

INSPECTION REPORT

REDBOURN INFANTS' AND NURSERY SCHOOL

St Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117236

Headteacher: Mrs J Deeley

Lead inspector: Mrs L Brackstone

Dates of inspection: 10th - 12th January 2005

Inspection number: 267545

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Nursery
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 to 7 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 159
School address: Long Cutt
Redbourn
St Albans
Hertfordshire
Postcode: SL3 7EX
Telephone number: (01582) 792 341
Fax number: (01582) 794 669
Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of Mr A Richardson
governors:
Date of previous 28th June 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This school is situated next to the Junior School in the small Hertfordshire village of Redbourn, near St Albans. The village has a wide social mix and a range of private and rented housing. There is minimal unemployment and the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The large majority of the children are of white UK heritage, but there are also a small number of white mixed and Bangladeshi pupils. It is an average-sized school with a 60 place part-time Nursery, which holds two sessions and two classes per year group daily. Numbers on the school roll have declined since the last inspection. About 15 per cent of pupils have special educational needs; their needs include speech and language difficulties and physical disabilities. There are two intakes for children during the school year depending on their dates of birth. Attainment on entry is above national expectations. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher was absent and a part-time consultant headteacher was supporting the school for a short period.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21872	Mrs Brackstone L	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language Religious education
9880	Mr A Comer	Lay inspector	
23917	Mr T Clarke	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Special educational needs
22790	Mrs J Pinney	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Music
20614	Mr D Kimber	Team inspector	Science Geography History Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
1 - 4 Portland Square
Bristol
BS2 8RR

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637 833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 5
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	6 - 8
Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	8 - 12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	12 - 13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	14 - 23
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Redbourn Nursery and Infants' School does not provide an acceptable education for its pupils. The leadership of the headteacher is very poor and this impacts negatively on teaching and learning. The pupils do not do as well as they should. The school does not provide adequate value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The leadership of the headteacher is weak.
- The governors have a good understanding of school issues and are well supported by the local education authority.
- Overall pupil achievement is unsatisfactory because teachers do not use the information gained from assessments to plan challenging work.
- Teaching is unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Curricular provision is unsatisfactory but there is a good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- Induction procedures for the youngest children are unsatisfactory.
- Provision for personal development is good and this has a good influence on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour.

THE SCHOOL HAS DECLINED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION IN JUNE 1999. THE PUPILS DO NOT ACHIEVE AS WELL AS THEY DID THEN. SOME KEY ISSUES FROM THE LAST INSPECTION HAVE NOT BEEN ADDRESSED SUFFICIENTLY, SUCH AS THE MONITORING OF TEACHING AND LEARNING. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL HAS FALLEN CONSIDERABLY AND UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CURRENT HEADTEACHER HAS NO CAPACITY FOR IMPROVEMENT. A SIGNIFICANT MINORITY OF PARENTS ARE NOW CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION AND THERE ARE SHORTCOMINGS IN ASPECTS OF CARE AND WELFARE FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 13(7) OF THE SCHOOL INSPECTIONS ACT 1996 I AM OF THE OPINION, AND HMCI AGREES, THAT SPECIAL MEASURES ARE REQUIRED IN RELATION TO THIS SCHOOL.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory overall. The above table shows that standards in the 2004 national tests were average in reading, writing and mathematics. The results

compare poorly with those of similar schools. Children start school with levels of skills that are above expected levels. They underachieve in the Foundation Stage and by the end of Year 2 have not made the progress of which they are capable. In Year 2, the current standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average. Standards in science and information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations and those for religious education do not meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. No judgements are made on standards in the other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily because they are assessed thoroughly and provided with individual support that is of good quality. However, the more able pupils do not do as well as they should. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls. The inclusion of all pupils in the life of the school is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development is good overall. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils are eager to learn and behave well. The attitudes and behaviour of Reception children are satisfactory. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in the Nursery and in Years 1 and 2. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is unsatisfactory. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory overall and the curriculum provided does not meet the needs of the children. **Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory** but the curriculum places too much emphasis on lengthy literacy and numeracy sessions that are not well suited for this age group. Provision also lacks creativity and some key elements of ICT are missing. The teachers do not make sufficient use of information from their assessments of pupils' work to plan what the pupils do next. The range of extra-curricular activities is good. The pupils are satisfactorily cared for overall but level of care is not as good as it should be in the Foundation Stage.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very poor and this has had a detrimental effect on all aspects of school life. **The management of the school is unsatisfactory.** Until very recently, insufficient attention has been given to the analysis of data and strategic development to raise standards and move the school forward. Key staff now have new roles that they are carrying out satisfactorily. However, the role of the deputy headteacher is underdeveloped. Governance is good and statutory requirements are appropriately met except for ICT and care and welfare in the Foundation Stage. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of weakness within the school and are closely involved with the local education authority in shaping the school's future.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils like their school and feel comfortable approaching particular staff when they have a problem. Some pupils feel that the work they are given is too easy and inspection findings support this view. **A significant number of parents are dissatisfied with the school.** They are particularly concerned about the leadership and management of the school, the arrangements for settling their children into school and the information they receive on pupil progress. Inspection findings confirm their concerns about the leadership and management of the school and the induction procedures.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Take action to rectify the significant weaknesses in the leadership of the headteacher and develop the role of the deputy headteacher.
- Raise standards of achievement generally and ensure that the needs of the gifted, talented and more capable pupils are met through a more creative approach to the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly by raising expectations and making better use of the information the teachers gather on the pupils from the assessments they make.
- Reconsider arrangements for settling children into school and rectify the unwelcoming Nursery environment.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Address the shortcomings in ICT and in care and welfare in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Children enter school with above average standards. However, at the end of Year 2, the overall standards are below average and the pupils underachieve.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Children start Nursery with standards of attainment that are above national expectations.
- Overall achievement is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily.

Commentary

1. Children start the Nursery with standards of attainment that are above average in all areas of learning. Although teaching staff in the Nursery approach the children warmly, they do not sufficiently challenge them in their learning and do not create an exciting and stimulating environment. Consequently, the children's achievement is not as good as it could be. Achievement in Reception is unsatisfactory because teachers do not take enough account of the children's previous attainment and the activities planned do not enable the children to move forward in their learning. By the end of Reception, overall standards are below expectations in the key areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Standards in creative development meet the nationally agreed levels for this age group but, when the prior attainment of the children is considered, this is not good enough.
2. Data from the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 2 have shown a significant downward trend since 2000. In the most recent national tests of 2004 for Year 2 pupils, standards were average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to schools that have similar numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards were well below average. Standards in the teacher assessment test in science were well below national expectations and similar schools. In relation to the pupils' attainment on entry, this represents significant underachievement and the headteacher has failed to take measures to rectify this. However, over the past two terms, the local education authority has been very proactive in improving achievement in Years 1 and 2. This has involved the reallocation of staff, the raising of teacher expectations and ambitious target setting.
3. Inspection findings indicate that pupils have maintained their good speaking and listening skills from when they started school because they are supported very well at home. Standards in reading and writing, and mathematics, are average. However, standards in science and information and communication technology are below national expectations. Pupils do not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. No judgements are made on standards in the other subjects because they were not the focus of the inspection.

4. In the most recent national tests, girls attained better results than boys in reading, writing and mathematics but there is little difference in the work they currently do. When mixed groups work together, girls tend to take control and class teachers do not monitor these situations.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. They are supported through detailed tracking and checking procedures and with the good support provided by teaching assistants. Their individual education plans indicate that many pupils are making good progress towards meeting their learning targets. However, the more able pupils are not given work that stretches them sufficiently.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004¹

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (15.7)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.4 (14.3)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	16.0 (16.3)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 57 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Other aspects of pupils' personal development are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show interest in the life of the school and are willing to accept responsibility.
- The school successfully promotes good relationships.
- The achievement of early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes towards school are good. When teaching is challenging and pupils are fully engaged, behaviour can be very good. Occasionally, the lack of sufficient classroom support for pupils with challenging behaviour can cause minor disruption. Pupils move around the school sensibly and have good relationships with each other and with adults, both at work and at play. They are polite and well-mannered. The school deals effectively when incidents of bullying are reported. There have been no exclusions during the past school year. Pupils readily participate in the life of the school, particularly the school council, and in the range of activities outside the classroom. All pupils who were interviewed expressed positive views about their school.
7. Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good overall. Pupils' social and moral development, through the personal, social and health education curriculum, the allocation of specific time for sharing views, and their involvement in the school council, are good. The variety of educational visits and visitors and the range of activities outside the classroom, including charitable fund raising, also encourage pupils to develop culturally, socially and morally as well as

¹ All levels of the National Curriculum are awarded a points score. The average score for all pupils taking the test is used to grade schools in each year. The expected average points at age seven is 15.6. Tables are adjusted to reflect the national average score before grading. The grades are shown in the summary.

contributing to their achievement. Pupils are able to gain a satisfactory understanding of their own and other faiths and cultures through the curriculum, and particularly through the highly regarded cultural weeks. The achievement of early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development at Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. This is because the teachers' expectations and the curriculum provision do not sufficiently challenge these young children.

Attendance

8. Attendance has been improving over the past two years and is, for the current school year, above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually for school and lessons begin on time.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	School data	1.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a significant decline in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well.
- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory.
- Teaching in Years 1 and 2 has improved because of the good input by the local education authority.
- Good use is made of teaching assistants in Years 1 and 2 where all staff have high expectations of behaviour.
- Procedures for tracking and checking pupils are not used well enough to plan activities to meet the needs of all the pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 27 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	1	6	14	3	3	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.

9. The overall quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Teaching staff in the Nursery share warm relationships with the children and encourage them to participate in a range of activities. However, this is not so evident in the Reception classes where not all members of staff talk to these youngsters in an appropriate manner and the necessary skills are lacking when communicating with these young children.
10. Overall, the knowledge and understanding of all staff in the Foundation Stage is weak and this has a detrimental effect on children's learning. Expectations are much too low and it is evident that the Foundation Stage teaching staff do not take sufficient account of the above average attainment of most of the children when they start school. For example, the children are given simple mathematics games to play when most already have a good understanding of number.
11. Staff fail to use the available resources to help these youngsters in their learning and this means that they do not acquire the knowledge and skills as they should. For example, the Nursery environment is unattractive and uninteresting and is much too cold for any quality learning to take place. The Reception classes have recently had a new outdoor learning area built but do not use this as an integral part of the school day and this means that the children's capacity for learning is limited.
12. Behaviour management is satisfactory in the Nursery but poor in Reception where routines and organisation are particularly weak. Consequently, the children do not gain an understanding of how to work independently. There is an insufficient level of care in Reception and this was evident when children are allowed to leave play equipment around for others to slip on.
13. The local education authority has had a tremendous input into the quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and during the inspection the lessons observed in these classes were never less than satisfactory. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have high standards of behaviour and insist that their pupils are behaving well and listening carefully. Teaching assistants are also used well, particularly for supporting pupils with special educational needs, and this has a good impact on their acquisition of knowledge and skills. This was evident in a very good English lesson in a Year 1 class where pupils were learning how to spell word blends like 'c/'. Pupils with special educational needs were able to be fully included in the activity because of the positive support they were given.
14. Overall subject knowledge in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and the best lessons are prepared well. For instance, the high level of planning was clear in a good mathematics lesson in a Year 1 class where the learning objective referred to the specific vocabulary that was to be learnt and the resources that would be needed. However, a weakness in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is expectation and challenge. Teachers do not always provide sufficient focused activities to really fully meet the needs of the more capable pupils. This happened in an English lesson where the activity planned for the above average pupils did not promote their literacy skills to working within a higher level. The better lessons also showed effective use of resources, good levels of teacher enthusiasm and positive relationships.
15. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they are fully included in lessons. Teachers are aware of the pupils' learning targets, although they do not always make reference to them in their daily planning. Pupils are given good, skilled help and encouragement from the experienced and committed teaching

assistants who understand well the needs and abilities of the pupils. The progress made by these pupils owes much to this informed intervention.

16. The procedures for tracking and checking the children's achievement is unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage because teachers fail to take account of the prior levels of attainment. They do not plan for the appropriate level of work and this is unsatisfactory. For example, children who have clearly read books in the Nursery were being denied access to continuing to develop these skills. Procedures for tracking and checking are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. However, as yet, the teachers are not using the copious amounts of information they have collected to target all the different groups of pupils, particularly those who are most capable. Although new target books have just been introduced, the pupils do not yet understand what they need to do to improve and this is unsatisfactory.

The curriculum

Overall, the school does not provide a sound range of appropriate learning experiences for its pupils. However, opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside the normal curriculum are good. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory, and learning resources overall are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good provision for special educational needs has a positive effect upon pupils' learning.
- Opportunities provided to enrich the curriculum add to the pupils' experiences.
- The match of teachers to the needs of the Foundation Stage children is unsatisfactory.
- The match of teaching assistants to the curriculum helps ensure that pupils are well supported.
- The blocking of lengthy English and mathematics sessions does not enable all pupils to learn well enough.

Commentary

17. All subjects and areas of learning have appropriate policies and programmes of work and this gives sound guidance to teachers and assistants. However, the curriculum fails to fulfil all its statutory requirements for pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is because the planned ICT curriculum cannot be fully covered because there are insufficient resources. In addition, the school does not make appropriate provision for religious education and, thus, fails to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The allocation of curriculum time ensures that literacy and numeracy are well covered. However, the timing of some lessons is not suitably balanced. Lengthy consecutive morning sessions of English and mathematics and the rigid adherence to the literacy and numeracy strategies do not always meet the learning styles of less able pupils. Consequently, their concentration wanes and learning is limited. The school has recognised this, and consideration is to be given to adopting a more integrated provision of subjects.
18. The curriculum for the Nursery and Reception does not provide a broad enough range of activities. It fails to cater for the needs of all the children and does not help them progress sufficiently well enough in their learning. Teaching staff plan using the

Foundation Stage curriculum² which is based on a nationally recommended programme of work. Not all staff are familiar with this programme and not enough attention is paid to the children's prior attainment on entry into school. Consequently, work is not always appropriately set and does not fully challenge the more capable pupils.

19. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. It was judged very good at the last inspection. Individual education plans are informative, detailed and helpful. Reference to the targets in these plans, recently adopted school tracking records and discussions with the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and teaching assistants indicate that many pupils are making good progress towards meeting their individual learning targets. The provision for those pupils who have statements of special educational needs is also good.
20. The school ensures that all pupils are fully included in all activities. The good quality support from all staff ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal and full access to all activities. However, gifted and talented pupils have not been identified and this means that their needs are not met. The personal, social and health education and citizenship curriculum is well established and helps to successfully promote the school's caring ethos. Personal development is promoted on a day-to-day basis through the good care and attention that staff pays to all pupils. In circle time and through school council, pupils have good opportunities to discuss their feelings and problems with teachers and others and this helps promote the good social relationships found across the school.
21. The school provides a good range of enrichment activities that appeal to the interests of a significant number of pupils. For instance, there is a good range of clubs, visits out of school are arranged and visitors invited into school to talk to the children. The match of teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. However, some teachers in the Foundation Stage lack the relevant experience of working with younger children. There is a good match of teaching assistants to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The contribution of these well-qualified and experienced support assistants, particularly when involved with the less capable and pupils with special educational needs, is significant. The good progress that these pupils make owes much to their support.
22. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, although the Nursery is somewhat isolated and rather cold. The recently updated outdoor facilities are good and provide a valuable extension to the learning and playing environment. The whole school is kept in very good order. The quality and quantity of learning resources is adequate overall, although resources for ICT are unsatisfactory.

CARE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

The school ensures that pupils are cared for and protected satisfactorily overall. The support, advice and guidance that pupils receive about their achievements and their personal development are satisfactory. The school successfully involves pupils in its work and development.

² This consists of six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy development; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Each area of learning is made up of four stages or 'stepping stones', from which both progress and standards can be measured.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The pastoral care and general welfare of the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory but good in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils have trusting relationships with each other and with adults.
- Pupils are involved in the life of the school and their views are valued.

Commentary

23. Policies and procedures for child protection and for promoting the general welfare of pupils are satisfactory. However, governors and senior management must ensure that, as soon as possible, all draft policies are approved, that regular fire drills are arranged and that the planned First Aid training is completed. The school's pastoral care system is satisfactory overall. However, children who are in the Foundation Stage are not receiving satisfactory care. The awareness of teaching staff of potential health hazards and of the need for proper supervision at all times is unsatisfactory. The procedures for ensuring children start and settle into their early education are also unsatisfactory. The older pupils have trusting relationships with each other through the *'buddy system'* and also with one or more adults in the school. Teachers and support staff know pupils and their families well and cater for their needs. They provide good role models for the pupils.
24. The advice, support and guidance that pupils receive at school are satisfactory. Whilst assessment is being done, the results are not being used to effectively enable teachers to respond to individual pupil needs. Personal, social and health education is established as a formal part of the curriculum, and recording and reporting systems are in place. The school actively seeks and acts upon the views of pupils through the school council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's links with parents and with the community are satisfactory. The links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with other schools.
- General communication with parents requires further improvement.

Commentary

25. The parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire (i.e. 48) or who attended the parents' meeting (i.e. 24) have positive views of many aspects of what the school provides and achieves. However, a significant minority of parents do not feel that they are well informed about their children's progress, do not feel that the school is well led and managed and do not agree that the arrangements for their children to settle into school when they start are good enough. The inspection evidence supports the last two of these concerns, but not the first.
26. The information that parents receive, through meetings, newsletters, noticeboards and reports, is satisfactory overall. Newsletters are regular and informative but do not celebrate either the school's or the pupils' achievements and successes. Pupil reports

are satisfactory and give a range of information about pupils' progress and development. The prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents for 2003 meet statutory requirements. However, the governors must ensure that their annual report for 2004 is published as soon as possible. There is evidence that communications between the school and parents has recently improved, but parents are still unaware of much that is happening, particularly the more effective partnership with the Junior School and the activity within the Primary Learning Partnership. Governors also plan to use the results of the recent stakeholder survey, together with the outcomes of this report, to encourage parental involvement still further. There is a supportive Friends of Redbourn Infants' School group and a relatively new, but committed, group of parent governors. The contribution that the school's links with parents makes to pupils' learning at home and at school is satisfactory. Parents' concerns and complaints are dealt with satisfactorily.

27. The school's links with the local community are satisfactory overall. Pupils take part in the local 'Open Garden' weekend and there is a range of educational visits and visitors involving the local community, including both local churches. There are good links with the adjacent Junior School and with the local consortium of schools that have benefits for both pupils and staff. Arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next phase of their education are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is very poor. The leadership of key staff is satisfactory but the role of the deputy headteacher is underdeveloped. Governance is good. Management is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very poor leadership of the headteacher has resulted in declining standards.
- The committed governors have a good understanding of the very significant weaknesses of the headteacher and have worked tirelessly to resolve them.
- Analysis of available data has not been used for staff development or to improve standards.
- The input by the local education authority is having a good effect on the leadership of key staff.

Commentary

28. The weak leadership by the headteacher and her continual periods of absence have had a very negative impact on the school's capacity to provide an acceptable education for its pupils. Most staff are hard-working and are keen to work together as a team. However, they lack strong and purposeful leadership and, consequently, morale is very low. High standards have not been promoted within the school. Information on the individual achievement of pupils has not been properly analysed and disseminated and this has meant that class teachers have not been able to meet the pupils' needs effectively enough. Staff have also failed to promote a more inclusive and sensitive induction process for the Foundation Stage children because their proposals have not been considered.
29. Despite being a key issue at the time of the last inspection, not all staff with responsibilities have a full awareness of the breadth of their role. The deputy headteacher does not have a strong presence in the school and her role is

- underdeveloped. The Foundation Stage is not well led and managed because insufficient attention has been given to developing consistent routines and systems. Senior teachers do not adequately support new staff and the school has not participated for some time in any initial teacher training programmes.
30. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall. The local education authority has been working well with subject co-ordinators for over a year and has been advising them on how they can take responsibility for their specific areas and improve standards. Most of the subject leaders are keen and eager to work with their colleagues and make a positive impact. Since the arrival of the part-time consultant headteacher, there has been a changeover of some of the key responsibilities. As a result, in the weeks leading up to the inspection, subject leaders have started to get a better understanding of standards throughout the school and know what they must do to raise pupil achievement.
 31. The local education authority has provided a great deal of intensive support for the management of special needs provision across the school. The deputy headteacher is now working well with the systems that have been developed to help her. In association with other teachers, she ensures that individual needs are met and liaises regularly with concerned agencies. Early contact is made with all parents as soon as concerns are noted about their children, and there is clear evidence of parental involvement in all stages of the Code of Practice.
 32. Strategic planning is unsatisfactory because the development plan only covers the current academic year and is not sufficiently focused on raising standards. The last inspection highlighted the need to carefully monitor standards, evaluate the quality of teaching and link it to pupil achievement. However, this has not happened. It is only since the local education authority has become significantly involved in the school that data on pupil achievement has been made available to staff and governors. The local education authority has been working very closely with the teachers to develop an understanding of responsibilities and most teachers are now really appreciating the benefits of structured professional development. The school adviser has been instrumental in the reorganisation of teaching staff in Years 1 and 2. Consultants have been invited in to share good practice, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and inspection findings confirm that this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching in these year groups.
 33. The day-to-day management of the school is organised well by the efficient school administrator, who also provides a cheery welcome to all visitors. An officer from the local education authority deals well with financial matters and ensures that the funds are spent wisely. Detailed records are kept in an organised and up-to-date way.
 34. Until local education authority intervention, governors were dependent on the headteacher for the quality and amount of information made available to them. The headteacher's regular absences, and her reluctance to attend meetings, made it very difficult for governors to fulfil their role. Consequently, this impacted negatively on their ability to influence the strategic development of the school and shape its future direction. Governors now have full access to the information they need and have been proactive in gaining the views of all those involved in the school. It is evident that they have a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The governors have been very active in trying to help the headteacher carry out her expected role and have set up various systems of support for her leadership. They ensure that statutory requirements are met, except for ICT and the care and welfare of children in the Foundation Stage.

35. Evidence clearly indicates that too many members of staff, governors and parents have no confidence in the leadership of the headteacher. Inspection findings confirm that her very poor leadership is having a detrimental effect and that the school has no capacity for improvement under her guidance.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	579,646
Total expenditure	583,680
Expenditure per pupil	3,671

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	6,310
Balance carried forward to the next year	2,276

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory and preparation for Year 1 of the National Curriculum is not effective. This represents a decline since the last inspection when the provision for Nursery and Reception children was considered to be very good. The children enter the Nursery on a part-time basis when they are three-and-a-half. They continue their Foundation Stage education on a full-time basis in one of two Reception classes, starting either in September or January depending on when their birthday falls. Induction procedures are poor. There are no home visits and there is minimal contact prior to starting school. The first meeting with teaching staff about life in the Nursery occurs when the child first starts school. Reception children immediately start school on a full-time basis and this is unsatisfactory.

Children start Nursery with levels of attainment that are above those expected for this age. They are confident and happily socialise with each other. Their use of speech and language is good, which has a positive impact on all other areas of learning. However, by the time they reach Year 1, the children do not achieve as well as they should. This is because there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, which represents a decline since the last inspection. Teaching staff do not have sufficiently high expectations and do not challenge the children enough. Although the children's progress is checked and information recorded, it is not used to ensure that they are receiving the appropriate level of education. Not all adults involved with them enthusiastically encourage the children in their learning and high standards of behaviour are not always expected. The Foundation Stage curriculum is based on a nationally recommended programme of work but not all staff are familiar with this and are not fully aware of how young children learn. The Foundation Stage team is not well led and managed. For example, new staff are not supported well by senior staff and routines have not been established securely. Insufficient use is made of the safe and secure outdoor areas; it is used as a playground rather than an integral part of the school day. The Nursery classroom is much too cold for young children. It is also a sterile and unattractive teaching area that lacks interesting and exciting resources. This has a negative impact on the children's learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Nursery staff establish warm relationships with the children but not all Reception staff have a warm and caring approach.
- Children underachieve in the Foundation Stage.
- Teaching and learning is unsatisfactory overall.
- There is a spacious outdoor area but it is not used to support learning.
- The Nursery environment is unattractive and the temperature of the classroom is unacceptably cold.

Commentary

36. Provision for **personal, social and emotional development** is unsatisfactory because the teaching staff do not have high enough expectations of the children. When the children start Nursery, they cope well with their personal hygiene. They take turns with equipment and play sensibly with their peers. Nursery staff interact well with the children but do not always move their learning forward by asking

challenging questions or providing stimulating activities. In the Reception classes, daily routines have not been well established and too much boisterous behaviour is accepted or even ignored. This was particularly evident in the outdoor area where some children used aggressive behaviour towards each other and adults did not check this. Not all Reception staff have an acceptable level of knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young children. This means that they are also not fully aware of the specific care and welfare needs of this age group. Consequently, achievement in this area of learning is unsatisfactory and the school fails to add any value to the personal, social and emotional skills of the children. By the end of Reception, only the most confident children will attain the expected level in the early learning goals and achievement in this area of learning is unsatisfactory overall.

37. **Provision for communication, language and literacy** is satisfactory in the Nursery but unsatisfactory in Reception. The vast majority of children start Nursery able to speak with confidence and listen carefully within group situations. They are eager to listen to stories and a significant number of children are sharing and reading books by the time they are ready to start Reception. They hold pencils correctly and write each other cards and have a clear understanding of the relevance of making marks on paper. Teaching and learning in the Nursery is satisfactory. However, teaching and learning in Reception is unsatisfactory. Children maintain their good speaking and listening skills and enjoy communicating with their friends and visiting adults to their classes. Many enjoy looking at pictures in books and read simple words. However, by the end of the Reception Year, only about half of the children will actually be able to recognise a few key words. This is because teacher expectations are low and insufficient attention is given to the prior attainment of these children. For instance, Reception teachers do not check to see if children have already started reading independently in the Nursery. Children also make unsatisfactory progress in their writing skills because the use of cursive writing confuses them and the letter shapes are not taught systematically. The work planned by teachers does not meet the needs of the more capable children, who are given the same work as the others. By the end of Reception, it is unlikely that most children will have attained the expected levels in the early learning goals and this is unsatisfactory.
38. **Provision for mathematical development is unsatisfactory** because the prior ability of the children in the Nursery is not taken into consideration when work is planned for them in Reception. Most children in the Nursery count up to ten with adult support and the more capable recognise the numbers in their name. They recognise two-dimensional shapes with developing confidence and understand positional terms such as '*below, beside*' and '*above*'. Teaching in Nursery is satisfactory overall. In Reception, children sing number songs such as '*Five little speckled frogs*' and '*1,2,3 Buckle my shoe*' very competently. They play mathematical games such as snakes and ladders using numbers up to six with confidence. However, work sampling indicates that the needs of the children are not being met. Children who have been in Reception for one term already only have two or three examples of work achieved and this is unsatisfactory when their prior attainment is considered. Teaching in Reception is unsatisfactory with weaknesses in knowledge and understanding and planning. The activities planned are dull and repetitive and the expectations of the teachers are much too low. Consequently, the children are not making sufficient progress in the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding. By the end of Reception, it is unlikely that most children will have attained the expected levels in the early learning goals and this is unsatisfactory.

39. **Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is unsatisfactory** because the quality of teaching and learning is insufficiently challenging. The children start Nursery with a good understanding of the world around them. For example, they talk about where they live and a significant minority know the number on the front door of their house. They talk confidently about visits to the hospital with family members and describe how large bandages were put on and why various injections were given. The children use the computer confidently and clearly understand that in order for something to happen they must use the control panel. Nursery staff satisfactorily develop the children's knowledge through discussions and play opportunities, but because the environment is so unexciting there are missed opportunities to motivate and move these children further along in their learning. In Reception, the children make unsatisfactory progress because teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. The work planned for them is not stimulating and does not help them to acquire further knowledge. This was evident in an ICT session where the learning intention was to use the control panel to make something happen. However, they had successfully achieved this level of skill in the Nursery. There are also many missed opportunities for arousing the children's curiosity such as when creating ice and letting it melt. It is unlikely that most children will have attained the expected levels in the early learning goals by the end of Reception and this is unsatisfactory.
40. **Provision in physical development is unsatisfactory.** Children start school with good levels of physical skills. They use scissors with confidence and the more capable children cut out complicated snowflake patterns. Children in Reception play with malleable materials very competently. They mould dough into long shapes and round balls and skilfully use rolling pins and cutting utensils. The children move confidently around the outdoor area and show good levels of skills when they walk on plastic stilts. However, teaching staff do not give sufficient regard to the health and safety of some of the equipment and this has a negative impact on children's learning. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Suitable resources are provided and physical activities are planned into the school day. However, there is no evidence of real challenge and adults do not intervene sufficiently well to ensure that the children are acquiring new knowledge and skills. By the end of Reception, most children will not have attained the expected levels of the early learning goals.
41. **Provision in creative development is satisfactory.** Children in both Nursery and Reception sing songs confidently and enjoy participating in role-play situations such as the '*Accident and Emergency Department*'. They hold their brushes skilfully to paint pictures and their use of crayons to colour is of a high standard in both Nursery and Reception. Teaching is satisfactory overall but lacks excitement and stimulation. For example, role-play areas lack the necessary resources to really motivate the children and move them on in their learning. By the end of Reception, most children will have attained the expected levels of the early learning goals. However, when their prior attainment is considered, they could achieve more highly.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 1

ENGLISH

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Until very recently, pupils have not been achieving as well as they should.
- Standards in reading have been falling steadily.
- Good opportunities are provided for the development of speaking and listening skills.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work.

Commentary

42. In the Year 2 national tests taken by pupils in 2004, results were average. This demonstrates underachievement when compared with pupils' attainment on entry to the school, which is above average. Standards of reading and writing were well below those of similar schools. Standards in reading have been falling since 2001 and are lower than at the time of the last inspection. Standards in speaking and listening and writing have remained the same, although pupils' achievement is lower because the standard of attainment on entry to the school has risen.
43. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are average. Since the beginning of the year, the development of pupils' basic skills has been a focus of whole school improvement. The local education authority has offered valuable support to the school and, together with the part-time consultant headteacher, has implemented strategies to raise attainment. Although recent, these strategies are already having a positive effect on the quality of provision. Consequently, pupils' achievement in English is now broadly satisfactory, although expectations could still be higher, particularly for the more capable pupils.
44. Speaking and listening skills are good. Most pupils listen well, responding appropriately. They demonstrate a wide vocabulary and engage in lively, confident conversations, as when discussing the procedures of the school council. Pupils are supported well at home in their language development and in school they make satisfactory progress against their attainment on entry because of effective opportunities to develop their skills during lessons, including role play and the use of *'talking partners'*. Time is given to develop ideas and improve vocabulary.
45. Standards in reading are average. In Year 2, most pupils read fluently for their age, with good expression. Pupils are systematically taught the strategies for effective reading and progress is satisfactory overall because the guided reading sessions are well organised. The books used for these sessions are sufficiently challenging and pupils who are reading independently are given planned structures for improving their skills. However, the school's individual reading programme has in the past been too firmly structured, with the result that more capable pupils have been underachieving, leading to the falling standards. An enjoyment of reading has not been fostered, and in talking with pupils, they complained that some of the reading books are really easy. The part-time consultant headteacher has reacted quickly to parents' justifiable concerns over reading. In the short time she has been in the school, she has reorganised the reading scheme and ordered a more appropriate range of books to improve progress.
46. In writing, standards are average. Year 2 pupils communicate effectively using simple words and phrases that are mostly punctuated correctly with capital letters and full stops. Handwriting by Year 2 is satisfactory, but as the pupils learn to use a joined script, their work is sometimes untidy and scrappily presented. As a result of recent support from the LEA, pupils are currently making sound progress in their writing because the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some strengths. In Years 1 and 2, all the teachers work hard for the benefit of their pupils.

Pupils are well managed so their behaviour is good and they have good attitudes to their work. Support staff are well briefed and used well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons. Learning objectives are shared with the pupils, so they are clear as to what they are going to learn. Resources are used well to capture and maintain pupils' interest. However, a recurrent weakness of the teaching of writing is in the lack of focused planning to meet the varying needs of the pupils during group work. Because of this, expectations for the more capable pupils are sometimes too low.

47. The subject co-ordinator is very new to the role and as such has not had time to effect standards or provision. Good procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have very recently been put in place. The school recognises that these now need to be applied consistently so that achievement is raised and pupils have a better understanding of how they can improve.

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

48. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well throughout the curriculum by, for example, engaging in role-play. Discussion as a way of learning is used to positive effect when pupils discuss issues in pairs. Pupils develop their reading skills effectively as they begin to use books to find information. However, opportunities are insufficiently developed for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects, such as in religious education. The quality of written work is variable, with some work being poorly presented and untidy.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have declined since the last inspection.
- Standards are average at the end of Year 2.
- Until very recently, pupils have not been achieving as well as they should but now overall achievement is satisfactory.
- Teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

49. At the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics in Year 2 were above average. Since then, there has been a gradual decline in standards. The 2004 national test results for pupils in Year 2 were in line with the average of all schools nationally, but they were well below those of similar schools. Observation of lessons, together with an analysis of pupils' workbooks, indicates that current standards in mathematics are broadly average.
50. In their current work, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are achieving satisfactorily but they have had much catching up to do. Baseline assessments show that pupils enter school with good mathematical experience and the majority of pupils have underachieved during their time in school. Pupils who have special educational needs often achieve well because of very effective help given by their teachers and support assistance. Teaching assistants are clear how they can support pupils and

concentrate on this during lessons. They encourage pupils to offer answers to teachers' questions, so improving their confidence and self-esteem. Individual education plans often include targets, which link literacy and numeracy. Teachers and support staff ensure that these guide the assistance needed to help pupils learn.

51. The analysis of pupils' books shows that in Year 1 they cover an appropriate range of work. Average pupils manage simple addition and subtraction sums. They are able to create repeating patterns and can order objects correctly by weight and length. Pupils use number lines and a range of resources to calculate and reinforce understanding of doubles to 20. More capable pupils find hidden shapes and calculate missing numbers in a sequence. Some pupils have begun to measure in centimetres and are able to make reasonable estimations of length. Although not officially part of the Year 1 curriculum, pupils use ICT to create a block graph recording the number of different car colours in a simple investigation.
52. By Year 2, most pupils count, order, add and subtract numbers confidently to 20. They recognise sequences of odd and even numbers, and many can calculate simple costs and work out which coins are appropriate. Currently, pupils are learning about time and the relationship of seconds, minutes and hours. Clearly, many have no idea of the specific times during the day when different activities take place, and find the topic very challenging. Teachers are patiently using a range of resources to establish and reinforce the hand positions on a clock face. Some more capable pupils use $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ to calculate simple sums and to divide different geometric shapes. Most of the work seen involves number, but standards in shape, space and measure are broadly average with pupils recognising and naming two-dimensional shapes. Little work was recorded of pupils using and applying mathematics and this aspect is underdeveloped.
53. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Year 1 and Year 2. Numeracy skills are taught carefully and accurately. Teachers routinely plan at three levels of difficulty, aiming to challenge all pupils appropriately. In addition, prominence is given to the introduction of technical vocabulary in lessons so that pupils gradually assimilate new terms. Lessons are well planned to ensure progression. Clear learning aims are established and good account is taken of pupils' individual needs. However, although work is planned for different levels of ability, many of the activities purporting to extend the learning of the more able, are simply more of the same tasks, rather than opportunities for pupils to use and apply their understanding. The numeracy strategy is well established, with lessons planned to include a mental or oral starter, a main learning activity and a final plenary or consolidation session. The brisk, challenging mental activities are a feature of all lessons. Pupils enjoy these activities; they respond eagerly and as a result become more confident and proficient at making accurate calculations. However, some lessons appear to be too long for less capable pupils to maintain concentration and in these lessons they do not always make the progress that they are capable of.
54. Teaching assistants are used well in effective teamwork, usually, but not always, to support pupils who have learning difficulties or behaviour problems. Appropriate use is made of resources and questions are used well to extend pupils' understanding. Recently introduced tracking and assessment procedures provide a good range of information and are now being used to identify the attainment and progress of individuals and groups of pupils. However, it is too early at present to establish the impact these procedures have on raising standards, or on identifying areas of strength and weakness.

MATHEMATICS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

55. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. There are some examples of mathematics being used in science and history, but opportunities for pupils to investigate, solve problems and apply their numeracy skills in other subjects are not fully developed. The potential of computers to record and produce data has yet to be realised. The school has recognised the need to plan for greater use and application of mathematics across all subjects and, to help address this need, it has recently introduced a scheme where one mathematics lesson each week has a practical focus.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Pupils do not achieve well because of the inconsistent quality of teaching, and lack of challenge for some pupils.
- Good quality assessment procedures have recently been developed, and have aided more focused teaching.
- The subject co-ordinator has recently introduced a variety of measures, which are successfully improving standards and provision.
- Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in their own enquiries and investigations, and to apply literacy and numeracy skills.

Commentary

56. Standards attained by Year 2 pupils are below average. This represents a decline since the last report when standards were above average. However, when compared to the National Curriculum assessments tests of 2004, inspection evidence indicates that standards have started to improve. This is a result of more focused teaching and enhanced assessment procedures. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, and no marked difference was noted in the performance of girls and boys. However, pupils are not achieving well enough, and the school has recently identified the need to provide greater levels of challenge, especially for more capable pupils.
57. Very recently, the school has sharpened assessment procedures and the tracking of pupils' progress. The subject leader now has full access to the data of Year 2 pupils' performance in national tests. It is evident that pupils are benefiting from these developments, and also from the more focused teaching. The school recognises the need to develop a marking policy and provide more feedback to pupils on how they can improve.
58. Pupils enjoy science and this was evident in talking with pupils as well as in a Year 2 lesson on forces and movement where the teacher demonstrated many good elements of teaching. She modified resources appropriately to ensure all pupils were fully involved; they gasped in a 'Wow' moment as she expanded a collapsible sphere; and she maintained a lively pace and good questioning skills to sustain pupils' concentration and learning.

59. The conscientious subject leader has recently introduced various measures to raise standards, many of them linked to the very helpful input from colleagues in the local education authority (since September 2003). Some recent innovations that are already helping to enrich teaching and learning include:
- analysis of test results to identify gaps in learning;
 - boosting curriculum plans to support teaching, and strengthen progression in learning;
 - examining ways to increase pupils' opportunities for independent investigations;
 - building up science links with colleagues in the junior and other schools;
 - enhancing the contribution of teaching assistant colleagues in science lessons; and
 - science now taught as a discrete subject, and not simply as part of topic work.
60. Currently, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in science. The school has also recognised the timetabled allowance of 50 minutes per week for science as insufficient to provide appropriate support for pupils' learning and progress in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision has declined since the last inspection.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are below national expectations.
- The ICT National Curriculum is planned for but some important aspects are not covered.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory.
- The unsatisfactory resources have a negative impact on the provision.

Commentary

61. Standards in ICT at the time of the last inspection were judged to be in line with national expectations, and now they are below national expectations. There is evidence that since the last inspection the importance of ICT within the school has declined. This has resulted in a reduction of resources, a lack of teacher expertise and confidence and a resultant drop in pupil performance. The school has recognised this and with local education authority support has adopted a new scheme of work and embarked upon a programme to increase staff skills and update resources. However, although planned for, by the end of Year 2, pupils have not experienced the full range of ICT activities expected of pupils of their age and consequently both their achievement and provision are unsatisfactory.
62. The one ICT lesson observed was satisfactory, but the lack of computers greatly restricted the teacher's plans and the pupils' learning opportunities. As the programmes of study are not being fully covered by teachers, teaching overall in ICT is unsatisfactory.
63. Current leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader is most conscientious. She is diligent in her co-ordination of the subject and has a clear vision

for its development. In the short time she has been in post, with advisory support, she has overseen an audit of staff skills, adopted a new scheme of work, organised technical support and instigated the provision of hardware and software. The school ICT development plan outlines its commitment to improving the provision of ICT and involving it across all subjects taught. The teachers have access to a number of fixed and laptop computers, but resources overall are unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

64. There is some evidence of ICT being used to create simple bar graphs in numeracy lessons and to record events using digital photography. However, provision across the curriculum is not satisfactory. The school has yet to ensure that ICT is used systematically in all subjects and in all classes.

HUMANITIES

The inspection focused on religious education. Aspects of history and geography were sampled and therefore it is not possible to give an overall judgement on provision in these subjects.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not achieve satisfactorily.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

65. Standards do not meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and this is a decline since the last inspection. Class timetables indicate that insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of this subject and this is confirmed through the very small amounts of work in the pupils' books. Planning from last term also indicates that teachers lack subject knowledge and confidence to teach religious education in detail. Consequently, in discussion with Year 2, it is evident that the pupils are unclear what religious education actually is.
66. Pupils know that Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas time but are unable to recall any Bible stories. A minority of pupils show confusion about the difference between God and Jesus. Scrutiny of work indicates that they have discussed other faiths such as Hinduism and Buddhism and have discussed the importance of light and the use of religious symbols such as the cross. However, they are unable to recall any of these details.
67. Work is rarely dated and pupils of differing abilities are given similar tasks to carry out. Teachers provide no feedback on the work and pupils do not know how their work could improve. The subject leader is very new to the role but has managed to look at samples of work and is fully aware of the need for consistent assessment procedures to be implemented.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

68. Evidence from scrutinising samples of pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that in **history** pupils steadily develop their understanding of chronology and of important events and persons in the past. They show great interest as they talk about their work on topics including Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, and the '*Victorian visitor*' to school.
69. Year 1 pupils enjoyed their lesson examining toys to distinguish between old and new. The class teacher skilfully captured their imagination and interest as they did their detective work and came to recognise that you cannot make simple judgements just upon appearance. Good questioning techniques and good relationships encouraged pupils to express their views and reasons confidently. Year 2 pupils use their writing skills to present a diary account of a resident in London during the Great Fire. Role-play is being successfully developed to fully support pupils' learning in Year 2. Appropriate schemes of work are in place. The subject co-ordinator is aware that there is a need for teachers to record more details of pupils' progress and use the information gathered to move their learning on further.
70. No lessons were seen in **geography** but scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with subject leader and pupils, and examination of teachers' planning documents indicate that pupils in Year 1 develop map using skills as they work with different types of maps. They experience fieldwork and carry out simple mapping of features of the school grounds. However, the work in Year 2 does not build strongly upon the mapping skills developed in Year 1. Pupils engage in environmental evaluation and apply their literacy skills when composing a letter to a local councillor on measures to improve their local environment. In addition to building greater consistency in assessment procedures, the subject co-ordinator fully recognises that more consistency needs to be applied to assessment procedures and understands the need for more work to be planned around the study of a distant and contrasting place.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

These subjects were sampled because they were not the focus of the inspection, and so it is not possible to give a judgement on provision in these subjects. One lesson was seen in **design and technology**. Inspectors spoke to the co-ordinators for **art and design, music** and **physical education**. They also discussed these subjects with Year 2 pupils and looked at a sample of their work.

71. It is clear from the limited **art and design** displays around the school and from pupils' work that pupils are given the opportunity to explore and develop their ideas in two and three-dimensions. Throughout the school, the use of well-presented sketchbooks gives value to pupils' work, provides good opportunities to practise techniques and is a useful record of individual progress. Pupils make sound progress as they learn to use a variety of media and techniques. Observational skills are developing well. For example, Year 2 pupils begin to use shading for effect in their pencil sketches of the inside of a church. However, there is limited evidence of the use of ICT for the development of artistic skills and few links with other areas of the curriculum.
72. In **design and technology**, there were few samples of completed work available for scrutiny. However, teachers' planning indicates that the key elements of the subject -

investigation of ideas, learning a range of skills and designing and making - are appropriately covered. This was amply demonstrated in the one lesson observed, where Year 2 pupils were excitedly examining a wide variety of wheeled vehicles before going on to design and build their own. In conversation, pupils expressed their enjoyment of the subject. There are some useful links with other subjects, but, as with art and design, there is limited evidence of the use of computers and ICT for the development of skills.

73. No **music** lessons were seen, but when inspectors heard pupils singing in assemblies, they did so tunefully. Learning is enhanced through the opportunity to perform in an annual Christmas production and the opportunity for Year 2 pupils to join the school choir. The co-ordinator is in the process of updating the scheme of work, but discussions indicate that the National Curriculum is appropriately planned and implemented. Resources are satisfactory, including those to reflect the music of other cultures, which have been improved since the last inspection.
74. No lessons were seen in **physical education**. The school follows a commercial scheme to support the curriculum for gymnastics and games. Following consultation with the local education authority advisors, teaching staff recently attended training on dance, and this improvement in their expertise and competence has had a positive impact upon pupils' standards of performance. There are satisfactory resources to support physical education, including the sizeable school hall for dance and gymnastics.
75. The leadership and management of the creative, aesthetic, practical and physical subjects are developing. Co-ordinators are enthusiastic and keen to improve provision. Recently, they have begun to develop a good overview of standards and areas for improvement. They have correctly identified the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress as a priority for future development and are keen to improve links with feeder schools.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

76. Personal, social and health education is a valuable extension to the school's curriculum and helps to enhance the pupils' awareness of the school's high expectations of their behaviour and attitudes. The health education programme is successfully woven into the curriculum and staff deal effectively with any particular issues when and where they arise. The school's good commitment to inclusion guides pupils' social development. Staff provide good role models in the way that they value the opinions and contributions of all pupils during lessons and discussions.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	5
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	5

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	5

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	5
The quality of teaching	5
How well pupils learn	5
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	7
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	5

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