with standards high by the time they leave the school. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well provided for and they also achieve very well. High levels of care and guidance ensure that pupils' personal development is very good. The school serves the community very well and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievement is very good; standards in reading, writing and mathematics are high
- Excellent arrangements ensure all pupils are fully included; this contributes most positively to the very good achievement of pupils with English as an additional language
- The headteacher provides very good leadership; she is very well supported by other key staff
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and the excellent relationships amongst pupils and adults contribute to the very positive ethos in the school
- Very good teaching, a very good curriculum and the rich variety of additional activities provided, promote high levels of interest in learning and ensure most pupils do as well as they can
- High levels of care and guidance enable pupils to gain confidence and learn
- Underdeveloped links with the nursery school limits the opportunities to plan a continuous curriculum for children's learning across nursery and reception as a whole
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to work with the computers in all subjects
- Attendance is below average

There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection in June 1999. Previous high standards have been maintained and the overall quality of teaching has improved. There is now appropriate provision of support staff, who contribute effectively to pupils' learning. The contribution of subject leaders to the development of their subjects has improved, but some still need more time to monitor and support the development of teaching. There is now good provision for learning outdoors. The closure of the school's nursery has disrupted provision for children across the Foundation Stage as a whole; current provision for these children is insufficiently continuous.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	C	A	A	A*
Writing	B	A	A	A*
Mathematics	B	A	A	A*

Key: A - amongst the highest 5% nationally; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average. Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

Overall **achievement is very good**. Children's attainment on entry to the school is generally below average, although there is a wide spread of capability. They make good progress in all areas of learning, with the majority achieving the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. Pupils' learning is very good in Years 1 and 2 and they make very good progress, so by the time they transfer to the junior school the majority achieve standards which are above or well above average. This is very good achievement. The table above indicates that these high standards have been maintained over the last two years. Compared with similar schools, results in reading, writing and mathematics in 2004 were among the highest five per cent nationally. Throughout the school

pupils' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory but not as high as in other subjects.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. High levels of care and excellent relationships contribute to pupils' very positive attitudes. Behaviour is very good. Attendance is below average however, and the school has to work very hard to improve it.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching and learning are very good overall, with some lessons of very high quality. Teachers and other adults have excellent relationships with pupils and they manage behaviour very well. The curriculum is very good, enriched with a very good range of activities, stimulating pupils' interest, promoting their learning very effectively and contributing positively to their very good achievement. There are very good procedures for assessment, enabling teachers to track pupils' progress very effectively and to set targets for improvement, but pupils need a clearer indication of how they can further improve their work. Very good care and guidance ensure that pupils' personal needs are identified and met. Pupils' views are valued. The school's links with parents and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall **leadership and management are very good.** The headteacher provides very good leadership, with a clear vision for the further development of the school. There is very good teamwork, with the deputy and the administrative staff all providing very good support. The very strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils, regardless of their abilities or talents, is enabling all pupils to achieve very well. Very effective management systems ensure the school runs smoothly while continuing to develop and change. Subject leaders manage the development of their subjects effectively, but now need more time to contribute to monitoring and supporting the development of teaching. The governing body is very well led; governors fulfil all their legal responsibilities and contribute very effectively to the strategic management and further development of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school. They are very pleased with their children's progress; they are very supportive of their children's learning, which contributes most positively to their achievement. Parents are right to think that teaching is very good and that the school provides a most effective environment in which children can learn. Pupils also have very positive views about school. The vast majority enjoy coming to school, they feel happy and secure, enjoy the wide range of opportunities available to them and feel that their teachers help them to learn.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure greater continuity in children's learning across the Foundation Stage as a whole
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to work with the computers in all subjects
- Continue to pursue ways to improve attendance

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall pupils' achievement is very good. Standards on entry to the school are generally below those expected, although there is a wide spread of attainment. Learning is good and children achieve well, with the majority achieving the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. Learning is very good in Years 1 and 2 and pupils make very good progress, so by the time they leave the school standards in reading and writing are likely to be well above average and in mathematics and science above average. This represents very good achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning is good and children do well to attain the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception in all areas of learning
- Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2, with the high standards reported in the previous inspection being maintained
- Standards among pupils currently working towards the end of Year 2 are well above average in reading and writing; in mathematics and science they are above average
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve very well because they are so very well supported in lessons and in additional small group work
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and achieve very well

Commentary

1 Children enter the school with fairly wide-ranging attainment, although overall standards are generally below those expected. The good provision made for these children, in both reception classes, ensures that they make a good start to their time in school and enables them to make good progress in all areas of learning. As a result, the majority achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception, which represents good achievement. There is an appropriate emphasis on personal, social and emotional development in which teaching is particularly strong, and this contributes positively to the way children settle and supports their learning in other areas.

2 The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is very good. Very effective teaching and learning enable pupils to make very good progress. The results of national tests in 2004 indicate that pupils attained standards that were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with pupils in all other schools. These high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The picture is even more positive when results are compared with those of pupils in similar schools, with standards in reading, writing and mathematics in the highest five per cent nationally. Very thorough assessment procedures and the careful monitoring of standards ensure that pupils' specific learning needs are identified and very effective measures put in place to support their learning. This contributes very positively to the maintenance of high standards.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.2 (17.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	17.0 (16.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	17.7 (17.8)	16.2 (16.3)

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

3 The high standards recorded in recent statutory assessment are reflected in the findings of this inspection, which indicate that standards among pupils currently working towards the end of

Year 2 are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. In both ICT and religious education standards are in line with those expected of pupils their age. In history good teaching is helping pupils to attain higher than expected standards and although it was not possible to make a judgement about standards overall in other subjects, there were examples of higher than expected standards in pupils' art work on display and in their portfolios of work.

4 Pupils achieve very well in reading, with the vast majority making very good progress and reaching well above average standards by the time they leave the school. This is because teaching is very good and because pupils are interested in books and get good support from home. The recent focus on improving standards in writing has been very effective, with a significant improvement in standards over the last two years. Pupils' achievement is very good, with standards now well above those expected of pupils of this age

5 Pupils' learning is very good in mathematics and they make very good progress throughout the school, so standards are generally above average by the time they leave the school. This represents very good achievement. In science achievement is also very good, with pupils making very good progress to attain standards which are above average. Pupils' achievement in ICT is good. They make good progress in reaching standards broadly in line with those expected by the time they leave the school.

6 Pupils with English as an additional language attain standards commensurate with their abilities, particularly the higher attainers. They achieve very well. The most recent national test results indicate that a high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language reached the higher Level 3 in both English and mathematics. These pupils do so well because they are very well supported in lessons and, where appropriate, they receive very effective additional support for short periods in small groups.

7 Pupils with special educational needs make consistently very good progress throughout the school because of the very good support that they receive. Targets set for these pupils identify precisely what needs to be worked on next. The high level of inclusion for these pupils and those with English as an additional language is a major factor in their very good achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is below the national average for primary schools and is unsatisfactory. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Behaviour in class and around the school is very good. There are no recorded exclusions. Pupils' personal development is very good overall and is a clear strength of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' very high expectations and pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour in class and around the school produce an atmosphere most conducive to learning
- Excellent relationships among all pupils and adults contribute very positively to learning
- Pupils accept responsibilities enthusiastically and sensibly
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development and encourages them to become mature and responsible
- The attendance of a minority of pupils is well below average

Commentary

8 The school sets very high standards of conduct and behaviour and pupils respond well. Teachers are very good role models and have developed excellent relationships with pupils, showing mutual respect, reflected in the way that pupils work hard and try to please. Pupils show an ability to work well together in groups or pairs when asked and they co-operate well. There is very good use of 'talking partners' throughout the school, even in a reception class where children immediately formed pairs to discuss their given task in a way which was particularly good. Pupils show an interest in their lessons and concentrate very well on their work. They are happy to show

what they have done and confident to talk about it. These very positive attitudes have been maintained since the previous inspection. The very good behaviour seen in class extends into the playground. There is no evidence of any bullying, racial or other form of harassment; the school is a happy community where pupils want to learn.

9 The school's inclusive policies ensure all pupils are valued and are encouraged to express their views and to take part in all class activities. As a result pupils get on extremely well with each other; they listen well to the opinions of others and respect each others' background and personality. Such very positive attitudes ensure that all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, feel fully part of the school and are fully involved in all its activities.

10 The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils accept responsibilities sensibly and maturely. When asked to take on additional tasks such as message taking, acting as register monitors or holding doors open, the requests are cheerfully met. Older pupils are pleased to take on extra responsibilities, such as being 'playground buddies' or members of the school council. Both these extra tasks give pupils the opportunity to help others and there is a sense of pride in being trusted to do this.

11 The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, to which off-site visits, music, art and themed assemblies contribute positively. Additional voluntary activities, such as the 'Songbirds', also contribute positively to pupils' development, providing a good example of developing pupils' spirituality through music, when some 24 pupils come into school early to practise and clearly enjoy the opportunity to sing under professional guidance. The school uses its multi-cultural links well to ensure pupils have a very good appreciation of the faiths and beliefs of others. The very good social and moral characteristics developed through the school's ethos and teaching complement the overall personal development of pupils and ensure they have a good start on appreciating the responsibilities of living in a community.

12 Attendance is unsatisfactory; this is mainly because a minority of pupils take extended holidays during term time. Pupils are prompt to school. Significant hard work is done to improve overall attendance rates, with the school introducing several valuable initiatives such as weekly awards for the best-attending class and termly certificates for individual pupil performances. Parents are invited to all these presentation assemblies and encouraged to support their own children in raising the level of attendance achieved.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.0	School data	0.2
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education for all its pupils. This has improved since the previous inspection. The very good leadership and management of the headteacher ensure a very strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils and a firm focus on high standards. This underpins the very good teaching and learning. Assessment is good so teachers can track pupils' progress effectively. The curriculum is very good, meeting all pupils' needs very effectively, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. There are very good opportunities provided to extend and enrich the curriculum. The school provides high levels of care and guidance for all its pupils. There is a good partnership with parents and good links with the community and most other schools. The high quality of education provided by the school contributes most positively to pupils' very good achievement.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Assessment is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection and are now very good, contributing effectively to improving standards
- Teaching and learning are good overall in the reception classes; children quickly grow in confidence, learn to make choices and manage resources for themselves
- There is a firm focus on learning throughout the school; teachers plan a good variety of interesting and relevant learning activities, enabling pupils to make progress
- Overall assessment is good; very good procedures ensure pupils' progress is tracked effectively, but more could be done to help pupils understand how to improve
- Teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is very good
- Teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good

Commentary

13 Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection, when they were good; teaching and learning in this inspection were very good overall. Unlike previously, there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The table below indicates that most teaching seen during this inspection was at least good and that there was a high proportion of very good teaching. A detailed examination of pupils' work reinforces this view of teaching across the school. Parents also value the high quality of the teaching in the school. A very strong feature is the teachers' focus on pupils' learning and their determination to maintain high standards or improve them.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	11	9	4	0	0	0

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

14 Teaching and learning are good overall in the reception classes. Teachers plan a good range of relevant activities, which enable children to have opportunities to work on self-chosen tasks, to work with adult support on focused or directed activities and to learn in more formal whole-class activities. This enables teachers to work with different groups and individuals, according to the children's particular needs, including those with English as an additional language or special educational needs. Well-established routines and clear expectations enable children to settle quickly into the reception classes. They rapidly become confident and independent, able to choose from the wide range of activities available because they learn how to manage the classroom resources for themselves. Teachers are very good role models. The effective organisation of the various learning activities enables teachers to work with various groupings and they use the available space well. The provision for children's learning outdoors has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Underdeveloped liaison with the nursery school limits continuity in provision across the Foundation Stage as a whole.

15 Throughout the school there is a firm focus on extending pupils' learning. Teachers understand what pupils of different abilities need to learn next and they plan interesting, relevant and often imaginative learning activities that ensure pupils are interested, engaged and able to make progress. Throughout the school teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of their behaviour. This contributes effectively to their very good classroom management skills, which in turn have such a positive impact on pupils' very good attitudes to learning and their response in lessons. Teachers make learning objectives clear at the start of most of their lessons. They are skilful at assessing what pupils already know and understand, enabling

them to set tasks that are well matched to pupils' particular learning needs and their capabilities. In many of the lessons seen, teachers skilfully engaged pupils in discussion, with clearly focused questions and, at times, very good use of talking partners to help pupils think for themselves. Although interactive whiteboards had been installed in some classrooms for a very short time, teachers made very good use of them to enhance pupils' learning very effectively. However, teachers generally provide too few opportunities for pupils to work with the computers in all subjects.

16 Overall assessment is good. The school has very good systems and procedures for assessment. Regular assessments provide very good information with which the school can track pupils' progress very effectively. Detailed analysis of the outcomes of assessment informs target setting across the school and this serves to focus everyone's attention on learning and improving standards. Day-to-day assessment in lessons is very good. Teachers are good at posing questions to enable them to understand how well pupils are doing and to help them identify where pupils need more help or support. In many of the lessons seen, the plenary part of the lesson was used well to evaluate pupils' learning. In the best lessons teachers were able to indicate how pupils' learning would be moved on in the next lesson. Pupils' work is marked regularly, with teachers providing very positive and supportive comments, which are clearly encouraging and motivating. At times they also comment on the level of pupils' understanding, but generally they could usefully provide more indication of what pupils need to do to improve their work.

17 The teaching and learning of pupils with English as an additional language are very good. The use of individual targets, careful lesson planning and the setting of work at appropriate levels enable teachers to ensure that all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, receive appropriate work well matched to their capabilities. Teachers take great care to ensure that pupils understand instructions and learning objectives and to involve them fully in oral parts of lessons. Ongoing assessment ensures that teachers understand clearly how well pupils with English as an additional language are doing and enables them to provide appropriate support in lessons or additional support in small groups.

18 The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good, being based on careful analysis of what pupils need to do next to improve their skills. This helps them make very good progress. Teaching assistants provide very effective support because they know exactly what they are doing and provide feedback to teachers at the end of sessions so that future work can be adapted.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good curriculum for its pupils and there is very good enrichment through activities that extend pupils' experiences outside normal lessons. The school's accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is very good, with a wide variety of activities provided to enrich it
- Connections between subjects and the very good planning in Years 1 and 2 exploit links for learning and bring the curriculum alive
- Provision for children in the reception classes is very good, but provision across the Foundation Stage as a whole lacks cohesion and consistency
- The curriculum ensures that the needs of different groups are fully met, including those with special educational needs and higher attainers
- Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good
- Resources for learning are good, but the computers are not yet used well enough to support or extend pupils' learning in all subjects

Commentary

19 There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, in particular in planning in Years 1 and 2. A very good range of 'first hand' experiences help bring the curriculum to life, making

learning relevant and often exciting for pupils. Visits, to places such as local museums, enrich and extend pupils' learning very well. Visitors into school, such as theatre groups, storytellers, musicians, and local pastors and vicars, all enrich pupils' experiences very well. A variety of popular clubs in sport and music help to develop important skills.

20 The curriculum is evaluated regularly and systematically to assess its impact on pupils' learning; there is a clear framework for developing pupils' knowledge and understanding as they move through the school that has been well supported by the school's senior management team. Developing links between subjects are helping to make learning more relevant for pupils. Teachers make good opportunities to include aspects of literacy and numeracy in virtually all lessons. This means that basic skills are developed very well. As a result, pupils learn to express themselves clearly, using appropriate terms and styles; counting and calculating, as well as estimating and measuring, also feature prominently in lessons. Throughout the school there is also a particular emphasis on developing pupils' creativity. Pupils combine their art and design work very well in other subjects, for example, so that they can see that what they have learned is useful in other contexts. Such carefully planned links contribute very positively to pupils' achievement.

21 The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the reception classes are very good. Teachers provide a rich variety of experiences and ensure that children take part in a wide range of carefully planned and structured activities, which gives them a very good start to their time in the school. However, because links with the nursery school are underdeveloped, cohesion and continuity across the Foundation Stage as a whole is not as effective as it could be.

22 The curriculum meets the needs of different groups of pupils very well in almost all respects. The needs of the more able pupils are catered for very effectively through adaptations to planning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, firmly based on the assessment of their specific needs. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress towards the targets set for them because of the carefully focused teaching. Teaching assistants are very well trained and involved in planning so that they know how to support pupils' learning very effectively in lessons.

23 Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. These pupils are very well supported and enabled to fully access the curriculum. The careful attention given to all pupils' needs ensures that their various cultural and religious backgrounds are fully reflected in the school curriculum. There is a good range of books to reflect cultural diversity, for example, and the festivals of different religions are included in celebrations over the course of the year. Parents from different cultural backgrounds are encouraged to visit the school to talk about their customs and practices, adding effectively to the richness of experience for all pupils.

24 The staff are well trained; numbers of support staff have been effectively increased since the previous inspection and now play a full part in promoting pupils' learning. There are good resources to support teaching and learning in all subjects. The library is very well stocked and pupils know how to use it. Although teachers use their interactive whiteboards effectively, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped overall, with the computers in classrooms not used well enough to help pupils extend and develop what they are doing. Pupils have plenty of room for practical activities in classrooms and, outside, the outdoor play area for children in the reception classes is very well equipped and used very imaginatively.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good care for all its pupils. Relationships are excellent and very good support, advice and guidance are provided, based on teachers' monitoring of pupils' academic and personal progress. The school has very good arrangements for seeking pupils' views and acting upon them to enable pupils to influence school improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a systematic and thorough approach to all aspects of welfare, which ensures pupils can work and play in a safe environment
- Very good relationships between pupils and staff give pupils confidence to approach an adult for advice or guidance
- Effective assessment of pupils' learning enables teachers to identify and meet pupils' specific needs as they move through the school
- The needs of pupils with English as an additional language are effectively identified and met
- Good arrangements for obtaining and acting on their views and suggestions give pupils an effective voice in school improvement

Commentary

25 This is a very caring school. The staff and governing body work well together to ensure a high level of care is provided for all pupils. Those with special education needs are particularly well cared for and supported. Pupils are carefully supervised throughout the school day and at the end of the day there are effective arrangements to ensure that pupils are met by known parents or carers before leaving the secure play area or the classroom. The required health and safety inspections and equipment tests are carried out and regular fire drills are held. The governing body is actively involved in the termly health and safety inspections and reports. Risk assessments for both off and on-site activities are prepared and evaluated. First aid arrangements are good. Medicines are properly controlled and all staff have appropriate child protection training that includes Internet safety procedures.

26 Teachers know their pupils as individuals with individual needs. There is a high level of mutual respect among pupils and staff. As a result, pupils have the trust and confidence necessary to enable them to approach their teachers for help and advice if they are worried or concerned. Teachers continually evaluate their pupils' progress and achievement and also assess their personal development effectively. This ensures that the advice and support offered are both appropriate and relevant to pupils' specific needs. Initial assessment, as children enter the school, enables teachers to identify their particular needs and this helps them to settle in quickly and contributes to the good early progress they make. The continuous assessment that follows throughout Years 1 and 2 ensures that pupils' needs remain the focus for teachers' planning and also contributes to the continuity in learning which makes the transfer to the junior school a smooth one.

27 Pupils with English as an additional language are effectively assessed on entry and, where appropriate, outside help is engaged to ensure that pupils' needs are being met. Funding for additional support for these pupils is used productively, to support them working in their classes or separately in small groups. This support is very effective and contributes to the very good progress these pupils make. Pupils are encouraged to talk, both in lessons and in small groups, and teachers are skilled in helping pupils to extend what they wish to say.

28 The school consults pupils regularly. Year 1 pupils are asked to name their likes and dislikes by indicating levels of satisfaction using 'happy' or 'unhappy' face symbols and 'show me' tags. Year 2 pupils complete a questionnaire to indicate their personal views of the school and how they feel it could be improved. Such effective consultation has led to change, including the revision of playtimes and play activities, lunchtime arrangements and the issue of fruit as part of the Healthy Eating project, for example. In addition, teachers use class discussion sessions, or circle time¹, to encourage pupils to talk about problems and how they may be resolved. The playground buddies contribute effectively to the resolution of arguments. The best example of consultation, however, is through the school council. The elected members of the council bring matters of concern or suggestions for improvement to the attention of the school's senior management team for discussion and decision. Recent changes implemented include the provision of new playground markings, fresh flowers in school and review of the school rules. All this ensures that, despite their age, pupils have an effective voice in this school.

¹ Circle time – is an opportunity for the whole class to discuss and reflect on a range of issues, often related to pupils' personal and social development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and encourages their involvement in the work of the school. The school has established good links with the community and uses them productively to enhance the curriculum. There are good links with some other schools and colleges and these are used well to contribute to learning, but links with the nursery school are underdeveloped.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's positive approach to encouraging parents to participate in their children's learning contributes to the quality of education provided
- Parents provide valuable support in classrooms, including help with translation
- There are very good links with parents of pupils with English as an additional language
- Good links with the local community support teaching and learning effectively
- Links with most other schools are used well to support staff development and pupils' learning

Commentary

29 The school actively seeks and welcomes parents' interest and support in improving the quality of their children's education. Parents value the provision of details about what will be taught each term and information on how they can help. Valuable guidance is given on homework and courses have been offered for improving parents' literacy, numeracy and computing skills. Home packs for weekend mathematics games and story sacks are provided, successfully encouraging parents to share such activities with their children. Good communication between home and school has been made a priority. There is good consultation with parents to discover their views about the school and any suggestions they may have on school improvement.

30 There are regular parent helpers in class; two parents provide very valuable help with language translation. Other parents come in to talk to pupils about the Muslim faith, demonstrate needlework and computer skills and one runs the school's gardening club. The Parent-Teacher Association has a good number of parent members on the committee. The group is very active and makes a valuable contribution to school funds, enabling the school to provide more and better resources for teaching and learning.

31 There are very good links with parents and the community for pupils with English as an additional language. Parents from different cultural backgrounds are encouraged to participate fully in the life of the school and minority groups are well represented on the governing body. A visiting Urdu-speaking education welfare officer plays a very useful role in making home visits with regard to attendance issues.

32 The school has established a good range and variety of links within the local community. Off-site visits, such as to the children's theatre and local superstores, are used well to support the curriculum and enhance learning. Pupils are also given opportunities to extend their learning through visits to local museums and parkland settings; the outdoor education centre is particularly popular. Visitors coming into school include a travelling science exhibition, professional musicians and a puppet theatre. Visitors to the school are also used well to provide advice and guidance on personal safety issues.

33 The school has good links with most other schools and colleges. Where these links are effective, they provide good opportunities for staff development through sharing common problems, best practice and joint training. The good link with the junior school helps smooth the transfer of Year 2 pupils, with useful staff exchange visits and information sharing meetings. Pupils are provided with a valuable half-day session when they can meet their new classmates and join in sample lessons or activities. The school's links with the nursery school are not so well developed however, with the result that children's learning across the Foundation Stage as a whole is not as continuous as it could be. Good links with the local secondary schools and colleges provide good opportunities for students' work experience or practical classroom teaching experience. The additional adult help in classrooms is used well to support pupils' learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by her deputy. The leadership of other key staff is good. The governance of the school is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership, ensuring that the school continues to develop and improve; there is a firm focus on maintaining high standards
- Despite severe constraints the management of the continued development of the school has been very good
- Although their role has been improved since the previous inspection, subject leaders could usefully contribute more to monitoring and supporting the further development of teaching
- School improvement planning is firmly based on the monitoring and evaluation of existing provision
- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, because they are well informed; they play a significant role in supporting school improvement

Commentary

34 The high quality of leadership and management of the school has been maintained since the previous inspection. The headteacher's very good leadership has ensured that the school has not stood still and that there have been significant improvements in some key areas of its provision. All the issues for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. Teaching has also been improved overall and this is contributing positively to maintenance of high standards, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. While subject leaders have become more effective in their roles, particularly in monitoring pupils' work and tracking their progress, they could do more to support the headteacher in monitoring and supporting the further development of teaching.

35 Despite the falling number of pupils on roll and the need to keep careful control of a limited budget, the school is providing a very good quality of education. Pupils consistently achieve well as they move through the school and by the end of Year 2 have made very good progress in relation to their attainment on entry. Key to this success is the inspirational leadership and very good management skills of the headteacher together with very strong and effective support from the deputy head and governing body. The school has managed to keep pace with change, such as the need to increase ICT resources. Through carefully considered strategies, the school has managed to maintain single age classes in difficult circumstances. School self-evaluation is firmly embedded, informing development planning very effectively. Good progress has been made in implementing arrangements for workforce reform. There is effective teamwork at all levels with a flexible senior management team drawing on skills of different leaders appropriate to the issues being addressed. Teachers work well together across year groups and the headteacher has a clear vision for the school's future including effective arrangements for the deployment of staff.

36 There is very good leadership and management in all aspects of the school's work including provision for special educational needs and for pupils with English as an additional language. There is very effective monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and subject leaders are more effective in their roles than at the time of the previous inspection. However, budgetary constraints limit opportunities for subject leaders to directly monitor teaching in other classes.

37 School improvement planning is firmly embedded in the monitoring of teaching and learning, analysis of the results of assessment, action plan reviews and in a two-year cycle of reviews of policies and schemes of work. The process is closely linked with ongoing self-evaluation and is closely linked to professional development and the performance of all staff. As a result strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified, matched to appropriate action plans and linked to the school budget. Governors as well as staff play a significant role at every stage of the forward planning process so that effective actions are taken to address any issues arising. There is careful and

thorough monitoring of pupil performance data and good support from the local education authority in data analysis. Governors are well informed about pupil performance and play a significant role in supporting the setting of school targets.

38 Governors, particularly the chair of governors, have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are actively involved in the school improvement process. Governors are supportive of the headteacher and set appropriate and challenging targets for school improvement. The governors have been proactive on a number of issues including maintaining single age classes and investigating strategies for improving attendance. The governors are actively involved in maintaining and improving community links and are making every effort to address the issue of falling rolls.

39 Financial management is very good and ensures good value for money when new resources are required. The school has done well to implement a plan for interactive whiteboards in all classes for the coming year and in maintaining current staffing levels. Future plans are realistic in their support for strategies to maintain the highest possible educational standards for all pupils.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	465 913
Total expenditure	468 446
Expenditure per pupil	3165

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	9615
Balance carried forward to the next	7082

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The overall quality of provision in the reception classes is **good**.

The provision for children's learning in both reception classes is good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, particularly improving the outdoor area. Management is effective and all staff work well together to ensure the learning and well-being of the children. When they begin in the reception classes, most children have below average knowledge and skills for their age. Achievement is good and all children make good progress. The needs of children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are fully met and they are fully included. Most children will achieve the levels expected of them by the end of the reception classes, but a few will still be working within the early learning goals set for them in their early years curriculum.

Teaching is good with particular strengths in personal and social education. The curriculum is planned with great care to provide a wide range of stimulating and challenging activities in both reception classes, which are matched accurately to all the children's needs. However, the school's insufficiently well-developed links with the neighbouring nursery school inhibits opportunities for planning the curriculum more coherently across the Foundation Stage as a whole. Assessment procedures are thorough and used well to build up an accurate and informative profile of each child's achievements.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships throughout the Foundation Stage are very positive
- Adults provide very good role models
- Children have very good opportunities to develop independence

Commentary

40 Children achieve very well because they settle into school life rapidly. Well-established routines and clear expectations of staff provide stability and security for them. As a result of the very good teaching, most children are on track to achieve the goals set for them in this area of learning by the time they start in Year 1. They rapidly gain in confidence and feel comfortable in expressing their ideas and feelings. Children know that they must listen when someone is speaking. The adults are very good role models, listening closely to what young children have to say and showing that their contributions are valued. Children know and respect classroom rules and behave very well. As they work and play together children acquire a wide range of skills and begin to take responsibility for their own actions. They develop initiative and independence in selecting resources, tidying away and making choices in their work.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing are introduced in exciting ways so that children achieve good standards in communication, language and literacy

Commentary

41 Teaching and learning are good so children achieve well. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception classes. A few children will still be working within the early learning goals. Teaching of such good quality means that even the youngest children begin to offer simple contributions to discussions or during play. In almost every activity teachers ask questions and continually emphasise words and names. Staff encourage children to speak clearly, and employ their own very good use of language to help children to broaden their vocabulary. For example, when reading *Rosie's Walk*, the teacher encouraged children to read the book together, developing early reading skills well. The good use of positional language developed mathematical skills well and linked learning together. The very good use of puppets brought the story alive and encouraged children to re-tell the story using their role-play skills.

42 Writing skills are taught carefully and systematically so that children learn to form letters correctly. Writing skills progress very well because teachers very effective use of assessment to set individual targets for children to achieve. Children often write in their play activities, for example when writing a place card for the 'Wedding Reception'. As a result, by the end of the reception year, some children can write simple sentences without help. Creative role-play is used very well to develop speech. Adults join in the play and encourage imaginative language, for example when playing in the 'Flower Shop'. There is a good range of books for children to enjoy and share with others and with adults. Consequently, children learn to enjoy books and handle them with care.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide a wide range of activities to develop and strengthen children's knowledge of number
- Children learn to use mathematical vocabulary very quickly

Commentary

43 Teaching and learning are good, enabling children to make rapid progress and achieve well. Most children are on course to achieve the goals set for them by the end of the year. Teachers develop children's understanding of number through carefully planned practical activities that are often linked to other areas of learning. For example, children begin to use appropriate language such as 'more than', 'before' and 'after' as they count numbers together and solve simple number problems. They learn to estimate heavy and light as they investigate weighing different things. Good use of discussion whilst reading *Debs' Book* helps children gain an understanding of what they are doing. Good use of positional language when reading the story of *Rosie's Walk* developed understanding of, for example, over, under, and in.

44 Teachers, teaching assistants and helpers use every opportunity to reinforce mathematical understanding and language through stories, rhymes, songs, games and imaginative play. Good use is made of computers to promote children's mathematical development. Children enjoy counting and identifying numbers using familiar programs, enabling them to make good progress in recognising and eventually combining numbers.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of activities gives children a very good awareness of the world around them

Commentary

45 Achievement is very good; most children make very good progress and are on course to reach the goals expected of them nationally by the end of the year. Children enjoy using their senses as they taste, smell and feel different foods they are preparing for the 'Wedding Reception'. Children busily decorate small cakes with brightly coloured hundreds and thousands and chocolate strands. Good use is made of language to describe what they are doing and what happens at a wedding reception.

46 Teachers' plan exciting experiences for children to take part in, such as the carefully planned 'Special Wedding Ceremony', to celebrate learning about different places of worship and to reinforce children's understanding that special places are special for different people. Adults used a very good range of language to help children to act out their parts: musicians played, the congregation sang as the bride, groom, bridesmaids, including two in traditional Asian dress, and pages walked across the carpet. The Vicar took the service and everyone took part in the role-play. The atmosphere was excellent as teachers, assistants and helpers all joined in. Photographs were taken and the wedding party retired to take part in the reception. They chose their named plate, and the food they would like to eat. A place card written previously showed them where to sit to engage in the celebrations. Such special occasions make learning very exciting; children were fully engrossed in this one.

47 Children's understanding of the passage of time and of how things change, was greatly enhanced as they sorted old and new wedding photographs. Children are given many opportunities to play with a range of small world toys and building bricks. Skills in ICT are reinforced effectively as children use prepared programs on the classroom computer. Teachers frequently use the computers in the classroom, to develop children's mouse and keyboard skills. Children are introduced well to different cultures and faiths.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the outdoor learning area to enable children to move with confidence and to show a developing awareness of space
- Their manipulative skills for handling pencils and paintbrushes are developing well

Commentary

48 Children achieve very well in this area of learning because of the good teaching they receive. They are on course to achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave reception. They have lots of opportunities to cut materials using different tools, and to join these in different ways, for example when they make collages of animals on the farm and flowers in the shop. Control over paintbrushes and pencils develops well through good guidance from adults. In the spacious outdoor area, children develop skills as they explore what their bodies can do as they run, jump, hop

and skip and travel in different ways, in care and safety for each other. They develop their control skills well as they travel with differently sized balls, practising their kicking skills.

49 Children happily engage in role-play as they go camping at the 'Farm' or when playing in the 'Flower Shop'. The outside area is used imaginatively each morning as children are given an opportunity to exercise after collective worship, before continuing with their work in their classroom. This helps develop an understanding that a healthy body needs regular exercise.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given lots of opportunities to express their ideas through experimenting with a good range of media

Commentary

50 Children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area of development by the time they leave reception because staff promote children's creativity very well. Their achievement is good. Children talk to each other and use their manipulative skills well as they create a party hat using brightly coloured papers, feathers and sequins. They write their name onto a place card so that they know where to sit at the reception. Staff are careful to give children many opportunities that are equally appealing to boys and girls, encouraging children to play imaginatively and co-operatively. Children join in enthusiastically with traditional rhymes and songs with actions. They enjoy listening to music and respond well to the different moods it creates. This was seen in a very good music lesson where children confidently joined in singing their favourite songs and rhymes, putting actions to the words and playing untuned percussion instruments very well as an accompaniment to the singing.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, display very good subject knowledge and use appropriate vocabulary
- There are consistently high standards of target setting and marking throughout the school
- There is very good planning, preparation and classroom management in most lessons
- There is very good involvement of all pupils in oral parts of lessons
- Evidence of the use of ICT by pupils is limited

Commentary

51 The most recent national tests in reading and writing indicate that standards were well above the national average and very high compared to those of similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that among pupils currently working towards the end of Year 2, standards in writing are well above those normally expected and standards in reading and speaking listening are above. This reflects the school's recent focus on raising standards in writing. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when standards in reading and speaking and listening were above those normally expected, but writing was in line. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve very well in English.

This is a result of very good inclusion by which all pupils are encouraged and helped to participate fully in all parts of lessons.

52 Teaching in English is very good overall, with some lessons of very high quality. An excellent lesson with Year 2 pupils was observed, for example, in which the use of a simulated telephone call from a local newspaper had a significant and most positive impact on pupils' enthusiasm, their learning and the very good progress they made as a result. Most lessons are very well planned and organised and teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers use high levels of vocabulary as a matter of course. As a result pupils reciprocate by using key words linked to the subject matter well. Pupils in Year 2 are familiar with words such as *fiction*, *text*, *index* and *glossary* and use these naturally in their classroom dialogue. Teachers set appropriate individual and group targets and refer to these as they mark pupils' books; good regular checks on these targets enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress effectively. As a result pupils move on a step at a time and very good learning takes place. There is very good engagement of all pupils in oral parts of lessons and generally a good pace. Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching and show keen interest in the pupils' responses. As a result all pupils feel valued and respond with confidence. There is good planning across the year group teams and there are some good examples of the setting of work matched to different levels of attainment. Instructions are delivered clearly and pupils are secure in knowing what is expected of them. As a result they settle quickly to their work. This has a positive effect on standards.

53 Pupils' writing is of a consistently very high standard with a considerable number of pupils attaining higher levels. These include a proportionate number of pupils with English as an additional language. Much of the handwriting is joined, fluent and well formed. Pupils show a clear understanding of grammatical structure with most pupils in Year 2 using full stops and capital letters correctly and higher attainers additionally using paragraphs, speech marks and commas. Spelling is of a high standard although there is some misspelling of polysyllabic words by high attainers. There is a wide range of writing opportunities in different genres with writing frames appropriately used. Opportunities for word processing are, however, limited. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively in developing pupils' cursive script and teachers use these appropriately in the teaching of all aspects of English. Written work is well set out and presented. Pupils show a pride in their achievements and therefore strive to do well.

54 Reading standards are above average. Most pupils have a good range of their own material at home and are beginning to be selective about the types of material they read. Some pupils with English as an additional language struggle with more difficult words. However, they often self-correct and show a good understanding of the text. This is a reflection of the support given at home. There are very good strategies for the teaching of reading with a range of guided readers. Groups of pupils take the same reading book home so they are able to share information about what they have read with their group. Pupils enjoy reading and most are equally happy with fiction and non-fiction material. Pupils who were heard to read had been allocated material at a suitably challenging level to take their learning forward.

55 There are good speaking and listening opportunities in lessons and assemblies and standards are above average. All pupils are encouraged to participate in oral parts of lessons and good probing questioning helps them to extend what they wish to say. Other pupils are attentive listeners. The use of talk partners in lessons contributes to the high standards. Teachers generally correct grammatical errors when pupils are responding to questions. This has a positive impact on learning.

56 The leadership and management of English are very good. The co-ordinator has a thorough knowledge of her subject and is an enthusiastic and very effective role model. There is very good tracking of pupils' progress and good monitoring of teachers' planning and work in pupils' books. However, opportunities for the monitoring of classroom teaching are limited and this sometimes limits the effective development of a consistent approach to new strategies.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

57 There are very good examples of writing across the curriculum ranging from the labelling of diagrams to report, diary and narrative writing. Good examples of literacy used in other subjects were seen in both Years 1 and 2 in geography, history, religious education, science and art. The display of pupils' responses to an interactive display in Year 1 is an example of good practice.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well with standards above average by the end of Year 2
- Pupils do very well in number, with very good opportunities to reinforce counting and calculation skills; their use of a variety of addition and subtraction strategies is good
- The mathematics curriculum is broad, so pupils make very good progress in all areas of the subject
- Teaching is very good, which contributes most positively to the very good progress pupils make
- Very good leadership and management ensure there is a firm focus on maintaining high standards and that provision continues to improve
- Pupils have very good opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, but make too little use of the computers to support their learning

Commentary

58 Pupils achieve very well in mathematics, making very good progress and reaching above average standards by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2. Although there is a fairly wide spread of capability in mathematics, the very good teaching they receive enables the vast majority of pupils to reach their full potential.

59 The results of statutory assessment in 2004 indicate that standards were well above average compared with those achieved by pupils in all other schools at the end of Year 2; in comparison with those achieved in similar schools, results were among the highest five per cent. This indicates that the high standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained.

60 Throughout the school pupils are making very good progress in their understanding of number. In both Year 1 and Year 2 very good opportunities are provided to reinforce pupils' counting skills, with number squares, number lines and sequences used effectively to help them count and order numbers. In Year 1 pupils add on in twos and fives, they master simple addition and subtraction facts to 20 and they develop understanding of place value in tens and units. Pupils extend their skills of calculation well in all the four rules; they successfully learn useful strategies that support their calculations. In Year 2, for example, pupils use number lines to help them with both addition and subtraction and 'partitioning' helps them to understand addition of larger numbers. There is a clear emphasis on ensuring pupils understand appropriate mathematical terms such as *multiple*, *difference* and *total*. At times word problems are used well to extend pupils' understanding, with totals to be found in money problems or the amount of change to be given. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils are able to double or halve and to calculate a half or a quarter of simple numbers.

61 The mathematics curriculum is fully covered so pupils are also able to make very good progress in other areas. By the end of Year 2 pupils know and can name a range of regular shapes, including *hexagon* and *rhombus* and they can sort them by their properties. They can indicate direction on a grid and record position and describe turns. Pupils build on their early work on measure in Year 1, where they compare 'more than' and 'less than' in length, mass and capacity. By the end of Year 2 they can measure accurately in centimetres, as they draw a yacht for example, and record mass in grams and kilograms. In extending their understanding of data-handling, pupils learn to record information on charts and graphs from which, by Year 2, they can derive a range of information.

62 Teaching is very good. Teachers have good skills in leading the introductory oral-mental mathematics activities, which are sometimes imaginative in the use of the interactive whiteboards and always fully engage pupils' thinking and secure their involvement. In the best lessons, teachers were able to match the various challenges to the capabilities of different groups in the class. The organisation of main activities in lessons is very good. Teachers make sure that the various

activities provided are well matched to pupils' capabilities, ensuring that different groups in the class are both effectively challenged and well supported. This has a most positive impact on the progress that all pupils make. Teachers are skilled at intervening as pupils work on the various tasks set and they use questions purposefully to check understanding or provide further challenge.

63 Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and she uses this very effectively to evaluate provision. She is good at identifying priorities for improvement because her self-evaluation is thoughtful, detailed and effective. This is ensuring that there is a firm focus on raising standards. The co-ordinator is aware of overall standards because she has developed an appropriate tracking system and monitors the outcomes of assessment carefully. The involvement of the whole staff in the examination of all pupils' work is a very good strategy for ensuring consistency in approach across the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64 Pupils have very good opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, helping them to develop an understanding of their practical application. They make very good use of their knowledge of data handling to record and present the outcomes of work in science, and measuring skills are used accurately in design and technology. In a very good piece of work, pupils used symmetrical paper patterns as they made coats in design and technology. Such effective use of their mathematical skills contributes very well to their progress in these other subjects. Although teachers make very good use of ICT to support their teaching, pupils have too few opportunities to use computers to support their learning in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in science is very good, with standards above average by the time they leave the school
- The science curriculum is rich and there is a strong focus on developing pupils' skills of investigation
- The practical approach to extending pupils' understanding of scientific concepts is very good
- Effective leadership and management of the subject are ensuring the whole school focuses on pupils' learning and the continual improvement in provision

Commentary

65 Pupils achieve very well and standards are currently above average in all areas of science. Pupils' skills of investigation are well developed. Pupils make very good progress as they move through the school. This reflects the most recent results of teacher assessment, which in 2004 showed that overall standards at the end of Year 2 were high, even higher than the good standards reported in the previous inspection.

66 It was possible to observe only one lesson during the inspection, but there was sufficient other evidence in pupils' completed work, in that on display and in teachers' plans to indicate that overall provision is very good. The science curriculum is rich and provides pupils with a wide range of relevant learning opportunities in each of the units of work planned. This contributes positively to the progress pupils make in all areas of science. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' skills of investigation. In Year 1 pupils are introduced to a valuable series of questions to introduce them to the essential elements of scientific investigation. This develops effectively through Year 2, so pupils make good progress in their understanding of the place of prediction, observation and conclusion, and the significance of fair testing.

67 In the very good lesson seen with Year 1 pupils, the teacher made very good use of a range of strategies to ensure that pupils' learning was productive. There was good discussion, with the

whole class focusing on the different materials used in making a push-chair. Pupils recognised most of the materials used and when challenged could discuss the reasons why they were used, drawing on their understanding of the properties of the materials in terms of strength, comfort and waterproofing. Good links had been made with pupils' work in literacy, on diagrams and labels. The teacher rounded the lesson off very well with an introduction to the investigation pupils would undertake in the next session, challenging them to test out materials for a container in which to post an egg. This was very effective in engaging pupils' thinking and they ended the lesson excited about what they were going to do next. Such a practical approach is contributing most positively to helping pupils understand scientific concepts.

68 The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator ensures there is appropriate balance in the science curriculum because she monitors planning. The whole staff' scrutinies of all pupils' science work are very effective in focusing everyone's attention on standards and on ensuring appropriate continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The involvement of all staff in this way is contributing to the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation procedures. A positive outcome of such evaluation has been the identification of specific learning objectives for each unit of work, which are a focus for assessment, marking and recording progress. The use of the assessment profile to track progress is good. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, including improved standards, although pupils still have too few opportunities to use the computers to support their work in science.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well and make good progress, although limited opportunities are made to stretch the higher attainers
- Teaching is good; teachers' marking is effective in helping pupils move onto the next stage in their learning
- The school uses its available resources well; good leadership and management are ensuring the gradual expansion of ICT resources
- Pupils have too few opportunities to work with the computers in all subjects

Commentary

69 It was possible to see only one lesson in ICT during the inspection, so judgements about overall standards and teaching are therefore based on work seen during this lesson together with work in pupils' books and around the school and through discussion with adults and pupils. This indicates that standards are in line with those normally expected of pupils this age. Work in pupils' books shows that at all levels of capability pupils achieve well and make good progress. However, the range of Level 3 work accessed by higher attainers is limited. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well, because they are well supported by adults in lessons.

70 In Year 1 almost all pupils are able to select pictures, move them around the screen and change their size. They can select and use text from word banks, use simple tools in a painting package and produce simple graphs and pictograms. By Year 2 pupils are able to save and open files, to edit text by deleting and inserting and to create and label pictures and diagrams. They can use control technology appropriately to create patterns and use CD-ROMs to find information. During the inspection practical activity by pupils in ICT was very limited.

71 Teaching is good overall. Pupils' books are well organised and clearly show good progression in the development of specific skills. Learning objectives are printed and clearly displayed in workbooks; teachers refer to these effectively during lessons. Teachers' marking is good and shows clearly that pupils are enabled to move on to the next stage of learning. Work for lower attainers is suitably modified to match these pupils' particular needs. In the one lesson seen,

enthusiastic teaching kept the pupils fully engaged throughout. The lesson was very well planned. There was very good pace and there were high expectations of behaviour and understanding. The pupils responded with enthusiasm and interest throughout, and as a result learning was very good. A minor problem with the laptop computer and the late entry of some pupils after another activity were handled extremely well so the pace of the lesson was not interrupted.

72 Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection as the school has kept pace with other similar schools in installing new hardware and ensuring appropriate staff training opportunities. Resources are satisfactory, but the lack of a computer suite places some constraints on learning, making whole-class teaching of new skills difficult for example, because pupils have to access classroom computers on a rota basis. A number of initiatives are at an early stage of implementation following the recent return of the co-ordinator. These include the updating of a portfolio of work and the half-termly review of work samples and book scans. Clear and appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified and a suitable action plan informs this development work. The ICT budget plan includes a useful component for the release of the co-ordinator to support other staff. Half the classrooms have interactive whiteboards, which are well used to support pupils' learning, and all other classes are scheduled to receive interactive whiteboards in the next 12 months. This reflects good budgetary planning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73 At times ICT is used to support teaching and learning effectively in a range of subjects across the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2 are using CD-ROMs to find historical information, for example, and there is evidence in pupils' books of computer-generated charts and diagrams in geography and science. In Year 2, pupils use the interactive whiteboards in developing handwriting skills and to register themselves present as they arrive each morning. Overall, however, pupils have too few opportunities to work with the computers in all subjects.

HUMANITIES

74 It was not possible to observe any lessons in **geography** during the inspection. However, displays of pupils' work and completed work in their books indicate that a suitable range of topics is covered. The standard of work seen in pupils' books is in line with that normally expected and pupils of all capabilities, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. There is evidence that teachers plan together in year groups and homework is used appropriately. In Year 1 pupils learn to follow simple plans and can produce simple maps and plans with keys. They can represent some information graphically using ICT effectively. In Year 2 pupils have studied their own environment and have compared and contrasted the local area with other localities. They have studied more complex maps with keys and are able to recognise features such as mountains, towns, rivers and lakes. The school and local area are appropriately used to support the geography curriculum.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and standards are higher than expected by the end of Year 2
- A good range of interesting topics enables teachers to extend pupils' knowledge and skills effectively
- Teachers make very good use of a range of sources to promote pupils' learning
- The use of specific key questions is very good, stimulating pupils' curiosity, focusing their work and providing the starting point for the development of their skills of enquiry

Commentary

75 Good teaching and learning in history are enabling pupils to reach higher than expected standards by the end of Year 2. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the variety of historical topics they study and their skills of historical enquiry, enabling them to achieve well. Good leadership and management have contributed positively to the significant improvement since the previous inspection, ensuring that standards are now better and teaching is good.

76 In Years 1 and 2 pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the past through stories of famous men and women, such as Guy Fawkes and Grace Darling and about significant events such as the Great Fire of London. They study a good range of topics which enables them to extend their understanding of change over time. In their study of transport, for example, they compare bicycles and in their work on homes they study similarities and differences in lighting, washing and bathing and how facilities for these have changed. This work is well supported with appropriate artefacts and this helps pupils develop understanding of chronology, as they put washing implements in order of age, for example, after studying how familiar objects have changed over time. The ordering of events on simple timelines also helps develop pupils' understanding of chronology.

77 Teaching is good. Teachers make very good use of a variety of sources to extend pupils' understanding, such as pictures and photographs, visits to historical sites and museums as well as artefacts. A very good lesson with pupils in Year 2 revealed the range of sources they had used in their local history work on canals. These included a visit to Etruria museum and a talk with the curator, a walk on the towpath of the nearby canal and pictures and photographs from the Internet. These sources had enabled pupils to identify some key questions to pose about different aspects of the topic. The teacher had managed the pupils' research well, so that small groups were able to present the outcomes confidently to the rest of the class. One group presented information successfully about barges, horses and 'legging' through tunnels and bridges and there were good links with work in science and design and technology as they described how the barge was pulled. The teacher skilfully involved all the pupils in the class in thinking about the group's presentation by discussing how to evaluate what was said and providing a number of focusing questions to structure their thinking. This ensured that pupils' learning was very good.

78 This approach is very successful in helping teachers emphasise the importance of pupils' thinking. The use of local history topics makes history relevant as well as interesting. Teachers are skilful at posing questions to stimulate interest and curiosity and to help pupils extend their thinking. The key questions designed to focus pupils' own research into different aspects of a topic are very good. Teachers accept pupils' ideas and build on them effectively, and they provide very good opportunities for pupils to pose their own questions and present the outcomes of their own research to the class.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are effective links with other subjects
- While pupils learn about a good range of faiths, they do not benefit from visiting different places of worship

Commentary

79 Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and with those seen in most schools by the end of Year 2. A judgement about standards in the last report was not made and so cannot be compared. Achievement is good. No lessons were seen and so no judgement is made on teaching.

80 Scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils indicate that pupils learn about the beliefs of Christianity and other world faiths as required by the current agreed syllabus. Lessons are enriched by visiting representatives of the local churches and of other faiths. Displays around the school show that the school confirms the respect that the school community has for the values and beliefs of others and its strong commitment to inclusive values. Religious education, in particular in assemblies, makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

81 Effective links with other subjects enhance and enrich pupils' learning. In Year 2, for example, pupils had carefully linked religious education with their sculpture work, imprinting signs and symbols into their sculpted creations such as a 'metal' log with the Star of David, the Christian cross and the symbols for Islam. Pupils were able to talk in depth about the signs and symbols and showed a good understanding of their learning.

82 Leadership and management are satisfactory and ensure that the full curriculum is covered and supported by a good range of visitors. A good start has been made to the development of a curriculum file for the subject to support teaching and learning. Pupils' learning about a good range of other faiths and the differences and connections between them is effectively supported with visits to school from people of these other faiths. However, opportunities are missed to extend pupils' understanding because they only visit Christian places of worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

83 It was not possible to observe any lessons in art and design or design and technology, only one in music and two in physical education during the inspection. Consequently there was insufficient evidence to support a judgement about provision in these subjects.

84 Pupils' portfolios of previous work in art and design, and their work currently on display, suggests that standards are higher than those expected by the end of Year 2. This indicates that pupils achieve well. Pupils' artwork is informed by the frequent studies of famous artists, enabling them to learn some of the techniques used and to incorporate these effectively in their own work. This is successful, and many pupils produce work of a very high quality. It is evident that teachers build up skills, knowledge and understanding in a consistent way.

85 There is a very good variety of artwork undertaken, including collage, printmaking and sculpture. A particularly good example of this was seen in a sculpture exhibition held by pupils in Year 2. Pupils had studied the sculptors Andy Goldsworthy and Wendy Taylor. Very effective links were made with different religions, for example Judaism, Islam and Christianity, as pupils imprinted signs and symbols of these faiths to enhance their chosen sculptures.

86 ICT is used very effectively to produce evaluation of their work. Pupils confidently use the interactive whiteboards to illustrate their evaluations of their work and use the Internet for research purposes. Pupils examined the artists' work before deciding on their own sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy or Wendy Taylor. They use the digital camera well to take photographs of the school grounds where they think sculpture would improve the environment. The images are projected onto the computer screen and pupils use graphics to show how the area would look if it had a sculpture. Pupils also develop a deeper understanding through the study of art from other cultures, as when they constructed mosaics of fish, for example, or imprinted religious symbols from Islam, Judaism and Christianity into their sculptures. The art curriculum is enriched by visits to local museums and galleries, where pupils recently took part in an animal mask-making workshop for example.

87 The quality of the displays of completed work is impressive, giving real value and esteem to pupils' artwork whilst also creating a vibrant working environment. It is obvious from the quality and finish of displayed work that teachers have high expectations of pupils' standards of presentation, and that pupils persevere for long periods of time to achieve this finish.

88 In **design and technology**, pupils in all year groups design and make things using a good range of materials and techniques. Pupils cover an impressive amount of work and all aspects of the design process are in place. A very positive feature is the way that teachers interlink subjects.

For example, pupils use their measuring skills as they make different vehicles. They use the digital camera to record their bread-making and tasting exploits. There are many examples of pupils' planning and of completed sheets outlining materials required, the order of work and detailed drawings of design intentions. Opportunities to work in groups make a good contribution to their personal and social development.

89 The subject plan is closely aligned to national guidance giving pupils consistency and progression in their learning as they move through the school. Teachers ensure good opportunities for pupils to apply skills taught in numeracy and literacy to the design process.

90 In **music**, pupils enjoy a good range of opportunities to extend their learning in music lessons and at other times of the day. This ensures there is an appropriately varied musical curriculum. A visiting teacher works with each class for one session each week. In the one lesson seen in this programme, teaching was very good. Pupils enjoyed the variety of activities provided. They joined in the action songs enthusiastically, showing they could sing in tune and keep a steady pulse as they added percussion accompaniment. In discussing the music played for them, pupils could use terms such as *pitch* and *dynamics* appropriately; their participation in an imaginative activity with a parachute effectively enhanced their appreciation of the dynamics of a piece of music.

91 There are very good opportunities for pupils to extend their musical skills in activities outside of lessons. The Songbirds early morning singing group, for example, enables pupils to have a lively singing session before school starts on one day each week. In the session observed, pupils were able to sing *I Hear Thunder* confidently in two and three parts and they performed *The Teddy Bear's Rock 'n' Roll* enthusiastically, singing tunefully and moving well to the actions in the song. These sessions also provide very good further professional development for class teachers who join in with the pupils and visiting teacher.

92 Opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to music, including entering the hall for collective worship. Very good use was made of excerpts from Barry Bekker's *Kikuyu*, for example, to enhance the story in one assembly during the inspection. However, more could be made of these opportunities to help pupils appraise the music they hear.

93 Although it was possible to observe only two lessons of **physical education** during the inspection, both in dance, the school does provide a full programme of appropriate activities. However, there was insufficient evidence to indicate how provision in this subject had improved since the previous inspection.

94 In the lessons seen, pupils showed they understand the importance of appropriate warm-up and the reasons why. In one very good lesson, a visiting teacher provided very good opportunities for Year 1 pupils to develop their ideas and demonstrate their skills, making very good teaching points to enhance pupils' performance. Very valuable 'decision time' was provided for pupils to think about what they were going to do and decide with their partners. Pupils worked intensively on the tasks set with a real seriousness of purpose, which enabled them to make very good progress. Their movement was energetic, vigorous and reasonably well controlled and most had good awareness of space. A very good feature of the lesson was the way the teacher involved the pupils in evaluating their work and that of others, by providing some very good questions to direct and focus their thinking. She also helped the pupils working in pairs reflect on their work, because she was very good at picking up on what they did and suggesting ways in which they might improve it. This evaluation of their performance was also a strong feature of the other lesson seen with Year 2 pupils. Both the teacher and classroom assistant provided very good support as pupils worked on their tasks, helping them to think about how to develop what they were doing. This resulted in groups of pupils more able to improve their sequences of movements. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has identified clear priorities for further development, including the revision of procedures for assessment. Although currently there is no swimming provided, there are plans in place for its introduction. A good range of extra-curricular gymnastics, dance and games activities effectively enhances overall provision.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

95 Personal, social, health and citizenship education is well promoted across the curriculum and in separate lessons. Too few lessons were seen, however, to judge provision or teaching overall. Pupils enter classrooms at the beginning of the day calmly, purposefully and with self-assurance. Their relationships with staff and with each other are very good. Teachers create a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Year 2 pupils confidently self-register by moving their own photographs on the interactive whiteboard. Social interaction is very good as class teachers complete class registers manually and pupils quickly settle to purposeful activities such as spelling practice.

96 Circle time is used very effectively to develop pupils' personal and social skills. Teachers are sensitive to the pupils' needs and make every effort to ensure all children are able to contribute to discussions and express their views and feelings. The school's commitment to inclusion is excellent, ensuring that all pupils, including those with English as an additional language, are fully involved. Pupils listen well to the views of others; teachers listen well to what all pupils have to say. As a result pupils feel valued and able to speak with confidence in whole-class as well as smaller group situations. Teachers encourage pupils to speak with carefully considered questioning and they help pupils to extend what they wish to say. As a result, pupils hear a wide range of ideas and learn well about such aspects of life as showing responsibility and creating happiness.

97 There is an excellent, recently formed school council in which pupils of all ages are represented. There is a good balance of gender and ethnicity. The school council is very well prepared and organised. The pupils are all listened to, their views are valued and they make a real contribution to the running of the school. The principles and purpose of the school council are clearly understood and all pupils are issued with agendas and minutes of the meetings. At the time of the inspection issues discussed included the selection of 'litter pickers' and what they should wear, the positioning of a poster about a multicultural society, pupils' views on new playground markings and ideas for a healthy school breakfast.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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