

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK BROW PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kirkby, Merseyside

LEA area: Knowsley

Unique reference number: 104429

Headteacher: Miss Valmai Roberts

Lead inspector: Mr David Carrington

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th November 2004

Inspection number: 267464

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	275
School address:	Broad Lane Southdene Kirkby Merseyside
Postcode:	L32 6QH
Telephone number:	0151 477 8540
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Eileen Gaskin
Date of previous inspection:	28 th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Park Brow Primary School is located in Kirkby, Merseyside, about seven miles north west of Liverpool city centre. Unemployment in the area is above the local and national level and there is considerable socio-economic deprivation in the neighbourhood. The school is part of the *Excellence in Cities* and *Sure Start* initiatives and the school places the partnership with parents and the community at the heart of what it does. The school is large for a primary school, with 138 boys and 137 girls. The nursery has an additional 15 boys and 14 girls who attend part time. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Most of these pupils are supported for moderate learning difficulties. There are an average proportion of pupils with statements. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has risen significantly since the school was inspected previously. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language. Schools in the district have recently been considered for re-organisation, but for the present, Park Brow is to remain a separate primary school. The local education authority has identified the school as one of ten for the provision of an *Intensified Support Programme* over the next twelve months.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Lead inspector	Mathematics and information and communication technology.
9479	Mrs Christine Field	Lay inspector	
17263	Mr Andy Bond	Team inspector	Science, geography, history, physical education, personal, social and health education and citizenship, and special educational needs.
19765	Mrs Pauleen Shannon	Team inspector	Religious education, music, and areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.
28686	Mrs Liz Walker	Team inspector	English, art and design and design and technology.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Park Brow Primary School is an improving school. It provides a **satisfactory** quality of education for its pupils. Pupils build skills, knowledge and understanding at an appropriate rate, and their achievement is satisfactory. There are a number of key areas where improvements have to be made but the headteacher is leading the creation of a more effective school from the front, and with determination and success. The school's priorities are the right ones to take it forward. Because the cost of education is very high, the school gives **unsatisfactory** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are well below average overall, and not high enough, in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- Achievement is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory, with strengths at the start and end of the school.
- The school is effectively led by the headteacher who has clear vision for the future of the school.
- Pupils are keen to come to school; they behave well and become kind, considerate and friendly children.
- Children get off to a successful start in the Foundation Stage because the quality of provision is good.
- The school has worked hard to develop a good partnership with parents, the community, other schools and support agencies in order to improve the quality of education and rate of achievement.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and do not form a platform for the effective planning of learning.
- The monitoring of achievement and the quality of learning is inconsistent and not rigorous enough.

The school has made **satisfactory** improvement since 1999. Provision in Year 2 and in ICT have both been improved effectively. Assessment has been improved satisfactorily in English and mathematics, but there is still work to do to strengthen it in other subjects. The school has positive potential for continued improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

In 2004 pupils in Year 6 attained well below average standards in English and science and below average standards in mathematics. The following table shows the results over recent years in Year 6.

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

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

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, especially for moderate learning difficulties, has increased substantially in the last few years and this has had a negative effect on standards. The rate of improvements to standards has been slower than in most schools. The decline in

standards recorded in the national tests since the previous inspection has been stemmed, though standards are still not high enough. However, achievement is currently **satisfactory**. School managers are working hard to speed up the raising of standards by making key changes to policies and procedures in school and by raising expectations amongst all staff. These are sensible priorities.

Attendance levels are improving but remain just below average. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. The attitudes of pupils are good, they behave well and relationships are positive and beneficial. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is **good** overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. There is good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory in the other years and this is the overall quality across the school. Learning follows a similar pattern. During the inspection there was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, centred on Year 3 and Year 4. This was due to low expectations, weaknesses in planning and the imperfect match of work to pupils' needs. On the other hand, very good or better teaching was observed in reception and Years 2 and 6. Planning, the pace of some lessons, expectations, and the degree of challenge for pupils are not good enough. However, teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour and the provision for pupils with special educational needs are good. There is some good enrichment of the satisfactory curriculum through out-of-school activities such as the *Breakfast Club*. The work of the Learning Mentor is having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and achievement.

Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. A promising start has been made to the development of a comprehensive system of assessment for children in the Foundation Stage, which is of very good quality. In English and mathematics there have also been positive developments, but this has not been extended to other subjects. The school has a very well thought out plan for the development of a target setting, sharing and tracking system to ensure all pupils achieve their best. This has only recently been introduced and has yet to have major impact.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall quality of leadership, management and governance is **satisfactory**. The headteacher has clearly shown her determination to raise standards, boost achievement and improve the quality of education since she joined the school in January. She leads the school well. The deputy headteacher and other key managers are equally committed to making the school a better and more effective place for the pupils. They are cheerful as they work together to overcome the weaknesses in provision that hold back learning and achievement. The quality of management is unsatisfactory because there is not yet a widely enough shared set of procedures in place to check and evaluate the successes and weaknesses of the school. However, this has been identified by the school and included in their school improvement plan. Governors support the school fully and are increasingly aware of its performance. Whilst not all statutory requirements are met, in all other respects governance is satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils hold positive views of the school and feel welcome and valued. The school has worked hard to forge a positive relationship with parents, the community, other schools and support agencies in order to benefit the pupils. Parents recognise this and say that their partnership with the school is a success. The pupils say they are proud of their work and they enjoy sharing it with visitors.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Speed the raising of standards and accelerate pupils' achievement in all subjects, especially English and mathematics, in order to seek better value for money.
- Issue guidance for staff to promote best quality learning and teaching, and sharpen the monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that there is more effective learning and increased achievement throughout the school.
- Move with urgency to fully implement the well-conceived policy for assessment and ensure planning and the target setting process are focused on the needs of groups of pupils and individuals in all years.
- Review and evaluate the provision of non-teaching support in all year groups.

Although not a key issue, the school should work speedily to bring policies and publications up-to-date and in line with statutory requirements.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are **well below average** and not high enough. Achievement is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are not high enough and the rate of improvement has been slower than in most schools.
- Pupils reach well below average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education.
- Achievement is satisfactory.
- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage.
- Boys and girls generally achieve as well as each other.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as the other pupils.

Commentary

1. The trend in standards during the last five years has been downwards. There are some promising indicators that the bottom of the decline has been reached and that standards are rising. This is due to the resolute approach of the headteacher who recognises that standards are not high enough and that the rate of improvement has been considerably slower than in most schools. Most staff are signed up to the work that is necessary to raise standards and accelerate achievement.
2. The school's results in the national tests in 2003 were disappointing but there were signs of a significant upturn in 2004. Last year, the pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 attained well below average standards in English and science and below average in mathematics in 2004. This situation is summarised in the following tables, which show that the pupils in school are lagging behind similar aged pupils in most other schools, though the results are getting much better and the gap is closing.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.7 (11.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	11.8 (10.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.0 (13.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.4 (23.5)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	26.0 (23.8)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.2 (26.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Inspectors judge that the current Year 2 and 6 pupils are on course to gain well below average standards in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education by the end of the school year.
4. When children start in the nursery they have low levels of skills and knowledge in the six areas of learning. This is particularly noticeable in communication, language and literacy and in personal and social development. The quality of provision is good in the nursery and reception classes. Children are provided with a good range of learning experiences, which allow them to make choices, but also for staff to intervene to extend knowledge and understanding.
5. The good rate of achievement in the Foundation Stage slows in Years 1 to 5. Achievement is satisfactory overall in these years, but does not regain its former momentum until Year 6, when it is again good. There are inconsistencies in the quality of provision in infant and junior classes that slow achievement. Overall, the rate of achievement in school is not brisk enough. School managers have introduced a number of major changes to policy and practice to improve achievement, for example in target setting and tracking. These are beginning to have impact, but it is too early to judge their full benefits.
6. Past national test results indicate that boys and girls generally achieved as well as each other. Evidence from the inspection also shows little significant difference in the performance of the two genders. It was noticed, once or twice, that girls were more willing and rapid to answer questions compared with the boys in the same class.
7. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties, which limit their acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. However, they achieve as well as other pupils in the school. When provided with additional support, focused on their particular learning difficulties, they usually achieve well.
8. The headteacher has reviewed the targets set for 2005 to ensure that they are challenging enough. This is an example of the strength of her personal leadership and an indication of the school's ambitions for the future. The local education authority is to provide an *Intensified Support Programme* over the next twelve months to enable the school to meet the demands of its targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good** overall. The school has a caring ethos in which pupils' achievements are very much celebrated. Pupils are happy to come to school and parents are very pleased with the good values and principles the school is helping to promote. Attendance levels are showing improvement, and although just below average, are on the rise because of the school's very effective improvement strategies. The punctuality of a minority of pupils is unsatisfactory and the school has yet to sharpen up registration practice in some respects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils have good attitudes to learning; they enjoy school and try hard.
- A significant number of pupils require a lot of behavioural support but the very positive systems in place to help them manage their own behaviour result in settled and happy classes.
- There are generally good relationships between pupils and with staff and these underpin the effective learning that takes place.
- Some pupils are regularly late for school and this interrupts the start of the day.
- All pupils know right from wrong and become sociable, considerate young people but there is room for improvement in their cultural and especially multicultural awareness.

Commentary

9. Children in the nursery and reception classes are settling well into the routines of the Foundation Stage. The staff are rightly placing much emphasis on fostering the children's personal and social skills as most have started school with very limited experience of sharing or playing co-operatively with others.
10. Older boys and girls mostly show good attitudes to their lessons. There are good relationships between pupils and with staff and these underpin the satisfactory learning taking place in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and generally behave well. They try hard and concentrate well in lessons, although their interest often wanes towards the end of the sessions. Pupils respond best to the more stimulating lessons, typically found in Year 6. In the best lessons pupils listen attentively, work productively and try to do their very best, rising to the challenges they are set. This was well exemplified in a very good mathematics lesson in Year 2 where all pupils worked purposefully and productively as they calculated the value of two digit numbers. The enthusiasm of the teacher, who made her high expectations very apparent, in a very positive manner, was infectious and resulted in pupils' good personal achievement. Pupils told inspectors that they really enjoy Fridays when they are awarded with *Golden Time* for the last part of the day in recognition of their hard work, good effort and good behaviour.
11. The school takes a firm but fair line on matters of behaviour and discipline. A system of zones operates which are clear and visible to everyone around school. Most pupils operate in green zone, which shows that they are working well and following the code of conduct. Moves out of the green zone reflect a drop in the standards expected. All pupils sign up to the *Park Brow Agreement* and most try their best to keep it. Around school are prominently displayed rules and codes that promote positive messages. For example, corridor posters remind the pupils to show respect and tolerance and to be friends with one another. The work on display done by last year's Year 6 pupils entitled *Recipes for mending a broken friendship*, is very poignant, and sets a good role model for others. Every week, achievement assemblies are high status affairs in which good work, effort, and behaviour are commended. The *Pupil of the Week-Citizenship Award* is the highest accolade and much coveted. Behaviour in class is typically settled and harmonious. A significant minority of pupils show challenging behaviour that staff do very well to manage positively. The role of the Learning Mentor is pivotal in helping particularly vulnerable pupils to develop good self-images and to build confidence and good self-esteem. The *friendship circles* in place for pupils to help one another with managing personally challenging situations are very positive features.
12. Behaviour at break and lunchtimes is satisfactory. Pupils told inspectors that falling out and sometimes instances of bullying occur but that the teachers always sort them out when they are brought to their attention. A school council has recently been elected and council representatives were observed to do a confident job in helping sort out problems on the playground. A quiet room is currently being developed to be available to those who want to stay indoors at lunchtime - the pupils have named this the *Chill Out Room*.
13. The school has a very inclusive policy of welcoming all comers and provides behavioural support for pupils whatever their background. However it will not tolerate abusive or anti-social behaviour and uses exclusion as a final resort. The zero rate of exclusions demonstrates just how effective the school's behaviour management strategies are and how committed to equality of opportunity for all everyone is.
14. Pupils' attendance is just below average and shows remarkable improvement due to the very effective systems being implemented. Led by the Learning Mentor, the school is working effectively to promote good attendance by raising its status amongst pupils and by rewarding improved attendance. Every week the highest attending class are presented with a trophy and their achievement is highlighted by the posting of a certificate on a display board in the hall. A shout of joy went up from a Year 3/4 class when they found out they had won the cup during the week of inspection! Punctuality is a different matter. A few pupils are habitually late and

some parents are not giving the school their full support in making sure their children attend on time. More could be done to encourage a smarter start to the day. There is also the need for all teachers to make sure that registers are sent back to the office in line with agreed policy after both morning and afternoon registration.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	6.9	School data :	0.3
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.

15. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall. Topics such as challenging racism, the importance of rules and coping with peer pressure help pupils make good progress in their understanding of right and wrong, and of the moral dilemmas they will encounter. Circle times are used effectively for the youngest children to consider what it means to be special and how everyone is special in some way. The pupils become sociable, considerate young people ready for the next stage of their education. Although thoughtful, as for example when praying together in assembly or when charitable fundraising endeavours are undertaken, there is room for improvement in their spiritual awareness. Too little time is given for personal reflection in assemblies and in the curriculum. Some thought provoking writing about *Personal Dreams* by all pupils, are a positive feature and help them think about personal aspirations. Pupils learn about the cultural differences in the wider world through the study of comparative religions, through the study of different types of music such as *Gamelan* in Year 6 and through geography studies such as the work about the journeys of *Barnaby Bear* in Year 2. However, there is potential for the school to promote pupils’ deeper understanding of the diversity of cultures present in contemporary British society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are of **satisfactory** quality. Assessment is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory in the other years and this is the overall quality across the school.
- A small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and learning was observed in Year 3 and Year 4; there was some very good or better teaching and learning in reception and Years 2 and 6.
- Low expectations, weaknesses in planning and the imperfect match of work to needs are key areas of teaching that have to be improved.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and the very well thought out plan for target setting, sharing and tracking is in its infancy.
- There is no learning and teaching policy in place to guide improvement.

Commentary

16. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. This judgement disguises the inconsistencies evident in learning from class to class. There is ample evidence of overall good teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes and in Year 6. Teaching is satisfactory in the remaining years though it is not consistent. The qualities of the best teaching and learning have not, until recently, been identified and shared successfully enough. There is no learning and teaching policy in place to guide improvement and to share best practice and this is a weakness. At present, the overall quality of teaching is not good enough to bring the accelerated achievement that is the school's main goal.
17. During the inspection, as the following table shows, there was a small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. This was observed in Year 3 and Year 4. The table also shows that there was some very good or better teaching, which was in reception and Years 2 and 6. The excellent teaching was observed in reception.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(2)	7 (14)	23 (45)	18 (35)	2 (4)	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.

18. The weakest teaching is marked by expectations that are too low, shortcomings in planning, and the imperfect match of work to needs. In many lessons the work set is exactly the same for all pupils, regardless of background or prior attainment. The pace of learning is inconsistent in some sessions and the promising beginning fizzles out. Some lessons that were judged to be satisfactory in terms of the promotion of satisfactory achievement were judged to show an element of these shortcomings. School managers know that these weaknesses are present and have started the process of making improvement. Most staff are willing to work for this improvement. The provision of a clear set of guidelines for learning and teaching is the next step for the school.
19. The school does have some strengths of teaching and learning to build on. The insistence on high standards of behaviour is a good feature that ensures that lessons are well regulated and settled sessions for learning. The very small group of support staff work as a good team with the teachers and, generally, they move learning forward. However, in some classes around two-fifths of the pupils have special educational needs and the amount of additional support is inconsistent. This is a barrier to better achievement. Nonetheless, all staff take care to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
20. Homework provision makes a positive contribution to achievement because the tasks set are well related to the content of lessons and provide practice and extension in the development of skills and knowledge. Parents support the homework programme well.
21. The teaching of English, mathematics, science and ICT is satisfactory, as later sections of this report indicate. In general, there is appropriate focus on the development of basic skills and knowledge in lessons and teachers have sound subject knowledge and expertise. However, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' independent learning skills in these subjects. The use of pupils' writing and computer skills is inconsistent in most subjects. Not enough use is made of computers or the library for pupils to research. In mathematics there is evidence of pupils' problem solving and, in science, of pupils setting up their own investigations. However these opportunities need further development so that pupils throughout the school gain more confidence to make their own decisions.
22. Teachers cater appropriately for pupils with special educational needs in lessons, although the work set could be matched more closely to their needs. When pupils receive specialist support in small groups from teachers and classroom assistants, based on their individual education or

behaviour plans, they learn at a faster rate. This is because the tasks set are more focused and matched to their capability.

23. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. The school has improved the quality of assessment well for children in the Foundation Stage, where assessment is very good and a model for the rest of the school. Assessment in English and mathematics has been improved satisfactorily. There are still aspects of assessment in these two subjects that require improvement, however. This is particularly the case in implementing the very well thought out plan for target setting, sharing and tracking in English and mathematics. The plan has been shared amongst staff but it has not yet been taken up consistently or rigorously enough across the school. Assessment in other subjects is not as advanced and in some subjects such as geography and art and design it is ad hoc. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to self-assess their work in lessons and the marking of work is not sufficiently informative about ways to improve knowledge and skills.

The curriculum

The curriculum, accommodation and resources are **satisfactory** with all statutory requirements met. There are appropriate opportunities for enrichment. There is good provision for pupils with special needs and children in the Foundation Stage.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' personal, social and health education are well promoted, consequently pupils achieve well and have positive attitudes to learning and to each other.
- The school is inclusive with good provision for pupils with special educational and behavioural needs.
- Children in the Foundation Stage get off to a successful start because the quality of provision is consistently good.
- Planning does not consistently take into account the ability of different groups of pupils.
- Some opportunities are missed to develop pupils' independent learning.
- There are not enough learning support assistants to help pupils.

Commentary

24. The satisfactory curriculum is based on the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Appropriate strategies for literacy and numeracy are in place, which are having a positive impact on achievement. Some specialism is provided in physical education, music and French. Again, this benefits pupils' achievement. There has been satisfactory progress in addressing most weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection.
25. Children in nursery and reception are provided with an interesting and well thought out range of learning experiences, which motivates them to learn. The school has rightly focused on implementing the literacy and numeracy strategy. It is now in the process of reviewing the curriculum to enhance creativity in the curriculum and to ensure that all enrichment activities are dove-tailed in. While each subject appropriately plans units of work over time, day-to-day planning in many classes does not take enough account of the needs of different groups of pupils. This affects the rate of their attainment and achievement.
26. The atmosphere of the school is inclusive. Pupils have good access to the curriculum whatever their disability, gender, or social background. A register has been started of pupils with particular talents though no extra provision for these pupils is yet made. Provision for pupils with special needs is good and ensures they achieve well. The school has a small number of vulnerable pupils and these are very well provided for.

27. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their needs are assessed well and individual plans are expertly produced, which are well focused on improving pupils' basic skills, using a well-graded approach. Regular reviews ensure that progress is monitored effectively and that targets are re-adjusted to promote further achievement.
28. The school provides effectively for pupils' personal, social and health education. As a result pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Provision in the Foundation Stage is very good. The youngest pupils are helped to develop the necessary social skills to learn. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to value each other and their school, and to develop an understanding of the wider world. The school council provides pupils with opportunities to arrive at their own decisions. The work of the Learning Mentor is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, self-esteem and attendance.
29. There is some good enrichment of the curriculum through out of school activities such as the *Breakfast Club* and the *Homework Club*. The regular provision of theme weeks such as for health and the Festival for Learning, successfully add interest for pupils. While the school has a range of additional clubs most of these are attended only by junior pupils. The school provides an appropriate range of opportunities to participate in the arts and sports although pupils currently have few trips out to visit places of interest.
30. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The site is extensive but showing its age and repair works are a constant drain on the school's budget. There are some strengths. Accommodation is very good in the Foundation Stage and used well. Good use is made of spare rooms for community and small group use. Resources are generally satisfactory and used appropriately in lessons. The school has successfully improved resources for ICT since the time of the previous inspection, with more equipment imminent. While support staff work hard to assist pupils in lessons they are spread quite thinly throughout the school. There are not enough support staff to work in every class. As a result many pupils do not get enough small group support. The school has a disability access plan to make the school fully accessible.

Care, guidance and support

The systems in place to ensure pupils' health, welfare and safety are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are highly effective procedures overall in place to ensure the health, welfare and safety of pupils.
- The monitoring of pupils' personal development including attendance is good but much more work is needed to make the assessment of academic achievement an effective tool for targeting improvement.

Commentary

31. The strengths in this aspect of provision reported on by the previous inspection have all been sustained. All pupils are well known by the staff and have good, trusting relationships with them. Pupils are treated with respect, care and patience. The school works with great success to support a significant number of pupils who are particularly vulnerable. Records show that the number of pupils who are assessed as being very vulnerable was reduced by 30 per cent this year due to the very good systems in place to combat their personal barriers to learning. The work of the Learning Mentor is fundamental in helping this group of pupils learn successfully. Induction arrangements work effectively in helping the youngest children and pupils new to school, settle well. Home visits are recognised by parents as very valuable to securing a good home to school partnership that works in the best interests of their children.

32. Teachers and other adults working in the school give pupils with special educational needs good support. Care is taken to ensure that their needs are catered for properly, their progress monitored and that they achieve appropriately.
33. Health and safety aspects are well attended to with risk assessments taking place regularly. A *Health Task Group* is in place that comprises staff, pupils, parents and governors who are working together to promote health education. A *Health Day* was organised earlier this year in which different activities were available for pupils to experience including Tai Chi and yoga alongside workshops on good diets and personal hygiene.
34. The school places pupils' welfare at the heart of its provision. Child protection procedures are well understood by all staff and conform to local requirements. The welfare systems work very much in support of pupils who say that they are confident to share any problems they have with their teachers or the Learning Mentor. The school has totally eradicated the unsafe features of the building highlighted in the previous report. The school has extended the school day for those pupils who want an early start to their day. The *Breakfast Club* operates each morning from 8am for a large group of pupils who enjoy the hot breakfast and range of activities provided. Another initiative geared towards improving pupils' well-being and personal safety is the schools very comprehensive travel plan. The *Walking Bus* is an outstanding feature that has been recognised by the Department for Transport as one of the best. Prizes and incentives for pupils to walk to school together have made an extremely positive contribution to helping raise attendance and supporting better road safety along the way.
35. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, particularly the many pupils with individual education or behaviour plans. The progress of these pupils is carefully tracked with regular reviews undertaken that involve parents. In their academic development, pupils receive good advice and support, which helps most to achieve successfully. However, assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. A promising start has been made to the development of a comprehensive system of assessment for English and mathematics, but this has not been extended to other subjects. The school has a very well thought out plan for the development of a target setting, sharing and tracking system to ensure all pupils achieve their best. This has only recently been introduced and has yet to have major impact, but the prospects for its future success are positive. The involvement of pupils in the work and development of the school is satisfactory, and the new school council representatives and monitors are good role models for others in taking on roles of responsibility.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There is a **good** partnership with parents, the community and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication between school and home works well.
- Most parents are supportive and involved in their children's education.

Commentary

36. The school is working very hard to build a better partnership with parents and its community and this is one of a growing number of successes. The community lunch organised for inspectors to meet those who work in support of the school was extremely well attended and reflected well the high value that is placed on this aspect of the pupils' education. Parents hold positive views of the school. They like the family values of the school and are pleased their children attend. The school forges good links with the parents with special educational needs. They are invited to review meetings, consulted on their children's needs and encouraged to support their learning at home.

37. The good partnership between school and home are firmly built in the Foundation Stage, for example through the links with Mother and Toddler club that meets in the school, through the home visits and through the excellent links with the local *Sure Start*. Communication works well and parents find the school very approachable. There is a regular newsletter for parents that contains useful news and views and meetings are organised about a range of aspects that are well attended. Assemblies receive very high levels of support from parents such as the one about different kinds of music led by lower junior pupils during the week of inspection. Various initiatives are usefully in place to help parents get to know the school well and to learn new skills. For example an ICT workshop was well attended and many parents have fine-tuned their own literacy and numeracy skills through the *SHARE* project in a bid to better support their children's education. A family learning project that runs over 18 weeks is proving successful in helping a parents to support their children's learning at home. Homework is a good feature at Park Brow because of the school's approaches. The annual written report sent to parents is viewed positively by them, and include targets that many find helps them support their children's education.
38. The School Association is a small, but active group, who work hard to help the school build for improvement. Through well-supported social events, such as the bingo nights and discos, they raise useful sums of money that have been put towards the purchase of resources. The school makes effective use of the local area to widen pupils' experiences and draws heavily on an extensive range of visitors to enrich the quality of pupils' education. The school has strong links with the church and other local schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are **satisfactory** overall. The headteacher has made many positive changes since her appointment ten months ago. This has been accomplished with good support from the whole school community who share a common aim of striving to provide the best education possible for the pupils at Park Brow.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is effectively led by the headteacher who has clear vision for the future of the school.
- The school's commitment to educational inclusion is very good.
- The positive team spirit and unity amongst staff is supporting steady improvement but more focus is required on adding rigour to assessment, monitoring and evaluation processes.
- Subject leadership is satisfactory overall but management requires a boost.
- The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Commentary

39. The headteacher gives good leadership and has set a clear plan to continue to improve the quality of education and raise standards. She has worked decisively to manage the necessary changes over the last ten months and to make sure that the issues identified by an intensive review supported by the local education authority are addressed. She is motivational and upbeat in her style and is committed to building a team who are all involved in promoting the school's mission and equally keen to do their best for the pupils. Noteworthy are the successes already notched up that include a good system of school improvement planning that involves all stakeholders, the good and developing partnership with parents, a kick start to the performance management process that all see as positive in supporting school effectiveness, the move towards sustainable leadership and the growing involvement of middle managers in this. With the considerable involvement of consultants and advisers from the local education authority and plan of intensified support (ISP) for the next 12 months, the school has secure capacity to continue to improve.

40. The headteacher and deputy have a very positive working partnership and both are equally committed to achieving the mission and key aims for moving the school forward. As a full time teacher in Year 6 the deputy is a very good role model for others. The amount of time she has available to undertake the key roles of mathematics and music subject leader, as well as the role of deputy, is extremely limited and this requires urgent review. The staff team are hardworking and between them carry all the posts of responsibility for subjects and major aspects of the school's work. However, many of the job descriptions are very out of date and are in need of a total revamp to reflect current roles and responsibilities. The job descriptions make it clear what teachers' class roles are but are less explicit about the responsibilities as leaders and managers of the subjects for which they are responsible, for example the monitoring of teaching, learning and standards. The quality of management is unsatisfactory because there is not yet a widely enough shared set of procedures in place to check and evaluate the successes and weaknesses of the school. This has been identified by the school and set out in the ISP plan within the key priority of supporting professional development
41. The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable. She leads and manages this area of school provision satisfactorily. There are good arrangements for specialist support teachers and agencies with particular expertise to visit school, in order to offer advice and to support groups of pupils. However, until recently there has been insufficient time for the co-ordinator to monitor the provision during school hours and develop a cohesive approach to the overall management of special educational needs. There are positive signs that this weakness is now gradually being addressed under the new school leadership regime.
42. The governing body are supportive of the school and committed to playing a full role in its daily life and development. Governance is wholly satisfactory. Governors manage the budget effectively and apply the principles of best value securely to their decisions when purchasing goods and services. They use a range of indicators to check that the quality of education is the best it can be are not yet sharp enough to fully hold the school to account. The school has not received a full financial audit since 2001, though one is due at the end of this term. The governors ensure that most of the legal requirements are met, however some policies are in need of review and the prospectus and their annual report to parents are two required documents that are in need of more work.
43. Day-to-day administration is very efficient. The office staff give a cheerful welcome to visitors and create a very good first impression of the school. They contribute well to the financial control and management procedures in school and maintain all records carefully.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	964 978	Balance from previous year	2 873
Total expenditure	967 851	Balance carried forward to the next year	36 318
Expenditure per pupil	3 343		

44. In this stage of its improvement the school provides unsatisfactory value for money because the quality of learning, pupils' achievement and the standards reached are not yet as good as they should be and the cost of educating each pupils is very high.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**. Children are taught well and as a result achieve well. They settle in quickly and work from an interesting, curriculum. This is the same positive picture as at the time of the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because the staff provide an exciting and enjoyable curriculum.
- Teaching is never less than good and at times very good and excellent. This motivates children well.
- The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The co-ordinator leads the team well. She is enthusiastic, dynamic and has a real understanding of how young children learn.
- The assessment arrangements are very good. The results are used to plan activities that are well matched to children's learning. They are shared with parents so they can help their children at home.
- Many children have difficulty recording their work and need more help do develop fluent writing skills.
- Children with special learning or medical needs are well catered for and great efforts are made to ensure they are fully included in all activities.
- A real strength is the teamwork between the teachers and support staff. The support team are a real asset in all they do. They make a significant contribution to the children's learning.
- Accommodation is very good inside and outside, with resources that are used well.

Commentary

45. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in the two nursery and reception classes and have access to a well thought out outdoor play and learning environment. Provision for the children is good and there are a number of key strengths that ensure they get off to a rapid start in their education. The curriculum is well planned to provide an interesting, motivating and enjoyable learning experience in the six areas of learning. The staff have good knowledge of children of this age. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and has ensured the staff work as a team and are well focused on the needs of the individual child.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because teaching and learning is very well focused on promoting children's confidence, independence and social skills.

Commentary

46. Teaching is very good and as a result children make very good progress and achieve well in developing their social skills. As a result, by the end of their time in reception, just under half the class are on course to achieve their early learning goals. Most children enter nursery with low social skills and many lack confidence. Admission arrangements are very effective. There are very good relationships with parents and the local pre-school group, all of which help children settle easily. Staff benefit from the parents who give their time generously as class helpers. Nursery staff work hard to establish secure routines so that children feel safe. All the

staff are very caring and use every opportunity to praise children's independence. For example all children eagerly look for their names at registration time.

47. The daily small group sessions help children learn to take turns and to listen to each other. Sessions are built in when the school's Learning Mentor works with small groups to develop children's confidence. Reception staff encourage further independence and children respond very well to being helpers. Staff provide many opportunities for children to learn to co-operate through playing games. As a result, many children work successfully both alone and in small groups.
48. There are very good transition arrangements between nursery and reception. However the school has identified as a priority the need to strengthen further the transition arrangements for children as they enter Year 1. For some children the demands of the more formal curriculum in Year 1 and the difference in organisation of the classroom are unsettling. A few continue to have immature social skills when they enter Year 1. All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour. When children do not do as expected they are dealt with firmly but fairly so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of other children. Children respond well to this and as a result by the time they leave the Foundation Stage their attitudes to school and behaviour are good. Nursery and reception children enjoy school and show real interest in what they are doing. They are eager to start the day and learn!

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because all staff take every opportunity to develop the children's language skills.
- Many children have difficulty expressing their ideas and recording work.

Commentary

49. Many children enter nursery with poor communication skills. As a result of good teaching by the end of reception while most remain below the level expected for their age, a minority are on course to achieve their early learning goals. Many children have difficulty expressing their ideas because of their limited vocabulary. This affects their ability in many areas of learning. Staff work hard to develop their speaking and listening skills. Good opportunities are provided for children to express their ideas through meaningful talk. Many children in nursery tend to give single word answers and have a limited vocabulary. Programmes funded by the *Sure Start* initiative also help extend children's language skills. Staff encourage less confident children to talk in sentences and more fluent communicators to extend their vocabulary, but it is slow going. Support staff make a very big contribution and are used very well to extend children's communication skills. Activities such as the *magic stone* game where children sit in a circle encourage less confident children to talk and share their views. A few children would benefit from a more structured approach to help them gain the confidence and skills to talk with confidence.
50. Nursery staff lay the stepping-stones for establishing positive attitudes to reading, through sharing attractive *Big Books* and familiar rhymes. Reception staff teach early reading skills consistently through using appealing stories with familiar characters such as Elmer. All staff share books informally throughout the day, however, few children actively chose to look at books independently and need more encouragement. Daily opportunities are well chosen for children to write for a range of purposes. While every effort is taken to develop writing skills, many children have difficulty forming their letters fluently or recording their work independently. Some children have poor letter formation at the time of joining Year 1.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's skills through a practical curriculum.

Commentary

51. Many children enter nursery with poor mathematical skills and limited experience in using and applying mathematical knowledge. This area is well taught. There is a focus on first hand practical activities through attractive resources. Early indications are that by the end of reception while most remain below average, a minority are on course to achieve their early learning goals. All staff take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's mathematical skills and language. For example, children daily take an active role in counting numbers for the register. In nursery, mathematical awareness is often promoted through rhymes and games. This engages the interest of boys and girls, many of who join in enthusiastically. A range of sand and larger mathematical equipment is in constant use so that children can use their mathematical language. Reception staff build on these practical experiences well, while encouraging children to record their work. In an excellent lesson, the teacher made learning about numbers exciting for all children through the use of high quality games and resources. The contribution by the learning support assistants was outstanding in motivating the children to learn with confidence. By the end of reception although children achieve well, many still find difficulty explaining their thinking and recording their work.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good balance between structured activities and learning through play and informal experiences that help the children achieve well.

Commentary

52. Although teaching is good and children achieve well, most children will not reach all their learning goals by the time they leave reception because they have so much knowledge to build. Planning shows that there is a good range of activities for children to develop their senses and widen their understanding of the world. Good use is made of social and snack times to help children learn about being healthy. Curriculum plans show that staff provide a range of interesting experiences. Topics such *Ourselves*, *Pattern*, and *Winter*, all help children to build up their picture of the world. In both nursery and reception children have many opportunities to develop their knowledge and curiosity about the world around them. They regularly use investigative areas linked to topics. Staff widen children's knowledge of different cultures, by learning about special times of the year such as Harvest, Remembrance Day, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Computer skills are well taught. Staff build up children's pleasure and confidence in using computers by providing daily opportunities to use a range of interesting programmes.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

53. It was not possible to observe provision in physical development during the inspection so this area of learning is only reported briefly here.

54. Planning shows that children have regular sessions in the hall to help them develop their physical skills and to learn to respond to music. The large outside area has excellent climbing equipment where children can develop their physical skills and confidence, safely. Children have daily access to three-wheeled vehicles and a range of small games equipment, which allows them ample opportunities to develop their movement and balance skills. All children develop their manipulative skills effectively by handling dough, scissors and small toys. For some children their hand-eye co-ordination remains weak, which affects their ability to hold and use pencils effectively.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The imaginative areas are used well to extend children's creativity and enable them to achieve well.

Commentary

55. Most children enter nursery with skills well below average. Teaching is good and as a result most children achieve well. By the end of reception while most children show skills that are below the level expected for their age, a minority are on course to achieve their early learning goals. There are many opportunities for children to develop their creativity and skills effectively. There is daily access to a good range of materials, with many planned opportunities to paint, draw and make models, which enables children to practise and improve their skills well. Staff develop children's skills and creativity through a range of interesting topics and imaginative play experiences. Nursery children have many opportunities to sing rhymes and explore musical instruments informally, which contributes well to their musical achievement. Reception children work through a planned music programme that is well structured to build knowledge and skills at a good rate. The imaginative play areas in both classes are changed frequently to match each topic and to engage the interest of boys and girls.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Whilst standards in English are not high enough, achievement is satisfactory and there is good determination to make improvements.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall.
- Assessment procedures are adequate but little guidance is given when marking to show pupils how to improve their work.

Commentary

56. Standards in English have been too low during much of the period since the previous inspection. National test results both at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were well below the national average in 2004. However there are promising signs of improvement and there is determination from the headteacher and the English leader to raise expectations and the degree of challenge provided for pupils. The 2005 targets for English are appropriately demanding.
57. A significant number of pupils enter school with very low level speaking and listening skills. Thus, the pupils have much ground to make up during their time in Year 1 and 2. There are also a significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, which impacts significantly on the results of the national tests. Results in reading and writing are well below the national average by the end of Year 2. Results in Year 6 have been too low for a number of years. However, in 2004 standards in writing rose significantly, particularly at the end of Year 6. The school has focused firmly on raising standards in pupils' writing and an increased proportion of pupils achieved the higher level in the writing test.
58. The poor speaking and listening skills are a major factor in the well below average standards in English. When pupils enter Year 1, lessons continue to focus on improving pupils' vocabulary and speaking skills. Teachers work hard to contain and use pupils' enthusiasm to communicate to positive effect. They encourage pupils to discuss with each other some aspects of their work and extend their understanding soundly by insisting on the use of correct language patterns, and to listen carefully to the teacher and each other.
59. The recent efforts towards raising standards of pupils' writing include the introduction of a new handwriting style. There has not yet been time enough for this to have major impact, though it is noticeable that there is inconsistency in the approach between classes. Pupils' writing skills are limited, but thought and care is demonstrated in some pieces of their own writing, particularly in their ideas for achieving their dreams and in pieces of personal writing. Story writing often lacks imagination, and skills develop too slowly throughout Year 3 and Year 4, where writing is focused on exercises, which are not always well enough matched to pupils' needs. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils demonstrate their willingness to empathise with other points of view and they record their ideas well. The quality of marking of pupils' work in Year 6 is very good and gives clear indication of how to improve their work. Marking in other classes is inconsistent and does not generally provide such effective guidance for pupils.
60. Pupils do better in reading than writing. Standards are well below average because of the significant gaps in children's knowledge and skill when they start school. The basic skills of reading, especially phonics, are taught well, and younger pupils enjoy reading at home, sharing their progress and they practise frequently with their parents. Reading diaries are used to good effect and pupils achieve satisfactorily.

61. Whilst older pupils undertake some project work, there is too little use of books for research, investigation and enquiry. The library has yet to be used effectively enough to develop pupils' skills in independent research.
62. The quality of learning and teaching is satisfactory. Where lessons are well planned, with measured steps for all groups, and with sufficient variety to keep pupils on task, progress is at least satisfactory and often good. In effective lessons teachers recognise pupils' short concentration spans and vary their approach so pupils are involved and responsive to the range of tasks. The focus on different activities helps younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 to build up, albeit slowly, their reading and writing skills in the majority of lessons.
63. Where there is unsatisfactory teaching, lessons are not sufficiently focused on the needs of the pupils. Because time is not used effectively enough and the pace of learning is too slow, some pupils become inattentive and unable to complete their tasks. In such lessons, not enough pupils achieve satisfactorily.
64. By contrast, the imaginative and strong commitment to ensuring pupils achieve well in lessons is demonstrated by the very good quality of teaching in Year 6. Pupils use texts well and were observed to savour the abridged version of *Pilgrims Progress*. Their level of perception was good as they made interesting comparisons about the style and principal characters in the story. The teacher valued the pupils' opinions and used them well to extend ideas and develop further understanding of the novel. There was a willingness to engage in discussion and pupils used a good range of vocabulary to describe and compare the main characters in the story. They used examples of their own feelings and experience to explain how a journey through life must have felt.
65. Pupils with special educational needs achieve soundly because they are well supported and their tasks are matched carefully to their needs. However, there is not always enough learning support in lessons and this slows the general level of progress.
66. The subject leader has managed the process of improvement soundly to date. She has had effective support from consultants who have helped to raise standards in teaching and learning. The local education authority is to provide an *Intensified Support Programme* in English during the next year in order to maintain this improvement. The subject leader has not had opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision and achievement directly in lessons and this restricts her overview of the subject. At present, procedures to assess pupils' work are in place but the data produced is inconsistently used to evaluate pupils' achievement and to set targets. However, the subject leader has aspiration to make improvements to the subject and to give an effective steer to English.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

67. There is satisfactory use of English in other subjects. Where resources are thoughtfully chosen, as in Year 6, there is very good use of literacy to support learning in religious education. Teachers encourage pupils to learn specialist vocabulary, for instance in science and mathematics. The school has yet to provide consistent ways for English, especially writing, to be a key part of learning in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6; they are currently too low, though there are good signs of improvement.
- Achievement is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.
- Leadership of mathematics is good.
- Assessment, and monitoring and evaluation procedures are not rigorous enough.

Commentary

68. Standards in mathematics are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. Overall, they are too low at present. Until the last year, the history of results showed a downward trend, but the results for 2004 indicate that there has been a significant upturn. In that year, pupils in Year 6 reached below average (grade D) standards, compared to the trend of well below (E) standards in earlier years. Currently, achievement is satisfactory in the subject across the school, though there is a clear boost in Year 6. Provision and achievement in mathematics is clearly improving, though inspection evidence indicates that standards remain the number one priority for the subject.
69. The basic quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is inconsistent however; there is good teaching in some years, and very good teaching in Years 2 and 6. The planning of work to ensure an accurate match to groups of pupils' prior attainment, the pace of learning and the general level of expectations are in need of improvement. As in other subjects, the insistence on good behaviour and the overall provision of equal opportunities in mathematics learning are relative strengths. The curriculum for mathematics is grounded in an appropriate emphasis on basic numeracy, though the problem solving and investigational aspects of the subject are insufficiently emphasised.
70. Assessment in mathematics is more advanced than in other subjects, but the system of target setting, sharing and tracking laid down in the well thought out plan for *target setting and target getting* is not yet in full force. The subject leader acknowledges that this is the case and the improvement of assessment remains a subject priority. In all, mathematics assessment is unsatisfactory because it is neither consistent nor rigorous enough.
71. The leadership of mathematics is in good hands. It has had some success in focusing aspirations and co-ordinating the approaches to improvement. The subject leader has a clear vision for the future and is a good role model. The management of mathematics is, however, unsatisfactory. This situation is shared with the other subjects. Procedures to ensure that provision in mathematics is focused on consistently effective provision and maximised achievement are not yet secure. In particular, the monitoring and evaluation process is not rigorous or widespread enough. The school is to be provided with an *Intensified Support Programme* in mathematics by the local education authority during the next twelve months. This is designed to maintain the rate of improvement in the subject and to ensure that, at the end of the period, achievement is consistently good through the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. The development of mathematical skills and knowledge across the curriculum is satisfactory. Some helpful use of mathematics was observed in ICT, for example in Year 6 work to build spreadsheets to calculate the area and perimeters of rectangles by using formulae. There is some effective development of graphical representation in ICT in Year 5 and the building of skills and knowledge of data handling in traffic surveys in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, but there are signs of improvement.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but stronger in Year 6.
- Assessment procedures are not effective enough to make a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Although leadership is satisfactory, there are weaknesses in the management of the subject.

Commentary

73. Standards in science are well below average at the end of Years 2 and 6, but there are signs of improvement, especially in Year 6. The 2004 results show a much larger percentage of pupils attaining above average levels in Year 6. However, weaknesses still lie in the development of pupils' investigative skills. Deficiencies in pupils' literacy skills and under developed reasoning processes contribute to pupils' under performance. Achievement is generally satisfactory, but pupils in Year 6 achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is more effective.
74. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but there are marked differences in particular year groups. Although teachers' planning is based on appropriate learning objectives, too little thought is given to matching the work to pupils' capabilities; for instance, the selection of a commercially produced work sheet for the whole class. This often results in a lack of appropriate challenge for different ability groups within the class. The pace in some lessons is too relaxed and pupils could do more in the time available. Teachers manage their classes well and pupils concentrate on their tasks, form good relationships and work well together. There are appropriate learning opportunities within the taught curriculum, although too little use is made of ICT. The school is focusing more closely on the provision of investigational activities in order to rectify this specific weakness. This is most evident in Year 6 lessons.
75. The school has some assessment procedures in science, but they are piecemeal and are not effective or consistent enough to make a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers record pupils' level of performance, but the information gained is not used productively to modify provision or to match work more closely to pupils' attainment levels. Analysis of test results in Years 2 and 6 and the adjustment of learning activities is gradually being embedded into the school assessment practice and is beginning to have a beneficial effect on school performance in science tests.
76. Although the subject is led satisfactorily by a knowledgeable subject leader who has improved the provision, there are weaknesses in management. There are too few opportunities to monitor the quality of science throughout the school and to draw on the evidence gained to set targets for improvement.
77. There has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the last inspection. Test results have improved slightly and teaching is now stronger in Years 2 and 6. Curriculum provision is better and learning resources now adequate to support learning. However, assessment remains weak and pupils' investigative skills are still not sufficiently developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below average; achievement is satisfactory.

- Provision for ICT has been improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.
- ICT is led effectively; its management has some weaknesses.
- There is not enough use of ICT across the curriculum.

Commentary

78. The school worked successfully to improve the quality of provision in ICT following the inspection in 1999. New technology was added, staff were trained effectively and the computer suite was regularly timetabled for each class. Pupils enjoyed better access and more focused teaching to enable them to build skills and knowledge appropriately. However, the overall inconsistencies in educational provision across the school affect ICT as much as the other subjects. Current standards are, therefore, well below average, though achievement is satisfactory.
79. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory. There are some useful factors in provision that work to pupils' advantage. In many cases, the taught group is on the small size and so ample attention can be given to individual needs. The teaching support staff have a particular role in arriving at this fairly low group size and are successful in their work. Planning is not refined enough to provide different learning activities according to the prior attainment of the pupils, however, and expectations are not high enough. Some particularly effective teaching of ICT was observed in Year 6, which linked decisively to mathematics. This quality of teaching and learning serves as a good model for ICT provision generally.
80. The subject leader for ICT is hard working, enthusiastic and has had considerable success in improving resourcing, staff expertise and the curriculum. The school is able to provide an appropriate curriculum in ICT, though assessment is unsatisfactory and is a central part of the third key issue for the school. There are also unsatisfactory features in the management of the subject, chiefly because opportunities for rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education and achievement are rare. There is promise for the future in ICT because most staff agree that improvements are necessary and are willing to work together towards this end.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

81. Whilst some useful examples of the use of ICT in other subjects is in evidence, such as the use of the *Paint* program in art and design, it is not widespread enough. ICT is not yet used as an effective aid to develop basic skills, especially reading and writing. The school has firm plans to add to its store of technology in order to enhance pupils' achievement in both ICT itself and in other subjects. Most staff are ready and willing to extend the use of ICT across the curriculum in this way.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are below average but achievement is satisfactory.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall.
- Religious education is led satisfactorily.
- Assessment procedures for religious education are not implemented fully throughout the school.
- There is good use made of literacy skills to promote the very good provision for religious education in Year 6.

Commentary

82. Standards in religious education are below average by the time pupils are aged 11. Pupils in most year groups do not have enough opportunities to use their literacy skills to consolidate their learning in religious education. However, in Year 6 pupils' interest in different people's faiths is stimulated by the very good use made of the book *Pilgrims Progress*. In a lesson observed in this year group, the teacher made interesting and very good use of discussions about spiritual and ethical issues as pupils made comparisons between good, evil, loneliness and despair. This experience contributed much to the development of pupils' thinking skills and made good links to the *Journeys* theme being explored in religious education. The pupils were well prepared for the lesson and their positive response, sharply focused statements, and challenging questions enabled the lesson to unfold almost seamlessly. Pupils with special educational needs achieved well in this lesson and they contributed well to the discussion.
83. The assessment of pupils' written and oral work is not yet complete and currently, there is too little account taken of the assessment guidance within the syllabus. Marking does not provide sufficient guidance to enable pupils to develop their ideas or to improve the quality of their written work.
84. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The contrast between very good and unsatisfactory teaching is marked by the use of good resources and the focus on a clear learning objective to develop pupils' thinking skills. Good lessons move along with stimulating dialogue and tasks, so pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic. Pupils in Year 6 recognise the symbolism of the Advent Ring and light as important to Christian believers. They use the ambience of the classroom created by the very good use of background music and the Advent Ring to compare festivals of light in different beliefs. They raise perceptive points and use their writing skills well to develop their ideas.
85. The oldest pupils are conversant with a basic range of beliefs and can describe major festivals and their meaning well. They make good links between Judaism and Christianity. However, their knowledge and understanding of Islam and Sikhism is not as strong, mainly because of lack of opportunity in the past to study these faiths. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to visit places of worship in order to develop comparisons and recognise differences between faiths. ICT is not yet used effectively enough in religious education.
86. The subject leader has managed religious education carefully and is developing a new scheme in order to develop links and focus on a wider range of faiths and beliefs in line with the revised locally agreed syllabus. The subject leader monitors thoroughly the quality of teachers' planning, but has not yet had an opportunity to observe and evaluate teaching and learning directly in lessons across the school.

87. The school uses its satisfactory resources well to ensure that pupils have appropriate experience and understanding of other faiths. Pupils' knowledge of bible stories is limited. Improvement since the last report is satisfactory.

Geography and history

88. Because the focus of the current inspection was on standards and achievement in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, plus those in ICT and religious education, it was not possible to mount a full examination of the humanities subjects of geography and history. It is not possible, therefore, to judge the quality of provision in these subjects.
89. In **geography**, Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoy their study of the travels of *Barnaby Bear* and this is arousing good interest for the subject. The pupils follow the travel of *Sarah, Andy and Barnaby* on a world map, with a good collection of photographs and e-mails to aid their learning. Topics covered in Years 3 to 6 include the water cycle, rivers, care of the environment, the continent of Africa and mapping skills. However, from the scrutiny of work it is evident that pupils have limited knowledge and experience by Year 6.
90. The scrutiny of work in Years 2 and 6 in **history** showed that there are occasional good links with literacy, especially in writing. Some research is undertaken, but much work consists of simply copying from other sources, with all pupils completing exactly the same work most of the time. There is satisfactory curriculum provision and time allocation.
91. For both subjects, leadership is satisfactory, but management is weak because of the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning, review of planning, and scrutiny of pupils' work. There is appropriate consultation with staff on an annual basis regarding resources and suggested modification to the schemes of work. Assessment in geography and history is largely informal and does not make an effective enough contribution to pupils' next steps in learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology, music and physical education

92. As in the case of history and geography, it was only possible to make a light sample of lessons and work in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education, because the focus of inspectors' work lay in the five central subjects of the curriculum.
93. Pupils' **art and design** work is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. Interesting examples of portrait painting the wives of Henry and emulating the work of Mondrian and Lisa Keaney shows pupils are developing a range of drawing and painting skills. Resources are adequate and a good scheme is in place so that pupils have the opportunity to explore ideas and techniques throughout the school.
94. Within **design and technology**, very limited opportunities exist for pupils to explore different facets of a design process. Work is sometimes linked to other subjects and artefacts are made for history and religious education. A scheme following national guidelines is in place but time and resources restrict the pupils' opportunity to participate fully in the curriculum. Pupils do not design or evaluate their own ideas or keep a record of their designs in either art or technology.
95. There is an appropriate range of learning opportunities in **music**. The subject appears regularly on class timetables and planning for music is satisfactory. Pupils sing with some enthusiasm in assemblies, and an increasing number now have opportunities to learn to play musical instruments. There is effective specialist instrumental tuition. Pupils say they enjoy their music lessons and the other activities provided.

96. There is a balanced curriculum for **physical education** that gives coverage of all elements of the subject and allows an appropriate amount of time for the work. There is satisfactory provision of after school activities. In swimming, standards are average in Year 6. The vast majority of eleven-year-old pupils swim the desirable 25-metre length. The school has two halls but and a playing field, but there was no evidence of the last in use. There are good links with the local secondary school in the development of sport and physical education activities.
97. Leadership of each of these subjects is satisfactory, but their management is unsatisfactory because there are no opportunities for the monitoring of teaching and learning and other means to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of provision. As in other non-core subjects, assessment is largely informal, though there is an appropriate assessment system for swimming.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. Discussions with teachers, pupils and a review of the planning documents and displays around the school indicate that this is an important school focus. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided with some very good opportunities to build skills and knowledge and their achievement in personal and social development is good. In the main school all staff are committed to the effective development of the pupils as people. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are central planks in the school's provision and are one of its main strengths. The pupils become responsible, friendly, polite and trustworthy children who are a pleasure to meet. Governors, parents, staff and visiting agencies all give strong indication of the many successes that the school has in developing the personal qualities of its pupils. The evidence from inspection supports their views.
99. Moral and social values are promoted well in school assemblies and the posters around the school stress the importance of working together as a team. There have been no exclusions in school for several years and the commitment to inclusion is very good. Most pupils want to be in school and to be part of the team. Staff are conscious of the need to promote pupils' self-esteem and to raise their expectations. The Learning Mentor is particularly skilful in developing positive attitudes to school and in providing pupils with good strategies to modify their behaviour. Increasingly, pupils are becoming more responsible and active in making a positive contribution to the school community through organisations such as the school council. The school promotes healthy eating and regular exercise effectively through its curriculum provision. The *Breakfast Club* and the long-running *Walking Bus* are conspicuous successes of provision for pupils' personal, social and health education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	5
Overall standards achieved	6
Pupils' achievement	4
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	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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