

INSPECTION REPORT

PECKOVER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wisbech

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110652

Headteacher: Mr Nigel Harvey

Lead inspector: Rajinder Harrison

Dates of inspection: 7th - 9th February 2005

Inspection number: 267488

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: 5 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll; 296

School address: Leverington Road
Wisbech
Cambridgeshire

Postcode: PE13 1PJ

Telephone number: (01945) 584 741

Fax number: (01945) 466 234

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr N Meekins

Date of previous inspection: 15th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Peckover Primary School is a mixed sex school for pupils aged 5 to 11 located in Wisbech in Cambridgeshire. With 303 pupils, (equal numbers of boys and girls), in 11 classes, the school is bigger than most primary schools. Because of the distribution of numbers, three classes have mixed age groups, namely in Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6. The school serves an area of local authority and private housing estates and older properties, but nearly half of the pupils come from outside the immediate area and the school is annually oversubscribed. Social indicators for the areas most pupils come from are generally below national averages. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals (9.5 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (20.3 per cent) is broadly in line with national average and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (4.6 per cent) is well above the national average. The disabilities and difficulties for those with special educational needs include dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech or communication difficulties, and a range of physical disabilities. The vast majority of pupils are of White-British origin with small numbers from a variety of other ethnic minority backgrounds, the main one being Chinese (3 per cent of pupils). The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English (4.9 per cent) is low and only one pupil is at an early stage of English acquisition. There are no refugees, asylum seekers or children in care at the school. Movement in and out of the school is about average, with 15 pupils joining the school and 18 leaving other than at the usual times in the last year.

Awards - Artsmark (2002), DfES 'Write here write now' award (2002), Investor in People (2004).

Attainment on entry is below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18059	Rajinder Harrison	Lead inspector	Science Geography History English as an additional language
19361	Keith Ross	Lay inspector	
32846	Trevor Scott	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Physical education Religious education
34431	Mary Usher-Clark	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Personal, social and health education Music
5531	Janet Croft	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Art and design Design and technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is good school and overall standards are above average. Teaching and learning are good and as a result, pupils achieve well. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils' personal development is good. Leadership, management and governance are good overall. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- At the end of Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Standards are well above average in art and design and this a strength of the school.
- Most pupils make good progress because teaching is good.
- Leadership by the headteacher and governors is good.
- The school promotes positive attitudes to learning and pupils' behaviour is good.
- Opportunities to enrich curriculum provision are good and many pupils benefit from this.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English, while satisfactory, needs improving to match the good provision for other pupils.
- There is disparity between the quality of provision for pupils in two of the mixed age classes compared with provision in the rest school.
- Assessment practice is satisfactory overall but insufficient is done to ensure that pupils are set targets and shown how to improve their work.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection. Attainment in religious education is now in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus at the end of Year 6. Provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Provision for ICT is now good and as a result standards have improved. All statutory requirements are now fully documented in the Governors' report to parents and the school prospectus. However, provision for pupils in two of the mixed-age classes still requires further improvement with respect to the organisation and management of pupils of such wide ability ranges. Achievement, for a small number of lower attaining pupils in these classes, is not as good as for those in the rest of the school.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Year 6 results

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	C	A	A
mathematics	A	D	A	A
science	A	C	B	A

Key: A – well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average.

Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

As a result of overall good teaching, the vast majority of pupils achieve well. In the national tests and assessments in 2004, standards in English, mathematics and science

were well above average overall. Since the last inspection, standards have improved at the end of Year 2. While there appears to be no significant improvement in the standards at the end of Year 6, there is clear evidence that the ability levels in each year group fluctuate considerably from year to year and overall standards remain above average. There is no significant difference in the standards attained by boys or girls or by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.

Most children enter the Foundation Stage with below average attainment. Many are well below average in their communication and language skills. They achieve well and the majority reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year in all but language and literacy, which remains below average for a significant number. Throughout Years 1 to 6 the vast majority of pupils achieve well. In the current Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and above average in art and design and ICT. In Year 6, standards are average in English, and above average in mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils are well above expected levels of attainment in art and design and achievement is very good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when given good additional support. Occasionally, where this additional support is not available, achievement is only satisfactory because a small number of these pupils find it difficult to progress well without continued guidance. This is further exacerbated by the fact that there are a high number of special needs pupils in the mixed age classes in Years 1/2 and Years 3/4 and the wide range of special needs represented makes greater demands on teachers for individual planning. In these classes, when teaching is less than good, pupils make limited progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, and are at a proficient level, achieve as well as their classmates. The few pupils who are at an early stage of English acquisition do not always receive the expert support required to access all that is presented to them, resulting, sometimes, in their unsatisfactory achievement. Standards in history and religious education are in line with expectations. The work sampled in other subjects is of at least average standard.

Pupils' personal development is good and is supported effectively by the good overall provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy school, form very secure relationships, have positive attitudes to learning and generally behave well. They are very caring towards each other and enjoy taking on responsibilities. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The overall quality of education is good. Teaching is good overall. Pupils learn effectively and make good progress because teachers provide interesting work including many 'hands on' activities that help pupils understand what they are learning. Higher-attaining pupils are generally well challenged. In most lessons teachers involve pupils of all abilities and backgrounds well. Additional support staff, where available, are used well, especially in helping those with special educational needs or those who are learning English as a new language. But in lessons where teaching is less than good and support staff are limited, a few lower attaining pupils find it difficult to complete any challenging work without individual guidance. Assessment procedures, including marking are satisfactory overall and information about pupils' progress is used satisfactorily to match work to their needs in most lessons. At times, some teachers miss opportunities to identify and share targets with individual pupils, to encourage them to take greater responsibility for their own learning. The curriculum is satisfactory and good opportunities to enrich provision through visits and visitors to the school make valuable contributions to pupils' learning. A well-planned

programme for personal, social and health education supports pupils' personal development.

The school takes good care of its pupils and promotes a positive ethos to learning. Partnerships with parents are good and links with the community and with other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership, management and the work of the governing body are good. Leadership by the headteacher is good. After just five weeks in the school he has established a clear sense of purpose and direction. With the assistance of a good deputy, he has identified where improvements need to be made to raise achievement for all pupils further. The leadership and management of other key staff are satisfactory. Governors monitor the school's performance well and ensure all statutory requirements are met and the school continues to improve.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very happy with the school. The information they receive about their children's work is good, and overall provision to consult with them regarding school matters is good. **Pupils** like their school, feel well looked after and are particularly positive about the help they receive from their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve provision for pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English.
- Ensure provision is monitored more rigorously in order to address the disparity between two of the mixed age classes and the rest of the school.
- Improve the use of assessment and marking in order to involve pupils in target setting.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Overall, pupils' achievement is **good** and overall standards are above average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in mathematics, science and ICT are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards in art and design are well above average and this is a strength of the school.
- Provision has improved in the Foundation Stage and as a result children achieve well.
- The achievement of pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of English acquisition is not as good as the rest of the pupils, being satisfactory overall.

Commentary

Foundation Stage

1. The majority of children enter the Foundation Stage with below average attainment in all areas of learning. A significant minority have particularly poor levels of communication and language skills and are further limited by poor speech development. Children's overall achievement in all areas of learning is good as they progress through their Reception year and the majority reach all the early learning goals expected of them by the end of the Foundation Stage. A small number of the higher attaining children work at basic elements of

Level 1 of the National Curriculum in numeracy. However, although all children achieve well in communication, language and literacy, very few exceed the early learning goals, a good number meet these goals but the majority are still working towards these at the end of their Reception year. Standards are at the expected levels in children's personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical and creative development as they leave the Foundation Stage. In the first weeks of school, teachers assess children's attainment and they monitor their progress regularly. Work planned following these assessments is carefully organised so that children build on their prior learning effectively. Children with special educational needs and the occasional few who are learning English as an additional language are supported well and they make good gains in their learning.

Key Stage 1

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	17.3 (15.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	16.6 (16.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.7 (15.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- In the national tests and assessments in 2004, standards at the end of Year 2 compared with schools nationally were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and above average in science. This was a higher attaining group than the current Year 2 and a high number of pupils attained the higher Level 3 in the tests and assessment. Standards were also well above average against schools with a similar free school meal number. This was a considerable improvement on the standards attained in the previous report. The trend for improvement over the last three years was above the national level. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls or for pupils from minority ethnic groups. However, from the results in 2003, the school recognised that mathematics and reading skills were a relative weakness and placed greater emphasis on monitoring pupils' progress in English and mathematics throughout the school.

Key Stage 2

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (27.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.6 (26.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.9 (29.0)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- The results from national tests and assessments in 2004 show that the standards at the end of Year 6 were above average when compared with schools nationally. This was a decline on the previous inspection, where standards overall were well above average. However, when compared to similar schools and against prior attainment, the school's performance was well above average and this position has been maintained since the previous report. The overall trend for improvement over the last three years remains above the national level. The careful monitoring and assessment

of pupils in English and mathematics has ensured the school not only met but exceeded the targets set last year. The Year 6 group of 2004 was higher attaining than the current Year 6 group and this supports the setting of lower targets this year. From year to year there is considerable variation in the attainment of year groups when they first enter school, hence results fluctuate from year to year.

4. In English, standards in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. They are better than those at the time of the previous inspection for pupils in Year 2 but below those of pupils in Year 6. Standards are average in reading, speaking and listening and writing at the end of Year 2 and in English overall at the end of Year 6. The school has placed significant emphasis on improving teaching and learning in English, particularly reading and creative writing skills in the last two years because it recognised that, on entry to the school, pupils' skills in these areas have declined over recent years. Literacy skills are used satisfactorily across other subjects, and this has the impact of raising standards further. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average at the end of Year 6 but opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage pupils to use the new vocabulary they learn in different subjects more confidently. Good teaching ensures the vast majority of pupils of all abilities achieve well. Most pupils with special educational needs achieve well when given good support and guidance. In lessons, where teaching is less than good in the two mixed age classes in Years 1/2 and Years 3/4, these pupils make only satisfactory progress. The occasional pupils who arrive at the school, and who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, make only satisfactory progress because specialist support is limited. Where these pupils are given the required support they achieve well. Pupils learning English as an additional language who are at a more advanced stage achieve well and some of the higher attainers make very good gains in their learning.
5. Pupils in the current Year 2 are working at average standards and those in Year 6 at above average standards in mathematics. The picture is slightly better in Year 2 and slightly worse in Year 6 compared with the previous report. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good and teaching is particularly good at the upper end of the school so most pupils achieve well. Number skills are taught well and in Years 5 and 6 pupils' mental mathematics strategies are good. Pupils with special educational needs are given good individual support to ensure they make good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language and at an advanced stage in their competence also achieve well, but progress of the occasional few who are very new to English is hampered by their lack of understanding as to what is required of them. There is good challenge for the higher attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented in mathematics and as a result they make very good progress.
6. Standards in science are average in the present Year 2 and above average in Year 6, and overall achievement is good. Although standards show a decline since the previous inspection, there is very good emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills and pupils of all abilities gain a firm understanding of the principles of scientific enquiry. Support for pupils with special educational needs and those new to English is generally good and this enables them to participate fully and many achieve well. However, on the few occasions where additional help is not available, these pupils struggle to follow all that is asked of them, and particularly with learning and applying technical vocabulary correctly.

7. Standards have improved in ICT since the last inspection and are now above average expectations throughout the school as a result of the improved provision. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. The facilities and hardware have been improved and staff regularly use ICT in other subjects, recognising the need to develop this in order to raise standards further. Standards in art and design are well above expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. This is a strength of the school and pupils' overall achievement is very good. Standards in history and religious education are in line with expectations across the school and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. From the work sampled in other subjects, standards are at least in line with expectations. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well when supported by good quality teaching assistants. But in those few lessons where additional support is limited, teachers' delivery of the subject content is not always sufficiently well matched to pupils' individual needs to enable them to work confidently without continued guidance. As a result, their achievement is less than that of pupils in the rest of the school. The new headteacher recognises management of additional support needs reviewing, particularly in classes where there is a high number of pupils with special educational needs. This is also the case for pupils new to learning English as an additional language, particularly as expert support is very limited. Those at a more advanced stage of learning the language achieve as well as their classmates in most lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have **good** attitudes towards learning and their school life and most pupils behave **well**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good overall**. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils think highly of the school and what it has to offer.
- Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good.
- Good behaviour in and out of lessons creates a happy atmosphere, although in a minority of lessons some pupils' behaviour could be better.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop responsibility and they take these seriously.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous.

Commentary

8. Pupils regard their school as being very good and are enthusiastic about all it offers. They are especially appreciative of their teachers who they feel are helpful and explain things well. Pupils feel they work hard because they are encouraged to do so by their teachers, who make most lessons fun and interesting. Relationships are very good throughout the school. This is because staff are friendly and approachable and show pupils that their views are valued. Staff work hard to encourage pupils to take a full and active part in the life and work of the school.
9. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school, but a small minority of pupils do not behave as well as they should do and have less positive attitudes to learning. This often occurs when teaching is less inspiring and teachers' behaviour management skills are weak. The very caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing courtesy and consideration for others. There were no signs of aggressive behaviour and both parents and pupils confirm that

bullying is rare but, should it occur, it is dealt with very effectively. Exclusion rates in the school remain very low. There was only one fixed-term exclusion during last year and this was entirely justified.

10. Children in the Foundation Stage mirror the good attitudes and behaviour seen throughout the rest of the school. Pupils go about the tasks happily and have built good work habits and achieve well. For the most part, pupils show good application to their work, sustained concentration and are polite and courteous.
11. Pupils' personal development is good overall. They benefit well from opportunities to take responsibility around the school. Older pupils particularly enjoy acting as playground monitors and looking after the younger pupils. They are very happy to volunteer for these and other roles and carry out their duties in a conscientious and sensible manner, for example, as seen when pupils book out and look after the new play equipment at lunchtime.
12. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is generally good. Through a good range of activities, for example, personal, social and health education lessons (PSHE), pupils learn about the need to consider the needs of others and thus develop their awareness of citizenship. They contribute to regular fundraising events for local and international charities and thus develop their sense of being part of a community and caring for others. Collective worship contributes to pupils' abilities to reflect on what they value and appreciate in life and share their feelings with others. Well-chosen stories help pupils to distinguish right from wrong in actions and the way people treat each other. Assemblies that celebrate pupils' achievements build up pupils' self-confidence and pride in their work.
13. The school's programme for PSHE, together with elements of other subjects, such as religious education and geography, promote pupils' understanding of others, the need to respect differing views and to reflect, for example, on environmental issues that impact on their immediate and long term futures. Visits to museums, churches and historic houses enhance pupils' appreciation of their cultural heritage. They begin to identify similarities and differences in their own and other people's cultural traditions well. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to make more of celebrating the traditions of some of the pupils of ethnic origins that attend the school, and raise pupils' understanding of the local community and the nature of Britain's multicultural society.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (2003/4)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.1	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.

14. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average but unauthorised absence is above average. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Attendance is checked efficiently with well-established routines in school and procedures that are familiar to parents. A small but significant number of families take holidays in term time and several parents do not provide the school with reasons for their child's

absence. Both these factors prevent attendance from being better. The new headteacher has plans to introduce various new initiatives to improve attendance further.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

This school provides a **good** quality of education. The overall curriculum is **satisfactory** and activities to enrich the curriculum are **good**. Care, guidance and support for pupils and partnerships with the parents are **good**. Links with the community and other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall. As a result, the most pupils learn effectively and achieve well. Assessment procedures and the overall use of the information gathered are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching occurs in all year groups and as a result pupils make good progress.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers, support staff and volunteer helpers enrich learning effectively.
- ICT is used effectively to support teaching and learning.
- Planning is not always carefully matched to meet the needs of every pupil successfully, particularly in mixed age classes.
- In a small number of lessons, there is not always adequate support for pupils with special educational needs and the occasional individuals who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.
- Procedures for assessment, including marking are good in English and mathematics but not yet fully exploited in other subjects to identify individual targets in order to raise standards further.

Commentary

15. Overall teaching is good, as was the picture in the previous inspection. It is particularly strong in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. As a result children make a good start to their learning and leave the school with standards that are generally above average. The school promotes an enthusiasm for learning and pupils respond positively to the interesting range of activities and experiences provided for them. In most lessons, planning is good with clear objectives and this ensures pupils build on previous learning effectively. Teachers make effective use of the good training opportunities they have to update their knowledge and skills and this has resulted in, for example, teachers making effective use of ICT in their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those at an advanced stage of learning English as an additional language learn effectively when they receive good individual guidance from some well-experienced support staff. These supporting adults know their pupils well and ensure they modify planned work carefully to help pupils make good progress. However, there are a few less than good lessons in the Years 1/2 and Years 3/4 mixed age classes, where teachers' planning lacks detail and where additional support, including expertise in teaching English as an additional language, is not available. As a result the needs of individual pupils are not always fully met.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	16 (38%)	14 (33%)	10 (24%)	2 (5%)	0(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.

16. The monitoring of teaching takes place throughout the school but lacks rigour and not all co-ordinators are involved in this activity. Many are new to their roles, as a result of staff changes at the start of this school year. As a consequence, some co-ordinators do not always know if all pupils are working successfully on the agreed levels of work. In addition, the school has not fully addressed the issue identified in the previous inspection regarding provision in the mixed age classes and occasionally, the need to provide greater challenge for higher attaining pupils.

17. The school's organisation of classes comprises some single age classes and some where two successive year groups are mixed. Where teaching is good or better, mainly in the single age classes and in the mixed Year 5/6 class, teachers manage these arrangements well, using the assessment information available to prepare appropriate work that matches pupils' needs, resulting in pupils' learning being good. In two of the three mixed age classes, namely in Years 1/2 and Years 3/4, there are a high number of lower attaining pupils from Years 2 and 4 working alongside higher attaining pupils from the year group below. In these classes, teaching is generally less than good. This is because the teachers' management and organisation are not always clear enough to ensure work is well matched to the diverse needs, both in terms of challenge for the more able and also ensuring lower attaining pupils fully access everything they are asked to do. This is particularly an issue in the few lessons where additional support is not available and pupils are required to work more independently. Whilst the higher attaining pupils accommodate such challenges well, lower attaining pupils do not make good progress without continued guidance. In a few lessons, particularly where too many subjects are integrated into the lesson, there is too much for these lower attaining pupils to take in. Consequently a few become distracted because they are not always sure what is required of them in their independent work. This results in a few pupils with special educational needs and those at an early stage of acquiring English as a new language achieving less effectively than their classmates.

18. Pupils' individual education plans have clear, achievable targets, but not all teachers are familiar with these, relying on their teaching assistants to fill this gap. Monitoring of these pupils' progress does take place, but practice is inconsistent from class to class as to how each teacher identifies further targets to move these pupils' learning on, and how information is fed back to the special needs co-ordinator in order to review individual education plans. The special needs co-ordinator discusses progress with each pupil regularly and with individual teachers and support staff informally. As a result, the majority of teachers accommodate the needs of these pupils well. However, the lack of any formal or systematic process does impact on provision in the two mixed age Years 1/2 and Years 3/4 classes, where overall teaching for these pupils with special educational needs is only satisfactory. The new headteacher has already begun to monitor teaching as an urgent priority. He has identified the key issues and has clear plans to ensure that all pupils have good opportunities to learn, irrespective of the class they are in. He is already improving the quality of educational inclusion by his actions.

19. In the Foundation Stage, children work in a lively, well-structured environment where they move freely between the two classrooms to explore a wide and interesting range of activities. The accommodation is generally good but the outside area is insufficiently developed to be of use in all weathers and provide children with greater opportunities to explore the outside environment independently. This particularly impacts on their physical development. Staff are very aware that a good number of children are not so confident in their social interactions or their communication and language skills when they first start school and extra attention is paid to these areas of learning. Assessment procedures are good and children's progress is monitored carefully to ensure any difficulties they experience are addressed quickly. Children settle into class routines confidently, responding very positively to the expectations placed upon them to work with others and behave well. Children with special educational needs and the very occasional child learning English as a new language are identified early and are very well supported. The well-qualified support assistant is fully involved with teaching staff in planning activities in which every child can participate. As a result of the good and often very good teaching, children of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. There has been good improvement in provision since the previous inspection.
20. Overall learning is good in Years 1 to 6 because most teachers place high expectations on pupils to behave well and work hard. Where teaching is good or better, explanations and instructions are very clear, work is challenging and fun and lessons run at a lively pace. Pupils are kept fully involved in activities that are matched well to their previous learning and teachers generate a lively enthusiasm for learning. In many lessons, teachers present a wide range of 'hands on' approaches, giving pupils good opportunities to learn more effectively through these activities. Pupils of all ages manage themselves confidently and most are prompt to settle to independent activities. They particularly enjoy class discussions, although these activities are sometimes curtailed in the Years 1/2 and Years 3/4 classes where, with the high numbers of special educational needs pupils, class management is sometimes a weakness. In most lessons, teachers question pupils' knowledge and understanding skilfully, probing and prompting as necessary to draw explanations from them regarding their views or observations. They recognise that many are reluctant to speak in front of others initially and such opportunities raise their confidence as they progress through the school. Higher attaining pupils become very confident in these skills by the time they leave the school. There are a few occasions where teachers tend to lead the learning too much, thus restricting opportunities for pupils to discuss and think ideas through more independently. The very good relationships within the school ensure pupils seek help when they need it and many are keen to work on projects in their own time.
21. Resources are well chosen to ensure they match the tasks, and support materials are generally carefully designed to match the needs of pupils of all abilities. Where this does not happen a few higher attaining pupils are insufficiently stretched and those with lower attainment struggle to fulfil the tasks. There are a number of examples where pupils of all abilities have recorded the same work and this prevents pupils from thinking for themselves and expressing individual responses. The use of ICT to support teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, and teachers use a good range of programs and the Internet to supplement their teaching. The use of interactive whiteboards has enhanced the use of ICT in all areas of the curriculum very effectively. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' experiences further and pupils talk enthusiastically of such events. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk excitedly

about the Greek Day that gave them a tangible taste of the life and culture of that period.

22. The assessment information available to all staff is good in literacy and numeracy, where individual targets are set and pupils are aware of these. As a result, pupils understand what steps they need to take to reach higher standards. Such information is beginning to be gathered in other subjects but is not yet available in detail to ensure pupils know how well they have achieved and what they need to do next to progress further. The same applies to teachers' marking of pupils' work, which is currently inconsistent. In the best marking, seen in Year 6, comments are very constructive and guide pupils into making the required improvements to achieve further success. But in one or two other classes, marking is minimal and does not help the pupils recognise what is good or unsatisfactory about their work. Pupils generally work hard to present work that is neat and tidy and, where teachers' comments have been constructive, pupils have responded positively. Again, the new headteacher is aware of the need to address these two aspects of teaching in order to ensure practice is of consistent quality throughout the school.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory** overall and good in the Foundation Stage. **Good** opportunities are provided for curriculum enrichment. The accommodation and resources are **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Visits, visitors and activities outside lessons enrich the curriculum well.
- Participation in the arts is a strength.
- The planning and organisation in the school does not always meet the needs of all pupils consistently, particularly in some of the mixed age classes.
- The outside area for the Foundation Stage and the playgrounds for other pupils need development.

Commentary

23. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements, including provision for health and sex education, religious education and collective worship. Good links are made between most subjects through an integrated approach in the planning. But occasionally, where this planning is not organised well, the linked subject becomes the dominant one, as seen in a religious education lesson that ended up focusing mainly on art and design because this was better prepared. In addition, whilst teachers plan the curriculum in a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed age classes, there are a few occasions where pupils in successive year groups do not always cover the subject in the same depth as the parallel class in that year group. This is more to do with the quality of teaching, rather than the organisation of the curriculum planning. Provision for personal, social, and health education is good and emphasis is well placed on developing pupils' self-awareness, promoting very good relationships, adopting a healthy lifestyle and a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities as young citizens in their community.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. No pupils are disappied from any aspect of the curriculum and all pupils have full access to all that

the school offers, including extra-curricular provision. Pupils with special educational needs have well constructed individual education plans (IEPs) that span, for example, targets for literacy, numeracy, and behaviour management. Where necessary, individual plans incorporate specialist support from outside agencies or additional support from staff within the school. However, not all lessons have support staff available to assist the teacher in the implementation of the IEPs, and as a consequence a few pupils do not always work to their set targets effectively. There are occasions, particularly in the mixed age classes in Years 1/2 and Years 3/4, where pupils who need continued guidance are required to work more independently and this impacts negatively on their overall progress in these lessons. The special needs co-ordinator ensures IEPs are reviewed regularly and further targets are identified and shared with pupils and parents following the review meetings. Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is satisfactory overall. It is good for pupils who are at an advanced stage of acquiring the language because they receive good support in most lessons, thus enabling them to achieve well. It is unsatisfactory for the very occasional pupils who arrive at the school and are at an early stage of acquisition because the school has not secured any long-term expertise to support these pupils in all lessons in order to improve their progress. The school has identified pupils who are gifted or talented in mathematics, art and design and music, and additional resources, including, for example, music tuition, are made available to help these pupils progress well.

25. Curriculum enrichment is good. There is a variety of midday and after-school clubs. These include football, art, reading, computer, recorders and choir, and a popular lunchtime homework club, where pupils work independently researching projects, for example, using computers. Visits, visitors, and residential visits enhance many curriculum areas. Participation in the arts is very good. Various theatre companies and musicians visit through the year and pupils have opportunities to work with several professional artists. The school is working towards its second Artsmark. Pupils receive regular hockey, football and rugby coaching, however the governors are keen to further develop participation in sports and are negotiating the use of the adjacent, privately owned Astro turf area. There are satisfactory business links, for example with Asda, who organised a lively pancake race on Shrove Tuesday.
26. Staff are appropriately employed and some specialisms amongst the staff are used to good effect, as is evident in music. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils and teachers in the time they have available to them. The school is well maintained, spacious, bright and airy, providing attractive learning areas, which include a large hall with a stage, a computer suite and a fiction and non-fiction library. The recently constructed group room enhances the accommodation and provides a large space for a variety of curricular activities. Resources are good, but non-fiction books are insufficient, as identified in a recent audit. Additional outside resources are needed in the Foundation Stage. The muddy areas outside the Foundation Stage classes need improvement to provide all weather access and a more stimulating environment for children to explore. Plans are in place to improve the school's main, somewhat sterile playground area in order to provide pupils with better opportunities for more creative outdoor play.

Care, guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety are **good** overall. The school involves pupils in the life of the school **well**, valuing their suggestions and ideas. The support, advice and guidance the school gives to pupils are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff are committed to the care and welfare of pupils.
- Induction arrangements for children starting school in the Foundation Stage are good and appreciated by parents.
- Each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in school.
- Risk assessment for the whole school needs to be reviewed.
- Pupils are involved well in the life of the school with their views being sought both formally and informally.

Commentary

27. The overall good quality of this provision has been maintained since the last inspection. All staff show care and concern for pupils' welfare. For example, they ensure that in lessons pupils have a good awareness of any health and safety issues, they encourage the choice of a healthy diet, and check that arrangements for administering first aid and meeting pupils' medical needs are good. Formal procedures for child protection are generally satisfactory. However, not all staff have received up-to-date training on how to identify and respond to child protection issues, although they are fully aware as to whom to report to should they have any concerns.
28. Children new to the school benefit from a welcoming induction package that ensures their smooth and secure settling in. Provision in the Foundation Stage is particularly good and much appreciated by the parents. Pupils soon develop a good trusting relationship with at least one member of staff and know there is always someone to turn to.
29. Overall, there are good arrangements to ensure that equipment is regularly checked and that there are frequent audits of the premises. However, risk assessment needs to be updated and tailored to meet the needs of the whole school thus ensuring that there is a full and accurate awareness of any potential risks to pupils' safety. Risk assessment for educational visits is completed meticulously.
30. The school council is an effective body. It represents the views of all the pupils and the management of the school takes these views seriously. Pupils from Year 6 represent the different classes. They visit their classes and note any concerns or initiatives and bring these to meetings and they make regular representations to the headteacher. They are currently discussing their idea to trial a healthy fruit tuck shop and have been asked to provide information on running costs.
31. Assessment, tracking and target-setting procedures are satisfactory. Good practice exists in a number of classes in the school, but this is not consistent or systematic across all classes. The progress of individual pupils is sometimes not monitored consistently enough in every class for example through marking, to pinpoint what pupils need to do to make further progress and reach higher levels of attainment. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in every class, in identifying their targets and evaluating their progress. Where the practice is good, pupils benefit from such information and take greater responsibility for their learning. Whilst there is a clear

system to identify pupils who have special needs throughout the school, most of the recorded information regarding monitoring of pupils' IEPs is retained by the special needs co-ordinator. The information sometimes lacks sufficient evaluation of how well pupils are progressing and does not always record the attainment levels they have achieved or fully detail the next steps for improvement. She discusses progress with each pupil regularly and with individual teachers and support staff informally. As a result, most teachers accommodate the needs of these pupils well. Where necessary, expertise from external support agencies is sought in making observations and assessments of individual pupils with full co-operation of parents.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a **good** partnership with parents, and links with the community and other schools are **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have very positive views about the school and are happy with all it offers.
- Parents receive good quality information about the school and its work.
- The school is effective at seeking, valuing and acting on parents' views.
- The parents' fundraising group raises substantial funds that benefit the school.
- Procedures to deal with concerns and complaints are very good.

Commentary

32. The school has established good and effective links with parents and this makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Parents find staff in the school approachable and the school is a very friendly welcoming environment. Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their child's teacher and the headteacher, in order to resolve any issues promptly. Additionally, parents' views are sought regularly. Questionnaires are sent home and the school responds well to any concerns. For example, the school has successfully addressed a recent concern by some parents about the consistency of homework and the behaviour of a few older children.
33. The information the school provides parents about their child's standards and progress is good, as is the general information about the school. The omissions in the prospectus and governors' annual report, highlighted in the last inspection, have been addressed. Parents have good opportunities to discuss their child's progress with the teacher, both formally and informally. Reports are of a good standard and give parents a clear picture of their child's strengths and weaknesses. They also show some targets to guide progress to the next stage of learning in literacy and numeracy. Of particular merit is a chart showing an indication of a child's expected levels of achievement at the end of each future academic year together with clear explanation to help parents understand what the scores mean.
34. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are made aware of how the school is helping their child and encourages parents to help at home. They are invited to attend regular reviews and are encouraged to help their children at home, but a few do not take up these requests in order to help them attain their targets. As a result, a few pupils do not always make the expected gains without further help from the school. This sometimes comes in the form of volunteers, particularly with support in aspects of literacy and personal development. Parents of pupils learning English as an additional

language are kept well informed of their child's progress and most take a very active interest in supporting their children at home.

35. There is an active fundraising committee comprising parents, governors and members of staff, who run a variety of successful fundraising events to provide additional resources. For example, the substantial sum raised and subsequently matched by a seed challenge grant to build the new group room has been invaluable to support small group work and as a homework room. A current project is to provide new play equipment for both playgrounds.
36. Opportunities to benefit from links with the local community, particularly local businesses and other schools, are satisfactory but underdeveloped. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the move to their secondary schools, with the expected induction days organised well with the number of schools pupils transfer to.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good and he is assisted well by a good deputy. Leadership by other key staff is **satisfactory** overall. The school is **effectively** governed and all statutory responsibilities are fully met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and the governing body have a strong sense of purpose that underpins the school's aspirations for high standards.
- The day-to-day work of the school well is managed well.
- Financial management is good and helps the school achieve its educational priorities.
- The contribution of co-ordinators is inconsistent and this affects the management of some subjects and aspects of the school's work.
- There is insufficient rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and as a consequence there are some weaknesses in the provision for a small but significant number of pupils.

Commentary

37. The headteacher provides good leadership. His calm, steady and systematic approach conveys a clear sense of purpose and a strong desire to secure the best for all pupils. Although he has only been in post five weeks, he has taken stock of where the priorities for change lie and has communicated this well to staff. He is demonstrating good management skills. He is assisted well by a good deputy. There is collective commitment to provide the best possible education for all pupils and to ensure the school continues to improve. The headteacher is aware of the shortfalls in provision in the two mixed age classes, Years 1/2 and Years 3/ 4, where teaching is not as good as the rest of the school, and the impact this is having on pupils' achievement. He has identified that this arrangement is further exacerbated by the high numbers of lower attaining pupils in these classes, a significant minority of whom achieve less well than their classmates. He has started the systematic monitoring of teaching and is taking over the monitoring of pupils' progress in order to establish good assessment procedures that are consistently applied throughout the school. He recognises that there are areas for improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs in two of the three mixed age classes and those at an early stage of English acquisition, and both of these are being addressed immediately.

38. Overall leadership and management by the co-ordinators is satisfactory. At the start of this school year there was considerable re-organisation of subject co-ordinators. This has meant that not all of them have had sufficient time to establish their roles and carry out all the duties required of them. As a result, practice ranges from being very good, as in mathematics and art and design, to barely satisfactory, with regard to the management of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Where practice is good, co-ordinators monitor the provision in their area of responsibility thoroughly and this leads to a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. They make good use of analysis and interpretation of a range of performance data and this leads to improvements in the provision in their areas of responsibility. However, most co-ordinators are not yet fully effective in that they have had insufficient opportunity to monitor or evaluate teaching sufficiently well to identify where the strengths and areas for improvement lie. This results in weaknesses in the provision, for example, for a small number of lower attaining pupils and the very occasional few who are at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. The progress these pupils make does not always match the good achievement of the vast majority of pupils in the school.
39. The day-to-day administration of the school is effective. There are well-defined procedures in place to ensure the smooth running of the school, including financial management. The school's self-evaluation process satisfactorily identifies where the school is most effective and where development is needed and this leads to the writing of focused targets in the school improvement plan, the progress of which is monitored well. As a result, most of the key issues have been addressed well. Performance management of staff is used well to guide and inform staff development and this underpins school improvement. For example there has been good improvement in the provision for ICT and developing investigative skills in science. The management of special educational needs has some good features, for example an effective team of support assistants has been developed and parents are kept informed and involved. However, there is insufficient time given to monitor pupils' progress in lessons, particularly in the two mixed age classes, described above, where there are high numbers of lower attaining pupils. As a consequence, the school does not meet the needs of all these pupils well enough to ensure that they achieve as well as the majority of the pupils in the school. Similarly, provision for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, a relatively new issue for the school, is currently unsatisfactory.
40. The governance of the school is good. Individual governors make significant contributions and work hard to support the school. The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and ensures that statutory requirements are met. Governors support the headteacher and staff well and provide appropriate levels of challenge and accountability. They are kept well informed about activities through newsletters, reports and visits to the school during the school day. Governors consult parents and consider their opinions important when making decisions about the provision. The governing body has ensured that most of the issues raised at the previous inspection have been fully addressed. An important one still remains outstanding and is still affecting the quality of provision for a small but significant number of lower attaining pupils in two of the three mixed age classes outlined above. In these classes teaching is not as good as in the rest of the school and the situation is not helped by the fact that these classes have a high concentration

of lower attaining pupils. In lessons in these classes where additional support staff are not available, a few pupils achieve less effectively than their classmates.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	781,350
Total expenditure	765,509
Expenditure per pupil	2,552

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	14,388
Balance carried forward to the next year	30,229

41. The school's finances are carefully managed and, when taking decisions, the governors pay attention to 'Best Value' principles. For example, they have reduced the costs of a perimeter fence. Governors monitor the budget carefully, analysing overspend and thinking well ahead. Overall provision is good and the school provides good value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** overall.

42. The attainment of children joining the school varies from year to year but overall it is below average. There is a very wide range of ability, with a significant number of children well below the expected levels. By the end of their Foundation Stage, most children reach, and a few exceed, nearly all of the early learning goals.¹ As a result of good teaching, they leave the Foundation Stage broadly in line with national expectations in all but their language and literacy skills. There is a well-planned balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities and overall achievement is good. New children arrive from several pre-school settings and have good opportunities to visit their classes before they start school. Parents attend an information afternoon and a curriculum evening to familiarise themselves with what their children will experience, especially during the initial days, and how they can help at home.
43. Staff use the first two weeks, when children are eased in gently on a part-time basis, to carry out initial assessments and identify the specific needs of each child. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and careful records are kept of how well children are achieving. This ensures children with special educational needs are identified early for careful observation. No children are at an early stage of English acquisition, and there very few children from families where English is not the home language, but when this occurs they are supported well and

¹ Early Learning Goals are a set of standards, which, it is expected most children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They are set out into six different areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development.

achieve as well as their classmates. Homework is encouraged and weekly fun activities are sent home to share and further develop children's learning. Completed homework is attractively displayed so children learn from each other's efforts and celebrate their success. Both classrooms are spacious and organised into different learning areas. Children are used to moving between the two classrooms during their lessons and are often taught in ability groups especially for their literacy and numeracy work. The outside environment is sterile and is in need of further development to create a more useful space where pupils can play and learn. Since the last inspection, outdoor resources have been purchased and the area made secure, and this is an improvement. Leadership and management are good and the teamwork of the staff is a strength. The good quality provision has been maintained since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Relationships between adults and children, and children with each other are good.
- The varied balance of activities encourages the development of the whole child.
- Children are comfortable with established routines.

Commentary

44. The children relate to one another well, with both classes mixing regularly throughout the day. They happily work with whichever teacher takes that particular session. They confidently and sensibly walk between the two classrooms and are very well used to the established routines. They talk about their news, with assurance, in front of the whole year group and have good, well-focused, social time together, developing a good sense of the needs of others. Children take turns sensibly, talk about what they are doing and help one another. Achievement in personal, social, and emotional development is good because of good teaching and learning. Children of all backgrounds and abilities attain the early learning goals successfully in this area of learning. This is a very good improvement on the last report where provision was deemed unsatisfactory.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and there is a clear emphasis on learning targets for individual children.
- Children have good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching assistant provides good support to teachers and children.

Commentary

45. Many children enter school with poor and immature language and a significant number have speech difficulties. A significant number are well below national expectations in

this area of their development. However, although a high number leave the Foundation Stage below expectations they nevertheless achieve well. A significant minority of children leave with good reading and writing skills, but most are still working towards their early learning goals. Teaching is good, well paced and interesting, and therefore children are excited about their learning. In the role-play area, higher attaining children with good guidance from staff, speak confidently using clear sentences. During writing sessions, a good number of children cut up and sequence simple jumbled sentences accurately, using their understanding of initial sounds correctly. But the range of abilities is very wide. So whilst lower ability children use their name cards to help them write their own name, higher attaining children write sentences independently. Writing books contain appropriate targets for each child and the work they produce is marked carefully to record progress. The teaching assistant supports lower ability children well in a gentle and sensitive manner, intervening appropriately to encourage and guide learning. Children enjoy sharing and listening to stories and staff ensure very good time is given to engage them in conversation so that they develop the confidence to explore new vocabulary and express their ideas. For example, while looking at a big book together, they were fully aware of what was taken from 'Mrs Honey's' hat and what item replaced it. They enjoy taking turns with the story sack artefacts to enact stories, and co-operate in playing games based on the stories.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and as a result children achieve well.
- Well-planned lessons are taught effectively.
- Good use is made of ICT on computers and on the interactive whiteboard.

Commentary

46. Children enter school with numeracy skills below those expected for children at this age but most leave Foundation Stage with standards in line with expectations. Teaching is very good, well-planned lessons have clear learning objectives. Good questioning reinforces learning and children respond well, clearly enjoying their lessons. During two very good sessions on measurement, children participated fully and focused on comparisons of different sizes. In one activity they worked in pairs well and used crayons to measure fish of differing sizes. Their work was accurate and all children recorded numbers competently on the fish and on the interactive whiteboard. An optional homework task related to measurement provided further support to develop this concept and involve parents in their child's learning at home. In the role-play area, children buying clothes from a fashion shop count coins to ten accurately and recognise monetary values. Using a computer program, children construct towers of differing sizes and when using a number program, they accurately recognise numbers beyond ten. In their numeracy books, work covers simple addition and subtraction, sorting and naming shapes, sequencing numbers, continuing patterns, measuring, and the use of money. A few higher attaining children work well into elements of Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Teachers' marking also shows that children who have difficulties with mathematical development receive good support.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The immediate environment needs further development to enhance learning in this area.
- A wide range of opportunities and interesting activities extend children's learning effectively.
- The outside area restricts children's experiences in adverse weather conditions.

Commentary

47. As part of their work on investigating materials and how they change, and it being Shrove Tuesday during the inspection, children made pancakes and enjoyed eating the results. Teaching was good as there were many opportunities for speaking and listening and children sensibly took turns in stirring the mixture. When looking at ice balloons, children knew it was frozen water, felt how cold it was and watched very carefully as it began to melt, making simple but accurate observations. Teachers build on children's observations and guide them in their explorations well. Teaching is good, the experiences staff provide stimulate children's interest and curiosity and, as a result, learning is good. For example, during an art and design lesson using printing techniques, children investigated various fruits and were intrigued by the less familiar green pepper. Independent research skills are encouraged as children look in reference books for hot and cold pictures before making their hot and cold weather collages. Computers are used as an integral part of most lessons and some children word process their names clearly on their finished work. In other work, children describe their holidays, look at old and new toys and learn about Palm Sunday, gaining a good awareness of the past and the present and the world around them. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children achieve the early learning goals in this area. However, provision is currently restricted for exploring the natural world and experiencing the outside environment because there is no all-weather shelter for children to work under outside.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The space immediately outside the classroom restricts opportunities for physical development and creative play.

Commentary

48. Although children enter school with underdeveloped physical skills, the majority leave the Foundation Stage having achieved their early learning goals successfully. Children

handle small tools well, they hold pencils effectively and use tools competently when rolling and cutting shapes out of play dough. In an art and design lesson, children used paintbrushes carefully and printed with careful control. Children ride three-wheeled toys very competently but opportunities to extend their skills are restricted because of the limited range of resources they currently have access to. The large outdoor space provides no facilities for children to develop their skills to balance, climb or use wheeled toys in a more organised and controlled setting.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and children achieve well.
- Teachers follow a strong cross-curricular approach to the activities they plan.
- Support from the teaching assistant is good.

Commentary

49. Because teaching is good, most children achieve well and leave the Foundation Stage in line with national expectations for children of this age. In an art and design lesson on printing, the techniques were explained carefully and children listened attentively, their resulting work being of a good standard. Children apply fabric paint sensibly to fruit before printing it onto a large piece of material and in doing so take care not to spoil the work of others. Teachers encourage children to use their senses to make close observations and ask them to predict what they might find inside the fruits before cutting them open. This gives them the opportunity to explore the unknown in the secure knowledge that they are safe to do so. Because children select from a wide range of materials, they learn to distinguish which are best for specific effects. They work excitedly to produce interesting pictures using the paint program on the computer and are thrilled with the lively effects they create. Opportunities to sing and learn songs and rhymes to reinforce number skills, for example, are good. Teachers involve children in a wide range of fun activities and encourage them to explore and experiment with their ideas to build and create and thus develop their creative skills.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall teaching is good and as a result most pupils achieve well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- Presentation of work and handwriting are very good.
- Standards are inconsistent between classes in the same year group.
- Work is not always matched to ability.
- There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills across the curriculum.

Commentary

50. In the national tests and assessments in 2004, pupils at the end of Year 2 reached standards well above national average in reading and writing. Pupils at the end of Year 6 attained above average standards in English. Both these year groups had a higher number of more-able pupils than the current Year 2 and Year 6. Children's attainment in communication, language and literacy is below expected levels when they enter school. But as a result of overall good teaching, the vast majority make good progress as they move through the school so that standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils achieve well. Pupils who are at an advanced stage of learning English as an additional language achieve well because they are generally highly motivated and have a good grasp of what they are learning. In addition, they generally tend to be in the single age classes where the overall attainment is generally higher and support for individuals is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those new to English achieve well and sometimes very well when they receive good quality individual support. In a few lessons where this support is inadequate, their achievement is less than their classmates because, in some instances, work is too challenging for them to complete without help. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, in that reading strategies have been improved and there has been a good focus on writing skills.
51. Because of the numbers in each year group, the school operates single and mixed age classes. Pupils in the single age classes tend to have work that is better matched to their needs and thus generally achieve well. The mixed age classes generally comprise the lower attaining pupils in a year group working alongside higher attaining pupils of the next age group down. This arrangement poses a number of challenges, particularly regarding greater accuracy in teachers' planning to match work to meet such diverse needs. Where teaching is good and the planning is carefully matched to pupils' prior attainment, pupils achieve well. However, when teaching is less than good, and this is mainly in two of the three mixed age classes, namely in Years 1/2 and Years 3/4, this is not the case. In some lessons in these classes, a few pupils struggle to make good gains in their learning, particularly if valuable additional support from teaching assistants is limited. Occasionally, a few of the higher attaining pupils are not always suitably challenged by what they are asked to do in order to make better progress and attain higher standards.
52. Standards in speaking and listening are average by the end of Year 2 and good by the end of Year 6. The school provides a good range of interesting and varied opportunities for pupils to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Good examples of this was seen when the dialogues prepared by Year 6 pupils, as part of a homework assignment, were subsequently modified after analysing speeches by famous people. In a lesson in the Year 4 class, pupils were given a homework assignment to prepare a talk on how they had designed and constructed their musical instruments. This required them to think logically and present well-structured information to others. Pupils in the Year 2 class spoke confidently to the rest of the class after having considered what makes a good speaker and listener. However, there are occasions, for example in history and science, where opportunities are missed to encourage more talk between pupils to share ideas and express their opinions.

53. Standards in reading and writing are at the expected levels by the end of Years 2 and 6 with a small but significant number of pupils working at above average levels in Year 6. Reading has been a particular focus for improvement in the school and the recently introduced strategies to raise the profile of reading appears to have been successful. Book corners are a feature of each classroom and the range of reading books extended to encourage and motivate an interest in reading for pleasure. Reading charts in each classroom ensure pupils record when they have read at home and this helps the teacher identify who may need further encouragement. Skills are taught systematically so that most pupils have the confidence to make use of a range of strategies when they meet unfamiliar words. Opportunities for extended writing are good in some lessons and pupils write with interest and enjoyment. They respond well to working independently and many are keen to research materials in their own time. Pupils use a wide range of writing skills correctly in their work, including note-taking and writing official letters. However a significant number struggle to retain technical vocabulary, for example from science, in order to use it correctly in their report writing.
54. Teaching and learning are good in the majority of lessons. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher asked searching questions and encouraged pupils to think about and extend their vocabulary when discussing the text. She modelled reading well by using expression and enthusiasm to inspire them. Most pupils are aware of their literacy targets and know what they need to do to be successful. However, the quality and use of marking is inconsistent and a few teachers miss opportunities to identify for pupils why their work is good or what they might do to improve further. Where marking is good or better, pupils have clearly addressed the points their teacher has raised in subsequent work. Additional support is often well planned and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers and particularly support assistants modify work to ensure individual pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Where necessary pupils receive one-to-one support in specific aspects of literacy and additional literacy strategies are implemented to support individual education plans. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils explored onomatopoeia and the teaching assistant supported lower attaining pupils well, by encouraging them to attempt the task on their own before giving them sensitive assistance. All ability groups were fully involved throughout the lesson. In less successful lessons, written work is not always accurately matched to ability, which means that lower achieving pupils sometimes find the work too challenging if individual help is limited. In a few instances there is little difference in the written tasks set for pupils of differing abilities, which leads to the lower attaining pupils not being able to complete work successfully on their own. The occasional pupils new to learning English receive insufficient expert support to help them make more rapid progress, although support staff work hard to help them in lessons.
55. The leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who took over the role at the start of this school year, agrees that the development of English has not received sufficient attention this year because there has been insufficient time to carry out all her duties. She is aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has initiated some whole-school developments that have brought about improvement. The work on raising the profile of reading has improved pupils' interest in reading and the emphasis on developing handwriting throughout the school has had a positive impact on the high quality of presentation in pupils' books. Pupils' attainment is monitored well and individual targets are set from year to year based on the detailed analysis of assessment data. However, there is inconsistent practice in the way individual teachers monitor pupils' progress through the year in order to ensure pupils are on track to meet their set targets. While there has been some monitoring of teaching, this has largely been conducted by the previous headteacher and the deputy. The new headteacher plans to ensure all co-ordinators have opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Pupils apply their literacy skills in other subjects satisfactorily. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their language and literacy skills. This particularly helps those pupils with low levels of attainment to practise language, for example, for problem-solving in mathematics and science. For example, in a mixed Year 1/2 class, pupils devised a fact sheet entitled, 'All my work about Pancakes,' which encouraged them to compose their own questions and write a clear scientific report. In another example, pupils wrote independently a fact sheet about being considerate when exploring moral and social issues. Pupils in Year 2 used bullet points accurately when designing a mask in art and design. In Year 6, pupils took relevant notes from a guest speaker discussing the natural world with them.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in Year 6 are good and, as result of good teaching, pupils achieve well.
- Teachers ensure pupils' numeracy skills are developed step by step so that all pupils benefit.
- New technology is enabling better teaching.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Planning and implementation of plans for low attaining pupils should be improved.

Commentary

57. The national test results in 2004 show that attainment for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was well above average. These year groups were higher attaining when compared with the pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6. The majority of children enter the school with below average attainment in this subject and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Standards are at the national average for pupils in the current Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils' overall achievement is good, and for a significant number of higher attainers, it is very good. Pupils with special educational needs and most of those who are learning English as a second language generally achieve well too, especially when given adequate support and guidance. The occasional pupils who arrive at the school and are at an early stage of learning English are not always supported with the expertise and guidance they need to understand what they need to do, and so do not always make the same good progress as their classmates. However, steps are being taken to address this urgently.
58. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and number skills are very well taught, with lessons moving at a good pace. They build on pupils' prior learning step by step and as a result learning for the majority of pupils is good. Teachers incorporate lively 'mental starters' to engage pupils' interest and involvement and continually encourage pupils to explain the strategies they use to solve problems. New ICT resources add interest for pupils and relieve teachers of

such tasks as drawing grids, tables and diagrams, thus enabling them to better focus their time and attention on pupils and their work. Teachers mark work regularly, although practice is inconsistent with regard to the detail teachers provide as to how the work might be improved further. Assessment procedures are thorough, but information gained is not always used as carefully as it should be by every teacher in matching pupils' future work to their learning needs. This particularly affects a few of the lower attaining pupils in the two mixed age classes in Years 1/2 and in Years 3/4, who are occasionally given the same tasks as their higher attaining peers. These pupils find it difficult to follow everything presented to them and to explain what they are learning clearly. In these classes, because the teaching is less than good and the work presented to them has been at too rapid a pace, they do not always fully understand what they need to do to succeed. As a consequence, they sometimes lose confidence and become distracted. However, the higher attaining pupils, and those identified as gifted and talented in mathematics, are suitably challenged, especially through extended homework activities and they often make very good gains in their learning.

59. The curriculum is enhanced with interesting and relevant activities where pupils are encouraged to apply their skills correctly in other subjects including science, design and technology and geography. The recent development of the ICT suite has greatly improved opportunities for data handling and some very good examples of representing data were in evidence. Participation in such initiatives as the National Maths Challenge adds excitement to the curriculum and increases parental interest.
60. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and very knowledgeable about mathematics. She manages the subject very well. She monitors the provision thoroughly and makes good use of analysis and interpretation of performance data to set targets for individual pupils. Teaching and learning are monitored well and information gathered is evaluated to consider improvements in provision. Her understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subject and her drive for better standards have secured good improvement since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils of all abilities have good opportunities to consolidate what they learn in numeracy lessons in other subjects. For example, pupils use measuring skills in science and knowledge of shapes in art and design. Pupils in Year 6 collect data to draw bar and line graphs to show the impact of temperature on rates of dissolving jelly. The links between learning in mathematics and ICT are being developed both through the very effective use of interactive whiteboards and programs that enable pupils to practise their numeracy skills. Lower attaining pupils find these programs particularly helpful when working without direct support.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6.
- Overall teaching is good and as a result most pupils achieve well.
- Pupils show good attitudes to work and behave very well in lessons.

- There is good emphasis on investigation and enquiry skills throughout the school.
- Planning and organisation do not always take account of individual pupils' needs, particularly in two of the mixed age classes.
- Pupils do not always have sufficiently detailed guidance as to how they can improve their work.

Commentary

62. In 2004, national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were above average. Both these year groups had fewer lower attaining pupils than are in the current Year 2 and Year 6. Standards for pupils in the current Year 2 are in line with national averages and standards are above average for pupils in Year 6. Pupils achieve well throughout the school and achievement is highest in Year 6, where teaching is particularly good. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. The occasional pupils who arrive at the school and are at an early stage of English acquisition make unsatisfactory progress because they do not have sufficient access to the vocabulary to explain their thoughts and ideas and the staff do not have the expertise to address their needs. Those identified as higher attainers generally achieve as well as other pupils. The key issue from the previous inspection regarding inconsistent teaching in the mixed age classes has not been fully addressed. In these classes, the planning and organisation do not always take into account the needs of pupils with such a diverse range of abilities, particularly in lessons where help from support staff to work with individual pupils who have special educational needs is limited.
63. Teaching is good overall and very good in Year 6. Scientific investigation skills are taught well throughout the school especially in Years 5 and 6 and, as a result, pupils make good gains in their learning. Because teaching is good and pupils are generally very inquisitive and enjoy science, they learn well. Pupils generally formulate their hypotheses and record their findings independently and are expected to explain their findings to solve problems when designing further investigations. This helps them gain confidence in their knowledge and understanding. However, there are occasions where teachers give pupils too much guidance as to what to do and what to think. This limits the challenge for higher attainers, for example, as seen in the lesson in the Year 5 class. While the lesson was generally good, pupils had limited time to work independently and think the investigation through for themselves. Most teachers plan lessons carefully and take good account of the practical aspects of managing equipment and pupils. They manage pupils well and, where additional support staff are available, they are used to good effect to encourage pupils to think about their observations. In the very good lesson seen in the Year 6 class, pupils made very good progress in collaborating with others to share the workload and recording their findings accurately. The information gathered was then displayed graphically and pupils applied their numeracy skills very effectively, some using computers to collate their results. Most pupils in this class were higher attaining and were suitably challenged by the task. In a very good lesson in the Year 2 class, the teacher combined learning in science, geography and art and design very effectively. While pupils pursued on-going projects in all these subjects, she worked closely with the science group to enable them to design and carry out their 'turning bread into toast' investigation. Skilful questioning and discussion time enabled pupils to make careful observations and explain their findings to others. Pupils enjoyed the activity and made good progress in understanding how materials change when heated. Again, this was a higher attaining

class and the parallel lesson in the mixed age Year 1 /2 class was not as successful. In this lesson, the organisation and management were less effective and the Year 2 pupils, many of whom were lower attaining, were held back by their poor literacy skills and having to hold on to too much information. This was despite having two additional support staff who helped individual pupils constantly.

64. Where teaching is less than good, mainly in the two mixed age classes in Years 1/2 and Years 3/4, work is too prescribed and it is not clear how much pupils have thought through independently. This is particularly an issue in these classes, where a high number of lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs work alongside younger but more-able pupils. In these classes, lower attaining pupils make slow progress because the work is sometimes too difficult for them to complete fully without constant guidance from support staff who are not always available in all lessons.
65. Pupils show good attitudes to work, behave very well and working relationships in lessons are very good. They are particularly responsive in practical activities where most organise themselves well and work hard to complete the tasks. Where applicable, pupils use ICT to record their findings or carry out independent research related to the topic. Their recorded work is generally neat and tidy, although there are some errors in the use of technical vocabulary. In discussions, it was evident some pupils struggle to retain new vocabulary accurately. Those with limited literacy skills particularly find it hard to explain their understanding confidently both orally and on paper. Teachers recognise this is a problem for a few pupils and constantly re-enforce pupils' understanding. Pupils' work is marked and corrected regularly although the quality of the marking is inconsistent, ranging from very good detailed guidance and evaluation to brief summary comments, which offer little advice as to how pupils can improve their work. There are satisfactory assessment procedures that identify how well pupils attain. The use of the data provided for setting targets for individual pupils is not consistently followed in all classes. Where it is used well, pupils know what levels they have attained and what they need to do next.
66. Science makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, and good links are made to aspects of the school's well-planned PSHE programme, for example, with healthy living and eating, sex education and environmental issues. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and has had limited opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. She has identified strengths in the teaching and curriculum, in that investigative skills have improved throughout the school and are now taught well, and recognises more needs to be done to reinforce pupils' ability to interpret information and articulate their understanding to others more confidently. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above expectations across the school and overall achievement is good.

- New hardware and software is helping to raise standards.
- Teaching assistants support teachers and pupils very effectively.
- At times, pupils' progress is slowed down by over-control of tasks by teachers.

Commentary

67. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They show interest and enjoyment in using ICT in various ways across the curriculum, for example data-handling in mathematics, word processing in English, using search engines in history and graphics in art and design. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Hardware has been updated and increased, so that every classroom has at least one computer and there are 14 in the ICT suite, enabling group and class lessons. Interactive whiteboards are being installed in every classroom and these are developing the teaching and learning of ICT very effectively. All pupils enjoy using this facility but lower attaining pupils particularly benefit from the hands-on experiences teachers provide for them, for example, when manipulating number operations in numeracy.
68. Only two lessons of ICT were observed, but a good range of pupils' work was examined and this showed above average standards across all aspects of ICT. Pupils' work also showed comprehensive coverage of the curriculum and a well-defined emphasis on ensuring pupils build successfully on previous learning, so that their knowledge and understanding builds up step by step. In one of the lessons observed, pupils were successfully developing their control skills. However, the progress they made was restricted as they had insufficient freedom to use the technology independently, and a good number of them were well capable of trying out their newly acquired skills sensibly. Useful assessment procedures are in place, but these need to be refined to make it clearer as to which specific skills, knowledge and understanding are being monitored and assessed. All pupils are given equal access to ICT and pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as a second language make good progress, in line with that of their peers. They are generally well supported and the practical nature of the learning allows them to explore and gain confidence in their learning. The fact that there is a dedicated ICT support assistant available to support teachers and pupils ensures good progress in lessons.
69. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good knowledge of the curriculum. She leads the subject well. She undertakes a considerable amount of staff training and monitors lessons and this gives her a good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through the school and evaluate how well pupils attain. She encourages and supports teachers who are less confident in developing ICT and deploys the non-teaching assistants effectively to support both teachers and pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Use of ICT across the curriculum is good and improving. Every class has at least one computer in the classroom and scheduled time in the ICT suite. This enables teachers to link use of ICT with specific teaching and learning in many lessons. Evidence in samples of pupils' work indicates that teachers and pupils have confidence in exploring the Internet and using a good range of programs that support learning in literacy, mathematics and art and design, for example.

HUMANITIES

71. No lessons were observed in **geography** so there is insufficient evidence to make judgements about overall provision. Pupils have good opportunities to learn more about their local environment and compare key features with other parts of this and other countries. The displays around the classrooms indicate that pupils, for example, in Years 5 and 6, explore rivers and estuaries well, looking particularly at how the town's river has impacted on the local environment over the years, thus linking their learning to work they cover under local history. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop simple mapping skills as they to explore the local area and they also gain a satisfactory understanding of the wider world as they follow the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' on holiday. The standard of the work seen was at least in line with expectations. The educational opportunities are enriched well by visits, such as to the town, river and coast and the residential visit encompasses learning across a wide range of subjects effectively.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Information is presented in good detail and pupils enjoy the subject.
- Good links are made to other subjects through topic work.
- Assessments are not detailed enough to know how well pupils have achieved.
- The co-ordinator has had no opportunity as yet to observe teaching and learning.
- Resources, visits and visitors are used well to enrich learning.

Commentary

72. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and overall attainment is in line with expected levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 as was the position at the time of the last inspection. Teachers make effective use of a wide range of good quality resources to engage pupils' interest and good use is made of visits to places of interest. Links with other subjects, for example, art and design when making observational drawings of artefacts and literacy when pupils participate in role-play activities, enrich learning effectively. Of particular value are the themed days, for example, the 'Greek Day', where pupils explore aspects of different cultures and traditions from various periods in history. Wherever possible visitors are invited in to talk to pupils.
73. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although examples of very good teaching were seen. The best teaching is characterised by good planning and organisation, enthusiastic presentations, secure subject knowledge and good management of pupils. In a very good lesson in Year 3, pupils explored the lifestyles of rich and poor Tudors through some very skilful questioning which made them think about what they were learning and explain their understanding through reasoned arguments based on the evidence they had gathered. This level of detailed questioning and information sharing is generally good throughout the school and pupils show a lively interest in exploring resources and listening to and thinking about what is presented to them. However, much of the recorded work shows detailed information has been copied from books or worksheets and opportunities for independent reflective writing are limited. Often pupils of all abilities record the same information, thus there is

insufficient challenge for the more-able pupils to express their own views and ideas, while some of the lower attaining pupils copy material they do not always understand. Pupils spend considerable time in presenting neat, tidy work. This is often at the expense of sufficient time being devoted to promote discussions and debates in small groups for pupils to explore historical concepts and develop independent enquiry skills. This is particularly evident where teaching is weak and expectations are too low. Lower-attaining pupils are generally supported sensitively by class teachers and support staff. However, support staff are in limited supply during history lessons, and pupils with special educational needs and those learning English and at an early stage of acquisition do not always have the specialist support they need to help them progress faster.

74. History is planned through topics where, for example, teachers link work to literacy, geography or art and design, sometimes using the Internet to create opportunities for independent research. Where these topic approaches are managed well, learning is good. In a good lesson in the Year 4 class, pupils developed accurate note-taking skills by observing how the Tudors may have made bread, recording the ingredients used and the method applied before finally cooking their 'loaves'. Because pupils understood the purpose behind taking careful notes, their skills developed well as they covered elements of the history and design technology curriculum. However, while this topic approach encourages and motivates pupils' interest well, for some lower attaining pupils there is too much to take in, and they do not always grasp all the information confidently. In the two mixed age classes in Years 1/2 and Years 3/4, where there is a concentration of lower attaining pupils from one year group working alongside the more-able pupils from another year group, there is wide disparity between the most able and the least able. When work is not always planned carefully enough to match such a wide range of abilities, and additional support staff are not available to guide individual pupils, a few of the lower attaining pupils fail to achieve well. This, along with poor classroom organisation and management, resulted in the unsatisfactory lesson observed in the Year 3/4 class. Pupils in this lesson showed good interest in the subject but, because of low expectations and limited involvement of pupils in the discussions, a few behaved badly and lost interest as the lesson progressed.
75. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has had insufficient time to carry out all his duties. He is keen to develop provision further and has already shown good leadership in ensuring resources that underpin the teaching and learning are well organised. Although his assessment of standards is currently limited to reviewing the quality of pupils' work through displays and collating examples of pupils' assessed work in portfolios, this has given him a clear view of what needs to be done. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place in a few classes but the practice is inconsistent and he has plans to manage the necessary changes. Until these changes are made, the co-ordinator has no means of establishing how well pupils achieve or what the standards are in every class. The fact that recorded work in history is mixed in with work from other subjects does not make it easy to establish how well pupils achieve and how successfully their knowledge and skills are developed. The headteacher recognises the need to look more closely at current provision.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved and are now in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Resources are used well to support teaching and visits to local churches enrich learning.
- Monitoring and evaluation of standards and assessment throughout the school are at an early stage of development.
- Religious education work is not always well laid out in topic books and so monitoring of standards across the school is difficult.

Commentary

76. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 now match the expectations outlined in the agreed syllabus and pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds and new to English are generally supported well and as result make satisfactory gains in their learning. In a few instances, these pupils' learning is disrupted because individual pupils are withdrawn to work with teaching assistants on their basic skills in literacy or numeracy, for example. Such arrangements make it difficult for them to maintain concentration on the key aspects being taught in religious education, and this results in a few making slow progress. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to explore religious education as part of their topic work as well as a discrete subject, and good links are made with other curriculum areas for example work in art and design and English. Good examples of this were seen in the attractive art displays around the school and in the notes Year 6 pupils made listening to a guest speaker talking about the natural world and our place in the universe. Pupils reflect on beliefs about what happens after death and the place of God in the world in a mature manner. In Year 2, pupils reflect thoughtfully on Christian faith within the home and what makes them feel safe and happy, thus linking in well with the school's provision for personal and social education. In a good lesson in Year 5, pupils were interested and engaged in aspects of researching opinions about the character of Jesus. Many pupils were keen to explain what they had found out and the short written exercise to record their information interested all pupils. In this lesson, support for lower attaining pupils was good and all pupils achieved well. In lessons where pupils do not make the expected progress, learning is less explicit and there are weaknesses in the organisation and management to ensure all lower attaining pupils achieve well. This was evident in an unsatisfactory lesson in the mixed Year 3/4 class, where issues of weak classroom management and unsatisfactory planning resulted in a significant minority of lower attaining pupils making little gains in their learning. These pupils found the work too difficult and did not have the necessary basic skills to express or record their ideas confidently. However, the school's integrated topic work approach sometimes results in arrangements that are not always managed well, as was the case in a mixed Year 1/2 class. In this lesson, insufficient attention was given to the religious education content and so pupils did not make sufficient gains in their learning to achieve higher standards in religious education, but their artwork developed well.
78. Pupils study world religions satisfactorily. Resources have been improved so that each world religion studied has support materials and artefacts. Provision satisfactorily supports pupils' awareness of the wider world, but opportunities are sometimes missed to make more of the range of cultures and traditions represented in the school and to celebrate key festivals in faiths other than Christianity, thus enabling pupils to celebrate diversity.
79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Standards have improved at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection and the range of work has been extended to meet the requirements

of the locally agreed syllabus. The co-ordinator has ensured that resources to support teaching and learning are good and that regular visits and visitors enrich learning. However, she has had no opportunity to monitor provision other than reviewing pupils' work and gathering examples to build up portfolios. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, in that they are not used consistently across the school, although good practice is evident. In addition, because pupils record work in topic books that cover a range of subjects, neither pupils nor teachers have any secure way of evaluating how good the achievement is and how secure pupils' knowledge and understanding are. Often much of the recorded work is the same for all levels of ability in any year group and marking is inconsistently applied across the school. The school has identified religious education as an area for development and has set clear tasks to be completed as part of the school improvement plan in order to improve standards further.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Only one lesson was seen in **design and technology** and one in **music**. No lessons were seen in **physical education**. So no judgements are made regarding overall provision in these subjects.

80. In **design and technology** pupils have experience of a satisfactory range of materials and techniques and develop the expected skills through designing and making a variety of products. The work seen reflected that standards are in line with those expected nationally. For example, pupils in Year 2 write simple step-by-step instructions on how to make a model cat and they satisfactorily label and evaluate their work on making a fruit salad. Pupils in Year 6 compose clear, more detailed and perceptive instructions, and annotate their work with critical evaluations as to how they might improve on it next time. Their booklets of ideas for the development of Wisbech's port are carefully illustrated and show mature consideration of the needs of different users. Clay, textile and reclaimed material work displayed around the school show good attention is given to the quality of finish. The practical nature of this subject results in pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as a second language achieving as well as their classmates. The current lack of a co-ordinator is an impediment to developing provision further.
81. **Music** features well in the school and the work seen was of a good standard. In the very good lesson seen with pupils from Year 4, pupils sang some complex songs and played percussion well to create different effects. They critically analysed their performance and recognised ways to improve their presentation. In assemblies, pupils sing joyfully and with enthusiasm. Older pupils were seen playing recorders tunefully during a lunchtime club. The music co-ordinator has very good knowledge and expertise and teaches music throughout the school. In this way she has a good overview of how pupils perform as they progress through the school. Visiting music teachers provide good instrumental tuition for brass, clarinet and violin, and pupils are eager to take up these opportunities. The school participates in a good range of local musical events and pupils benefit from a range of musicians who visit the school to participate in workshops and performances.
82. In **physical education** the required curriculum is in place and additional activities include a residential visit where pupils engage in a wide range of outdoor pursuits that enrich learning well. Although there are limited opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting activities outside the school day, there was an energetic and enthusiastic

football coaching session where over fourteen boys and girls developed good team skills. The school recognises the need to develop provision further.

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards and achievement are well above expectations across the school.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Observational drawing, watercolour painting, pastel crayon and clay work are particularly good, benefiting from an appropriate balance of basic skills teaching of and good opportunities for imaginative work.
- The subject's high profile in the school and the school's longstanding reputation for high quality work in this area results in high expectations that pupils work hard to meet.

Commentary

83. Standards are well above expectations throughout the school and pupils of all backgrounds and abilities achieve very well. High standards and achievements in this subject have been maintained since the previous inspection. The school has gained various awards, for example, Artsmark 2002, and pupils have participated in local and national exhibitions of the best of children's artwork. Pupils' work enhances the appearance of the school and inspires and motivates pupils to enjoy their success.
84. Pupils use colour, form, texture, pattern and different materials and processes to successfully communicate their ideas in such activities as painting, printing and modelling. They develop their skills continuously, building on previous learning very effectively. For example, in displays of portraits from Foundation Stage to Year 6, there is evidence of increasing attention to detail, the development of skill in mixing skin tones in watercolour paint and, in some examples from older pupils in Years 5 and 6, the ability to convey character. Clay and fabric work is also of a very high quality with the oldest pupils producing some excellent 3D work. Pupils satisfactorily evaluate their own and each other's work and consider ways of making further improvements. They learn a little about the work of recognised artists, designers and craftspeople and the diverse roles of art and design in different times and cultures. However, these elements of the curriculum are not well developed in order for pupils to appreciate and evaluate a wider range of artistic styles resulting in lower standards in these aspects of the curriculum.
85. In the lessons observed, teaching was very well focused, with clear instructions about processes and activities that provided good opportunities for pupils to experiment and explore materials and techniques. As a result pupils worked confidently and produced some high quality creative work. Visiting artists add variety to the teaching and give pupils new experiences. For example in a recent cross-curricular project on Fenland Landscapes, pupils produced some excellent mosaic work. The very effective use of ICT programs is developing pupils' understanding of how colour, pattern and design can be manipulated to obtain particular effects and pupils' skill in computer graphics is developed very well.
86. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject and leads the subject very well. She monitors pupils' work and has built up a very good portfolio

collection that supports teachers' judgements about standards very well. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and pupils are given good guidance as to how to improve their practical skills. Activities such as art clubs enrich pupils' learning very effectively.

Personal, social and health education

87. No lessons were seen in **personal, social and health education**, so no judgements are made about overall provision. The school provides good opportunities through regular activities, such as 'circle time', where pupils are given time to think about their feelings and relationships and how they can help one another. Aspects of citizenship are discussed regularly in order for pupils to understand the importance of living as part of a community that is mindful of the needs of others. Older pupils enjoy being given extra responsibilities and through a well-organised rota system, they carry out a variety of important jobs around the school, including supervising younger pupils at breaks and lunchtimes encouraging and helping them in a kindly way. Pupils have successfully organised 'friendship stops' in the playground to ensure pupils never have to play alone and because they have found this responsibility so rewarding, they have developed the activity into the 'friendship train' thus demonstrating good levels of ingenuity and initiative in order to entertain each other. Designated pupil representatives visit classes and feedback any concerns or issues to the school council, thus becoming involved in any improvements, such as better play facilities. Others help to put out equipment at playtime and use their initiative in organising cake and toy stalls to raise money for charity. Health issues are taught through the curriculum but particularly through science and PSHE lessons and the school promotes an interest in healthy eating through its participation in the fruit scheme. As a result of the school's provision, pupils form very good relationships and learn to become sensible and mature young adults by the time they leave the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
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	4

How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).