

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIESTSIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122468

Headteacher: Mr D Binks

Lead inspector: Mr K Williams

Dates of inspection: 4th-7th October 2004

Inspection number: 267517

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	461
School address:	Park Street Sutton-in-Ashfield Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG17 4BB
Telephone number:	01623 465705
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bowers
Date of previous inspection:	1 st -5 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Priestscic is a community primary school situated in the centre of Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottinghamshire. There are 461 boys and girls on roll, which is bigger than average. The children usually join the nursery in the term after their third birthday. The school serves an area containing significant deprivation. On entry to the school, the attainment on most pupils is well below average. Almost all of the pupils are from white British backgrounds. An average proportion of pupils (61) have been identified as having special educational needs; none has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Twenty-six per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. The school received the School Achievement Award in 2002 and 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21074	Keith Williams	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, physical education, personal, social and health education
32682	Ruth Wood	Lay inspector	
18645	Charalambos Loizou	Team inspector	Foundation Stage, geography, history
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27100	Trevor Davies	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

As a result of very good leadership, management and teaching, the school provides a **very good standard of education**. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below average. They make very good progress and achieve very well; by the end of Year 6, standards in English are below average; in mathematics they are average and in science they are above average. Overall, the school gives very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by the staff and governors
- The school has a very positive ethos and pupils of all ability, including those with special educational needs (SEN), achieve very well
- The teachers, ably assisted by the support staff, provide work that interests, stimulates and challenges the pupils and is well matched to their needs
- The pupils receive a very broad range of experiences in and out of lessons and information and communication technology (ICT) is very well used
- Standards are rising in English, but could still be higher, particularly in spelling and handwriting

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected. Standards are rising and the results of the national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been improving at a faster rate than the national picture. The teaching, curriculum, leadership and management have also improved. Very good progress has been made in addressing the key issues. Assessment arrangements are now very good; a close check is kept on literacy and numeracy lessons and their quality has improved. The partnership with parents is now good and there are clear procedures for homework.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2004
English	E	E	E	C
Mathematics	C	C	E	C
Science	B	B	C	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.*

Inspection evidence confirms that the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those capable of attaining the higher levels, **achieve very well**. The children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below average and their language and communication skills are particularly low. They achieve very well and, although few will achieve the goals expected of them by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, most will reach the expected levels in the other areas of learning. The school's results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The inspection confirms that, by the end of Year 2, standards in English are below average and they are average in mathematics and

science. The 2003 results for pupils in Year 6 were lower than in previous years but, overall, the results have been improving at a faster rate than that seen nationally. This improvement is reflected in the results for 2004; the proportion of pupils attaining expected and higher levels has increased significantly compared to 2003. Inspectors found that standards in the current Year 6 are continuing to rise and the pupils are making very good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English, average in mathematics and above average in Science. Standards have risen in ICT and are now above what is expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, as they are in art and design. Standards in religious education, history and physical education are in line with those expectations.

The pupils' **personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.** They have very positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a very good quality of education. The teaching is very good and contributes to the very good start made by the children in the Foundation Stage and the pupils' very good learning and achievement in Years 1 to 6. The teachers, very well supported by teaching assistants, are particularly successful in planning exciting and challenging work that meets the needs of different levels of ability, using information from the very good assessment procedures. Excellent use is made of resources, particularly those for ICT.

The school provides a very good curriculum, enhanced by a very good range of enrichment activities. The care and welfare of the pupils are very good and they are offered very good support and guidance. The school benefits from good links with parents and the community and very good relationships with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The **leadership and management of the school are very good** overall. The headteacher's excellent leadership is having a direct impact on the pupils' achievement, and the rising standards, because there is a strong focus on developing and improving the quality of education. As a result, the school has a very good climate for learning in which all pupils, including those with SEN, are able to make progress. The governors, senior staff and Advanced Skills Teachers play a significant part in the school's development.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents and pupils are very satisfied with the school. In particular, parents are pleased that their children like school and are made to feel very welcome when they first start. They feel that the school is well led and managed and the teachers expect their children to work hard. The pupils confirm that they enjoy school and feel that they are treated fairly, learn new things in lessons and are shown how to improve their work.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

This is a very effective school in which standards are rising and the pupils are achieving very well. The most important thing the school should do is:

- continue to implement the successful strategies to raise standards in English, particularly in spelling and handwriting

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The evidence of the inspection confirms that the pupils' achievement is very good overall. Standards in English are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and, in mathematics, they are average. Standards in science are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Standards are rising.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils of all ages and ability achieve very well because they are very well taught
- Standards in English are rising, but could still be higher, particularly in handwriting and spelling

Commentary

1. The children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below average; language and communication skills are particularly low. They settle very well, enjoy their time in the Nursery and Reception class and are very well taught. They make great strides, achieve very well and, although few will achieve the goals expected of them by the end of Reception in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, most will reach the expected levels in the other areas of learning.
2. The school's results in the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. When compared with schools in similar circumstances, the results were below average in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was above average in reading, below average in writing and well above average in mathematics. The results over recent years have been improving at a faster rate than the national picture. This improvement was evident in the results for pupils who were in Year 2 in 2004, although at the time of the inspection, it is not possible to make comparisons with other schools nationally.
3. Inspectors found that in Years 1 and 2, the pupils' achievement is very good. They are very well taught and they make rapid gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. By the end of Year 2, standards in English are below average and in mathematics and science they are average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.3 (15.0)	15.7 (15.6)
Writing	13.8 (13.2)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	16.4 (16.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 61 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. In Year 6, in 2003, the national test results were well below average in English and mathematics and average in science. When compared with similar schools, the results were average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The results compared less favourably when compared with schools that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, it should be noted that the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has risen significantly since 2003. The proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was average in English and science and below average in mathematics. The results for 2003 were lower than in previous years though, over time, they have been improving at a faster rate than that found nationally. This improvement is reflected in the results for 2004 which, although national comparison is not possible, were significantly higher.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.7 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	25.1 (26.9)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	28.9 (29.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 70 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising in Years 3 to 6 and the pupils are achieving very well. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. The school places a high priority on the pupils' literacy and numeracy and a very close check is kept on how they are progressing. Exciting, well structured lessons and a very strong emphasis on providing practical, first-hand experiences help the pupils to make very good progress in acquiring the basic skills. A wide range of strategies is used to develop the pupils' literacy skills as they move through the school and reading and writing are taught very effectively. However, given the pupils' low levels of language and literacy when they first start school, standards in English remain below average. Grammar and spelling are taught well, although the pupils' accuracy in their weekly spelling tests is not so evident in their day-to-day writing and the school has rightly identified the need to develop a more systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting to improve the pupils' fluency and standard of presentation. The mathematics programme is very well organised and taught and this enables the pupils to reach the expected levels. Standards in science are above those expected because the pupils are given a variety of stimulating and challenging investigations and experiments, so that they develop the skills of scientific enquiry very well.
6. Among other subjects, standards have risen in ICT and are now above those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, due largely to improvements to resources, teaching and organisation. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and standards are also in line with what is expected in history and physical education. In art and design, standards are above the expectations of pupils of this age because the pupils enjoy a very broad curriculum that develops their skills progressively as they move through the school.
7. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their classmates because of the very good support and nurturing they receive. Planning takes very good account of their specific needs and the teachers ensure that these pupils receive the additional help they need in lessons. The teaching assistants have a significant impact on the achievement of

all pupils, including those with special educational needs. A significant number of pupils with special educational needs exceed the progress they are expected to make by the end of Year 6. The more able pupils achieve very well because the teachers have high expectations of them and they receive work that challenges and stimulates them to reach the higher levels of which they are capable. Those identified as gifted or talented in sport or the arts, for example, extend their skills through the many out-of-school activities and often achieve success in local organisations such as clubs or theatre groups.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are very good and there is very good provision for the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils’ have very positive attitudes to school and to their work and they behave very well
- The pupils actively support the wide range of activities provided
- The school provides very good support for the pupils’ social and personal development

Commentary

8. Attendance, overall, is satisfactory and is close to the national average. A new computerised registration system has recently been introduced and absence is carefully monitored each week. A close check is kept on the reasons for absences and appropriate follow-up action is taken to promote improvement.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

9. Most pupils arrive promptly for school and any latecomers are speedily integrated into class with limited disruption to other pupils. The staff know the pupils well and issues raised by persistent latecomers are sensitively addressed.
10. The behaviour of pupils is very good and attitudes to school are very positive. The teaching staff expects high standards of behaviour and the system of sanctions and rewards is well understood and fairly applied. The children’s response is very positive in class, as well as in corridors, the hall and in the playground. There have been no exclusions, so the table showing exclusions is not included. The headteacher and his staff quickly and effectively deal with reported incidents of poor behaviour. The pupils commented favourably on recent improvements in playground behaviour.
11. The pupils like coming to school and are keen to participate. They relate very well to one another and to adults, are courteous and contribute well to class discussions. The pupils

are encouraged to become active participants in the elimination of bullying and to explore the impact of their actions and feelings in class discussions. A school council has recently been introduced to give the pupils a more formal opportunity to contribute to the life of the school.

12. There are very good opportunities for promoting the pupils' personal development and social and moral development are particular strengths. The school's very positive ethos is complemented by a wide range of activities aimed at building the pupils' self esteem, self-confidence and experience of the wider world. Assemblies are used very productively to confront issues such as bullying and to raise awareness of other cultures and religions. Art, music and drama are also employed successfully across the curriculum to provide an insight into traditions and customs of other ethnic groups and faiths.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a very good quality of education. The teaching, learning and curriculum are very good and there are very good arrangements for securing the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Links with parents and the local community are good and there are very good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is very good and there are very good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers make lessons interesting, exciting and challenging
- The use of ICT, particularly the interactive whiteboards¹, is having a major impact on the pupils' learning
- The teachers use assessment information very well to match work to the needs of different abilities and they are supported very well by the teaching assistants

Commentary

13. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good and this has a significant impact on the pupils' achievement and the progress they make. The teaching was very good or excellent in almost six out of ten lessons seen and, across the school, there are many noteworthy features. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and the amount of very good and excellent teaching has more than doubled.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 55 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6 (11%)	26 (47%)	19 (35%)	4 (8%)	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.

14. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well because of the consistent high quality of teaching. The teachers and teaching assistants work as a highly effective team due, in no small part, to very good leadership and management. All of the staff know the children really well because of their very detailed assessments of the children and the highly effective monitoring of their daily progress. Communication with parents is very good. The highly organised and effective planning ensures that every child works at a level that matches his or her age and ability. A significant number of the children (about two-thirds) enter the Nursery with varying degrees of speech and language difficulties which are identified as early as possible. Programmes are then provided that will help each child improve in all areas of learning, particularly in early language and literacy. There has been very good progress since the last inspection in the teaching of children in the Foundation Stage.

¹ This is a whiteboard that is linked to a computer controlled projector. A large image is projected and the teacher, or pupil, is able to control the screen in much the same way as they would with a mouse.

15. The school gives the highest priority to the development of the pupils' self-esteem and their progress in literacy and numeracy. Consequently, these areas are very well taught and the pupils achieve very well. The teachers have a very clear understanding of how the basic skills should be taught and they have a very consistent approach from class to class. The impact of the school's three Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) has been considerable, particularly in the identification and sharing of good practice in the Foundation Stage, English and mathematics. Lessons in literacy and numeracy follow the national guidelines, but are adapted to take account of the pupils' understanding and experience. This is very effective. The teaching of ICT has also improved, due largely to the leadership of the co-ordinator, who has been instrumental in improving the knowledge and confidence of the teachers and ensuring consistency from class to class.
16. The pupils respond very positively to the teachers' very high expectations of how they should behave and approach their work. Lessons are invariably calm: the pupils are able to concentrate on their learning, secure in the knowledge that their contributions will be valued by adults and other pupils. They are not afraid to make mistakes but, equally, they enjoy succeeding. This was seen to great effect in a Year 6 class, where the pupils took great delight in hearing a very imaginative piece of writing by one of their classmates. On the rare occasions when pupils misbehave, they are dealt with very effectively by the staff. The teachers plan interesting and exciting activities that capture the pupils' attention and motivate them to do well. The introduction of interactive whiteboards in each classroom is proving highly effective and there were many examples of excellent use during the inspection. Their use in English and mathematics – often during the introductory activities, or to recap what they learned in a previous lesson – helps lessons to get off to a brisk start. Year 6 pupils enjoy, for example, taking part in a game of 'fraction frenzy', having fun while consolidating their knowledge of equivalent fractions. In Year 2, the pupils' learned about the different components of a car. The boards are used imaginatively in many other subjects too including, during the inspection, art and design and physical education.
17. The teaching of those pupils with special educational needs is very good across the school. In the Nursery, the early identification and assessment of the children' needs means that those with special educational needs are supported extremely well, enabling them to make very good progress. This continues in Years 1 to 6, where the pupils benefit from a balance of whole class teaching, small group work and individual attention to their areas of difficulty. The teaching assistants play a very important role in ensuring that these pupils are successful in reaching their targets. The teachers work closely with support staff to plan and assess the needs, not just of the pupils with special educational needs, but pupils of all abilities. Across the school, there are very good procedures to assess the pupils and keep a check on their progress, particularly in English and mathematics, but increasingly in other subjects, too. The information gathered is used very effectively to identify areas of strength or weakness in the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, to ensure that the work planned meets the needs of pupils of differing ability and to set targets for improvement. The school recognises the need to develop assessment arrangements in religious education and music.

The curriculum

The school provides a very good range of curricular opportunities, both inside and outside of lessons. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good
- The curriculum promotes the teaching of literacy and numeracy very effectively
- The school is constantly seeking new ways to improve what is taught
- The pupils' personal development is very well provided for
- ICT is used very effectively to support learning
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum

Commentary

18. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very well planned to provide a wide range of experiences covering all of the recommended areas of learning. In the Nursery and Reception class, there is a very good balance between activities directed by teachers, those selected by teachers that give opportunities for exploration and those chosen by children themselves. Planning is very good. All of the required areas of learning are linked together very well. Teachers and teaching assistants understand how young children learn and work together as a team to make the best use of time. This is evident in how well the children are working together at the very outset of the new term. The development of the children's language and their personal and social skills rightly permeates all activities.
19. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. Since the last inspection the subject co-ordinators have worked hard to reorganise and improve what is taught and this has led to higher standards in many subjects. The school has developed policies and schemes of work to enable appropriate curricular coverage and the progressive development of the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Planning ensures that there is parity of provision in parallel classes and all pupils are enabled to achieve very well, particularly in English and mathematics. It has continued to adapt the national literacy and numeracy strategies to meet the needs of its pupils and has achieved great success with its development programme. For example, the school has been particularly successful in using subjects such as geography and science to enable the pupils to develop their skills in recording and data-handling. Standards in the basic skills of English and mathematics have risen faster than the national rate in the tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. The school recognises that the provision in some subjects, for example music, needs revision and has a planned rolling programme for subject development.
20. The curriculum is very well planned to ensure that all pupils receive similar experiences and opportunities. The work provided is very well matched to the needs of all abilities, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. The provision for those pupils with special educational needs is very good. The support staff are employed very effectively in classrooms to ensure that these pupils get the support they need. Each of the pupils has an individual education plan (IEP), which is regularly reviewed, updated and used to plan their work. The planning ensures that all subjects are accessible to the pupils and that the facilities, resources and teaching are matched to their individual needs.
21. The school has developed a very good policy and a comprehensive scheme of work to support the pupils' personal and social education. It has been particularly successful in supporting high quality relationships in the school and promoting very good behaviour.

Aspects of personal and social development are taught regularly in each class and strongly supported by assembly themes. The school has a clear programme for teaching sex education and the dangers of alcohol and drugs misuse are taught in the junior classes.

22. The school provides a very good range of activities outside of the school day and visits and visitors to enrich lessons. A sports development officer has been appointed to promote a range of sporting clubs, including football, netball, hockey and cross country running. These are very well attended. The pupils go on a number of regular visits to support and extend classroom learning. Good use is made of the local area for visits and residential excursions for pupils in Year 3 and Year 6. The local community makes a vital contribution to the life of the school through the large numbers of visitors who contribute to school life. The school makes it very clear to parents what is being taught and, through homework projects, promotes a fruitful partnership between home and school.
23. There are very good arrangements for the children before they start in the nursery and for the transfer to the next stage of their education. They have established excellent links with the local comprehensive school to which most of the pupils transfer. A particular benefit of this close relationship is the outstanding use made of the Advanced Skills Teacher" programme, through which subjects such as drama are very well supported.
24. The teachers are very well matched to their roles in the school. The teaching assistants make a very positive impact on the pupils' achievement because the school has a very effective programme of staff development. The school is well resourced, particularly so for literacy, mathematics and ICT. Resources in ICT have improved significantly since the last inspection, mainly as the result of national and community initiatives. Through a programme of systematic training, the teachers have developed confidence in using computer technology to help the pupils to learn and opportunities are built into teachers' planning and seamlessly integrated into lessons. The building and the grounds have their limitations but the management team has been very creative in the use of space and it makes very effective use of the available accommodation. The conscientious caretaker and his team maintain the building to a high standard. It is further enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very effectively for the care, safety and welfare of the pupils and they receive very good support, advice and guidance. There is good involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very strong, caring ethos in which the pupils' feel secure and valued
- Systematic and well managed assessment enables the school give pupils very good support and guidance
- Induction procedures and the arrangements for the transfer of pupils are very good

Commentary

25. The school has a very strong, caring ethos in which the pupils feel secure and valued. The pupils generally feel they can readily approach staff and share any concerns they may have. The provision for children with special educational needs is very good: the pupils' needs are quickly identified and planned for and support is sought from the appropriate external agencies. The staff work hard to ensure the inclusion of these pupils in all class activities.

26. There is good practice in respect of health and safety matters. All the required health and safety checks and inspections, including risk assessment, are routinely performed and recorded systematically. The staff are vigilant and any potential problems flagged are quickly addressed. The headteacher and governors work hard to ensure that the site is safe. Teaching staff are familiar with the school's approach to child protection issues and to whom they should refer their concerns. The school makes good use of external resources, such as the DARE (drug awareness) Project, to promote awareness of health and safety issues among the children.
27. The practice of monitoring and evaluating the pupils' work to improve standards has been a priority since the last inspection. The teachers keep good records of progress and these are used consistently across the curriculum to inform planning and set individual targets against which the pupils' achievement and progress can be measured. This has contributed to the very good achievement of most pupils. Where the need for extra support is identified it is provided, both to individual pupils and to groups, for example, the booster classes timetabled as the Year 6 national tests approach.
28. The pastoral arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school are very good. The staff are quick to establish positive relationships with new entrants to the Foundation Stage, fostering a sense of security and allowing new pupils to settle quickly into the school's routines. There are well established links with the main receiving school, which initiates a programme of extra-curricular activities in art and design, drama, ICT and sport for pupils in Years 4 to 6, in preparation for transfer. This, together with a formal induction programme, helps ensure a very smooth transition for final year pupils, especially those with special educational needs, and this contributes to a very positive experience for pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the local community are good and there are very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are provided with good information on their children's progress
- Parental involvement has increased with positive results for the pupils' education
- The school has very productive links with educational and other services
- Opportunities for formal consultation with parents are too limited

Commentary

29. The quality of the links with parents is good. The majority of parents are very positive about the work of the school, the progress their children are making and the information provided to them. Parents receive a curriculum newsletter each term and letters detailing other school matters. Two open evenings are held in the course of the year, although these are not always well attended, and parents also receive a comprehensive written report detailing their child's abilities and attainment. School performances and sports events are very well attended.

30. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to develop the learning partnership between home and school. A significant number of parents now come into class to participate in the Parent Reading Initiative aimed at developing the reading skills of their children and to foster an interest in books. The school values this involvement and is encouraged by the positive impact it is having on raising standards, especially in reading in the younger classes.
31. Parents feel the headteacher and his staff are approachable. They like the “open door” policy and feel any concerns they have are quickly addressed. Parents like this informal arrangement but there is currently no other mechanism for more widespread consultation with parents. The school recognises the need to consult better to improve its partnership with parents and this matter is currently a priority for development. The “Friends of Priestsic” supports the school with fund raising initiatives, although the organisation of events is usually carried out by a small group of parents.
32. The school has very good links with educational and other services to enrich the curriculum. Residential and theatre trips and other visits contribute positively to the personal development of pupils. The focus is on supporting the pupils’ personal and academic development and the school, by providing a wide range of experiences, strives to uncover individual talents in each pupil. Parents value the broad range of extra-curricular activities provided, which includes many sporting clubs, musical instrument tuition, art and ICT clubs provided by both teaching staff and specialist visitors.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher’s leadership is having a direct impact on the high quality of teaching and learning and on the standards achieved by the pupils
- The school’s very good climate for learning is stimulated by the leadership’s clarity of purpose and raising of achievement by making the teaching even better
- The governors are at the heart of the school’s strong drive for improvement
- Senior staff and Advanced Skills Teachers play a significant role in the school’s development

Commentary

33. The headteacher’s energy and determination to improve the very good education that the school provides inspires staff, governors and parents. As a result, the teachers and all other staff work very well as a team and they are keen to improve further the high quality of what the school provides for its pupils. This means that there is a constantly strong focus on the very good care that staff give to pupils and a continuing emphasis on enabling them to improve their achievements still further. The careful analysis of assessment information, and the monitoring of teaching and learning, enables them to make a very accurate appraisal of what the school is doing well and identify what it needs to do to continue to improve. The governors and parents rightly value what the headteacher and staff provide for the pupils.

34. The wide-ranging measures for making teaching even better are contributing very well to the rising standards. The school is very good at involving support staff and teaching assistants, as well as teachers, in its very effective efforts to improve teaching. For example, all staff attend training days, including those at other schools, often resulting in a very good impact on what the school provides. Consequently, teaching assistants are very much a part of the whole team. Staff development is given a high priority. Those new to the profession are enabled to work alongside other, more experienced colleagues to develop their skills. Senior teachers, subject co-ordinators and advanced skilled teachers lead by example and this acts as a catalyst to improving the professional development and competence of all staff. This has resulted in the large majority of lessons being of very good quality or better with some outstanding teaching and learning taking place in all phases of the school.
35. The governors are central to the school's efforts to improve and they play the role of "critical friend" very effectively. Their role has developed well since the last inspection and they are now thoroughly involved in monitoring what the school is doing to improve. They have very well organised arrangements for reviewing what has been done so far to meet their priorities and revising their plans accordingly. Subject co-ordinators provide very clear information for the governors' committees who, in turn, evaluate the co-ordinators' action plans and inform the full governing body. The school has made very good progress in addressing the weaknesses reported in its last inspection. The governors and headteacher have improved resources, particularly fiction and non-fiction books, and reports to parents now inform parents fully on their children's progress in ICT. The school improvement plan now clearly shows what the school wants to improve, the steps it proposes to take and who, including governors, will be responsible for ensuring that targets are met. There is a well-expressed vision for the school over the next few years. The plan is sharply focused, showing the school's keen evaluation of the standards being attained by the pupils. It is a very good tool for helping the school to move even further forward.
36. Senior staff contribute very well to the school's improvements. Notably, the senior management team and advanced skilled teachers ensure that there is close consistency of practice in the quality and range of teaching across the school. This has been central to the establishment of the very good provision for children in the Nursery and Reception years and the remarkably consistent pattern of high quality teaching in other phases of the school. Teachers with responsibility for co-ordinating subjects make a very good contribution to their development. They have a very good impact the planning of work and they get a good picture of the standards that the pupils achieve by looking at completed work. They consider carefully what needs to be done to improve the provision in their subjects and the resulting plan that they write informs the school's future development. The rigorous monitoring of teaching in subjects including English and mathematics has had a positive impact on its quality. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) manages this very important area of learning very effectively and is well supported by the headteacher and a designated governor, who meets regularly with the co-ordinator. Links with outside agencies are very good and enhance the provision.
37. The finances of the school are very well managed and excellent procedures ensure that the school achieves its educational priorities. This has had most impact recently on the quality and range of resources in ICT.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,259,232
Total expenditure	1,113,039
Expenditure per pupil	2,309

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	98,058
Balance carried forward to the next	107,074

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

38. The provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is very good. The teachers and teaching assistants provide the children with a very good start to their education. The Nursery admits up to 78 part-time children (39 full-time equivalent) in the term after their third birthday and they transfer to Reception in the term of their fifth birthday. There are currently 23 full-time Reception children in the class and more will join the school in January to form two classes. The Nursery children are taught and cared for in a very well resourced Foundation Stage base by a full-time teacher and two well qualified teaching assistants. A class teacher and a teaching assistant teach the Reception children. The management and organisation of the Foundation Stage are highly effective and ensure that all of the children achieve very well. The indoor and outdoor facilities are very good.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well because the teaching is of high quality and they enjoy coming to the well-organised, secure and stimulating classrooms
- Personal, social and emotional development permeates all activities

Commentary

39. The teachers and teaching assistants fully understand the personal and emotional needs of all of the children. After thorough assessments and discussions with parents before the children are admitted, the staff are clear about the potential of each child. This leads to highly effective planning so that the teaching and care offered to all children is of the highest quality. Children in the Nursery and Reception soon learn to choose an activity, co-operate and work with others and to ask for help when needed. The staff are careful to prompt the children gently if they choose something they have already done before, thereby ensuring that the children experience all areas of learning each day.

40. The children quickly learn to become confident and secure. They become familiar with the routines and participate in all activities with interest and enthusiasm. As they arrive in the Nursery, the children and their parents put their coats, books and bags in the correct place and sit on the carpet. After going to their base groups, they reply politely to the register. In the Reception class, the children follow familiar routines and the teacher cleverly combines language with visual prompts posted on the door such as 'Password of the Day', which indicates the words and letter sounds to be learned today. A special person is chosen each day to carry the register to the office. In both the Nursery and the Reception class, the children learn to take turns and this is reinforced regularly throughout the day. The children share their news or special information confidently and the staff value their contribution and so build up their self-esteem. Relationships are excellent and there is an ethos of mutual trust and respect between adults and children. The children concentrate extremely well and help to tidy away equipment at the end of each session. By the end of the Reception year, the children reach the early learning goals in this area of learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children increasingly develop confidence and improve their speaking and listening
- Reading and writing are taught very effectively
- Role-play and ICT resources are used extremely well to encourage the children to communicate and express their ideas

Commentary

41. The children join the Nursery with limited communication and language skills. The children achieve very well because there is strong emphasis on this area of learning. They enjoy acting out the roles of doctors, receptionists and nurses in the role-play area, 'Priestsic Hospital'. Exploring the big book in the Reception class about 'Owl Babies', the children enjoy communicating with 'Bill', a soft toy baby owl, and sharing ideas about what to do next, which is an excellent teaching technique used by the teacher to encourage prediction and inference during early reading and writing tasks. Highly effective themes such as this help the children to enjoy their learning. Children and staff use rhyming songs and poetry effectively with repeated patterns in the phrases. The Nursery children enjoy using 'mobile phones' to order goods as they flick through catalogues. Reception children sit as a group to follow words and pictures in the big book. In groups, the children explore the many role-play areas in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards and computers to stimulate learning, as when the Reception teacher created a digital image of 'Bill the Owl' looking lost in the outdoor garden. The children were mesmerised and concerned for 'Bill's' welfare and suggested what he might be thinking and saying. "I want my mummy," suggested one Reception child, and the teacher reveals the same sentence in the big book. This was an excellent lesson.

42. The vigilance of the staff when assessing the progress of the children and the high quality of their planning and teaching enable the children to talk and explain what they mean to adults and other children as well as learning how to listen to others in a group. Activities are extremely well planned to cover speaking, listening and the development of specific vocabulary when developing early reading and writing skills. Both Nursery and Reception age children enjoy handling books and listening to well-told stories and nursery rhymes. Books, tape recorders and computers are used effectively to engage the children's interest and provide a basis for discussion. Combined with role-play and a variety of other activities that extend the children's understanding, this helps them to gain confidence as they love to retell and act out the stories, using their own words, and become familiar with the sequence of a story and the characters involved. Reception children quickly learn that text has meaning and this builds on the very good work done previously when the children talk about characters in books and observe illustrations to point out what is happening in a story. Excellent teaching techniques are used, such as the use of initial letter sounds and word recognition of common high frequency words in texts. The children throughout the Foundation Stage achieve very well in relation to their attainment on entry, even though standards are below those expected by the end of the Reception year in this area of learning.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is of high quality because the work is very closely matched to the abilities and stage of development of the children
- The children enjoy using number rhymes and develop a very good understanding of numbers, shapes and measures
- Mathematical understanding is extended through structured play and an excellent range of well chosen activities, including problem-solving using computers

Commentary

43. The children's knowledge of number is developed extremely well. Consequently, by the end of the Reception year, most can count to ten and beyond. They have many opportunities to use their counting skills: every day they count objects, sort shapes and use a variety of measures to determine more or less. In the Nursery, the staff exploit every opportunity to allow the children to develop their number skills. For example, in a very good lesson the teaching assistant asked the children to order numbers by re-arranging them on the carpet. The lesson developed into one focussed on the relative sizes of numbers and this became more challenging for the children as they had to count out objects and match these to numbers as well as positions on a number line. In the Reception class, the work becomes more challenging and builds very well on that done in the Nursery. The children are provided with interesting tasks including sorting into sets. 'Bill the Owl' has become a real celebrity as he is used to stimulate responses when the children start to write addition sentences using symbols and numbers. This is reinforced during independent activities, as groups of children use the interactive whiteboard to point and drag objects from the screen and arrange them into addition facts.

44. Throughout the Foundation Stage the children learn to create repeating patterns using paint and templates or by threading coloured string to determine one and two step patterns. Number rhymes and songs are used to very good effect by the staff. The children develop a good understanding of the language of mathematics using 'more than' or 'less than' with confidence, especially when using containers in the sand and water area. This is built on extremely well as they move into the Reception year when the children solve problems using different sized containers. Consequently, they understand and develop positional language too, including 'on', 'under' and 'beside', especially when comparing objects or predicting if one container will fill another. The scrutiny of children's previous work indicates that most of the children will just fall short of the early learning goals because they start from a low baseline but they make very good progress throughout their Nursery and Reception years.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers provide a wide range of activities that capture the children's interests

- The children have regular access to the class computers, the interactive whiteboard and other technology such as digital cameras and tape recorders
- Excellent use is made of the sensory garden and natural resources to improve the children's observational and scientific skills

Commentary

44. The children progress very well and almost all reach the standards expected for their age in this area of learning. The adults organise a very stimulating range of experiences to arouse the children's curiosity about, for example, how materials change when mixing paints, experimenting with wet soil when making marks and writing with sticks and branches to form shapes, pictures or letters. Groups of Nursery and Reception children regularly spend time in the outdoor sensory garden or indoors using magnifying glasses to observe flowers, plants and autumnal features such as horse chestnuts and rotting leaves. In the Reception class, excellent use is made of the digital microscope linked to the computer, which enables the children to observe natural features very closely and to describe what they see.
45. Nursery children are ready and willing to dress ready for an outdoor exploration in the rain. They say they enjoy holding their umbrellas and making splashing noises when they go outside as they explore sounds around them and discuss why some containers, including rain gauges, fill more quickly than others when left out in the rain. The children throughout the Foundation Stage are learning to recognise the characteristics of houses and shops and enjoy playing with construction toys and the 'small world' apparatus to arrange people, objects and familiar scenery such as playgrounds, roads and shopping malls. The adults are very alert to initiating opportunities for the Nursery and Reception children to encourage observation and investigation. They respond promptly when the children indicate that they wish to pursue some experience or attempt to change pictures or graphics on the computer. The Nursery children thoroughly enjoyed the recent visit by Asian students from a city secondary school who helped to put Mendhi patterns on to their hands as part of their religious celebration. The children's curiosity about the world around them is developing very well and, as they mature from Nursery through to Reception, they become increasingly independent and confident learners.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good indoor and outdoor resources are used to develop the children's physical co-ordination and skills
- The teaching is of high quality with regular, very good opportunities for the children to use large and small apparatus

Commentary

46. Highly effective teaching ensures that the majority of children will reach the standards expected of them by the end of the Reception year. The teaching is very good because it caters for the children's natural exuberance and energy. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in providing well planned and imaginative indoor and

outdoor play areas. These provide the children with daily opportunities to develop their physical skills. The outdoor area is a very good resource and the school is continually adding to this; even during the inspection, more resources were being put into the shared area outside the Reception and Nursery classes. There is a good range of wheeled toys, which the children manoeuvre well, avoiding other children and planned obstacles. They incorporate these into their dramatic play situations. Previous topics about their bodies help the children develop an understanding of the importance of exercise to ensure good health. Regular access to good quality equipment is developing very good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond well to their teachers and teaching assistants. Most children display a good degree of suppleness and agility as they become more aware of their own bodies. Emphasis is placed on developing the children's independence and skill when handling tools and malleable materials such as dough and clay. They are becoming competent as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care, such as previous work when designing and making vehicles, buildings and animals.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children of all abilities develop imaginative and creative skills and the staff celebrate and praise originality
- There is an excellent balance of activities led by adults as well as those that the children choose themselves
- Very exciting role-play activities develop the children's creative development

Commentary

47. By the end of Reception, the children's attainment reaches the expected level for their age. They achieve extremely well, from Nursery children who experiment with brushes, tools and materials to those in Reception, who change and mix coloured paints to represent pictures, scenery and self-portraits with well-balanced and proportioned facial features. The Nursery children enjoy describing what they make when experimenting with collages using glue sticks or when making self-portraits using paper plates and wool to create hair. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes thoroughly enjoy getting 'dirty' as they finger paint, draw shapes in mud using sticks or paint on walls and easels. The staff are very good at praising their efforts by identifying what the child is telling them they are drawing (or writing). All of the children throughout the Foundation Stage show very good levels of confidence, flair, imagination and creativity in their work. The teaching is very good with many outstanding features, enabling the children to learn, master and use key skills and techniques. An excellent balance is achieved between activities in which adults show the children how to carry out tasks and how to improve their work and activities which give the children the freedom to experiment and make their own choices and decisions.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve very well
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good
- The very good management of the subject by the co-ordinators has ensured that standards in the national tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 and year 6 have risen significantly
- Standards in spelling and handwriting could be higher
- The school makes very effective use of ICT to support learning.

Commentary

48. The pupils join Year 1 with levels of attainment in language and communication that are below average. However, because of the very good teaching in the infant and junior classes, the pupils make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. The trusting relationships that have been developed between the teachers, the support staff and the pupils, build the pupils' confidence. The teachers provide many exciting opportunities for the pupils to learn from first-hand experiences and to extend their vocabulary. For example, in a very effective Year 6 drama lesson, the pupils learned to express their empathy for the main characters in Bram Stoker's "Dracula". At regular intervals in many lessons, the pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas on any given subject with another child, a "talking partner", and this strongly contributes to the pupils' development. The pupils listen very attentively to their teachers and this enables them all to contribute to class discussions. However, because of the limited range of vocabulary of many pupils, standards in speaking are below their listening skills.
49. Although standards in reading are below average by the end of Years 2 and Year 6, the pupils make very good progress because of very effective teaching based on a strong and well-planned curriculum. The school makes very good use of a range of strategies to help the pupils develop their reading skills. Each class has regular reading sessions when the pupils are encouraged to read and understand a wide variety of stimulating texts. Lower attaining pupils benefit from a very structured approach where the early skills are very well taught. The teaching assistants play a vital role in supporting this work. Many parents reinforce the school's efforts by providing support and encouragement at home within the context of a carefully structured homework system, particularly for the younger pupils. The school encourages research and comprehension skills by providing opportunities for the pupils to find information on a range of themes on the Internet and then to express their findings in their own words.
50. Although standards in writing are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the pupils' achievement is very good. Standards in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 and in Year 6 have risen sharply since the last inspection. This is because the pupils are highly motivated to improve and the quality of teaching is very good. The staff have high expectations and provide good feedback to the pupils. Grammar and spelling are well taught throughout the school. However, the accuracy that the pupils achieve in their weekly spelling tests is not as evident in their day-to-day writing. Furthermore, the school acknowledges that there is scope for a more systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting to improve the pupils' fluency and standard of presentation.
51. The teachers plan work very well to provide a range of opportunities for the pupils to write in different styles such as formal accounts, poems and letters. Very good account is taken

of the wide range of abilities in each class and the teaching assistants give very effective support, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. For example, in an excellent lesson for pupils in Years 2, the classroom support staff fully engaged in the teaching by becoming involved in role-play and helping the pupils to express their ideas in writing. The school has become very successful in helping the higher attaining pupils to reach their potential. The evidence from recent national tests indicates that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in reading and writing tests is increasing year-on-year in Year 2 and, in Year 6, the performance of the boys has risen sharply.

52. ICT is very well used to stimulate the pupils' ideas and creativity. This was particularly evident in Year 6 where the teachers made very effective use of the interactive whiteboards to provide extensive background information through text, photographs and maps to support the pupils' understanding of 19th century Europe. In every classroom and in different subjects, there is a very good range of attractive, well presented written work. Lessons are very well planned with a good balance of teacher input and pupil activities. In every lesson, appropriate learning objectives are set and the marking reflects these objectives.
53. The subject is very well led and managed. A key reason for the pupils' success is the very clear and well-understood assessment system that regularly and very carefully tracks and reviews the progress of each pupil. Ambitious targets are set for the pupils' performance and the pupils are given every encouragement to succeed. Very effective monitoring systems and further professional development have improved the quality of teaching. The school ensures that those pupils requiring additional support receive it and very effective use is made of outside agencies, such as theatre groups, to provide further motivation for the pupils.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. Subjects such as history and science are used very effectively to enhance the development of the pupils' literacy skills. They provide the pupils with opportunities: to write in their own words and in different styles; to practise their speaking and listening skills in group work and in role-play exercises; and to develop their reading and comprehension skills through research tasks. For example, in science lessons in Years 1 and 2, the pupils sequence the steps required to make a healthy sandwich and record their own observations on solids and liquids. Because only judicious use is made of commercial worksheets, the pupils are given the scope to conduct their own research and learn to express their own findings in clear sentences. This strongly supports their progress.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve very well because the teachers make lessons interesting, exciting and challenging
- The teaching assistants make sure that pupils of all abilities are able to play a full part in lessons
- The mathematics development team manage the subject very well and are clearly focused on raising standards

- A very close check is kept on how the pupils are progressing and this information is very well used to plan the work and set targets

Commentary

55. The pupils start Year 1 with mathematical knowledge and skills that are just below average. They make very good progress, achieve very well and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are average. This is a similar position to that found in the 2003 and 2004 national assessments in Year 2. In the Year 6 tests, the results in 2003 were well below average – lower than in previous years due, largely, to a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs, a large number of whom joined the year group during the course of their final year in school. The school's results in 2003 also compared unfavourably with those schools working in similar circumstances, although the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals has since increased significantly. Standards have risen since the last inspection. Over recent years the school's results have been improving at a faster rate than the national picture; the results for 2004 are significantly better than those for the previous year and the work of the current Year 6 indicates that standards are now in line with what is expected of pupils of this age.
56. The improvements seen reflect the high priority placed on raising standards in mathematics. The subject is overseen very effectively by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic development team, who keep a very close check on the progress made by the pupils and on the teaching and learning. A wide range of strategies is adopted to keep track of the pupils' progress and highlight any shortcomings in their understanding. Day-to-day assessments, including the marking of pupils' work, are very thorough, evaluate how the pupils are doing and identify what they need to do to improve. Each half term, the teachers carry out a formal 'assess and review' lesson and regular discussions are held with the pupils so that they, too, can contribute to the process. Test results, including the national assessments, are analysed very thoroughly to identify patterns of strength or weakness. Overall, the school makes very good use of the information gleaned from these assessments to ensure that the work planned meets the needs of different levels of ability. The whole staff tackles any areas for development very energetically. For example, a weakness identified in the pupils' understanding of decimals was addressed by targeting support at specific pupils. This has proved very successful.
57. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The work is enhanced by an Advanced Skills Teacher and, although on leave of absence at the time of the inspection, the impact of her work is evident throughout the school: there is a very consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics. All staff aim to make lessons exciting, interesting and highly participative. That they are successful ensures that all pupils are actively engaged from the very start. Lesson openings are very brisk, often relate to work from previous lessons, and set the tone for the rest of the lesson. The interactive whiteboards are proving highly effective in capturing the pupils' attention and enhancing the quality of the teacher's explanations and instructions. For example, in an excellent lesson in Year 6, the pupils enjoyed playing 'fraction frenzy', a game involving the identification of equivalent fractions in which the pupils' competitive instincts came to the fore. Later in the lesson, the pupils were fascinated to explore the scale of an aeroplane, made more relevant by comparing its proportions with those of the school building, again using the whiteboard. In another excellent lesson, in Year 1, the pupils enjoyed using the board to make amounts of money using specific coins.

58. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well because of this very good provision. Lessons are very well planned, so that those who need help get it. Pupils of all abilities develop in confidence as they move through the school, showing an increasing ability to calculate mentally, for example, knowing that their efforts, regardless of accuracy, will be received sensitively by the teachers. The pupils who are capable of trying harder work are challenged to do their best so that they, too, achieve very well. The staff expect pupils of all abilities to do well and they, in turn, rise to the challenge.
59. As a result, across the school the pupils have very positive attitudes to mathematics. They work very hard, persevere when they have difficulty and work well together in pairs and groups. Every opportunity is given to encourage the pupils to explain how they have arrived at an answer. A strong feature of many lessons is the teachers' use of 'discussion partners', where the pupils discuss their ideas before putting them forward to the rest of the class. As well as supporting their mathematical development, these discussions make a significant contribution to the pupils' speaking and listening and the promotion of their self-esteem. The teaching assistants play a very prominent role in ensuring that pupils of all abilities are able to contribute to the discussions and understand what they have to do. All staff are skilled at questioning to probe, prompt and guide the pupils and 'mini-plenaries' are used very effectively during the course of lessons to summarise the learning so far and address any misunderstandings.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. There are very good opportunities for the pupils to use mathematics in other subjects. Daily registration sessions, particularly with the younger classes, are used to develop mental calculation. In science, the pupils measure the height of sunflowers and compare their own measurements with other pupils. In Year 2, the pupils measure the distances covered by model cars. Music lessons provide the opportunity for the pupils to count beats and develop mathematical language by comparing the length of notes. When investigating fruits and vegetable, in design and technology, pupils in Year 1 sort and collect data about their favourites. Older pupils create a tally of their favourite bread. Patterns are investigated in art and design, for example by exploring repeating patterns in buildings. There are numerous opportunities to develop mathematics in ICT, including creating two-dimensional shapes using an art package and consolidating the pupils' knowledge of their names and properties. Their understanding of angles and directional language is developed when giving instructions to control the floor robot.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils make very good progress and standards at the end of Year 6 are above average
- The high level of pupils' investigational skills has helped to raise attainment
- The quality of teaching is very good
- The subject is led very well, which promotes consistency in the teaching
- Those pupils with special educational needs are integrated well in lessons and they achieve well
- The pupils' written recording of work could improve further

Commentary

61. The pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is below that expected. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve very well in all aspects of science. By the end of Year 2 standards are average and they are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The school provides a variety of stimulating and challenging investigations and experiments leading to good levels of achievement in scientific enquiry.
62. The quality of teaching is very good. This is because teachers plan their lessons thoughtfully and use a wide range of stimulating resources and scientific experiences to stimulate and challenge pupils of all abilities. The school has produced a scheme of work that follows national guidelines. Assessments at the end of each topic ensure that the pupils have acquired the appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding. The teachers interpret the scheme very effectively and planning identifies learning outcomes and appropriate levels of challenge for pupils who learn at different rates. The teachers use good questioning skills to assess the pupils' understanding. The pupils have very positive attitudes, partly because the teaching is made interesting by the effective use of ICT and other additional resources. The teaching assistants are used widely, for example, to provide additional help for pupils who learn at a slower rate and the provision those pupils with special needs is very good.
63. The pupils approach tasks with enthusiasm and enjoyment and they have a good understanding of how to conduct an investigation. In Year 4 for example, the pupils were able to use different investigational tools, such as microscopes and magnifying glasses, to sort and classify different organisms. In previous weeks the pupils had visited a local park to explore the different habitats of minibeasts and plants and they were able to explain and record their findings. In Year 6, the pupils investigated how different plants grow in different soil conditions. They designed an experiment to test the absorbency of different soils. The pupils understood scientific vocabulary such as 'permeable' and 'non-permeable', conducted a fair test and hypothesised about the likely outcomes of their experiments. The observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work confirm that, in all age groups, the pupils are appropriately challenged and enjoy science. However, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 lack the writing skills to record their observations and investigations and present their work accurately. Although these skills improve in Years 3 to 6, there is room for further improvement
64. The monitoring of the science curriculum by the two subject leaders is very effective. This helps to ensure that the pupils make sufficient progress from year to year. Initiatives, introduced by the subject leaders, have contributed much towards the improving science provision and standards in the school. One example is the focus on learning through play in Years 1 and 2, which has helped to support the boys' achievement in science. The co-ordinators are aware of standards and work closely with the teachers to ensure that science is enjoyable. They receive good support from the assessment co-ordinator in establishing science assessment materials. Science resources are generally good throughout the school and they support teaching and learning effectively. ICT is well used to support the teaching, particularly the interactive whiteboards and computers. These are used very successfully with other resources, such as digital microscopes.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the pupils achieve very well
- The subject is led very effectively and this has contributed to the improvement in the teachers' confidence
- Assessment is used well to identify the pupils' strengths and weaknesses
- ICT is used effectively in other subjects

Commentary

65. The school has invested significantly in its ICT facilities and resources since the last inspection. All classrooms now possess interactive whiteboards, the school has its own ICT 'centre of excellence' and a computer network that links the computers in the classrooms. Pupils of all ages and abilities benefit greatly from these resources and achieve very well. They are now also effectively applying ICT to their work in other subjects, especially through the use of the interactive whiteboards.

66. The teaching is very good overall and this has a significant impact on the pupils' achievement. By the end of Year 2, they have a secure grasp of word processing, simple control technology and using paint packages to create imaginative pictures. The teachers in Years 3 to 6 build on these skills and by the end of Year 6 pupils are using spreadsheets, researching using the Internet and making multimedia presentations. In the Year 6 lesson observed, the pupils were creating a multimedia presentation and had to make decisions about which audio and video clips would be appropriate for their presentation. They communicate their ideas well and edit their work, enhancing it by importing graphics and text. They are all keen to learn and work hard, listening carefully and following instructions. Those pupils with special educational needs are successful because they receive the additional support they need. More able pupils often partner those with less confident ICT skills and this is beneficial to both parties.

67. The subject leader has enhanced his colleagues' competence and brought consistency between year groups through monitoring. He assesses and monitors the pupils' progress across the school by teaching ICT to all classes. The teachers have good subject knowledge overall and their confidence has increased because of the support and training they have received. However, the co-ordinator has identified that some lack of confidence in some aspects of ICT teaching and made suitable plans to address this. The school has developed its own scheme of work, based on the national guidelines, and the teachers can access the school's planning and assessment guidance on-line. There is a helpful collection of assessed work that helps to ensure consistency across the school. Consequently, a careful check is kept on how the pupils are progressing.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. Evidence from the previous school year and from those lessons observed indicates that the pupils are now beginning to use their ICT skills effectively in other subjects. In Years 1

and 2, the pupils have created self-portraits and patterns, in the style of Mondrian, using art software. They use control technology such as remote buggies to follow literacy instructions. Most pupils use their word processing skills satisfactorily in English lessons; writing stories, poems, letters etc and using the computer's tools to craft, draft and refine their work. In Years 4, 5 and 6, the pupils make effective use of smart notebooks for literacy and numeracy and digital microscopes for science. A Computer Club for older pupils allows them to apply their technical skills to a wide range of cross-curricular projects. A particular success is the introduction of interactive whiteboards in each classroom. These are a regular feature in lessons in all subjects and their imaginative use is contributing strongly to the rising standards in school.

HUMANITIES

69. No **geography** lessons were seen during the inspection, so overall judgements are not possible. However, the pupils' previous work indicates that, by the end of Year 2, pupils of all abilities have a good knowledge of contrasting localities with reference to seascapes and landscapes. As they move through the school, they develop a good understanding of how the environment changes and what impact human resources have on local areas such as their own in the Sutton-in-Ashfield. By the end of Year 6, the pupils show a good understanding of how to locate key features on a map with keys and symbols representing these. Very good use is made of digital cameras and computers to present evidence of local visits, walks in the local area and other experiences. These are usually combined with the classroom interactive whiteboards so that pupils can discuss and interrogate geographical and historical evidence. Learning in geography is enlivened and enriched by a range of visits and visitors to the school.

Religious education

The provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4
- There are no procedures for assessing or recording the pupils' achievements
- ICT is used very effectively to support learning

Commentary

70. Inspectors observed two lessons, had discussions with pupils and looked at samples of previous work and the teachers' planning. From these indications it appears that standards are in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils achieve satisfactorily.

71. The pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the special features of the Bible and the stories of the life of Christ and they learn about the major Christian festivals. Their recording of Bible stories and themes is hampered by their limited writing skills. Older pupils study the main features of, and continue to make satisfactory gains in their knowledge of, Christianity. They also learn about the beliefs, festivals and customs of other faiths, particularly Judaism and Islam, and are beginning to make comparisons between them. For example, they discuss how and why harvest is celebrated in different countries and in different religions. However, when looking at the pupils' previous work and taking

account of discussions with pupils from Year 6, it is evident that their subject knowledge and understanding lacks depth. For example, in Year 6, there is very little recorded work and coverage of the Biblical story of the "Creation" is superficial. This is not the case in Year 4, where themes, such as ceremonies, are investigated closely and the pupils make detailed studies of the world of Islam.

72. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. There are two subject leaders, one for each phase, who have recently taken over responsibility for the subject. At present, the school is in the process of adopting the changes in the newly revised locally Agreed Syllabus. The school's planning is under review to take into account the requirements of the new syllabus. Currently, there are no coherent procedures for the assessment of the pupils' work. ICT, particularly the interactive whiteboards, is used very effectively to support learning. This is because the teachers illustrate stories with graphics, sound effects and text and they provide good opportunities for the pupils to conduct their own research.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is vibrant and varied, so the pupils achieve very well
- Very good use is made of interactive whiteboards, computers and digital cameras

Commentary

73. Given their knowledge, skills and understanding when they start school, the pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, reaching standards that are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils of all abilities develop good levels of knowledge and understanding of life in the past and they talk knowingly, for example, about work in Victorian and Tudor times. More able Year 6 pupils produce very detailed history projects following thorough research, for example, about Henry VIII.

74. The teaching is very good because it helps pupils to think as 'historians'. For example, in the very good lessons in Year 6, the pupils made deductions from photographic evidence, including a 'spot the difference' activity using the interactive whiteboard to describe the key features of buildings in the local area. In a very good Year 2 lesson, role-play was used highly effectively as the pupils were taken back in time to meet the baker's wife in Pudding Lane immediately after the Great Fire of London. This evoked questions from the pupils who were highly motivated and stimulated by the experience because the teacher set up the role-play using a colleague to act out the role. Role-play was gain used very effectively in Year 4, as the pupils asked Henry VIII or Catherine of Aragon what they felt about the impending 'divorce'. One Year 4 class enjoyed acting a trial to vote on the issue and determine whether it was right for the king to behave in the way he did. In all of the lessons seen the teachers demonstrated very good subject knowledge. They set high expectations and move along at a very good pace. A wide range of interesting tasks actively engages the pupils. The teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and they manage them very well. In Year 6, for example, effective questioning and the linking of the discussion to literacy tasks helped the pupils to compare the local area of the past with the present day. Encouraging the pupils to make notes on their individual whiteboards enhances the learning, and this is summarised on the interactive whiteboard.

75. The curriculum brings the subject to life very effectively. Visits to places of historical interest make the past meaningful. Opportunities for pupils to dress in period costume and take part in role-play enliven the subject. Classroom artefacts and arrangements of books and materials act as 'museums' for the pupils to handle and discuss. Very good links with English enable pupils to write in a range of styles, for example, when empathising with an historical character. Art and design skills are very well used when painting or sketching objects from the past. As a result, the pupils find their learning very interesting and they have very good attitudes to history.
76. The co-ordinators have a very positive impact on the subject. They have a clear view of what is happening through the school by looking at the pupils' completed work. In this way, they can share with teachers what works well and identify any areas for improvement. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in raising attainment through its increasingly rich history curriculum and very good teaching.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

77. Very little **music** teaching was observed during the course of the inspection so it is not possible to make overall judgements about provision. The school makes good use of a professional pianist who is engaged to support singing in each age group. Additionally, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught to play the recorder and tuition is provided in brass instruments for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Furthermore, the school ensures that the pupils are introduced to a range of musical genre from around the world by inviting specialist musicians, for example in steel drums and Indonesian pipes, to set up workshops for the pupils. However, the school's music policy and scheme of work are out of date and the development of the pupils' skills in musical composition lack cohesion. Opportunities are missed on occasions, such as school assemblies, to promote the pupils' enthusiasm for and appreciation of music on a regular basis.
78. Only one **design and technology** lesson was seen during the inspection. It is not, therefore, possible to make judgements about the quality of provision or standards. In the lesson seen, in Year 2, the quality of teaching was excellent. The pupils explored different ways of making an axle, as part of working towards designing a vehicle for different purposes. The teacher motivated the class to achieve high standards by her enthusiasm, clarity of teaching and challenging expectations for pupils of all abilities. The pupils understood that different vehicles are designed for different purposes, worked independently with advanced skills and generated their own ideas. From an analysis of displays, photographs, discussions with pupils and other evidence, it is clear that the school offers a wide range of opportunities for designing and making. The school follows national guidelines for planning the work and has effective assessment procedures. Year 2 pupils are able to describe how they have designed a finger puppet, selected appropriate tools and they can explain the choices they have made. Year 6 pupils, after designing a shopping bag, evaluated the processes and materials used. Outside providers are well used. For example, visitors from 'K-Nex', worked with Year 6 pupils to design and build a model of a revolving restaurant for the Olympic village and the pupils have also designed and built a Lego 'town'.

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils achieve very well and attain standards above those expected
- The curriculum is broad and well balanced and develops the pupils' skills as they move through the school
- The pupils have very positive attitudes to art and design and they use their artistic skills well in other subjects

Commentary

79. The pupils attain standards that are above those expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6. Judgements are based on three lessons, in Years 2, 3 and 5, and on artwork on display, in portfolios and in photographs. There were also brief observations of Year 6 pupils working with a local artist, the art club and Year 5 pupils at the end of their lesson. Since the last inspection, standards have risen by the end of Year 2 and the good standards found at the end of Year 6 have been maintained. Across the school, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well and there are many examples of high quality work around the school.
80. The pupils in Year 1 build on the very good start that they made in the Foundation Stage as they learn to paint, print and make patterns. They show great attention to detail in their pastel representations of fruit baskets. First hand observational work is also a strong feature in Year 2 as, for example, in a very successful lesson where the pupils explored pastels to create delightful pictures inspired by Mondrian. In another very good lesson, in Year 3, the pupils, this time after studying the work of Kasimir Malevich, created a textured collage using just black and white materials. These pupils have a very strong sense of design, and of what pleases them, and they worked extremely carefully. This attention to detail is very evident across the school, whether in the careful landscapes created by pupils in Year 4, the patterns made by those in Year 5, influenced by Seurat's pointillism, or Andy Warhole-inspired man-made objects. The pupils' sketchbooks are a delight, showing very clear skills development through the school. The pupils have benefit from working regularly with a local artist. During the inspection, pupils in the two Year 6 classes worked collaboratively to create a montage. The artist also leads the regular art club which, during the inspection, focused on close observational work. As well as developing their skills, this gives the pupils an insight into how an artist works and helps their knowledge of the work of other famous artists.
81. Under the very effective leadership of the co-ordinator, the curriculum is wide ranging and the pupils learn the skills systematically and build on their previous learning, which contributes to their very good achievement. The quality of teaching is very good overall. A strong feature of the lessons seen was the teachers' knowledge and confidence and sharp planning with a clear focus on the skills and understanding to be learned. Across the school there are many examples of the pupils using art and design to enhance their learning in other subjects. Computers are used well, including paint packages to generate pictures and patterns. Good links are made with mathematics, for example, when the pupils study two-dimensional shapes and, in other subjects, the pupils use their skills to provide illustrations for their work. Art and design makes a very positive contribution to the pupils spiritual and cultural development.

Physical education

Provision in physical education (PE) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is good and focuses on improving the pupils' skills
- The pupils enjoy PE, make good progress and achieve well
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular sporting activities

Commentary

82. Although it was not possible to see lessons in the full range of activities offered by the school, the evidence of lessons in gymnastics and games in Years 1 and 2 and a games lesson in Year 5 indicates that standards are in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well. In addition, the school reports that about three-quarters of the pupils are able to swim the expected 25 metres before they leave the school.

83. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well organised; resources are plentiful, so that there is maximum participation at all times. The subject is well led and managed by the sports development co-ordinator, who also takes responsibility for teaching outdoor games. Consequently, she is in a good position to ensure that the skills are developed progressively from year to year and to monitor standards across the school. From Year 1, the pupils learn to listen carefully to instructions, follow rules and practise to improve their skills. In a good gymnastics lesson with pupils in Year 2, very effective use was made of the interactive whiteboard in the classroom prior to the lesson to focus the pupils' attention on what they were about to learn. Throughout the lesson, the teacher referred back to these objectives and encouraged the pupils to improve what they were doing. As a result, they performed a series of balances with good control and made good progress in linking them together in interesting ways. In their games lesson, pupils in Year 5 warmed up effectively using routines that they had learned in previous lessons, before consolidating their netball skills and developing tactical awareness in a game situation. They pass, move and intercept the ball with a growing awareness of their own position and that of teammates and opponents.

84. In all of the lessons, there is a clear emphasis on improvement. The pupils work hard, listen carefully to the advice they are given, behave very well and clearly enjoy their lessons. Many of them take advantage of the very wide range of activities provided outside of lessons, many of which are led by the sports development officer. This has a very positive impact on the pupils' physical development and on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Ongoing assessments of the pupils' capabilities are made, although the co-ordinator has identified the need to develop and extend these arrangements.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

85. No direct teaching was seen in this area. The evidence from discussions with staff and pupils and from scrutinising the planning indicates that a very good programme is provided, but it is not possible to make firm judgements on the quality of the provision and learning. The school has developed a very good policy and a comprehensive scheme of

work to support the pupils' development and, from the time they join the Nursery, the school places a very strong emphasis on this aspect. Very good behaviour is reinforced during class discussion times, where pupils are given the opportunity to explore ways of resolving issues and the school is particularly successful in supporting high quality relationships. Aspects of personal and social development are taught regularly in each class and strongly supported in assemblies. There are clear procedures for teaching sex education and drug awareness.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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