

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKWOOD INFANT SCHOOL

Clacton-on-Sea

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114722

Headteacher: Ms L Trotter

Lead inspector: Mr G Timms

Dates of inspection: 23 – 26 May 2005

Inspection number: 267422

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: 3 – 7
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 361

School address: Windsor Avenue
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of Mrs A Prior
governors:

Date of previous 12 October 1998
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Oakwood Infant School has 361 pupils, 83 of whom are part time in the Nursery. The children are organised into 14 classes. The school is above average size for its type. Overall, the attainment of most pupils when they enter the school is well below that expected for their age. There are 83 pupils on the register of special educational need and this is above average. Two of the pupils have a statement of special need entitling them to extra support, which is broadly average. The main needs are moderate learning needs, social, emotional and behavioural development, and autism. Most pupils are from a white British background; a small number are from a range of mixed and Asian backgrounds. Only two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of parents who claim their entitlement to free school meals is above average. The mobility of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than is normal is above average.

The school is involved in an Excellence Cluster and a local Education Trust, which is furthering the work started by an Education Action Zone. They are working towards gaining a Basic Skills Agency award and hold occasional courses for parents.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21038	Mr G Timms	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Physical education
9619	Mr R Miller	Lay inspector	
1963	Mrs S Raychaudhuri	Team inspector	English Religious education Geography History Personal, social and health education English as an additional language
29426	Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Music Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This good school offers its pupils a good quality of education and an excellent level of care. Pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, as is the curriculum provided. The governance of the school is good, as are the leadership and management. **Overall, the school provides good value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- pupils achieve well given their attainment on entry to the school;
- standards in reading and writing are not high enough, but standards in mathematics and other subjects are improving;
- standards in art and design are above those expected by the end of Year 2;
- the school offers pupils an excellent level of care, support and advice;
- the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good;
- attendance is below average although pupils' punctuality is very good;
- there are good aspects to the school's links with parents but parents are not sufficiently involved with their children's learning;
- the relationships in the school are very good and the school is fully inclusive;
- the work of the support staff is very effective.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The key issues raised then have been largely addressed. Standards in information and communication technology have improved due to the provision of better resources, more training for staff and more time on the curriculum. The governing body has improved significantly and has a much more central role in monitoring the work of the school. The work of subject coordinators has improved so that they all get time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Lesson planning is better and this helps ensure work is better matched to the pupils' prior attainment. All statutory requirements are now met.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Attainment on entry to the Nursery classes is very low. This is especially evident in children's personal and social development, their reading, speaking and listening skills. Boys' attainment is lower than girls by a significant amount, but this is not due to any differences in the provision. Although they make good progress in the Nursery, when children start in the Reception classes, many still have standards that are very low in most areas of learning. The continuing good provision ensures that good progress is made so that, by the end of the Reception year, although the majority will still not have fully achieved the nationally expected early learning goals, a few children will have done so.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	D	D	E	E
writing	E	E	E	D
mathematics	E	E	E	E

*Key: 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*

The above table shows that when compared with schools nationally, standards in 2004 were well below average. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were well below average in reading and mathematics, and below

average in writing. There has been a consistent picture for the last few years of below and well below average attainment by the end of Year 2. However, this does not reflect the good achievement and progress evident as the majority of the pupils start from a very low base. The early indications are that the results in 2005 are better than those in 2004, especially in mathematics. Standards in reading and writing have not improved sufficiently and are still too low. Standards in speaking and listening are better than that. The current standards in science are below average. However, in information and communication technology standards are currently broadly in line with those expected, although the use of computers across the curriculum is not fully developed. Standards in art and design are above those normally expected and pupils achieve very well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. The school has few pupils with English as an additional language but they make good progress and achieve well because teachers and teaching assistants support them effectively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Attitudes and behaviour are good. Attendance is below average, although pupils' punctuality is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Because of this pupils achieve well. The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. The teaching assistants offer very effective support and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, or who are more able pupils, in small groups is effective in developing their learning. Assessment is good and is used well to plan appropriately challenging work for most pupils. The curriculum is good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective and they achieve well. The school offers an excellent level of care and support for the pupils. The links with parents, local schools and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher demonstrates effective leadership and, along with the deputy headteacher and senior management team, is working hard to try and raise standards further. The school's involvement with the Education Action Zone has benefited it in a number of important ways. This work is continuing through an Education Trust and an Excellence Cluster. The analysis and use of data has improved and this is having a positive impact on teachers' planning and the tracking of individual pupils' progress.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents are largely positive about the work of the school. They say their children are happy at school and the teaching is good. Some feel pupils' behaviour is not very good but the inspection evidence does not support this. Children make good progress and parents like the arrangements for their children starting school. A significant proportion would like more information about how well their child is doing and how they can help at home. Pupils say they are happy at school; they enjoy playing and being with their friends. They enjoy most of their lessons.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- raise standards in reading and writing;
- work to involve parents more in their children's education;
- continue efforts to improve attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good throughout the school. Standards attained are below average but rising and current standards in Year 1 are closer to the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The lower and higher attaining pupils achieve well. The middle attainers make less progress.
- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress given their attainment on entry to the school.
- Standards in reading and writing are still too low.
- Standards in art and design are above average and achievement is very good.

Commentary

1. When children start in the Nursery classes, many have standards that are very low in most areas of learning. The good provision ensures that good progress is made, but children in the Reception classes are still at levels well below those normally found. By the end of the Reception year, further good progress is made but although some children achieve the expected early learning goals, many do not. Their attainment is well below average in their personal social and emotional development, their communication, language and literacy skills and their mathematical development. Attainment on their knowledge and understanding of the world is below that normally found, but their creative and physical development is broadly in line with that found nationally.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.9 (14.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.0 (13.1)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	13.7 (14.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 113 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. In 2004, standards shown by the test results were well below average in all three subjects compared to schools nationally. There has been a consistent picture for the last few years of below and well below average attainment by the end of Year 2. When compared with schools that take pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were well below average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing.
3. However, this does not reflect the good achievement and progress evident as the majority of the pupils start from a very low base. Careful analysis of the reasons for the lack of apparent improvement in results over time by the school, and by the inspection team, shows a range of factors including the low attainment on entry, a lack of parental support, poor retention of learning and very high proportions of pupils with special educational needs, particularly learning difficulties. In addition, the immaturity of many of the children hinders the development of good learning skills and habits.

4. The current standards are better than those reflected in the table above. The average points scores have improved this year, particularly in mathematics where it is 15.0 which is much closer to the national average than was the case last year. This is true even though the current Year 2 has a higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties than was the case last year. However, standards in reading and writing have not improved sufficiently and are still too low. Standards in speaking and listening are better than that, largely due to the necessary focus on this aspect in the Foundation Stage and through the rest of the school. The current standards evident in Year 1 are even higher and show that the recent changes to the staff, teaching methods, resources, tracking of pupil progress and other aspects of the provision are beginning to have a significant impact on standards.
5. The school has very effective systems to analyse the performance of pupils with special educational needs. There is frequent and regular communication to ensure that these pupils receive appropriate support. Members of the support staff are fully involved and play a significant part in the achievement of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans clearly lay out suitable targets. Teachers and parents regularly review the plans. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. The school has only two pupils with English as an additional language, and who are at early stages of learning English. They make good progress and achieve well because teachers and teaching assistants support them effectively.
6. The current standards in science are below average. However, in information and communication technology standards are currently broadly in line with those expected, although the use of computers across the curriculum is not fully developed. Standards in art and design are above those normally expected and pupils achieve very well. This is due to the wide range of opportunities, the very effective teaching of skills and the imaginative tasks set by teachers, who are very well supported by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic coordinator. It was not possible to make secure judgements about standards in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are **good**. Pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual development is also **good**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory** but punctuality is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' relationships with each other are very good. This is reflected in the good behaviour in most lessons.
- Because of the very effective way in which the school promotes good relationships, including racial harmony, pupils have a very clear understanding of their individual and corporate roles and responsibilities within the school community.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and take their responsibilities of living in a community very seriously.
- The school is very effective in the way in which it promotes good attendance but a small number of families continue to take holidays in term time.

Commentary

7. The rate of attendance is well below that of similar schools nationally but most pupils attend school punctually. The majority of lessons start and finish on time. The school has very effective systems in place to monitor and promote good attendance. A number of parents continue to take family holidays during term time but the school's efforts to dissuade them are now beginning to impact and the rate of attendance is showing signs of improvement. Unexplained absences are followed up very quickly and registers are kept in accordance with statutory requirements.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.3	School data	0.9
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

8. Pupils enjoy coming to school and develop good very relationships with others in their classes. Most pupils show good attitudes to their work and their life in school. This is reflected in their very good punctuality and enjoyment of lessons. Pupils say that they are expected to work hard and that they are taught well. Parents endorse these comments.
9. Pupils are well behaved and co-operative in lessons. There have been no exclusions in the past academic year. There are a small number of pupils who are identified as having specific behavioural needs but they are given very good support and make good progress in their behaviour over time. Praise and encouragement are used particularly effectively.
10. Pupils' attitudes, both to learning and each other, are good. They are very clear that if there were any problems between pupils the school would act very quickly and effectively. Parents agree that teaching is good and that their child is making good progress. Pupils listen to adults and follow instructions because staff set high expectations for their conduct. They are encouraged to take different responsibilities as they progress through the school, such as acting as Play Leaders and playground "Buddies". Older pupils are often seen helping the younger children, particularly at lunchtimes. The very clear focus on inclusion means that pupils within the school feel valued and work well in harmony with each other.
11. The vast majority of pupils are proud of their school and have a good understanding of how they can make it a better place for the whole school community. They are confident that members of staff deal with any form of harassment quickly and effectively.
12. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good and continues to be a good feature of the school's provision. The school is a caring and happy community which has high aspirations for its pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and their behaviour. Parents are convinced that the school is helping their children to develop in a mature and responsible manner.
13. The school makes a clear statement in its entrance. '*This is our school, let peace be here.*' Good quality acts of collective worship in which the pupils are actively involved offer periods for reflection and prayer. Assemblies are carefully planned and suitable music is chosen to create an appropriate atmosphere. Pupils respond with quiet and respectful behaviour throughout the session. Special services, like the Christingle Service, can create a real sense of wonder.
14. The school's efforts to promote pupils' moral development are good. Pupils in each class have the opportunity, under the guidance of the teacher, to develop their own positive behaviour code. There are high expectations of the good behaviour of

children in classroom and playground. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and staff are well maintained. Adults in school provide good role models.

15. Pupils have many opportunities to help around the school and through schemes like 'Buddies', to help other pupils. Trips, such as the one to Colchester Zoo, give them the opportunity to mix in the wider community. Whole year productions give pupils the chance to work together on a joint operation. Pupils are encouraged to think of those less fortunate than themselves through their good support for several charities.
16. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of the work of European artists and can recognise works by Picasso, Monet and Seurat. They experience a wide range of cultural experiences during events like 'Performing Arts Week'. Visiting theatre groups enrich the curriculum. Although the school has few pupils from other ethnic groups, it makes considerable efforts to present features of non-European cultures by studying and celebrating events like the Chinese New Year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education, supported by good teaching and learning. The curriculum is good, as are the links with parents and the wider community. The care provided for pupils is excellent.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good. The assessment of pupils' progress is also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is consistently good through the Foundation Stage, and in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers plan well together in teams.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The teaching assistants offer the teachers and pupils very effective support for their learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 37 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3 (8%)	24 (65%)	10 (27%)	0	0	0

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

17. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. This matches the school's self-evaluation. None of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory, and almost three quarters was good or better. This picture of the teaching shows why standards have begun to rise. Over recent years the school has suffered some disruption and significant changes to the staff. The school has made some good recent appointments that have strengthened the staff team, and deployed staff differently, and this too is having a positive impact, particularly in the Nursery and Reception classes.

18. Teachers plan lessons together in year group teams and this ensures more consistency of approach and that all pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. They also work closely together to support each other with subject expertise and knowledge. This too has a positive impact on provision. The very good accommodation is very effectively used by teachers who have worked hard to create a bright, colourful and exciting learning environment. In particular, the displays of pupils' work are of high quality in many classrooms.
19. A particular strength is the way the members of staff are supported by the team of teaching assistants. They take responsibility for helping plan the curriculum and for working with pupils, especially the less able, and the higher attainers. For example, teaching assistants run a 'brain gym' session before school for selected pupils to help them develop their coordination skills. They teach groups of pupils with special educational needs, those who need to be boosted to achieve a higher level, more able children in the 'stretcher' groups, and some children who benefit from small group circle time to enhance their personal and social development. Their expertise and efforts have a very positive impact.
20. The best teaching is lively and knowledgeable, with high expectations. Teachers ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to work alone or in small groups. Many activities are planned to involve speaking and listening skills. In one very good Year 1 lesson, the resources were very well prepared and appropriate, and the teacher clearly explained concepts such as 'hollow' and 'solid'. Pupils were praised well and this encouraged them to answer questions. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Where the teaching has minor weaknesses, the displayed learning objectives are not discussed and shared with children, and the objectives themselves are too descriptive. The use of computers to support class work is inconsistent.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils who need help are identified in good time. A suitable programme of learning is planned and work is well matched to the pupils' needs. Teaching assistants are very well used to support the learning of the pupils. Teachers are very good at promoting equal opportunities.
22. The assessment of pupils' work is good, and this has a positive impact on the planning of work that is appropriately challenging for all pupils. The marking is often good with useful comments and very good annotations to show what the purpose of the work was and how well the objective has been achieved.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum, which is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school is well staffed, has a good level of learning resources and benefits from very good accommodation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good and effective links made between different subjects.
- There is very good equality of access and opportunity and the school is very inclusive.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Provision for personal development contributes effectively to pupils' social and moral development, and pupils are prepared well for junior schools.

- The programme of enrichment is good.

Commentary

23. The curriculum is broad, balanced, and meets statutory requirements. The provision for information and communication technology has improved and sufficient time is now provided for the subject. The school offers its pupils many opportunities for reflection through assemblies, art and music and the legal requirement of a daily act of collective worship is met.
24. The school has made good improvement in tackling the issues identified in the last inspection. Planning is now monitored regularly by the co-ordinators to ensure consistency in the coverage of curriculum content between classes. Teachers make effective links between subjects and both literacy and numeracy are supported well, and all subjects provide opportunities for reading and writing. For example, in Year 2, the pupils apply their skills in literacy and numeracy to producing a map with grid references based on the story of Fantastic Mr Fox. The school has been very innovative in using Education Action Zone funds to support pupils' learning in literacy to raise standards. Pupils are prepared well for transfer to their next year groups and strong links with the adjacent junior school through shared projects and liaison between special educational needs staff provide smooth transition.
25. The provision for personal development is good. There is an effective teaching programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship, which is taught through other subjects. It is supported by school ethos and it offers pupils a range of responsibilities from Nursery to Year 2. Pupils volunteer to become play leaders in the playground or to become a buddy or a 'Helping hand' to ones who need it. Pupils often contribute to class rules and teachers manage these rules fairly. Sex and relationships education is provided appropriately.
26. Pupils participate in a range of valuable enrichment activities, which support learning in lessons. Arts subjects feature strongly in the enrichment programme. Pupils have the opportunity to display their artwork at exhibitions; visiting theatres, dance sessions and performing arts fortnight enrich their experiences. These activities contribute to the overall ethos and culture in the school.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well planned. It ensures that pupils make good progress towards achieving their targets in their individual education plans. The individual plans are detailed and thorough. They contain appropriate targets, which are communicated well to all relevant staff. Teachers and class assistants work well together to meet pupils' needs. Teaching assistants run stimulating and well organised sessions for pupils with special educational needs before the start of the school day. These play an important part in the physical, intellectual and social development of these pupils. There is a considerable programme of withdrawal groups, involving pupils throughout the school, which allows small groups of pupils to have relatively short periods of concentrated tuition. However, this programme is very well planned and this ensures that individual pupils do not miss out on any area of the curriculum. The expertise of outside agencies is used when necessary.
28. The school currently has a full complement of suitably qualified staff who are well deployed to make best use of their skills and experience. The school's very small number of pupils with English as an additional language is supported well by teaching

assistants. The provision for gifted and talented pupils is developing well. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and makes provision for them. This focus on individual pupils and their needs results in all being fully included in the life of the school.

29. The accommodation provides a very positive, calm environment. It is attractive and cared for and displays are stimulating and relevant. The open-plan building contributes to teamwork and the community ethos because everyone knows everyone else. Good quality teaching resources enrich the learning. The library is well stocked and suitable for small group work. Outdoor accommodation is very imaginatively planned with markings for games and buddy benches, which help to promote very good relationships among pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides excellent levels of care and attention to the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Provision of support, advice and guidance for the pupils is very good. There is good involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures to ensure that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are excellent.
- The school provides a very warm, caring and purposeful learning environment where all pupils are highly and equally valued.
- Pupils have a very good and trusting relationship with at least one adult in the school.
- Pupils have access to very well informed support and guidance.
- Induction arrangements for children in the Foundation Stage are very good.
- The school encourages the views of older children and acts upon them.

Commentary

30. Pupils work in a clean, safe and healthy environment. Regular health and safety checks and a building maintenance programme identify and rectify any hazards quickly. A very well co-ordinated team of governors, teachers and conscientious site manager ensure that health and safety is given high priority among staff. School meals are a significant factor in the healthy life style encouraged by the school. The excellent provision for health and safety is a continuous improvement since the previous inspection and makes a valuable contribution to pupil's academic and personal development.
31. This is a very caring school where staff treats pupils fairly and with respect. This ensures that pupils are comfortable about approaching individual teachers or support staff for help or guidance. Pupils say teachers always take time to listen to them and they can always have their say. Pupils are satisfied with the school and with what it provides.
32. There are very good child protection procedures in place and these are well known to adults in the school. This is a continuous improvement since the last inspection. There are good links with outside agencies. The members of staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and are able, therefore, to provide very good support and guidance. There are good practices for getting to know children before they start at the school. Parents of children entering the Nursery and Reception stages of education say that the induction procedures are very good and that the school is helping their child to become mature.
33. The personal, social and health programme, and tracking and assessment procedures enable staff to provide targeted support for individuals, particularly those pupils with special educational needs, who contribute to their own annual reviews. This very good support and guidance is helping to raise pupil achievement. A sex and relationships policy is now in place and this is an improvement since the previous inspection.
34. The school encourages the pupils' views both in informal and formal ways. There is no school council but older pupils consider matters as diverse as new games and formulating playground rules. This opportunity to contribute to school improvement contributes well to pupils' personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good partnerships with parents. Links with other schools and colleges are good. It also has good links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are kept well informed about the school and their children's progress.
- There are good procedures for ensuring parental satisfaction and for dealing with any parental concerns or complaints.
- The good links with other schools and colleges ensure a smooth transition for pupils to their next stage of education.
- The school needs to do more to involve parents in their children's learning.
- Formal and regular consultation arrangements with parents are being developed and currently under review.

Commentary

35. Parents are satisfied with the work of the school and with what it provides. They say their child enjoys coming to school, that they are comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns or complaints they may have. These good partnerships with parents are a continuous improvement since the last inspection. However, a significant minority would like more information about how well their child is doing.
36. Members of staff, including the headteacher, are always available at the beginning and end of each day to deal with any concerns or complaints that parents may have. This informal contact ensures high levels of parental satisfaction and ensures that any problems are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The school recognises the need to consult more regularly and formally with parents on matters of school improvement. To seek their views and to take account of their suggestions is identified as an area for continuous development.
37. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, regular newsletters and school notice boards. The school prospectus and annual governors' report to parents both meet legal requirements and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Parents appreciate the opportunities to discuss their child's progress at both formal and informal meetings with teachers. A helpful end-of-year academic report, containing targets to help improvement, accompanies these meetings. The school has identified the need to provide even greater information to parents about what their children will be learning.
38. A number of parents contribute to their child's learning at home and where this takes place it is having a positive impact on pupil achievement. Parent workshops are held to encourage parents to learn more about the way in which information and communication technology, literacy and numeracy are taught but these are poorly attended and the school would benefit from making more efforts to involve parents in their children's learning. The friends of the school raise money to ensure the school has a steady flow of learning resources through the course of the academic year. The school has identified the need to encourage more parental help, both at home and in school as areas for future development.
39. The school links well with local schools to ensure best practice is shared and to take part in joint initiatives. Strong links with local schools through the excellence cluster provide opportunities for staff professional development, the sharing of pupil information, and for the discussion of areas of concern to ensure a smooth transition for Year 2 pupils to the next phase of their education.
40. The good links with the community include a close liaison with the local council, counsellors for parents and the police. All of these connections have a positive effect on pupils' personal development and is a continuous improvement since the last inspection.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The senior members of staff provide a clear educational direction for the work of the school.

- The work of the governing body is much improved.
- The school has clear and appropriate priorities for improvement.

Commentary

41. The headteacher provides the school with good leadership, and she is very well supported by the recently appointed deputy headteacher. Together with other senior staff, they make up an effective team that is clearly and correctly focused on raising standards and preparing the pupils as well as is possible for the next stage of their education.
42. The school has been part of an Education Action Zone which provided extra resources and support because of the difficulties and barriers to learning faced by many of the pupils. This has now ended and been replaced with an Excellence Cluster, which supports schools in similar ways, but the local schools have continued the action zone work through the creation of an Education Trust. The school has been very involved in this, and the headteacher has been particularly active in ensuring that the needs of younger pupils have been at the forefront of many of the initial discussions. The school has hosted training for early years teachers across the action zone, as well as introducing a phonic scheme and a thinking skills project for Year 1 pupils.
43. The school is much more effective at monitoring its work than was the case at the last inspection. The subject coordinators have time to monitor the teaching and learning in their areas. The feedback from this has clearly helped improve provision and raise standards. Governors also monitor more by visiting the school, talking to teachers and observing lessons. This has helped the school recover from the difficult staffing issues and senior management changes that have occurred over the past two years.
44. The school improvement plan is a detailed and practical plan that has a positive impact on school improvement. It is monitored regularly by senior staff and the governing body, who are more involved now than was the case in the past. All subject coordinators devise action plans that feed into the overall plan. The plan is evaluated and annotations added as targets are reached and success criteria monitored.
45. The governing body has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their work has improved greatly since the last inspection. They are very supportive of the school, those who work in it and of the pupils. They are also knowledgeable about where the test results need to be improved and have begun to develop a more challenging role through visits to the school. They realise that more parental involvement is important if standards are to rise and this is a regular feature for discussion at meetings. Governors are also aware of the requirements of the workforce reform changes due to be implemented in September.
46. A major strength of the governing body has been the work of the development committee which was set up specifically to extend and improve the governors' skills, knowledge and ways in which they could be of more help to the school. This has been very successful through a range of training and better induction for new governors. This has had a clear impact on the recruitment and retention of governors and it has helped new governors, especially parents, feel more able to take a full part on the governing body. The structure for meetings, committees and minute taking is effective and efficient.

47. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed. The co-ordinator is in the position to have a clear overview and to have an impact on provision. The co-ordinator is well supported by the relevant governors. The performance of teaching assistants is regularly reviewed. Pupils' individual education plans are reviewed rigorously and frequently. Systems for tracking the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils are thorough and well established.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,143,064	Balance from previous year	66,220
Total expenditure	1,105,262	Balance carried forward to the next	104,022
Expenditure per pupil	3,028		

48. The budget setting process is efficient. The budget is monitored well during the year. Priorities are based on the school improvement plan, but also the overarching aim of having staff as the main resource and wanting to keep class sizes small in the long term. This is why the balance carried forward is above that normally expected. The school works hard to achieve best value in all of its work, although better use of the computer suite needs to be made.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

49. Although there is a wide range of attainment on entry to the Nursery classes, many of the children have very low levels of attainment, especially with regard to their social skills and their communication skills. They achieve well and make good progress but when they enter the reception classes their levels of attainment are still well below those normally expected. The progress made through the reception classes is again good, as is children's achievement, and some are on line to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the year. However, the majority are unlikely to achieve these goals before they start on the National Curriculum in Year 1, and standards remain well below those normally found.
50. The Nursery and Reception classes have had significant staffing changes recently. The current members of staff are developing much closer links between the two year groups to ensure that the Foundation Stage plans and works together more closely than has been the case in the past. This is already having a positive impact on provision, and the members of staff involved are very keen to extend links still further. The leadership and management demonstrated by the members of staff and the action plans for future development are good. The quality of teaching found throughout both years is consistently good and this has a positive impact on children's learning and their good achievement. The support offered by teaching assistants and Nursery nurses is very effective in helping teachers and in supporting children's learning, including those with special educational needs. Children's progress is well assessed and very good detailed notes are kept on them. Members of staff focus observations of children on specific issues. Very good use is made of digital photographs to record children's achievements with good teacher annotation on the reverse.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good teaching focuses on this area of learning and it is resulting in good achievement.
- The relationships between children and adults are very good.
- Many children still play and work alone or alongside others rather than with them.

Commentary

51. This area of learning has a high priority in the Nursery and Reception classes due to the children's needs evident from when they start school. Teachers work hard to ensure children begin to develop good learning skills and they are able to share, co-operate and collaborate when playing and working together. The quality of the teaching is good and this results in good levels of achievement although standards remain below those expected by the end of the Reception year.

52. Members of staff ensure children settle quickly and well at the start of the Nursery session. Many of the children find it hard to follow instructions. The session starts with activities for children after they have self-registered using their photograph. Members of staff continually interact with the children on a one-to-one basis and this helps them settle and feel secure. The snack groups give adults time to talk with a small group of children, to tell stories or discuss matters that the children raise.
53. In the Reception classes it is clear how well children have progressed as they are much more confident when working together in small groups, or in whole class sessions where they need to follow class rules and which they do well. Again, the members of staff build very good relationships with the children and act as effective role models for their social and emotional development. Physical education lessons are used well to teach children how to follow instructions.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although progress is good, standards are well below those normally found.
- The members of staff focus a lot of their work on developing speaking and listening skills.
- The development of reading and writing skills is well planned for.

Commentary

54. The teaching is good and children make good progress and they achieve well. Even so, most are unlikely fully to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. The speech of many of the children is immature and underdeveloped. Staff work hard to ensure that during all activities they are continuously talking to the children and trying to get them to answer. The use of snack times is particularly important for this work and children discuss things such as the work they have been doing or their holidays. This work continues into the Reception year where speaking and listening has equal importance. Children directly working with adults are involved in conversation well, and they show a growing maturity and inquisitiveness. Role play activities extend this further.
55. Early mark-making skills, with paintbrushes and water, are developed in the Nursery, before moving on to tools such as crayons and pencils that are more conventional. This is effective in building early confidence in the children. Nursery children begin to learn to write their names through tracing over the teachers' writing. Although children clearly make good progress over the year, their skills are still below those normally found at this age. In Reception classes, children have good opportunities to develop writing skills through role play in the writing corner, and a range of practices for their emergent writing skills.
56. Stories are an important part of the work in the Nursery. The topic during the week of the inspection was being enlivened by a story about make believe monsters. This was well read to a group by a teaching assistant, who kept their interest and attention well through questions such as '*Can you look cross?*' Children take books home and begin to get into good habits regarding looking at and looking after books for their later

schooling. In the Reception classes children learn phonic skills and about simple three letter words. Children can sequence the pictures from a simple story in the correct order.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Counting and number recognition has a high profile across a range of activities.

Commentary

57. The good teaching takes advantage of a range of activities to try and develop children's mathematical knowledge and skills. They make good progress and achieve well but the majority are still unlikely to have achieved the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year and standards are well below those normally found. Many children in the Nursery are familiar with common two-dimensional shapes. They can count to five, and in snack time can match fruit and drinks to the number of children in the group. In Reception classes, activities extend their counting skills to 10 and beyond. Children use dice to match figures to a bus. They are able to sort objects by size and are becoming familiar with the appropriate terminology. Children can create patterns using a range of shapes to create mathematical sequences. They can compare objects in balances and say which is lighter or heavier.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children use computers with confidence.
- The teachers provide good opportunities for children to experience a range of activities.

Commentary

58. The teaching is good and this has led to a good level of achievement, although standards are still below those normally expected at the end of the Reception year. Children in the Nursery have a sound knowledge of a range of animals following their topic on 'Wild Things'. In Reception this is extended to specific learning about fish and other sea creatures. Earlier work showed children designing and making sunglasses out of card. They also make jelly and experience other food technology activities over the year. Children learn about other cultures by, for example, learning about festivals such as the Chinese New Year. They learn early geographical skills by drawing their route to school.

59. Many children in the Nursery use the mouse with confidence to click on pictures or icons. However, most of the software is too difficult for them to understand exactly what the task is, and those observed tended to guess at an answer rather than work it out. In Reception classes, children continue to develop their skills with more appropriate software. However, they often only spend a very short time on an activity

before moving on. They are able to follow appropriate sequences when, for example, clicking and dragging to dress a teddy bear. Children in Nursery and Reception classes have good opportunities to use a range of construction apparatus for a range of purposes. These vary from very large building block equipment to smaller and more complex resources.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children achieve well.
- Reception children use gymnastic apparatus and this improves their confidence and skills.

Commentary

60. The good teaching results in children making good progress in their physical development through a wide range of activities, and this enables them to achieve well by the end of the Reception year. Standards are satisfactory and the majority of the children will achieve the expected early learning goals. The Nursery classes have a wide range of large resources to enable them to build, climb and play with large wheeled toys. They also have good opportunities to use a wide range of tools and materials, which supports the development of their physical skills. In the Reception classes, more formal physical education lessons build on the skills and confidence picked up in the Nursery. Children use gymnastic apparatus safely and with imagination, climbing, rolling and jumping with growing skill and enthusiasm. Children have access to good resources to enable them to improve their ball control, throwing and catching skills. All children have good opportunities to experiment with soft and malleable materials.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good opportunities to use a wide range of media and materials.

Commentary

61. The good teaching helps children make good progress and achievement is good. The vast majority are likely to achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. The work of the teaching assistants is effective in helping the youngest children in the Nursery attempt activities that are more difficult. In one example, children were helped very effectively to use construction materials to make animals. They have many opportunities to cut out and stick shapes and colours to create their own pictures. Children also have opportunities to listen to music while taking part in other activities. Many children know the primary colours. Children are provided with good opportunities to use their imaginations in different ways. For example, the teacher had created some animal parts and children joined parts from

different animals with split pins to make imaginative creatures with moving limbs. In Reception classes, children use modelling materials for more specific activities, such as making undersea creatures. Others use their hands to create colourful large backgrounds for mounting other work. During this, they learn how to create a variety of greens and blues.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching of phonics and spelling helps pupils to spell words correctly and read simple texts accurately.
- Effective use of teaching assistants makes a significant difference to the achievement of pupils with special educational needs.
- Clear expectations of work and behaviour help to foster pupils' positive attitudes towards learning.
- Literacy is promoted well through other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils do not get sufficient planned opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and very few links are made between these skills and writing.
- Reading materials are not interesting enough to engage and motivate boys.

Commentary

62. Standards are lower than those noted at the time of the last inspection because the number of pupils with special educational needs has grown since then. Nearly half of the pupils have special educational needs in some classes and this has a clear impact on their literacy standards. Standards are below average in speaking and listening and well below average in reading and writing. The 2004 National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 also reflect these standards. Boys underachieve in both reading and writing. They are in large numbers in lower attaining groups.
63. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with poor standards in communication, language and literacy and high levels of social needs. They achieve well in the Nursery and reception classes but still start Year 1 with well below average standards. Overall, achievement is satisfactory by Year 2 as the quality of teaching is not very strong to enable the high proportion of lower attaining pupils to make better progress than they make. In the current Year 2, nearly two-fifths of the pupils are working below the expected level in writing and about a third in reading.
64. The strong teaching of phonics linked to spelling helps pupils to read simple texts fluently and spell many words correctly. Pupils receive two hours of phonics, vocabulary work and spelling in ability groups every week. The skills pupils enjoy learning in these groups are not always applied effectively to their work in other lessons. As a result, these strengths in phonics and spelling do not make sufficient impact on standards in reading and writing by Year 2. The teachers do not create appropriate and relevant activities to extend pupils' understanding of what they read and develop writing for a real purpose. Pupils are heard read regularly at school. However, with the exception of few higher attaining pupils, most find it difficult to talk about the storylines, characters or settings in the books they read. The boys who read

to the inspectors generally did not find the available non-fiction books in the school interesting enough to enable them to enjoy reading.

65. Opportunities to write for different purposes are good. Pupils learn to write retelling of stories, recounts, diaries and instructions but very few attain a secure higher level. In the lessons observed, writing was often neither linked to a real purpose nor built through discussion and talk. For example, in one lesson, the pupils learnt to write sentences in the past tense but not in the context of writing something that happened in the past.
66. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory but it is stronger in Year 1 where teachers engage pupils better through good match of tasks and a brisk pace. All teachers know their pupils well and manage them generally effectively. As a result, they are keen to learn and behave well. Teaching assistants are skilled at working alongside teachers, so that pupils who have special educational needs are able to join in with the class and achieve well.
67. The subject leader is new to her role and responsibilities. At present, leadership and management are satisfactory but demonstrate a good commitment to improvement. The school has good systems and procedures for assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress to raise standards. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. Language and literacy are promoted well through subjects such as mathematics, history, geography and religious education. There is ample evidence that the teachers make links between what pupils read in literacy to their work in history or geography. Pupils use writing skills well to tell, for example, the story of the birth of Jesus or of Florence Nightingale.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are rising and pupils' achievement is good.
- Learning objectives are not always stated in a way that makes clear what pupils are expected to learn.
- Higher attainers are well provided for in the 'stretcher' groups.
- Teachers match the work well to the pupils' prior attainment.
- Teachers need to provide more opportunities for investigative mathematics.

Commentary

69. Current standards in Year 2 are broadly similar to those found at the last inspection and have improved from last year, even though the cohort has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The standards in Year 1 are higher than this and demonstrate how effective improvements to the teaching and learning have been. Achievement is good and given their attainment on entry to the school, progress is often very good. The school is particularly good at helping the less able achieve well given their potential, and also supporting the higher attainers through a system of 'stretcher' groups. These have been effective in extending those pupils' knowledge

and understanding. However, there remains some underachievement among the middle attainers which remains to be addressed.

70. The results in 2004 national tests were below average when compared to similar schools and the reasons for this, and the issues that arose from the school's analysis of this, have resulted in the current improvements to standards. The more focused monitoring of teaching and learning carried out by the coordinator has had clear impact on practice and helped raise standards. The feedback from this is used by year group teams to plan work and address weaknesses. In addition, the use of target setting has improved and pupils and teachers are clearer about what they are aiming to achieve.
71. One of the weaknesses in pupils' skills results from their poor thinking and literacy skills, and this hinders their learning when it comes to problem solving activities. The school has recognised this as a priority for future development. The use of computers to support learning of basic skills, and to provide on-going assessments of pupils' knowledge through timed activities, has helped consolidate basic skills. Good use is made of television resources to support basic skills. However, there are lessons when the use of computer activities was not effectively planned for or forgotten.
72. The quality of teaching is good, overall. Teachers have altered aspects of their practice following analysis of results and feedback from monitoring. Learning objectives are now displayed but in most lessons these are not fully discussed or shared with pupils. In addition, they are too often descriptive of the lesson rather than exactly what the pupils are expected to learn. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this gives pupils the confidence to answer questions and attempt challenging tasks without fear of failure. The work of teaching assistants is very effective in supporting pupils' learning, and in helping small groups of less able or higher attainers. Work is well planned and the activities chosen are effective in supporting the intended learning. Assessment of pupils' work is good and clear records of progress are kept. A particular strength is the way teachers provide activities that are well matched to the pupils' prior attainment. Insufficient time is given, or activities identified, in the planning for investigative mathematics and problem solving.
73. The subject is well led and managed, and this has had a positive impact on standards and the quality of teaching. Rigorous monitoring, effective feedback and good resourcing have all helped raise standards since last year. Training is disseminated and the coordinator has taught model lessons for colleagues. Home-school links have improved through the sharing of targets, homework and the information about the curriculum to be covered. Parents have been reluctant to take part in evening meetings to explain how the subject is taught and the school needs to review further and develop this aspect of its work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

74. The use of basic mathematical skills across the curriculum is good. A session with less able pupils making sandwiches was very effectively led by a teaching assistant to ensure mathematical language was used correctly, comparing shapes and discussing the sides and corners of the bread and then the way the sandwiches were cut. Pupils learn to use graphs and bar charts to illustrate information gathered in surveys. In art and design lessons, pupils made patterns using mathematical sequences or they used art techniques to explore symmetry.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils is good.
- The levels of attainment of pupils in Year 2 are below average.
- Teaching and learning are good.

Commentary

75. The standards in Year 2 have fallen since the last inspection and are now below average. This fall can be linked to the low levels of literacy skills of the pupils which, in turn, is a result of the increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. Nevertheless pupils, because they are well taught, achieve well and make good progress in relation to their previous levels of learning. Pupils with special educational needs, aided by teachers' careful attention to their individual needs and the concentrated help of teaching assistants, make good progress.
76. Many pupils start from low levels of understanding. A Year 1 pupil has some difficulty recognising that strawberries are a main ingredient of strawberry jam, another does not understand that there is a link between crisps and potatoes. However, by the time they are in Year 2, higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand the principles of fair testing and the idea of isolating the one factor to be investigated. Even with this group of pupils some misunderstandings persist, some believing, for example, that the life cycle of a plant is completed when a leaf falls from the plant and grows into a new one. Middle attaining pupils in Year 2 confuse the stalk and root of a plant.
77. Below average literacy skills limit pupils' ability to record accurately. Year 1 pupils have difficulty constructing a simple menu. However, teachers are clearly aware of this and are clever in maximising opportunities for learning by using scientific material as subject matter in literacy lessons. So, for example, Year 1 pupils combine learning about making lists with increasing their knowledge of healthy foods. Teachers, particularly those in Year 1 classes, are also clever in devising ways for pupils to record without having to do much writing when they are more concerned with developing pupils' scientific learning.
78. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Pupils' learning is considerably helped by the teachers' very good planning. Teachers of a year group plan together so that all pupils in the year cover the same material and help the learning of pupils of all abilities by planning activities for groups of pupils of differing ability levels. Teachers are also careful to plan so that all the different ability groups receive some direct adult

attention. Teachers are well supported by skilful teaching assistants, who help the learning of all pupils, but who are particularly significant in providing direct support for pupils with special educational needs.

79. The good planning extends to the use of time. At the end of an afternoon, for example, when Year 2 classes have been studying the factors necessary for plant growth, they come together to extend and consolidate their learning by watching a video recording concerned with that subject.
80. To encourage interest, and to a certain extent to ensure that low literacy skills do not inhibit learning in science, teachers adopt a practical, investigative approach to the subject. Year 1 pupils investigate waterproofing. A visit to a local wildlife park leads to work on minibeasts and results in some spectacular models of ladybirds. A visit from the 'Recycle Bus' means an extensive study of aspects of recycling and results in pupils making their own recycled paper. Teachers question well. A Year 2 teacher challenges the learning of pupils with insistent questioning about evidence pupils have produced on how plants grow under different conditions. Computers are beginning to be used to support learning in science but this remains an area for further development.
81. Leadership is satisfactory. The coordinator has a clear view of how science should develop in the school but has not yet been in post long enough to have had much impact on standards. Resources are good and good use is made of the school grounds although the school pond, won in a competition by a pupil, is underused.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The computer suite offers the school a very good resource, but this is not yet fully used.
- Cross-curricular use of computers is growing but it is not yet fully integrated into teachers' planning.

Commentary

82. The standards and achievement of pupils is much improved since the last inspection and by the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected. This is due to the increased time given to the subject, the training teachers have received, and the improved resources. The teaching is good. The computer suite has enabled much more effective direct teaching of skills and methods to take place, and this is well supported by the growing use of the interactive whiteboard. However, the suite is often empty and the school is not yet getting full value for money from this resource.
83. Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching was good overall. This was due to the good pace, the use of the interactive whiteboard to illustrate teaching points, and the balance between direct teaching and hands-on experience. In the lessons observed teachers had good subject knowledge but the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that this is uneven across the school.

84. Year 2 pupils learn to enter data they have collected about animals onto a database. They are at a very early stage of learning to interrogate the data. However, in one satisfactory lesson, time is wasted during the demonstration and then individual activities on the whiteboard as too many children have to sit and wait for a long time when they could have been using the database at the keyboards themselves. Year 1 pupils are able to communicate ideas by selecting and adding text. This helps develop their literacy skills and reinforces learning about full stops and capital letters. They can enter, save and retrieve their work. They are able to create numbered lists when, for example, making a breakfast menu.
85. The leadership and management of the subject is developing well and is good. The new co-ordinator has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. She has led staff development since taking up the post. She has monitored teachers' planning and observed some lessons and the use of computers in classrooms. The feedback from this has helped improve teachers' practice. The improvements since the last inspection include more time for skills teaching. Assessment of pupils' learning is carried out through a combination of teacher observation and assessment and the use of a commercial, computer based scheme.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

86. Teachers are developing their use of computers across the curriculum and this is currently satisfactory. They are used effectively in English and mathematics but less well for research purposes. Pupils in Year 1 can create pictograms after entering information about favourite pets. Pupils produce a lot of art work using drawing software. They use word processors to enter correct verb tenses, and a range of mathematics software to both support and assess pupils' progress.

HUMANITIES

87. Work was sampled in these subjects. Only two lessons were seen in religious education and none in the others. It is therefore not possible to form an overall judgement about provision and standards in these subjects. National guidelines and other commercially produced schemes have been adopted as a basis for planning in the subjects. It is evident from teachers' planning and pupils' work that a range of resources including visits and visitors plays an important part in making the work interesting and relevant.
88. **Religious education** is often taught through discussion and talk. Consequently, there was not a body of written work available. There is good photographic evidence of pupils' participation in work that is related to the subject.
89. Much of this work is relevant to their age and experience. The pupils in Year 1 have made a book of their special memories on 'Our spring walk', Easter egg hunt, lighting candles at a service, Chinese New Year and many more. They also learn about creation stories and special books. In the lesson seen in Year 1, teaching was effective in engaging young pupils through a role-play on Jesus calms the storm. By the end of Year 2, pupils have been introduced to key themes in Christianity, including the birth and death of Christ. They are also introduced to other major religions in which they learn about festivals, symbols and places of worship. Spiritual awareness is encouraged through stories and music in assemblies. Pupils listen well and sing whole-heartedly with enthusiasm.

90. Pupils' work and displays in **history** are of good quality. They relate to the Gunpowder plot, Florence Nightingale and Great Fire of London for Year 2 pupils, and to the houses built a long time ago for pupils in Year 1, the latter comparing changes in houses built today and those built a long time ago. The quality of pupils' work reflects a growing understanding of chronology through sequencing of the events of the past. The subject makes good use of literacy and art in representing the past. For example, the pupils in Year 2 have written about the Great Fire of London and illustrated their work through collage and painting. They also created good pictures using computers to show 'London Is burning' or 'Fire is burning'.
91. An important aspect of the **geography** curriculum is that it builds effectively on pupils' knowledge and experience of the world. For example, pupils in Year 1 produce a map of the school grounds or spot the litter, noting where litter is found. From planning and the available evidence of work, it is clear that mapping skills and geographical vocabulary are taught over the year. The Year 2 pupils learn to use a grid for positioning objects and events found in the story of Fantastic Mr Fox. Much of the work is imaginative and based on the stories pupils read in literacy lessons. In both Years 1 and 2, the pupils have produced good maps of the routes taken by The Jolly Postman or The Little Red Riding Hood.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

92. Only one lesson was observed in **art and design**. However, from the very good displays of pupils' work it is evident that standards are good and pupils achieve every well and make very good progress throughout the school. This represents very good improvement from the position at the time of the last inspection. There are examples of very effective work using a wide range of media and materials. Three-dimensional work using junk modelling, card and clay, as well as mask making, gives pupils very good opportunities to create imaginative pieces of work. There are very good links with work by well-known artists such as Matisse and Van Gogh, as well as art from other cultures such as Chinese New Year dragon masks. Year 1 pupils have produced excellent collages in the style of Matisse. Pupils that are more able are very well encouraged to extend and develop their skills. For example, a Year 1 girl created an excellent piece of work when doing observational painting of sunflowers after Van Gogh. She independently devised a method of patterning the leaves by using the pointed end of the brush handle very imaginatively. In Year 2, very good paintings in an impressionist style followed a study of Monet's work. The pupils' work is displayed to excellent effect and this helps create a vibrant, colourful and exciting learning environment for the pupils.
93. No **design and technology** lessons were seen and so it is not possible to make any final judgement about standards. From the scrutiny of displays of work produced by the pupils it is possible to say that standards are likely to be at least average and that some of the work by Year 1 pupils is good. They design, make and evaluate their 'recycled musical instruments', some of which are of good quality. Some of the Junk Robots made by Year 1 pupils are splendid efforts. The amount of pupils' work completed indicates that design and technology plays a full part in the curriculum. One interesting venture is the bridging project, undertaken by Year 2 pupils, when they design a monster but do not actually build it until they reach the Junior School. They then return to Oakwood to show and speak about their models to the incumbent Year 2 pupils. This project not only develops pupils' skills but helps to make the transfer from one school to another as seamless as possible. Resources for design and technology are good and include a good range of construction kits.
94. It was not possible to see any **music** lessons and so definite judgements on standards are not possible. However, it is clear from the good quality of the pupils' singing in assemblies and because all pupils in Year 2 are taught the rudiments of playing the recorder that music is taken seriously at the school.
95. Only two lessons were observed in **physical education**. These lessons indicated that standards are broadly in line with those expected, particularly for pupils' games skills. The school has a good hall with new and appropriately sized gymnastic apparatus. The teachers ensure that pupils cover the appropriate curriculum, with extra enrichment such as dance lessons in Year 1 as part of a performing arts week. In the lessons observed, pupils demonstrated sound ball skills. In Year 2 they can dribble large balls with their feet, move around while bouncing balls and throw and catch. The good quality resources and the teacher's sound subject knowledge enhance their work. Teachers effectively limit the space on the field that they use by marking with cones, and this enables them to keep the pupils close so they can easily be observed and assessed, and so that time is not wasted while pupils are gathered together. Pupils' skills are effectively extended in Year 2 as they work together in small groups to devise their own games using given resources. Teachers question them well regarding rules and scoring systems.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

96. No lesson was seen and therefore it was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards and provision in the subject. There is a good programme of work, which covers the recommended strands of developing an awareness of citizenship, a healthy life style, confidence and responsibility and good relationships. It is not taught as a separate subject but through circle times, assemblies and other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils learn many useful skills including how to distinguish between 'good world' and 'bad world' in the environment in relation to their work on rubbish and litter. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities of looking after others by becoming a buddy or a helping hand. The subject makes a significant contribution to school's good provision for personal development. It is supported by the school ethos and provides opportunities for pupils to develop their role within the community of the class and school. This is one reason why behaviour, relationships, and the climate for learning are strengths of the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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