

INSPECTION REPORT

**ROBERT WILKINSON (VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED)
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Strensall, York

LEA area: City of York

Unique reference number: 121545

Headteacher: Mr Richard Ludlow

Lead inspector: Mrs Lesley Clark

Dates of inspection: 16th - 18th May 2005

Inspection number: 267571

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	548
School address:	West End Strensall York North Yorkshire
Postcode:	YO32 5UH
Telephone number:	01904 490306
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Hampshire
Date of previous inspection:	May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a much larger than average sized primary school. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Nearly all pupils are of white ethnic backgrounds. The take-up of free school meals is low. The school serves a semi-rural, socially and economically average area, including nearby villages, farms and the local army camp. Although the number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is slightly higher than normal, it is no longer as significant as it was. The school has doubled in size in the last five years, reflecting a significant growth in the local population, as well as the school's popularity. Children's attainment on entry is average. Fifty-eight pupils (10 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, which is below average; however, 27 have significant physical, social, emotional and learning difficulties. Six pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is about average. Most of the pupils receiving additional help have specific, moderate and severe learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural problems, speech or communication difficulties, hearing impairment, physical difficulties and dyspraxia. Following the unexpected death of the warmly regarded headteacher in June 2004, the school was led and managed initially by the senior leadership team. The headteacher was appointed very recently, in April 2005, after two terms as acting headteacher, during which time he built very quickly on the very good ethos that the previous headteacher had established. At the time of the inspection, three members of staff were on long-term sick leave and their classes taken by supply teachers. Six new classrooms were in the process of construction and one of the Year 1 classes was being taught in a very small room and the neighbouring corridor.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25431	Lesley Clark	Lead inspector	The Foundation Stage English as an additional language
19446	Susan Wood	Lay inspector	
12301	Joan Boden	Team inspector	Science Art and design Physical education
30954	Brian Ashcroft	Team inspector	Mathematics Music
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33570	Carolyn Pender	Team inspector	Special educational needs Information and communication technology Design and technology
33665	Carol Machell	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an effective school where standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Teaching is good and pupils derive much enjoyment from their learning. The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and well above average in information and communication technology (ICT) and science;
- The very good leadership of the headteacher inspires a strong sense of team work, which is leading the pace of change at a good rate;
- Children get off to a very good start in the reception classes and make very good progress in a very short time;
- The school makes good provision for pupils with significant physical, social, emotional and learning difficulties;
- Pupils have very good attitudes to learning, behave very well and show a great deal of responsibility and maturity in their dealings with each other and with adults;
- Teaching is good overall; however, the very good and excellent practice, evident in many classes, is not shared sufficiently well so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning in a few;
- The curriculum and timetabling of lessons are not sufficiently well organised to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate balance of subjects.

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected. There has been very good improvement in standards in religious education and in the provision for pupils' spiritual development. Subject guidance for teachers, together with assessment and marking, has been strengthened. Homework is used effectively. Provision in the reception classes for personal, social and emotional development is now very good. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are now very good and are proving effective. There are no particular barriers to learning; significant aids are the senior leadership team's energy and enthusiasm to improve standards.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is good, including that of pupils with special educational needs. Almost all children in the reception classes are likely to meet the expected goals by the time they start Year 1 in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They are likely to exceed those expected in physical development. Standards of the present Year 2 are above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics and science. Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were in line with the national average in writing, but below average in reading and mathematics. Standards in the present Year 2 are higher, because of improvements in the way teaching is organised to help pupils learn more effectively. Standards of

the present group of pupils in Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics, and well above average in science, by the end of Year 6. Standards have risen in English and science, because of the school's drive to improve writing and the concentration on teaching scientific skills through investigation. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in religious education and physical education and well above average in ICT. No judgements on standards could be made in other subjects.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good, as are attendance and punctuality.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good and leads to pupils' overall good achievement. **The quality of teaching and learning is good overall**, particularly the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, which are taught and used well in other subjects. Practical skills in physical education and scientific investigation are also well taught. The teaching and learning seen in the reception classes was invariably very good and sometimes excellent. Very good teaching was seen in each year group, most notably in Years 2, 5 and 6, and for pupils with significant special educational needs. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the overall good quality of teaching and effectively help pupils of different abilities to learn. The quality of teaching, however, does vary quite considerably, from barely satisfactory to excellent. Unsatisfactory elements include low expectations, lack of challenge and a slow pace. Assessment is used effectively to help pupils learn. The sound curriculum is broad but not always balanced for all of the pupils, because of the way lessons and different subjects are timetabled. Overall enrichment of the curriculum is good. There is very good provision for all kinds of sport. The resources and accommodation are satisfactory on balance; both are very good in reception but accommodation is cramped elsewhere. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. The school provides pupils with good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in its work and development. The partnership with parents is good, as are the links with the community and other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and he is assisted ably by the senior leadership team. Subject leaders fulfil their roles well. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents think that this is a good school and like the fact that their children are happy here, although they would like a bit more information as to how well their children are getting on. Pupils have very positive views and hold their teachers in high regard.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Share the excellent and very good practice to raise the quality of teaching and learning in a minority of classes*;
- Adjust the timetabling and curriculum to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate balance of subjects*.

**The school is aware of these issues and has suitable plans in place to take effect from September 2005.*

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of pupils is good. Standards are above average overall in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the reception classes achieve very well in a very short time;
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well;
- Standards show good overall improvement in Year 2;
- Standards are above average in most subjects by the end of Year 6 and well above average in science and ICT.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry, when they start in reception, is broadly average. By the end of the reception year, the vast majority are likely to meet the goals expected in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, and exceed those expected in physical development. They achieve very well, making very good progress in a short time, for two-thirds of children have just two terms in the reception classes and very varied pre-school experience.
2. In the 2004 national tests at the end of Year 2, standards were below average in reading and mathematics and close to those expected in writing. Compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils with free school meals, standards were well below average. The then acting headteacher addressed this problem as a matter of urgency. The way teaching and learning were organised in reception and Year 1 was modified and immediate provision made for a related indoor and outdoor curriculum. Increasing the numbers of teaching assistants and assigning them to particular classes sharpened up the provision for the different needs of different ability groups in all classes. This, alongside radically altering how year group teams worked and planned together to improve teaching and curricular provision, has halted the apparent downward trend in the school's results at this stage.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.0 (15.3)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.5 (14.6)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.8 (15.6)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 81 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Standards in the present Year 2 are on course to be above average in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and average in mathematics, with an increased proportion of pupils exceeding the levels expected at the end of Year 2 compared to recent years. Pupils now achieve well in Years 1 and 2 because of the steps the school has taken to ensure that the large proportion of pupils in Year 1 who have had limited pre-school or reception experience follow a less formal curriculum. They have ample opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and their skills in literacy and numeracy, through role play and related activities. For example, in the 'vet's surgery' in each class, pupils filled in forms, wrote instructions on 'how to look after your pet', drew maps to explain where to find the sick animal and managed the finances using tills, purses and money. Standards in science continue to be broadly average. Although higher attaining pupils have the potential to do better in science, their achievement is limited by the fact that little or no science is taught in the summer term of Year 2.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.3 (27.4)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	28.3 (27.1)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.8 (29.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 69 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Standards in the present Year 6 are on course to be above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. There are no noticeable differences in the performances of boys and girls. Standards are higher than in the 2004 national tests, when they were in line with expected levels in English and above average in mathematics and science. Pupils do well compared to their prior attainment, as judged in relation to the levels achieved at the end of Year 2. The trend in the school's results is broadly in line with the national trend and, over a period of three years, the school's results average out as being above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. There are signs this year, however, of marked improvement in standards in all three subjects, as a consequence of the headteacher's analysis of the school's actual results in relation to its potential. There has been a big push on developing writing and oracy throughout the school, very good opportunities for mathematical investigations and, in science, a much clearer focus on teaching skills in contexts relevant to investigations, plus continuing professional development and training of all staff. Standards are now rising because of these effective steps to halt a slight decline, particularly in English. The school is on course to meet its ambitious targets.
- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 in religious education. This is very good improvement since the last inspection in 1999 when standards were judged to be below average. Standards are also above average in physical education, reflecting the very wide range of sporting activities open to pupils at this school, including regular swimming for all age groups, the very good provision for extra-curricular sports and the involvement of specialist teachers. Standards are well above average in ICT because of very good development of skills and ample opportunities to use these in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is also very good. Attendance is well above national averages.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils behave very well and are well motivated to learn;
- Adults encourage pupils to develop impressive value systems;
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are promoted very well through the high quality provision for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development;
- Attendance rates are high and pupils consistently arrive at school promptly.

Commentary

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very keen to learn. They have many opportunities to discuss in lessons and are quick to answer questions and to ask if they do not understand. They work well together, older pupils showing high levels of co-operation and responsibility. They are cheerful and friendly and are enthusiastically involved in all that the school has to offer. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, such as manning the office telephone at

lunchtimes or working alongside younger pupils in the ICT suite to help them develop new skills. A system of paired reading, whereby older and younger pupils read together, also develops successfully the self-esteem of both age groups and helps pupils to become more mature.

7. Parents are right to consider that their children are encouraged to respect one another and that they are treated as individuals, despite the school's ever-growing numbers. A very simple code, known as the CARE code (Care and Respect for Everyone) helps pupils to regulate their attitudes and behaviour throughout the day, with very effective social and moral guidance. Pupils of all ages understand that unkindness of any sort will not be tolerated. There are clear procedures, involving parents at all stages, to deal with any repeated poor behaviour, including bullying or name calling. Pupils feel that adults in the school are very approachable and they have no hesitation in asking for help as they know their concerns will be taken seriously. At lunchtimes and playtimes, there is an exemplary playground buddy system. Pupils wearing the yellow tabards are enthusiastic about their role. They understand that they have been chosen as 'Playground Pals' because of their kindness to others. Any pupil who feels in need of a friend is encouraged to approach the 'Friendship Stop' and ask for someone to play with. Consequently, most pupils play happily together, even though their playspace is currently restricted by the building work in progress. In reception, lunchtimes provide a seamless stream of learning; these youngest children are supported extremely well by adults who encourage positive relationships and co-operative play.
8. Pupils are encouraged to develop independence and maturity through, for example, the well established school council. The council provides pupils in Years 3 to 6 with many opportunities to develop their skills as young citizens. For example, they have been involved in decisions regarding the provision of compost bins, lunchtime rotas and organising an anti-bullying poster competition. They have taken part in regional school council conferences with other schools and have been part of organising a 'Waste Action' conference in the locality. For those with challenging social, emotional and behavioural problems, the 'Rainbow Club' provides a 'nurturing environment' designed to allow pupils' individual needs to be met, in the context of active learning and social interaction, as in a cookery session, for example. Pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 responded enthusiastically as the adults prompted high levels of participation and much speaking and listening, in line with the school's focus on oracy.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	534	10	0
White - Irish	1	0	0
White - any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British - any other Black background	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

9. The exclusions relate to one pupil.

10. Spiritual development has improved markedly since the last inspection and is now very good. Opportunities for spiritual awareness are planned for in the local syllabus for religious education. All pupils reflect upon and respond to their own feelings and those of others with sensitivity and appreciation. In many lessons, there is a real sense of joy in working together, fuelled by the teachers' good humour and the pupils' ready responsiveness. Through music and language, pupils' perceptions are widened and there was a real sense of wonder when the Lord's Prayer was considered in a sung version and in an eastern European language. Assemblies, personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) lessons and teachers' everyday contact with pupils, both in and out of class, all contribute very well to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils show a good appreciation of their own cultural traditions and there are developing opportunities, through art, music and visitors to the school, for them to appreciate the richness and diversity of other cultures. Through learning European languages and looking at world events in the news, pupils learn to look at cultures outside their own. The school recognises that there is still more to be done to extend their awareness of cultural diversity within British society.

Attendance

11. The very good rates of attendance show that pupils are very keen to come to school. The pupils arrive at school in good time to enable a smooth and uninterrupted start to the school day. The school has very good procedures in place to promote good attendance by all pupils and parents clearly know to contact the school if their children are absent.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.5	School data	0.0
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 provided by the school is good. Enrichment activities enhance the curriculum. Pupils benefit from effective levels of personal support. There are productive links with parents, other schools and the community.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the Early Years Unit are of a consistently high standard;
- Teaching is good on balance and very good in Years 2, 5 and 6;
- While there is no unsatisfactory teaching, unsatisfactory elements in otherwise sound lessons slow the pace of pupils' learning in a small number of lessons;
- Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs learn well as they receive a great deal of individual help which is very well matched to their needs;
- Teaching of skills is a notable feature of the good and very good teaching;
- Assessment is used very effectively in Years 5 and 6.

Commentary

12. The teaching and learning seen in the Early Years Unit was impressive and, on occasions, excellent. The staff team work extremely well together, sharing the different rooms, outside areas and resources in an apparently seamless flow of purposeful activities. Children who have special educational needs are given good levels of support and those who show particular aptitudes, in reading for example, have the opportunity to learn at a faster rate, assisted by older pupils. The hallmark of high quality teaching throughout the Early Years Unit is the high levels of fun and energy demonstrated by the adults and responded to with equal zest by the children, as they learn successfully with maximum enjoyment.
13. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. The majority of lessons are good or better and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. However, the school recognises that the overall pattern of teaching and learning is uneven and is much better in some classes than in others. It knows that there is a need to share the excellent and very good practice to raise overall quality in a minority of classes. Measures put into place by the leadership and management of the school to improve pupils' learning are proving effective. The time allocated each week to year group teams to prepare and plan lessons plays an important part in ensuring consistency in terms of what is taught and how pupils learn. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been rigorous and has increased the overall quality of classroom practice and pupils' achievement. The use of large screens linked to computers in Years 5 and 6 has sharpened the pace of lessons and helps pupils to focus on learning objectives. Where teaching quality is good, behaviour is very well managed, pace and challenge is high and the needs of pupils of different abilities are well catered for. In very good lessons, pupils of all abilities display high levels of independence and enthusiasm for their work. In an excellent lesson, the teaching used a variety of resources, including ICT, to the maximum effect to help pupils of all abilities to develop their skills to well above average levels. In a small number of lessons, unsatisfactory features made learning less effective. These included insecure subject knowledge on the teacher's part, a lack of challenge and expectation appropriate to pupils' abilities and a pedestrian pace in the delivery of the lesson. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the overall good quality of teaching and give effective support to enable pupils of different abilities to learn well.
14. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for and they learn well as a result of the help and support they receive. Teachers and support and teaching assistants plan together to ensure that the individual needs of pupils are met. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and those with the most challenging needs are given effective extra support in the 'Rainbow group' sessions, where teaching is very good. Clear targets in individual educational plans help pupils know what they need to do to improve. Teachers and support staff work as a strong team, both within class and when pupils work together in small groups on their own.
15. The skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught well through other subjects. A strong focus on teaching skills in other subjects, such as science and physical education, and giving pupils opportunities to learn from each other through discussion, demonstrations and evaluations, are helping to make learning increasingly effective. Similarly, the school's drive to improve standards in literacy through encouraging pupils to speak and listen to each other, often with a partner or in a group, also benefits their learning.
16. Assessment systems introduced into school during the last eighteen months have increased the rigour of pupil assessment, tracking and target setting in all year groups. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress to an agreed format and there is good liaison between staff as pupils move through the school. A strength of the system is the encouragement of pupils to be involved in assessing their own work and setting targets alongside their teachers. This can be seen operating particularly well with older pupils in Years 5 and 6 in the marking of their written work. The result is a clear focus on improvement, a sense of partnership between teachers and pupils and a greater enthusiasm for writing.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (7)	18 (41)	16 (36)	7 (16)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is planned effectively and provides a range of worthwhile opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all the pupils. Good use is made of visits, visitors and first-hand experiences to enrich the learning. There is a good range of after school activities. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are very rich early learning experiences provided in the reception classes;
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- The curriculum and timetabling of lessons is not sufficiently well organised to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate balance of subjects;
- A good programme of experiences through visits, visitors and other activities provides valuable enrichment.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets the statutory requirements and all the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, including provision for religious education and collective worship. There is now better provision for religious education and the subject is taught regularly. In addition, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn a foreign language, French or Spanish, taught by specialists. All pupils have regular swimming lessons from a qualified instructor and specialist staff brought in offer a more extensive range of physical education than is normally found. The curriculum in the reception classes is very good and provides a wealth of exciting activities in all areas of learning, both indoors and outdoors. Children have ample opportunities to select their own resources, which are of very good quality, both inside and out.
18. The curriculum provides good support for pupils with special needs and enables them to achieve well. The very good links with other agencies allow staff to draw on the guidance and advice of a wide range of professional expertise. One fairly unique resource is the 'Rainbow programme', through which pupils are able to access wider curriculum opportunities tailored to their individual needs. This particularly benefits those pupils with significant physical, social, emotional and learning difficulties, who need a lot of individual attention and support. The benefits of this provision far outweigh the disadvantages; however, on occasions pupils miss out on some areas of the curriculum which they could otherwise access.
19. In Years 1 to 6, the school has used the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and this has been effective in raising attainment. In some other subjects, such as science in Year 2 and geography in Year 6, pupils do not receive an appropriate balance. This is because the curriculum and timetabling are not sufficiently well organised. However, plans are in hand to address the weaknesses in the current blocked system of teaching subjects and this will ensure a more progressive development of skills.

20. The school makes good use of the local community, visits and visitors to supplement the work done in the classroom. Pupils have many opportunities to visit different places as part of the topics they are studying, such as the theatre or museums. They look forward to visitors coming into school to bring the learning alive, for instance when 'Florence Nightingale' came to visit Year 2 pupils. The Year 6 residential visit to the outdoor pursuits centre in Northumberland develops the pupils' skills effectively. The wide range of after school clubs and weekly swimming lessons in all year groups help the pupils to develop their sporting skills and achieve good levels of fitness.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes good care of pupils. Good procedures are in place to gather and act upon the views of its pupils. There is good support, advice and guidance for pupils based on monitoring.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has a warm, caring environment in which pupils feel valued and so they enjoy learning;
- Pupils feel very confident to approach any adult in school if they have concerns or worries;
- Pupil's views are valued by the school.

Commentary

21. There are clear procedures in place to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all the children. These are supported by effective child protection procedures and provide a very caring and safe environment in which pupils can learn and develop into mature young people. The school is currently reviewing its health and safety policy to ensure it is in line with very recent guidance from the local education authority. The school has developed very good links with a range of external agencies, to help support children with individual needs and their families appropriately.
22. Pupils feel very confident that they can approach any adults with concerns and worries. These are listened to and dealt with sensitively. There are also good systems in place for the younger children, such as the playground 'friendship stop', where children who feel upset or lonely can go and nominated 'buddies' will listen to and talk with them. The school has good systems in place to ensure pupils are clear about their learning and where they need to improve, whether academically or in their personal development.
23. The school council is well established and elected members are able to present the views of their peers. Regular time is given to enable feedback from council meetings and discussion in class groups. Recently, a grant was obtained for playground equipment and children took part in the selection process for buying the new playground resources. Pupils like the fact that their views are considered and believe that they have a firm say in what goes on in their school.
24. The school monitors pupils' progress and achievements carefully. Staff work hard to provide flexible, effective, individual solutions matched to pupils' needs. The good liaison between school, parents and outside agencies ensures that all pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Induction arrangements are good and help those new to the school to settle in quickly. Within school, the strong links between the Early Years Unit and Year 1 mean that transfer for those children who have only had two terms in reception is smooth. Pupils are given good support and advice when they move on to secondary school and get to know their new school beforehand.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and this is an area that the headteacher continues to develop. There are good links with the local community and other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning are good;
- The quality of annual reports to parents, though satisfactory in the main, varies from good to unsatisfactory;
- Parents receive good quality information relating to children with special educational needs.

Commentary

25. Links with parents are developing well and they are supportive of the school and the work it does. The level of communication to parents has increased and a wide range of regular and well presented information is provided on the everyday routines of the school, the curriculum and events organised by the school. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are well presented documents, although they have limited information in some areas that they are required to report on in law. Parents have many opportunities to share in their children's learning and achievements, as in homework, consultation evenings, productions and curriculum workshops. A small number of parents help in classrooms and many help on educational visits out of school. The school is supported by The Friends of Robert Wilkinson School, who are a small group who work hard to provide a wide range of social and fundraising events for the families and children of the school. Recently, they provided funding to help develop the reception outside play area and play equipment.
26. The annual written reports to parent vary in quality from class to class. The best examples clearly describe what children have learnt, can do and what they need to improve. Others have very limited information on some of the subjects studied. They do not contain clearly focused targets to enable parents to support their children in areas where they are experiencing difficulties. The school is currently working on this to improve the overall quality of its reporting to parents.
27. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress at planned review meetings, as well as in less formal meetings arranged to share information frequently. Effective links with local secondary schools exist to ensure that there are no breaks in support for these pupils. The school has established good links with outside agencies and health professionals to strengthen support further.
28. The school has good links with the community. The choir sing for a local residential home for the elderly at Christmas. Pupils use walks in the surrounding area for first-hand experience of their local heritage and regularly visit the local church. The school has good links with pre-school providers and has also many links with neighbouring primary schools, particularly in participating in inter-school sporting events. They also work with the secondary school to ensure that pupils in Year 6 are well prepared, as they move to the next stage in their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the leadership team. Management is good, as is governance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The inspirational leadership and educational guidance of the headteacher has brought almost instant improvement to declining standards through raising awareness and accountability;
- The senior leadership team manages each key stage effectively;
- The school's self-evaluation and the way it is used is very effective at driving up standards;
- Management, including performance management, is effective;
- Financial management is good.

Commentary

29. The leadership of the headteacher is impressive. As acting headteacher, he instantly tackled the issue of declining standards at the end of Year 2 with characteristic honesty and incisiveness. He made governors and all staff aware of the school's standards in relation to national norms and those it had attained formerly. The degree of transparency and openness jolted both governors and staff into taking more collective responsibility for the standards achieved and tackling the problem as a team. The headteacher's strategic thinking and planning quickly brought about changes in the way teachers in the same year group worked and planned together. A much higher profile has been given to subject leaders for literacy, mathematics, science and ICT. They have had more management time to tackle their subjects; for example, the numeracy subject leader has had half a day a week to focus on Year 2, looking at underachievement at the higher levels and supporting teachers and pupils with practical ideas for making learning more effective. The teachers of most age groups now have specified time in which to work and plan together. Each area of the school has piloted different projects, and the school is developing those that have worked best. The reason this is proving successful is because the headteacher has motivated staff, as well as giving them responsibility for the outcomes of their teaching. By experimenting in this way, the school has teased out what works and there has been a very clear focus on standards, particularly writing. All staff know where the weaknesses are and where the emphasis should be.
30. The senior leadership team, in charge of managing key areas of the school, ably and enthusiastically support the leadership and management of the school. In effect, the school is run as small units, within a much larger one. The need to remodel the workforce has had an impact on the organisational structures within the school, which is working well to free up teachers' time and at the same time benefit pupils' learning. For example, in Years 3 and 4, while teachers plan together, support staff and outside specialists take the pupils for Spanish and an extended range of physical education. A similar structure in Year 2 gives pupils the opportunity to learn French and develop additional skills in physical education. This enriches pupils' learning in all respects by giving breadth to the curriculum, as well as being a highly efficient way of tackling the management of a very large school. At the same time, the school has retained the feel of a small family school, because of the way it is organised and run.
31. Monitoring and evaluation are well thought out with a pattern of observation, support and development. The headteacher has seen most teachers teach this year and the written evaluations of lessons are detailed, evaluative and of equally good quality. Support has also been given to science, through developing investigative science by working with teachers, observing and then feeding back observations. The senior leadership team contributes well to monitoring and evaluating standards in the school. They have observed literacy lessons to gauge how well pupils learn and how effectively the focus on oracy is helping to improve writing. Monitoring has been extended to other subjects, starting with geography, religious education and science. This highlighted curricular issues for example, it found that geography was a bit light, and that science was lighter in Years 1 and 2, thus indicating what needs to be addressed in next year's long-term curriculum plan. The senior leadership team, therefore, has moved a long way in a short time, in terms of monitoring and accountability, and to get this back into the classroom.

32. This term, performance management is being used to follow up on the training teachers have had in developing speaking and listening, to see the difference it has made to standards. In this school, monitoring, performance management and continuing professional development mutually interlink and support each other. Teachers are asked to reflect on their training, to see how this has helped to improve their work. It has been used as an effective tool to raise teachers' expectations of themselves and their skills, because it is linked to outcomes and standards. In these ways, the headteacher is introducing accountability and has sharpened the focus of what everyone is doing.
33. Governors are fully apprised of the strengths of the school and are aware of the areas which require improvement. The new building has been a priority, so as to cater for the significant increase in numbers over the past five years. They have now thrown their energies wholeheartedly into strategic planning, so as to raise standards quickly. They think the school has improved significantly since the last inspection; they consider ICT to be a strength and that the school's climate for learning is extremely good, resulting in happy pupils who are very willing to learn. Governors are quite clear that the main area for development is standards, and all their efforts are directed to this end. The governing body questions and debates, showing much respect for the greater degree of transparency the new headteacher has brought to discussing standards and pupils' achievements in relation to national and local averages.
34. The school's administrative systems, with the introduction of resource managers, work smoothly and efficiently and, as a consequence, the headteacher is able to spend minimal time on this aspect. The income per pupil is low in this very large school. It is used well to raise standards and develop the school, so as to provide better for the needs of different age and ability groups of pupils. The Robert Wilkinson Trust has made funds available to enable the headteacher to provide additional resources, such as large screens linked to computers in every room and fencing off a separate area for the use of reception children. Governors have a good understanding of the principles of 'best value', obtaining competitive quotes and using their expertise to offer guidance. The pay off is now being seen in rising standards and a good sense of team work which pervades all aspects of the school's management systems.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1262588	Balance from previous year	93598
Total expenditure	1247425	Balance carried forward to the next	124550
Expenditure per pupil	2276		

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Children enter reception at the start of either September or January of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls. In practice, this means that about two-thirds of children have only two terms in the reception classes. Attainment on entry is average. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and there is some excellent teaching of communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills, reflecting the school's focus on these areas this year. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. Provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is now very good, as is the overall provision in terms of indoor and outdoor resources and accommodation. The leadership of the Early Years Unit is very good. The staff team work together extremely well and the excellent teaching and curricular lead given by the team leader provides an outstanding example to other staff. Links with parents are strong.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's achievement is very good because of the high standards of teaching;
- Provision in this area of learning has improved markedly since the last inspection.

Commentary

35. By the end of the reception year, almost all children are likely to meet the expected goals. The quality of teaching and learning is very good; children are happy and have very good relationships with each other and with adults. Children have ample opportunities to select their own resources and quickly acquire the confidence to explore new learning with minimal assistance. They are highly motivated to learn because of the very well organised teaching which has the knack of making all learning experiences highly enjoyable. Children forget to fuss, because they are so interested in what they are doing. They persevere and concentrate for long periods of time, developing in assurance and self-esteem. Outside, for example, children built a den together using plastic crates and a piece of camouflage material. They then dressed themselves up as explorers and proceeded to go on safari, using their binoculars to spot the large toy animals perched high up in the trees and tall bushes. With the digital camera, they photographed what they saw, while others with clipboards wrote down their observations 'like real explorers'. Others co-operated well, transporting their finds in pairs on bikes, both pushing and pedalling furiously as they spotted yet another animal in the far distance. Each day, a special person is chosen who sits on a special chair and has the right to go first. This means that everyone has a turn at being treated in a special way and it is noticeable how this helps normally shy children to be more communicative. It develops their sense of responsibility, trust and self-esteem.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and are likely to meet the expected goals at the end of the reception year.

Commentary

36. Excellent teaching of this area of learning was seen. Skilful questioning helped children to articulate their thoughts. Children made lively suggestions, for instance as to what a large group of ants might be called, suggesting 'herd' and 'a family of ants', and finally guessing 'army' as their teacher gave them a clue. The teacher's playful liveliness engages children's interest and they respond enthusiastically, as when they noted, for example, rhyming words and discussed eagerly with their partners the glimpses of animals they could see in the pictures. The high quality teaching ensures that children have many real reasons for writing, with the result that the small group of higher attainers can write several sentences in sequence, spelling complicated words like 'slither' phonetically. Average attainers are beginning to recognise simple words and understand that books are read from left to right. Assessment of children's learning is very good and from observations of what children say and do (which are transferred to a weekly record of each individual child's achievements) plan out the next steps of learning. A particularly able reader reads with a Year 4 pupil each week to extend her skills. The outdoor area is used very effectively to foster children's rapid progress. Lower attainers were much clearer about letter sounds when they played a lively game outdoors, selecting an animal from the teacher's box. They gradually realised that all the words ended in the same way and they reeled them off with great delight. The pace and timing of these sessions is extremely well judged to maximise learning with a high degree of enjoyment.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good and excellent teaching lead to enthusiastic, purposeful learning, both indoors and out, and very good all round achievement.

Commentary

37. Standards are on course to be average for virtually all children by the end of the reception year. The pace of learning is very fast because teaching is very well organised. Expectations are high and activities are challenging and fun. For example, at the start of one session, children and adults jumped up and down, clapping their hands as they turned a quarter turn for each number, as they loudly counted forwards and backwards from zero to ten. Higher attainers predicted which way they would be facing at the end and all were thoroughly alert for helping Kanga (a large toy kangaroo) count as he jumped forwards and back along a line with imaginary numbers. More able children were able to count on and back from larger numbers such as 13 and 27. When the teacher fed Kanga some hay to help him to jump in tens the children eagerly assisted him; most got up to a hundred but some were unsure of the exact sequence. The large screen linked to a computer is used very well to help children to learn. Children suggested that the ideas they had pooled on the uses of money should be saved under the heading 'interesting money', reflecting their concentration and enjoyment. Activities are extremely well thought out to develop children's understanding and to help them build on what they know. For example, a simple game, such as counting out the coins in different purses and labelling each one, gave a real purpose for counting and recording accurately. Children have very good opportunities to talk about their learning with other children.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Imaginatively devised activities enable children to find out about their world;
 - They achieve very well to attain average standards in a short time.
38. The quality of teaching and learning are very good. Children have many opportunities to learn through investigation and finding out for themselves. Often another area of learning, such as mathematics, is linked in; for example, children were encouraged to put their heads under a large black cloth and, with the aid of torches, spot the different small creatures under the sand, identify them and keep a record of how many legs they had. Children successfully explained the difference between night and day in terms of light and the presence of the sun or moon, and are aware of the changes in weather. In another lesson, average and higher attainers had great fun disentangling fact from fiction, as they read and then debated questions such as 'Do slugs swing?' or 'Can a hen dig?' This gave rise to a fascinating discussion, as one child thought they were debating whether slugs could swim and stoutly asserted that they could as she had seen one in water. They confidently access programs on the computer or on the interactive whiteboard.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and most exceed expected goals by the start of Year 1.

Commentary

39. Children are provided with excellent opportunities, both indoors and out, to develop their skills. They make very good progress in terms of developing confidence and control when running, riding large wheeled vehicles and climbing. They know to bend their knees properly when they land from a jump and the imaginative layout of apparatus in the hall sparked off inventive ways of travelling, involving twisting and turning and clambering underneath sloping benches, before holding a pose for five seconds. They bounce large balls with a fair degree of control and prove adept at attempting to shoot them through a high net. All children have swimming lessons in the school pool and about a third of them can swim without using water aids. Children manage to dress and undress reasonably quickly, because they have so many opportunities for physical development they take charge of their swimming towel very responsibly, rolling it up like a long sausage before draping it over the high pegs. The very good teaching also ensures that children have lots of occasions to use scissors and glue and to manipulate malleable materials. They develop good control of a computer mouse and operate remote controlled toys and the digital camera with ease.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well as they have ample opportunities to develop their skills.

Commentary

40. The quality of teaching and of children's learning is very good; they achieve very well as a result. Many choose to do creative activities. The room is very well set up to encourage their independence and they are given very good opportunities to explore different media. They work very well independently, making models of jungle animals using a range of recycled materials, for instance, or using a malleable material to shape into 'snakes of money', as one explained. They have opportunities to mix paint themselves and the very good resources encourage their creativity, as in collage work. Adults are skilled at developing imaginative play. Many activities involve children in role play and awe and wonder abound as make-believe becomes near-reality, as in their imaginations they travel on a safari bus or set up camp.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved and are now above average at the end of Years 2 and 6;
- Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because of the good quality teaching and support they receive;
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good and excellent teaching observed;
- The subject is well led and managed, with a strong, co-operative ethos;
- There are good cross-curricular links and good use is made of ICT.

Commentary

41. The improvement in standards since 2003 is the result of clear and effective action by the leadership and management of the school. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are now above average in reading, writing and speaking and listening. The achievement of pupils across the school is good, including those with special educational needs. The school has undertaken high profile, well planned and resourced whole school focuses on writing, oracy and assessment, and these have quickly raised standards.
42. Pupils' standards and achievement in speaking and listening are good overall, with higher attaining pupils reaching very high standards. The school's recent work on oracy across the school, and the successful introduction of the 'Talking Partners' strategy into all classrooms, have given pupils greater confidence and an understanding of their learning and the way their work is assessed. Teachers place great importance on developing skills and this results in some very good practice. In two very good Year 2 lessons, where pupils compared books by the same author, the teachers expertly guided and built upon pupils' comments and questions, to ensure that all pupils understood the work covered. They were careful to include all pupils in discussion. Pupils showed above average ability in following the conventions of group discussion, listening attentively to their classmates and developing further points raised, individually or with their partners. In a very good Year 6 lesson on play scripts, the class enthusiastically and successfully explored the finer points of writing for a specific purpose, through a very good blend of speaking and listening and writing activities.
43. Pupils achieve well in reading and standards are above average throughout the school. A greater proportion of younger pupils are reaching higher than average standards than in recent years, thanks to the well planned and effective teaching they receive. The school uses a range of successful strategies, including independent and guided reading and paired

reading with older pupils. Year 1 and 2 pupils were observed reading together with confidence and fluency. They are given opportunities wherever possible in lessons to read as a group or individually. Teachers use their subject knowledge and the well resourced reading scheme effectively to develop reading skills. All pupils have reading records and these are used well to monitor and record progress and involve parents. Older pupils also achieve well, have many opportunities for reading and show understanding of what they have read. All classes have their own well stocked libraries, as well as a central library area. The non-fiction books are very well supplemented by ICT resources, with pupils enjoying regular, organised access to Internet research.

44. Standards and achievement in writing have also improved and, this year, pupils are reaching higher levels than in the last two years. This is the result of a major focus on writing across the school. Staff have received intensive training and support to improve their own knowledge and skills and these have been successfully implemented in lessons. Most pupils at Year 2 are using legible, well formed writing and many are joining letters. They can write sentences and higher attaining pupils write stories and instructions. The use of ICT resources, particularly the expert use of large screens linked to computers in Years 5 and 6, is a strength of the teaching of writing. The quality of teachers' displays, informing and encouraging writing, is outstandingly rich. Pupils' writing is also displayed but far less prominently. This is surprising, given the enthusiasm and celebration of writing by pupils and teachers alike in the lessons observed. The range and quality of writing undertaken, particularly for older pupils, is very good. Handwriting and presentation are good in nearly all classes. Marking and assessment have benefited from the recently introduced whole school policy, with older pupils particularly having more input into their assessment and target setting. Teachers' marking overall is encouraging, with points for development to help pupils improve.
45. The good overall quality of teaching and learning, with some very good and excellent teaching, has been key to the recent improvement in achievement and standards. Staff have developed a 'How can I be successful?' approach to learning, especially in writing. The collaborative approach to planning has improved the quality and consistency of lessons, with clear objectives communicated to pupils. In lessons that are good or better, there is good pace and appropriate challenge for all pupils and a range of varied and stimulating activities. In an excellent Year 5 lesson on persuasive writing, pupils of all abilities produced work of exceptionally high quality. The teacher has totally involved his pupils in their assessment and target setting and all pupils are very highly motivated and love writing. ICT is used to provide stimulus and to display pupils' work as it develops. The skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing are combined and directed by the teacher in outstanding planning and delivery to produce lessons of the highest quality. Support staff are knowledgeable and effective and, as a result, special educational needs pupils are fully involved and supported in lessons and achieve well. Support staff contribute significantly to the planning and delivery of lessons, show initiative and are skilled communicators with a sensitive and thoughtful approach to the pupils in their care.
46. The leadership and management of English are good. The subject leader has good expertise and has developed an effective collaborative approach, which uses the good subject knowledge and proactive nature of the staff to bring about improvements. The whole school initiatives on oracy, writing and assessment have been well implemented and monitored and standards have risen as a result.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

47. Opportunities to use literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum are good. Subjects such as science, history, geography, design and technology and religious education contribute to an integrated curriculum that encourages use and development of language and literacy skills. Good use is made of ICT in this area.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well and standards have improved and are now average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6;
- All pupils achieve well because of the good quality teaching and support they receive;
- Good leadership and management have helped to bring about improvements;
- Setting pupils in Years 3 to 6 according to their current levels of achievement is beneficial;
- Pupils enjoy lessons and have positive attitudes towards mathematics.

Commentary

48. Since the time of the last inspection standards have improved, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are average in Years 1 and 2 and above average in Years 3 to 6. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well. The effective teaching is ensuring that all pupils are appropriately challenged and very good quality support is provided for those who need it. In the national tests taken in 2004, results at the end of Year 2 were below the national average and well below those of similar schools. By the end of Year 6, the results were above the national average and well above those of similar schools. The school's detailed tracking procedures indicate that results should be very similar this year but not as many pupils will achieve the higher level (Level 5) as in 2004.
49. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. This is because appropriate work is planned for them and they receive very good support from the classroom assistants. They ensure that the main teaching points of the lessons are reinforced during the group sessions and this helps to boost the pupils' confidence and raise their self-esteem.
50. The National Numeracy Strategy is now firmly embedded into the curriculum and staff have received training. This is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The curriculum is well planned and work is well matched to the needs of the pupils. There is a good focus on the teaching of number and calculation skills. Throughout the school, pupils are developing a secure knowledge and understanding of number, which they apply when they solve problems. Many opportunities are given for pupils to apply their knowledge in practical situations. They enjoy investigating numbers. A good example was seen in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils were investigating patterns in the number grids they were using. They found great satisfaction deciding, for example, that the sum of all the numbers across the diagonals added up to 200.
51. Pupils enjoy mathematics and join in lessons enthusiastically. They take pleasure in explaining to the rest of the class how they calculate their answers. This is seen no better than in the mental part at the beginning of the lesson, when pupils use whiteboards and number fans to show their answers. Great excitement is generated when pupils play games, such as 'Squirt', or have 'multiplication' contests to check their speed at calculating answers.
52. The school is continually working hard to raise standards. In Years 3 to 6, the successful setting arrangements, where pupils are taught in groups according to their levels of achievement, are having a positive impact on standards. These groupings are formed in response to the analysis of assessed work. The individual pupil's achievement in the subject is regularly monitored to ensure that appropriate progress is made.

53. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, but very good teaching was observed in all of the Year 6 lessons. Features of this very good teaching were challenging activities that sparked the pupils' interests, and very good subject knowledge and understanding of the lesson content. Questioning was used very effectively to check the pupils' understanding and to develop their learning further. In these very good lessons, time was used very well and not a moment was wasted. Clear learning objectives were carefully planned and explained to all pupils.
54. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has put into place effective systems for assessing, analysing and tracking pupils' progress. Pupils' work and test results, and teaching, are all carefully monitored to see where improvements can be made.

Mathematics across the curriculum

55. This is good. Pupils are given many opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in other subjects. They collect data and produce graphs and charts in science. In design and technology, they use their measuring skills and in history they use timelines to help them understand the chronology of events. ICT is used very well. Pupils confidently use mathematical programs and the interactive whiteboards are used imaginatively to bring learning to life for the pupils.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 enables pupils to achieve very well and reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6;
- Higher attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not achieve as well as they could, because they are not challenged sufficiently and there is little or no science taught in the summer term in Year 2;
- In Years 3 to 6, very good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' investigative skills;
- The subject leader has ensured good improvement since the last inspection.

Commentary

56. In Years 3 to 6, all groups of pupils achieve very well. By the end of Year 6, all but a very small minority reach the standard expected for their age and most reach the higher level. This is reflected in pupils' performance in national tests over the past three years. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils with special educational needs achieve at the same rate as the rest of the pupils because of the very good support they receive in lessons.
57. Standards are not as high in Year 2 as they were at the time of the last inspection, when they were deemed to be above average. Higher attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could, because they are not challenged sufficiently. This means that standards are average because, although most pupils reach the standard expected for their age, not enough reach the higher level.
58. By the end of Year 6, pupils develop a very good scientific understanding because of the strong emphasis on practical work. The last report indicated that science investigation skills were underdeveloped. This weakness has been tackled well. There has been a very clear focus on teaching pupils the skills necessary to find answers to problems. The fruits of this can be seen in the way they describe how to plan and carry out investigations. They are particularly good at organising their tests to ensure that they are fair, and recognise the importance of repeating tests to get reliable results.

59. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was variable throughout the school and satisfactory overall. It is now very good in Years 3 to 6, but still only satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The improvement in Years 3 to 6 is the result of much better planning and the fact that science is taught as a separate subject in all classes, whereas it used to be taught as part of a topic in Years 3 and 4. Teachers match work accurately to the needs of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils are expected to work much more independently, while those who find learning more difficult have extra support. Marking is used well, as questions are raised to make pupils think and move their learning on. Pupils are relaxed and confident in using the correct scientific vocabulary because teachers use it naturally in discussions.
60. The subject is led and managed well. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and gives very good support to other teachers. Despite the high standards in Years 3 to 6, she knows where improvements are needed. She recognises, for example, that pupils should now move on to devising their own investigations and applying their enquiry skills independently. She has identified the need for further support in Years 1 and 2 to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and the need to change curriculum coverage in Year 2 in the summer term.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weakness

- Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, standards are well above average;
- Staff make very good use of technology in their work;
- Very good leadership and management ensure that ICT is used well in other subjects.

Commentary

61. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to increase the provision of high quality resources for this subject and staff are committed to developing their own expertise. Their increasing confidence in ICT, motivated and inspired by a knowledgeable subject leader, contributes greatly towards the good progress made by pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs. A challenging and well planned programme of work has been introduced since the previous inspection and is now well established throughout the school.
62. Younger pupils experience a good range of ICT tools and standards are as expected for pupils in Year 2. They use computers confidently and have a range of basic skills. Working enthusiastically, they operate the keyboard and mouse increasingly accurately and are able to create pictures of toys using a drawing package. They print the results of their efforts on the colour printer for their design and technology folders. Too few lessons were seen to be able to make a judgement on standards, teaching or learning at the end of Year 2.
63. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well and standards are well above the national average by the end of Year 6. Pupils tackle new tasks with confidence and the high quality of their work is clearly evident in displays around the school. Pupils have very good word processing skills and use a range of tools to analyse information. Pupils in Year 6 confidently demonstrated how to prepare a multi-media demonstration to be displayed on a large screen, with prompts to help them talk about it. They enjoy animating pictures and text, varying the speed and range of movement with ease. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and pupils talked with great enthusiasm about making videos and using some of the interactive programs the subject leader had designed for them. The school uses a very effective resource to teach pupils about the importance of Internet safety, enabling them to make effective use of the Internet with confidence.

64. Highly effective use of interactive whiteboards contributes significantly to older pupils' high levels of motivation. Teachers capture pupils' interest, challenge their thinking and extend their learning through well planned lessons. In one lesson, the teacher used work saved on the interactive board from the previous session to remind pupils about animation tools and techniques, thus starting the lesson off at a good pace with this dynamic recall.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

65. ICT is used well to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. The subject leader has developed a wide range of software and resources to support pupils' learning and increasing use is made of high quality educational websites. One very good feature of ICT is the use of individual computer folders for pupils to store their work. This contributes strongly to continuity in learning across the curriculum and promotes a sense of ownership by pupils.

HUMANITIES

66. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision or standards of teaching and learning in either **geography** or **history**. Only one lesson of each subject was observed.
67. In geography, the teaching used the Internet very well to increase pupil's understanding of the news as reported locally, nationally and internationally. Pupils were fascinated and later pointed out the newsboards in Year 5 and 6 classrooms, where they pinned up items of interest. This broad-based approach makes learning relevant and raises pupils' awareness of the immediacy and importance of human and physical geography, as well as helping them to learn a great deal about other parts of the world in relation to their own. However, from scrutinising pupils' work, it is clear that while some classes, notably Years 3 and 4, study geographical activities in some depth, in other classes coverage of the curriculum is scant. The school has plans in place to remedy this.
68. In history, the teaching seen was very good. There was good emphasis upon the acquisition of skills and pupils were all allowed to practise and develop these through imaginative methods involving talking to a partner and dramatic representations. Pupils discussed different view points knowledgeably and energetically, and gave different interpretations of life in Athens or Sparta. The teacher had high expectations of her pupils and challenged them to develop their thinking and understanding. As a result, all pupils made good progress.
69. The subject leaders for both geography and history have a good understanding of the standards in their subject. Monitoring is at an early stage but they have a clear view of what needs to be done to improve standards further.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is above average;
- There are good opportunities for links with pupils' personal and social education;
- Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development;
- Links to places of worship and faith communities are underdeveloped.

Commentary

70. Pupils are in their second year of studying the new locally agreed syllabus. Expectations are exceeded by the end of Year 6. This represents very good progress from the last inspection, when standards were below average at the end of Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning

is good. Pupils respond well and teachers challenge them to develop their thinking and consider moral issues from their own perspective. By the end of Year 2, pupils know some important stories and events from Christian beliefs and consider the importance of care and respect for everyone. They consider the importance of special places in their lives and some children are beginning to understand why religious stories can teach moral and spiritual values. They have been introduced to beliefs from different faiths. Too few lessons were seen to be able to make an overall judgement on teaching, learning and standards at the end of Year 2.

71. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed an above average understanding of the importance of different faith communities. They appreciate Islamic patterns and can make comparisons between different beliefs, such as Sikhism and Islam. They know the rules of different faiths and can explain how symbols such as earth, fire and water convey meanings to members of different religious groups, and how they relate to religious beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about the importance of respect and one pupil commented that no respect in the world would mean greed, chaos and no peace. Others wrote about their dream for the world of stopping pollution in the oceans and seas. They are encouraged to consider questions and evidence about how the world began from different view points and to express their own opinions and conclusions.
72. The lessons are planned well so that pupils consider an issue or subject and are given time for reflection and response. They are encouraged to celebrate and review their learning and their own thoughts and feelings. In a Year 4 lesson, the pupils investigated the meaning of the Lord's Prayer. Pupils were encouraged to reflect upon the true meaning of the words in a 'pair share' activity and different groups explored different parts of the prayer together. The teacher skilfully offered pupils the opportunity for a moment of spiritual contemplation as they listened to two different versions of the Lord's Prayer through music and a reading in a foreign language. The lesson provided good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development, as well as encouragement to make links with their own experiences and to develop their literacy skills in the specific analysis of the words in the prayer.
73. The subject is well led and managed. Resources have improved with provision of 'resource bags' for each topic area and the use of the new syllabus. Monitoring is at an early stage of development. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to provide further planned visits and visitors representing the diverse nature of our society, bearing in mind the largely mono-ethnic culture of the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. Insufficient teaching was seen in **art and design**, **design and technology** and **music** to make an overall judgement about provision in those subjects. However, discussions with pupils and an examination of their folders and display work enabled some evaluation.
75. In art and design, pupils work with a satisfactory range of materials, including paint, pastels and modelling materials. They work carefully, whether individually or in groups, using a variety of techniques to produce their best work. They use their drawing and sketching skills well to illustrate their work in other subjects. Teachers use the subject effectively to develop pupils' computer skills through special programs or research on the Internet. The curriculum is enriched by special events, such as the Arts Week and by visiting artists. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of what is happening in other classes and she has produced a comprehensive action plan to raise standards.
76. Work in design and technology is based around the national guidelines adapted for the needs of the school. Teachers organise design and technology work effectively to fit in with overall themes and topics linked to other areas of the curriculum. The necessary elements of design and creation of ideas were present in the two lessons observed and in the examples of pupils' work on display around the school. Teachers ensure that pupils are given opportunities to

acquire the necessary skills to make their designs a reality. Careful evaluation of the process, from idea to final product, is also a feature of all topics. Relationships are good and, in a Year 2 lesson, teacher and teaching assistant worked effectively as a team to support those pupils with additional needs.

77. The music curriculum is satisfactory and pupils' achievement is what would be expected for pupils of this age. Opportunities are given to pupils to sing in the choir and to learn how to play the recorder. Some pupils learn how to play a range of string, brass and woodwind instruments. In the lessons seen, the pupils achieved above average standards in composing and performing. They used percussion instruments very well to depict animals and to retell a story.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and reach above the standards expected by the end of Year 6;
- The school makes good use of outside specialists to support teachers;
- Teaching is effective because skills are taught systematically.

Commentary

78. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Standards are in line with those usually seen at the end of Year 2 and better than those expected at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the good support they receive in lessons. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this is a major factor in pupils' good achievement. The good subject knowledge and expertise of some teachers is shared with colleagues, so all pupils benefit. High levels of competence mean that teachers are able to demonstrate and teach specific skills confidently. Outside specialists are used well to support teaching and learning.
79. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard to improve their performance. They are keen to learn and take full advantage of the good range of activities outside the school day. These activities support their learning well. The pupils' good skills are reflected in their successes in a range of sporting competitions with other schools, both in the local area and at county and national level. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development. This can be seen in the way they get on so well together.
80. The subject is led and managed well. Although the co-ordinator teaches in Year 2, she has a clear understanding of what is happening throughout the school. This is the result of effective teamwork, with colleagues in Years 3 to 6 sharing the load. There is a clear action plan for raising standards further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. This area of the curriculum was sampled. Statutory requirements are met in regard to the school's provision for sex and relationships education and drugs education. This area of the curriculum is enhanced by pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour. They listen very well to each other's views and give their own in a calm and measured way. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong and begin to think of potential solutions to problems. Pupils participate in fundraising ventures for those less fortunate than themselves and consider wider environmental issues as part of their geography lessons. The school has suitable plans in place to develop provision further with an initial focus on Year 5.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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